

THE EXPERIENCE OF WAYNE F. DOLL'S MILITARY SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II

February 16, 1944 - May 17, 1946



OCTOBER 7, 2018
LAWRENCE, KANSAS

December 7, 1941 Sunday

It was a typical Sunday afternoon with not much to do, so I went to the local hangout—the Bon Ton Café in downtown Larned, Kansas. I met some of the guys, had a Coke and decided to go home. I was at the cashier's counter waiting my turn to pay, when the radio music was stopped for a very important announcement. The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, Honolulu in a sneak attack. They sank several big ships, bombed the air fields and strafed parts of Honolulu, killing about 2,000 people. We didn't even know that Pearl Harbor was a naval base where most of our Pacific fleet was anchored.

Oh, my! -- We were at war!

December 8 Monday

Mr. Finney, our School Superintendent, had the High School classes assemble so we could hear President Roosevelt address the nation over the radio. We all heard his message that centered on the sneak attack that Japan had made on the United States, an attack that would live in infamy, and that a state of war now exists between the U.S. and Japan.

A lot of fellows who had already graduated from High School signed up for service. Some of our classmates even quit school to join up. Those who stayed in High School and would graduate didn't have much say as to what they were going to do next. They did have a choice of which branch of service they preferred — Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard. A future career would have to be delayed.

I was in my junior year and decided to finish high school. I was eligible, but I decided to wait. The draft board let 18-year olds finish school and gave farm boys a nine-month deferment to help get the work done. I was pleased to get to help dad for a few more days even though it was work sun up to sun down. There was no time for social life.

In early 1944 the board was about to draft farm workers, so I went ahead and signed up for the Navy Reserves. I left Larned by train to Fort Leavenworth, Kanas (Image1). Would I ever get back home?

I don't ever remember missing a meal in all of my young 18 years of life. So I didn't know how it would feel to miss one, but I was to find out in an unexpected way. On the train we were fed meals except the last one, which would be provided when we got to the Fort. Surprise! Surprise! The train was a little late and the army mess kitchen was already closed. So no food that evening. It wasn't only our stomachs that were growling. How would we ever survive?

We were herded into a barracks full of double bunk beds, given a blanket, fresh out of moth balls, a pillow and told to go to sleep. I have always hated the smell of moth balls and I was assured I would never be able to get to sleep because of its choking aroma. But I did.

Welcome to the Service.

Later I was inducted into the US NAVY RESERVES.

I was given a physical, shots, a GI haircut, GI clothes (our civvies were sent home) and dog tags. Then I was sent by troop train to the USNR Boot Camp at Farragut, Idaho (Image 1).

An unusual event occurred at Ft. Leavenworth when I went to get my GI haircut. I recognized one of the barbers. He was my next-door neighbor from Larned and we attended the same high school. (Ray Cline) He saw me and had me come to this chair where he gave me a slow cut so we could visit. I didn't know he was in the Navy. It was nice to see someone I knew.

At Farragut we were housed in the top level of a two-story barrack. Our company had over 100 men in it. At boot camp everything was hurry up and wait. You line up for everything. I would get up early to avoid the rush. Laundry was handled in one of three different ways: you scrubbed it yourself, mailed it home for mom to do it and mail it back, or throw it away and buy new. I washed mine.

I found boot camp to be easy compared to farm work. I was already accustomed to getting up early so the rise and shine was routine. Doing calisthenics was no problem either because I was used to strenuous work. The only thing I questioned at first was the food. Would it really provide enough energy and strength necessary for Naval life? It must have because after couple of weeks I was still kicking. Only I could never get used to the Saturday morning breakfasts. It consisted only of beans. Navy beans! No eggs, no bacon, no hash browns, no toast, no nothing but good old navy beans. But they kept you from getting hungry.

Several days after I got to Boot Camp, I received a package from the Larned USO. It contained a pack of cigarettes, a book of safety matches, sticks of gum, some Gillet double-edged razor blades, and a Gideon New Testament. I gave the cigarettes and matches away, chewed the gum, put the blades with my shaving gear, and kept the New Testament.

I decided that if the volunteer ladies of my home town thought enough of that book to send a copy to me over 1,000 miles away, it must be important enough to read. Even though our neighbor, Hazel Lawton, took us kids to the Presbyterian Church Sunday School where we learned the Bible stories, I had never read the Bible so I began to read it.

A few of the old English words were difficult to understand and I had trouble with some of the parables, idioms, and other figures of speech, but it was interesting, and I kept on reading.

I came to the passage where the chief priests and elders of the church accused Jesus of being an imposter, had Him brought before the authorities who arrested Him. Then He was questioned, found guilty, mocked, slapped, spit upon, beaten, scourged and sentenced to death by crucifixion. I saw clearly that Jesus had been falsely accused and had done nothing wrong. He was so weak that He was unable to carry His cross so they had someone carry it for Him.

I used to carry heavy things like fence posts on the farm, but I was never wrongly accused, beaten or stumbled under a heavy load. His fall made me see how much humility and physical pain He was suffering. Somehow

just reading about it brought conviction to my soul as I realized that I had not always obeyed my parents as I should have and that caused Jesus to suffer as much as the things the soldiers were doing to Him.

Later I remember going to church with mom and Lucile when the preacher, Rev. Cheney quoted John 3:16: "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." I thought, "hmm, everlasting life" That caught my attention and I decided to investigate it.

That began a very nice part of my life when I was able to read, study and question the promise of everlasting life. This activity convinced me that the Bible was true, and I believed that Jesus was who He said He was, and I became a believing Christian looking forward to eternal life.

After boot camp they gave us several days leave. I went home to Larned. Of course it was nice to be home again, but with most of my friends away in the service, it was a little lonely. I sure did like mom's cooking more than ever and working with dad was great.

The trip back to Idaho began with a bus ride from Larned to Dodge City here I caught a train for the rest of the way. On April 14 (my 19th birthday) the train made a stop at Pocatello, Idaho. It was a large station which was full of men and women from all branches while their trains were being serviced. The USO ladies were very active providing eats, drinks, and respite for all the troops. They even had a birthday cake with ice cream

for anyone who happened to have been born on this day. Several of us jumped at the invitation, and though we would rather have been home, we appreciated this little thing the ladies did for us.

Leaving Pocatello, I saw a large moose running alongside the train through the snow. It was the first time I ever saw a wild moose or even a tame one.

Arriving back at Farragut I completed several kinds of aptitude tests that would be a guide for duty assignment. I qualified for quartermaster school, which I liked very much. A Navy quartermaster is different than an Army quartermaster. A Navy one is in the ship's communication section, where he helps the officers record the sailing log, care for the charts, and helps with navigation and steering. He must also be proficient as a signalman, knowing the dot-dash Morse code to receive and send messages with a blinking signal light; to know flags to hoist for coded messages; and to know the semaphore alphabet positions to send and receive signal flag messages.

An Army quartermaster primarily takes care of procuring equipment and supplies for the troops.

The Navy quartermaster school was updated, efficient and pleasant. Book learning with practicing the signal skills was challenging and satisfying. I remember practicing the semaphore flag positions in front of a mirror to be sure I got each letter position just right. One of my classmates said I was the best of the class. I was.

I studied diligently, passed all the tests and was one of the class who had high enough grades to receive a pass to attend a USO Hollywood Entertainment Show in the auditorium. What a nice respite—a night to relax, to laugh at jokes, to appreciate the music, and to look at the girls. There was only one movie star, Jinx Falkenburg, but she was enough. Too soon the show was over, but what a time we sailors had to be able to enjoy, to forget where we were, for what we were training, and to put the future on hold for at least a little while.

After graduating from QM School, I was promoted to seaman first class and began receiving a small increase in pay. I was assigned for sea duty aboard a Landing Ship Medium in the Navy's Amphibious Fleet and was sent to the Amphibian Training Camp in Little Creek, Virginia (Image 2). There were no liberty days available for a swing through Kansas so I went straight to the Camp. It was several miles east of the big Naval Base in Norfolk and had access to the Atlantic Ocean and its beaches. They told us at Farragut that members of our class would not be sent to the amphibs but would probably go to Bremington, Washington and board a real ship like a destroyer or cruiser. But here we are where the camp sign says Amphibian Training Camp, Little Creek, VA. Weren't we supposed to go to Bremington to serve on a real ship instead of a second class amphib ship? I don't know why some looked down on the amphibs. There were good men there, too. Me for instance. So what do you do? You do your duty, make the best of it because you don't have much to say, if any, about what branch of the Navy you will be in, what ship you will be on, or where you will go, or will you ever get back home.

Most of us went to Norfolk for liberty. It sure was a big town swarming with sailors from all the different ships and bases. The town went all out to provide R and R for the service men. There were USO's, picture shows, live theaters, music and sports auditoriums, and many church sponsored canteens. The sidewalks in the downtown area were crowded with sailors. Their white caps bobbed up and down like a sea of corks in a stream. I enjoyed being with our ship's two signalmen as they did not smoke or drink either so we had a good time without getting into too much trouble. We even went to church.

Life at Little Creek included refresher courses and two weeks aboard a LSM training ship. LSM stands for Landing Ship Medium. It is smaller than the Landing Ship Tank but can sail a little faster and is more maneuverable. Both ships were designed so they can land directly on the beach, open their bow doors, lower the ramps to allow the troops with their equipment to go storming ashore. Large stern anchors are dropped on the approach to the beach to help pull the ships off when they were unloaded.

After training at Little Creek, VA, we were shipped to Houston, TX to board a LSM which was still under construction at the Brown Shipyards (Image 2). We were allowed to go into the yards and actually watch the men put the finishing touches on the ship that was to be our new home at sea. Houston was another nice liberty town with lots of USO's, theaters, churches, and friendly people.

After our ship was commissioned we shook it down in the Gulf of Mexico. When the craft was considered ship- shape we sailed to Biloxi, Mississippi for a load of 4'x4'x4' steel pontoons for temporary docking material designated for the invasion of Okinawa (Image 2).

Enroute to Biloxi, Mississippi, through the Gulf to Colon, Panama, we passed by the western coast of Cuba, but were not close enough to see much. We did not see any of the other Gulf Islands.

The Captain thought we might be sailing into shallow water, so he slowed the ship to allow the seamen to sound, or measure the water depth with a weighted line. They found the bottom was deeper than the length of their 100 foot line. So we sailed full speed confident we would not run aground with our ship, which only drew six feet of water. Later we found that the area we measured for depth was over a mile deep. We smiled a little at that one but didn't tell anyone.

I was looking forward to get to Colon, the city in Panama which is on the Atlantic side of the Canal, when I could clean up and rest a bit (Image 2). But things don't always turn out the way you plan.

Somehow I spent the regular at sea watch of 4 hours; the dogging of the next watch of 2 hours (dogging is dividing a 4 hour watch into 2 watches of 2 hours each to rotate the time so one section doesn't always get the midnight to 4 am.); then spent 2 hours at special sea detail when we entered the harbor and found an anchorage. So I really was not a happy camper when our section was rotated to the 8 to 12 pm watch of another

4 hours. This caused me to be on 12 hours of continuous duty and to miss my planned clean up and rest time. Then it began to rain.

The Captain said I could go into the pilot house and did not have to stay on the open conning tower deck protected only with a canvas roof stretched over an iron frame. But I was stubborn and unhappy enough to be in an "I'll show him attitude" and did not go into the pilot house. The rain finally quit which softened my unhappiness, so I began to look around at the other ships and lights in the harbor. It was unusual to notice that the lights on shore seemed to be getting brighter. Maybe we were getting closer to them. After a check of the anchor bearings, I realized the ship was dragging anchor.

I rushed below deck, told the Chief boatman who woke the Captain and enough crew to move the ship to a better anchorage. The Captain thanked me for being alert. No doubt it was the responsible attitude expected of me by my family that prompted me to do my duty even though I really didn't feel like it. Anyway, it kept the ship from possible damage by going aground on the beach.

COLON PANAMA

Shore leave in Colon was very interesting. Here a teenage farm boy from mid-central Kansas was experiencing first time eye-opening events in fulfillment of "Join the Navy and see the world."

As I mentioned earlier I had made friends with the two signalmen who liked to do and live the same things I enjoyed, so it was easy for the three of us to go ashore together. We hired a taxi driver to show us around town. Things were different here than back home. The buildings and houses were built for tropical use. There were no furnaces or space heaters. The streets were narrow and not well paved.

I had the driver to let us off at the First Presbyterian Church. The preacher of my home town church, Rev. Cheney, told me that he had a preacher friend at the Colon church and if I ever got there to look him up. Also, I could write home to the folks and tell them I had seen Rev. Cheney's friend. Then they would know I was getting ready to go through the Canal. We had a nice visit and I did write home about it.

Most of our ship's crew smoked, drank beer, and headed for the bars. The three of us didn't smoke or drink beer, but we sure did search out the bars just like the crew, except for one difference—the bars we looked for were **ice cream bars**. There we could get a double banana split for 25 cents. Mm! mm! good! No hang overs except at the belt line.

Some of the Colon stores had silk stockings for sale.

That was a surprise because they had been absent from US stores for several years. I think mom and my sisters were glad when I sent them several pairs.

The International Restaurant was a delightful surprise. It was large, airy with good service and food. We ordered a fresh fruit salad. As we were finishing the tropical fruit salad, we were distracted by waiters coming from the kitchen carrying trays that contained something hot off the grill that sizzled all the way to our table-what was this? Did we order it? Surprise, yes you did. It was the sizzling steak dinners we had ordered. We were surprised by the way they were served-carried over the shoulders of smiling waiters with the sizzling steaks drawing the attention and smiles from other diners as they were delivered to us. The steaks were delicious. We had a laughing good time.

GOING THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL

WOW! I can hardly believe that this country farm boy from Kansas was actually going to go through the famous Panama Canal.

Our ship and a sub went into a lock together with room to spare. We were hooked to a tow machine that pulled us into the first lock. Gates were closed, water entered and raised us to the level of the fresh water lake that was on the isthmus.

Our landing ship had bow doors that opened to let the ramp down when we beached to unload. When the ramp was raised, the doors came together and were secured for the bow. However, there was a triangular space inside the doors and below the ramp that filled with water. Since the canal was all fresh water, this space was also filled with fresh water. It was large enough for all of the crew to take turns and have a fresh water bath without using any of the ships' distilled water. A salt water shower even with salt water soap with a short fresh water rinse was better than nothing, but you cannot beat a complete fresh water scrub. We all enjoyed it.

When we were through the locks, we were released from the tug to navigate the canal by ourselves. It was easy going because all along the shores there were guide signs. As long as you kept the signs lined up, you were in safe water.

The western locks lowered us to the level of the Pacific Ocean, where we began a very pleasant trip to San Diego on a following sea (waves

coming from aft) (Image 3). We saw a variety of sea life, including porpoises, large sting rays, sharks, flying fish, and whales. It is remarkable that we saw so many.

I wonder why I never saw any of them in the golden waving grain of our Kansas wheat fields.

We were sailing northward along the west coast of Mexico when the Captain decided to practice a landing on an unoccupied part of the beach. The ship made a good successful landing and part of the crew went ashore to "search for buried treasure."

There developed a problem. As the off shore waves came to the land, they began to push the ship further up on the beach. This was dangerous because if it got pushed up too far it might not be able to get off. So the Captain moved the ship off the beach and anchored it in deeper water. The "treasure hunters" left on land had a long hard swim back to the ship, but they made it and we all sailed to San Diego without further delay.

When we arrived in Diego the Captain gave us a two-day leave while the ship was being refueled, supplied, tuned up, etc. Enterprising people on shore approached us and offered to take us to Los Angeles to see Hollywood and the movie stars. They had large touring cars and would need six passengers at \$5.00 a piece to make the one- way trip. It didn't take long for my two signalmen friends, myself, and three others to make up a load and away we went!

Wow! Here we were, teenage sailors from small town USA who had hardly ever been away from home, were now in famous Hollywood. Wow!! We went to the Hollywood Bowl where movie stars were serving GI's in the canteen. We also rented bicycles and peddled all over the city to see some of the movie stars' homes. (Jack Benny, Edgar Bergman, Charlie McCarthy, etc.)

The city took great care of the service men, providing free recreation, food, and a place to sleep. All in all, it was an exciting good time. Of course, we each saved \$5.00 for the return trip back to Diego.

LEAVING THE WEST COAST MARCH 1945

It is difficult to express my feelings as we left San Diego and saw the West Coast of the good old USA begin to sink below the horizon. When the coast could no longer be seen, I couldn't help but wonder if I would ever see it again. I didn't think about it very long because I had a very strong feeling that I would, so I stopped worrying about it.

We sailed with several other LSMs in two columns. Since our Captain was senior, our ship became the command vessel to lead the convoy. We sorta kept the ships together, did the navigating, and kept alert for challenges from other ships, airplanes, or shore facilities.

Not long after we sailed we were approached dead ahead by a couple of salty destroyers. Instead of veering to the starboard or to port, they came barreling at flank speed right down the middle of our columns. Evidently nothing was going to delay them for going on liberty in Diego.

After several days at sea we were approached and challenged by a Navy fighter plane. The pilot could surely see that we were not Japanese but went ahead anyway and flashed a challenge as he circled. I was on the bridge then, and even though we all knew the plane was one of ours, I swung the signal light around and gave the coded reply. The pilot dipped a wing, blinked an OK, and away he went. We never saw any carriers or other big flotilla, but we were certain they were not too far away.

Life aboard ship when it is underway is strenuous and tiring. The sea duty routine is 4 hours on watch and 8 hours off. It seems like a good arrangement, but the off hours were never long enough to get everything done: eat, sleep, clean, write home, play pinochle, etc., before it would be time to go on watch again. Fortunately, the hours were rotated so one section did not get stuck with the midnight duty forever.

Later we found the duty-watch schedule would change when we entered a battle area to 4 hours on and 4 hours off. This would allow half of the crew that was on duty to sail the ship and man some of the guns. If the ship was under imminent danger or if it was actually being attacked, like when the Japanese sub attacked the convoy, or when the enemy air planes air raided day or night, or when the suicide boat passed our ship to blow up against a cargo ship anchored close by; then the general quarters' alarm would sound to bring the off-duty sailors rushing to their battle stations. Now the ship was completely ready for action with all guns manned and look outs posted. My station was on the open conning tower next to the signal light, ready to receive or send signal messages when needed. It was also my duty to record any change or condition of the ship. The tower contained the Captain, the executive officer, a signalman and a quartermaster (me). We stayed at general quarters until the all clear signal was received.

Most of us slept with our clothes on when the ship was in a battle area so we could get to our general quarters post as quickly as possible when the alarm went off.

PEARL HARBOR

We had another historical experience by being able to sail into Pearl Harbor Wow! Here is where it all started. It still contained several of the sunken and damaged ships, but many had been raised, repaired, and put back in service.

As soon as the ship was docked to be supplied and refueled, the Captain let all but the maintenance crew go ashore. My two signalmen friends and I headed straight for base bar. How pleasant and delightful again it was to belly up to order, imbibe and enjoy the refreshment, just like the rest of the crew did but with one exception. We went to the ICE CREAM BARS instead of the spiked ones and pigged out on shakes, sodas and banana splits. Still mm! mm! good.

We found Honolulu to be a modern city with all kinds of greenery, flowers and palm trees (Image 4). Their large USO had genuine native Hawaiian music which was real and easy to listen to. The high-rise hotels along Waikiki beach were modern and well kept. The people were friendly, kind and attractive. We didn't see any grass skirts, but our stop at Pearl was a pleasant experience.

ENEWETAK ATOLL

We left Hawaii heading for Enewetak Atoll, our next refueling stop. It is one of the western islands of the Marshall Islands that was large enough and deep enough for a navy supply base (Image 4). What a difference,

Hawaii was all green with grass, shrubs and trees, well developed buildings occupied with people. Enewetak was a barren atoll of coral rock with some scrubby plants, a few palm trees and gooney birds. Except for the base there were no buildings or native inhabitants. I could never figure out why our crew of sailors didn't rush to go ashore to explore this island like they did at Hawaii. After all it isn't every day you can view the remains of an extinct volcano that has an isolated, deep, sheltered, quiet harbor. Maybe ship life didn't seem so bad after all.

GUAM

As we were approaching Guam, a signal light was flashing toward us. It didn't take long to realize it was a Morse Code challenge from a shore battery. Our signal light was quickly swung around so a correct coded answer could be flashed back. I assume I got it right since the gun battery crew didn't blow us out of the water. It was a good thing that part of our crew checked the code book for the correct answer before they came on watch.

Later while entering the harbor, on April 12, 1945, our radioman received the message that President Roosevelt had died. We were sad about it. Our flags were flown at half-mast in his honor. A great man had passed but we realized that the war would continue.

We got to go ashore on Guam to look around while the ship was being refueled (Image 4).

SAIPAN MARIANA ISLANDS

From Guam we went to Saipan, another of the Mariana Islands (Image 4). We were formed up with a convoy of LSTs (Landing Ship Tanks) which were also loaded with supplies for Okinawa. They were in the center columns with the LSM scattered around the perimeter. Our LSM 122 was in the outside group where we were to be on patrol looking out for and deterring any attacks from submarines, suicide boats, or airplanes.

LSTs are big heavy-duty crafts that can carry a tremendous amount of cargo and can unload directly on the beach. The only problem is that they are slow lumbering iron whales. At top speed they can only do six knots, which is about eight miles per hour. It was a pain to slow our LSMs to accommodate them. Of course, we could run rings around the slower ships because we could cruise all day at 8 knots or about 10 miles per hour. Real whiz kids. The entire convoy was escorted by a destroyer escort that had 5" guns and depth charges. We were glad it was there because the biggest guns on the LSTs and LSMs were 40 mm anti-aircraft ones that had limited range. The DE (destroyer escort) cruised back and forth in front of the convoy available to help when needed.

That came about the third day when our radioman received a voice mail message from the Destroyer's very scared, nervous radioman who was trying to tell the convoy that an enemy torpedo just missed them. We were to be especially alert to try and locate the sub.

Later, after securing from general quarters (battle stations), our officer of the deck and one of our signalmen (Harrison) sighted a periscope in the water off our starboard bow. The sighting was quickly signaled to the destroyer, who after verifying the sighting, came speeding around to investigate. The convoy continued to move ahead while the DE slowed to sound for the sub. Then we saw it shoot shells into the water. One exploded.

We were told later that the shells were called hedgehogs designed to penetrate water and blow up anything they hit. The DE notified the convoy that they had sunk a two- man mini sub evidenced by the debris that resulted from the explosion. Neither of the Japanese sailors survived.

During a submarine torpedo attack, the LSMs are not in immediate danger because of their shallow draft of only about 6 feet fully loaded. Most torpedoes need a deeper depth to be effective. If the sub had sunk the DE when they fired their torpedo, and if they had a 3 inch or larger deck gun, they would have surfaced and shot us all up. Guns on our convoy ships would lack range for defense. We were glad the DE sunk the sub.

The rest of the trip was uneventful except when 2 or 3 LSTs lost their electric steering control and would go careening through the convoy on various courses. It was quite a circus for a while as other ships tried to get out of the way. Fortunately, there were no collisions, just near misses. It took a while to get their steering back in working order and to get the ships aligned up again in a modified formation.

OKINAWA JAPAN

As we approached Okinawa, before we could see the island during the day, we could see where it was at night as bright star shells floated down to give light over the battle field. Navy vessels would fire them to explode at the right place so our soldiers could see to repel night time attacks.

When we arrived at Okinawa, the LSMs were sent to an anchorage north of Buckner Bay on the east side of the island (Image 4). Everything was quiet and calm until, soon after dark, we received a signal that the island was under a Japanese air raid. While the planes might have flown near us, they concentrated their bombing and suicide attacks on the west side of the island where most of the invading fleet was stationed. The battleship Texas with some cruisers and destroyers, and other ships were on the east side providing additional fire power and battlefield support.

At anchor we soon heard the signal for "Small boys make smoke." Since we were a "small boy" the deck crew put our smoke-making generator into action. It puffed away real good for a while, fogging up the atmosphere, when the thing caught fire and lit up the whole anchorage. What a mess! Here we were trying to make smoke to help hide the big ships when we did the opposite by exposing them to the Japanese planes.

The fire finally burned itself out and no attempt was made to light it. Evidently the fire did not attract any bombers as none flew over us. When our night fighters went up to challenge them, they went back to Japan,

and the air raid was over. Needless to say the Captain had the deck crew out bright and early the next day working on the generator.

Later we found out that the "small boys" who were supposed to respond to the signal to "make smoke" were only the ones who were surrounding the big boys (destroyers, cruisers, battleships, cargo freighters, etc.) while they were anchored in Buckner Bay. The small boys were supposed to make smoke so it would drift over and hide the big boy during the raid.

So our first night in the Okinawa battle zone resulted in us being in a Japanese air raid:

While in the wrong group of small boys,

While trying to use a generator that didn't smoke but blazed.

While failing to lay smoke over a wrong group of ships, doing it all,

While anchored in a wrong harbor.

Situation Normal All Fouled Up!!

However, after repairing the generator, it made good smoke several times while we patrolled the big boys in Buckner Bay, so then it was

Situation Normal All Fixed Up! **Yea!!**

We unloaded our cargo of portable docks on the east side of the island and began taking supplies from the cargo ships anchored in deep water to the beach about a mile from the front lines. We delivered all kinds of material from jeeps and trucks to guns, ammunition, food, and clothing. This went on for 24 hours a day. It stopped only when we had an air raid. If it was an unusual day time raid, all personnel took shelter. Most raids

occurred at night when lights were turned off and loading or unloading came to a halt. Soon the anti-aircraft guns began to send up a barrage that lit up the sky. Occasionally the search lights would get a Japanese plane in its beam, but we never saw one shot down. Later we would get the radio alert that our night fighters were taking off to take care not to hit them.

When the anti-aircraft guns were sending up a lot of flak our Captain would sound "general quarters" for all hands to go to their battle stations. Our ship was ready, but no Japanese planes came to the east side of the island, so we did not fire any of our guns. When the Japanese planes left, an all-clear signal was given as our crew stood down from battle stations and continued to deliver supplies from ship to shore.

One day when the Captain found out that it would take several hours more than usual to unload our ship, he allowed one third of the crew to go ashore at a time to look around for an hour or so. Some of us went up into the island foot hills 300-400 feet from the ship. In one of the ravines we found several fox holes dug into the sides and at the upper end there was a more elaborate shelter where an officer probably stayed. It had a woven bamboo roof with several mats covering the ground. Personal items were scattered around, including a tea pot, cups, small wooden boxes, family pictures, etc. The Japanese soldiers must have evacuated in a hurry to leave such things.

While we were there, we were approached by an Army soldier with a gun in his hand. He was from an advanced mess station. They had heard us

and sent the soldier to investigate to see if there were still some Japanese soldiers around. We were fortunate he didn't take some sound shots.

Looking back, I thought how potentially dangerous and stupid it was to go into a battle zone so recently abandoned. A Japanese soldier could have been hiding in any number of places just waiting for an opportunity to kill Americans.

Of course there is no real place in any battle area that is safe. A sailor of another LSM was killed by shrapnel while his ship was unloading at the same place we did.

I didn't send the letter to my folks about our shore visit until the war was over.

Though every day was work as we unloaded the freighters and other supply ships, we thoroughly enjoyed tying up in a refer, a refrigerator ship. In addition to regular cargo, we could get fresh milk, eggs, meat, ice cream, and other frozen food. Mm! mmm! Good!

When we were not unloading ships, we had water patrol duty. By day we would encircle the big boys while they fired their guns at Japanese targets in support of the Marine and Army soldiers. At night we would patrol back and forth to windward of the anchored ships making smoke to drift over and cover them during air raids.

We also were always on lookout for sub and suicide boat attacks. Sometimes we were out there in the bright moon light making smoke and looking out for other ships, but we had no one to make smoke or provide look outs for us. Oh for the advantage of being a "small boy."

At night the Japanese would send their scout planes over the islands to gather information about targets for future raids. One night as we were patrolling around the big boys, we heard their plane that we called "Washing Machine Charley," coming toward us. Even though it was pitch dark, our bow wave stirred up enough of the phosphorous in the sea water to cause it to glow brightly. The scout plane flew directly over us - and whether he didn't see the bow wave or just wasn't interested in a LSM we will never know as he went putting on away. We could hear him but could not see him so we didn't shoot at him.

Another night when we were anchored in the northern part of Buckner Bay, a suicide motor boat went past our ship to explode as it hit a cargo ship anchored nearby. It blew a hole in the forward port side, which flooded one hold. None of the ship's crew was lost. The ship took on water, which caused it to list ten degrees, but did not sink. Our crew had just changed watch and they had not had time to get to sleep, so they heard the explosion. One sailor was all excited because he thought our ship had been hit and was yelling, "We've been hit, we've been hit!" We got him quieted down and we all quickly responded to the signal for all hands to man their battle stations. No other suicide boats appeared, so we stood down from our battle stations and resumed the 4 hours on and 4 hours off battle zone watch routine.

Another memorable night occurred when for some reason unknown to us, the Captain anchored our ship between the shore and a destroyer. I am sure the Captain was not aware that the DE was assigned to fire star shells directly over our ship to get them on their way to the beach fighting zone. The bang of the 5" shell as it was fired was very, very loud, sorta like a dish pan hitting water K-BANG!

As the shell passed over us, we could hear it swiffle- whistle on its way. There it exploded, releasing the parachute which floated down with its light to help our soldiers see the enemy.

We never knew when to expect the destroyer to fire another flare but we always jumped when they did.

(Our Captain changed anchorage the next day.)

BACK TO SAIPAN AND THE PACIFIC

After spending about a month in the Okinawa War Zone we were sent back to Saipan with several other LSMs. After refueling we were sent to Guadalcanal to pick up some heavy equipment, probably for road and air field construction (Image 4). Again, because our Captain was the senior officer, he got the privilege of commanding the convoy of LSMs.

As we crossed the equator, our old salts who had crossed it before got together and worked up an elaborate initiation ceremony so all of us pollywogs could join King Neptune's fleet of the deep. Some of the ritual was humbling and designed to cause you to be submissive to the Great King and his salty sailors. Somehow we survived and are now forever good members in standing. Want to see my certificate?

Two or three days after we entered the southern hemisphere we encountered some very large ocean swells. They were about 25-30 feet tall, about ½ mile from crest to crest, and several miles long. Big, tall, and long ones!!

Here in the middle of the ocean, with no land in sight, we were either climbing up this hill of water, with its 10-15 degree slope, or after topping it we were sliding down the other side as it passed under us. It was quite an experience and the only time we were to sail this kind of ocean.

Since sailing can become monotonous when doing the same thing over and over again, the Captain decided we all needed something to do for a

change and decided to have a race. He had me select flags from the code book that signaled "ALL SHIPS LINE UP AND PREPARE TO RACE."

There was to be no tying down of the governors, no revving engines past flank speed, and no advanced starts. We had a hard time achieving a straight line, but when it became more than straight, the signal hoist was executed by pulling it down and the race began.

So here we are in the middle of a war, in the middle of the South Pacific, in the middle of a race of LSMs. We never saw so much smoke coming out of the exhaust pipes. To get an advantage, some tried a fast start and some went past flank speed. It was sorta a dumb thing to do, but it was a lot of fun and it really boosted our morale (P.S: since our ship was not ahead, the Captain declared every ship a winner.)

Beaching on Guadalcanal was routine, the rear anchor was dropped, to help pull us off the beach, the bow doors were opened, speed was slow ahead to stop on ground, and the ramp was lowered. Then an Army bulldozer pushed a sand bank to the ramp to help the loading of the equipment.

Our ship received a rock crusher that barely fit between the bow doors and the overhead 40 mm gun mount. While we were on the beach, we went ashore and visited the Army camp, bought some trinkets the soldiers made out of sea shells, and passed around a football. If you ever get to this island, be sure to visit this beach and get a native to climb the third

palm tree and rescue our football where someone had kicked it. We waited for high tide to help us get off the beach, but we still had to have the big dozer push us from the mud and sand.

The trip back to Saipan was routine and uneventful. We didn't even encounter the big waves his time. That was swell. At Saipan the rock crusher was unloaded and replaced with Sherman tanks. We noticed more LSMs were arriving in the anchorage. It was not clear what cargo they were carrying, but we were ordered to replace the tanks with drums and drums of gasoline. It was easy to tell that preparations were being made for the planned invasion of Japan. Some estimated there would be a million casualties when it occurred. There were some solemn thoughts about who would survive. LSMs with gasoline drums were usually in the 2nd or 3rd wave which made them high priority targets.

All of the crew was busy working to prepare the ship for invasion action. Our armament consisted of several mounted 30 and 50 caliber machine guns, five 20mm guns and one twin barreled 40mm gun mounted over the bow doors and ramp. The action of each gun was checked and made ready for firing. We all helped the gunner mates get the ammunition ready. We lubricated the 20mm shells and cranked them into their canisters. The 40mm shells were bracketed together and placed into racks around the gun mount. Bullets for the 30 and 50 calibers guns were clipped together in belts and placed in their ready boxes.

The engines were tuned up, the landing and retracting machinery was checked, and all the navigational equipment was operational. I made sure all the charts were up to date.

The hull of the ship was being painted with a camouflage design. There was not much doubt about it—we were getting ready to invade Japan.

AUGUST 6 — AUGUST 9, 1945

We continued to work through the end of July and into the first week of August. No one was really happy getting ready for an invasion with a cargo of gasoline drums aboard, but we kept at it.

Then on the 6th of August we heard a rumor that a super bomb had been dropped on Japan. Then a few days later another one. Our radio man kept up with all the news and told us that Japan might be ready to surrender. Hope stirred within every one of us.

Then on August 15, 1945, we received the official report that Japan had indeed surrendered. The war was over!

The war was over! We could go home! There are no adequate words that can express or describe the glorious feelings of relief and thankfulness that came when we realized we could go home.

The war was over and we were going home!

GOING HOME!

HEY

**THE WAR IS OVER
AND**

**WE ARE GOING HOME
GOING HOME**

GOING HOME!

A point system was established to decide which sailors were eligible to leave the ship immediately. A sailor's age, length of service, marital status, health, and need at home were considered. The ship was commissioned with a crew of 49 men. Twelve of them qualified for immediate discharge, leaving 37 to sail the ship. This was adequate since there was no need to man the guns.

After the gasoline drums were unloaded, we left Saipan and sailed to a small island named Ie Shima (Iejima) just west of Okinawa (Image 5). There we beached and began loading army troops and equipment bound for the occupation of Japan. Several sailors went ashore to view the battle area and to visit Ernie Pyles' grave. He was an independent newsman who would join different fighting units, interview individual soldiers, and send word back home. The GI's sure did like him as he became one of them.

While backing off the IE beach, one of our propellers hit something, which bent it enough to cause severe vibrations. We had to limp around the south end of Okinawa to get to Buckner Bay on the east side where the prop could be replaced. To replace it, a navy diver put an explosive charge between the prop and the shaft housing, put a rope around the prop blades to catch it. After clearing the area, the charge was set off BAM! Which blew the prop off as neat as a whistle. After a new prop was installed, the old gal purred like a kitten.

Arriving at Japan, we entered a small inlet to the south of Nagasaki where the second bomb was dropped (Image 6). We could not see the epicenter of the explosion, but the surrounding area was badly damaged. Only the steel posts and beams of the adjoining shipyards were standing. The inlet was covered with shattered wood and other debris.

We were guided to our designated unloading area and after delivering the troops and their equipment spent the rest of the night anchored. There was no liberty so none of our sailors got to go ashore. In the morning we left for Okinawa to get another load of troops.

During one of our trips four of us were in the chart room- radio shack playing pinochle. We were having a hard time of it because the sea was so rough we had to hold on to something to keep from falling down. Even the cards had to be held down or they would slide off the table. So we were having a good time laughing, cutting up and swearing as sailors are supposed to do. I guess we got quite obnoxious as the radioman, who was also in the shack, said in a normal tone. "You guys shouldn't be taking the Lord's name in vain that way." That is all he said. He was a little older than we were, married, and always behaved himself. We respected him and glad he spoke to us. I don't know how what he said affected the others, but I kept thinking about it. I said to myself, "Self, if you get home and still talk like that, they might just ship you out again." So I realized I had to change before I got home. So I did it by correcting myself every time I said a bad word or even began to say one, but replaced it with a good one. It took over 6 months every day by day to

break the habit and get it done. I'm glad the radioman said something to us.

I was off watch in my quarters when a seaman came to tell me the Captain wanted me on the bridge. My mind flashed, "Oh, my, what kind of trouble am I in now?" I couldn't think of a thing but I still went with apprehension. The Captain greeted me and said, "The Captain of one of the other LSMs signaled that he knows you. So I got on the signal light and found out that he is the baseball pitcher from Burdett who came to Larned to play on the team that my dad sponsored. Yes, we sure did know one another. His name was Salman who worked all day for his dad and pitched all night for mine. It was good to say hello with someone from home.

Later when we were on one of the trips to Japan with occupation troops, one of the signalmen yelled at me, "Hey Doll, somebody on that large troop transport ship is signaling for you." So I got on the light and found out it was a high school classmate from Larned. I had lost track of most of my high school friends and didn't know that Donald Powell was a signalman in the Navy. I don't know how he found out I was on the LSM122. We enjoyed talking by Morse code as we passed by. It was a pleasant surprise.

After loading more troops at IE we left the Okinawa area for our second trip to Japan. This time we were to unload at a naval base that had a seaplane ramp near the town of Sasebo. While approaching the base through the Inland Sea, we were signaled to be on watch for floating

mines. The mine sweepers had cleared the channel and had exploded most of them that floated to the surface, but not all. It was not a surprise when our crew spotted one. Rifles and a 30cal. machine gun were fired at it. We could see the bullets bouncing off the round top of the mine until it exploded. Everyone claimed it was their shot that hit the prong that set it off.

At the Naval Base, beaching on the concrete ramp made it real easy to unload the occupying troops and let sailors walk ashore. The hanger on the base had been commandeered by the Army, who had arranged to have the Japanese provide entertainment for the GIs. They put on a Japanese show so many of us got to see a first-class performance of a Japanese opera. The costumes were elaborate, the acting was done by the best of the Japanese Opera society. Now while this old farm boy from Kansas was not an opera critic, but I could not help but be impressed by their acting ability. First class movements all set to oriental music in perfect rhythm. I noticed that the whole crowd of GIs and sailors were hushed in a quiet and solemn attitude, respectfully enjoying its splendor even if they couldn't understand a word of it.

There were hills and small mountains surrounding the harbor. Looking up at them from sea level, all you could see was grass and other vegetation growing from the shore to the top elevations. Nothing was impressive about it all until you got to the top of the hills and could look down toward the sea. From that point you could see the most intricately constructed rice paddies. They were contoured around the hills, each on its own level. The hills were covered by them. There was no vacant land except what

was on the top of the dikes. Each paddy was full of growing rice, the first I ever saw.

Another thing I noticed was the way each hilltop had been prepared for an invasion. The guns and equipment were no longer there but the firing pits, trenches, and observation positions were still evident. I could understand now how they estimated that there would be a million casualties if we had to invade.

The town of Sasebo had been heavily bombed and had few buildings left without damage. Owners of one damaged department-type store had cleared part of it and was open for business. I bought a rice bowl with a lid. I held out my hand with money to the clerk, who selected what was needed, left the rest, then bowed politely. I still have no idea how much it cost.

On the way back to the ship, we could smell cedar wood smoke. Following our noses down a side street, we came upon a small one-man woodworking shop. He had made a fire of cedar wood to ward off the late afternoon chill. The man was busy sawing a board with a bow saw. He seemed to be cutting it ok, but it was sure done in a different way than we did it at home. In the first place, he was sitting on the board and was sawing toward his body instead of alongside of it as we would have done. At least in what appeared to be a more dangerous manner, he could probably see the line better. We didn't see any cuts or scars on him and he seemed comfortable, so maybe his way of doing things was ok.

In another part of town we looked into a Japanese restaurant that was open for business. It was more like a diner with only a counter with stools but no tables or silverware. The customers were eating out of bowls. Since there was no silverware, they held bowls to their mouths and sorta scooped the rice in with chop sticks. They would drink the soup and use the sticks to push pieces of food into their mouths.

We were hungry and thought about eating, but none of us could read the menu. Sure we were and could, but didn't.

The next day when our ship was anchored in the harbor, a small US landing boat loaded with captured Japanese rifles came alongside. The coxswain asked how many sailors we had in the crew. When someone told him 37, he threw that many rifles with ammunition into our well deck and left. There were all kinds of rifles—some single shots, some repeaters, and some were automatic. I got a 27 caliber repeater with a six cartridge clip and some ammo to go along with it. Some of the sailors shot their guns after they tied them to a rail and pulled the trigger with a string. I sent mine home and never did try to shoot it.

We went back to Ie Shima for another load of occupation troops. After loading we were ordered not to leave for Japan but to stay in Buckner Bay because a large typhoon was approaching. We had been told two previous times to leave the harbor and ride out the storms at sea. This time the storm was of such intensity we were ordered to stay in the protection of the harbor.

Our Captain maneuvered the ship as close as he could to anchor by the lee side of the shore at the north end of the harbor. He used the heavier stern anchor with adequate cable. It must have found a good place for it to hold since it didn't drag a bit.

When the storm approached in mid-morning, the sky took on a gray-tannish color which became darker as it blew over us. The wind became so strong that the frame, which held the canvas sun shield and was welded to the top of the exposed conning tower, was blown off to land on the twin 40mm gun mount. Flags were shredded and everything that was not tied down was blown away. The 150 mile an hour wind blew the rain so hard it felt like grains of sand as it hit our rain gear.

Most of the soldiers preferred to sit up all night along the passage ways instead of sleeping in a bunk below deck. By morning the storm had worn itself out and the sun came up bright and early. Our ship was sent out to search for damaged ships and survivors. We found only one motor launch that was floating around unoccupied and towed it back to the harbor.

After a day or two, our third trip to Japan with a load of occupation troops began. The sea was stirred by winds remaining from the typhoon which made for rough sailing. Our LSM faced waves 8-10 feet high, which would lift the bow completely out of the water and then let it smack down to hit the next wave as it approached. When our flat-bottomed ship hit the oncoming waves, it sounded like a 5-inch shell being fired. Ker Bam! The whole ship would shudder. If you were standing on the stern, you could see the bow bend up about a foot as it hit the oncoming wave. We knew

the landing ships were supposed to be flexible, but this was being more than flexy.

Our Captain, who was again in command of the convoy, wisely determined that the LSMs could not continue to endure such pounding and changed course to allow them to sorta roll over the waves at an angle instead of hitting them straight on. Ships with keels can knife through approaching waves much easier than the flat-bottomed landing craft.

The end of our third trip found us beached on an island in the Japanese Inland Sea. We had to beach at high tide to be able to dear the sand bars that extended seaward. At low tide our flat-bottomed ship was sitting level high and dry on the sand. We could walk around it. Houses had been built along the beach so close to the water that we practically landed in their back yards. The houses were not bombed or destroyed.

When the ship was secure, the Captain let most of the crew go ashore. My two signalmen friends and I went together. We borrowed some cigarettes from some of the other sailors who smoked to be used to barter if we found something to buy. We found a woman working in her garden. We approached her and used sign language to express our desire to trade cigarettes for a Japanese folding fan. She finally understood, went into her house and brought out a fan and made the trade. The fan is still around our house somewhere.

It didn't take long to unload the troops and their equipment, and when the high tide came in we were soon afloat and off the beach. One can almost

still smell again the delightful wisps of cedar smoke that filled the cool fall air as we left Japan.

After we finished taking troops to Japan we were assigned duty in the Philippine Islands (Image 4). Since winter was approaching the Japanese Islands in the north, we were pleased to be sent to the Philippines with their warmer climate (as if we had anything to say about it). There our job was to go to various islands and bring soldiers from isolated areas back to Manila, so they could be sent home. This presented a great opportunity for us to see many of the beautiful islands.

We loaded soldiers from places like Lingayen Gulf, Olongapo, Cubic Bay, and Batangas on the island of Luzon; and from the town of Boae on the island of Marinduque; and from Cagayon on Mindanao. All the army personnel were delivered to Manila passing Corregidor and Cavite.

When we arrived at the island of Marinduque to take soldiers and their equipment from an isolated radio station back to Manila, we found the island people were friendly and pleasant. The town's mayor approached our Captain with a problem and a request. His problem was - there had been no ships or boats that stopped at the island since Christmas. The friends and relatives who came from Manila to celebrate the Holidays have not been able to get home. It was now March.

His request was: "Would you take them back with you to Manila?"

The Captain did not know if he had the authority to transport civilians but decided to do it anyway. So after getting the Army personnel with their gear aboard, the civilians came with all their children, baggage, and animals. We left for Manila late in the afternoon. It was an interesting cargo for a landing ship to carry. There were soldiers aboard who were not on the way to invade some island's beach; the civilians had no idea of how to sail this kind of ship or man the guns; and then there was the live baggage of chickens, dogs, and goats who would prefer to be somewhere else.

After a chilly night it was quite a surprise to be sailing with water all around us to hear a rooster crowing with the rising sun.

After unloading our cargo in Manila, we refueled and supplied our ship for the trip home. Somebody wanted tanks brought back to the States, so we were loaded with them and their crew.

There was plenty of time in Manila for shore leave that proved to be interesting. Since English is the second language in the Philippines, we didn't have much trouble understanding the Filipinos once we learned the Spanish way to pronounce the vowels and consonants. The center of Manila had been severely bombed [shelled –ed.]. Most buildings were reduced to a pile of rubble with only a few still standing.

Some of the enterprising Filipinos set up small shops among the wreckage to help provide for family needs. You could get a haircut, a shoe shine, film developed, buy native wood carvings for souvenirs, etc.

We even got a hamburger sandwich at a partially rebuilt cantina. It might have come from a water buffalo for all I knew. Anyway, it tasted good. But the next morning my throat was so sore that I couldn't talk. It cleared up in a day or two, so I was not sick.

Since I knew we would be heading home in a few days, I began to select, update, and organize all the charts we would need for the trip. I had filed all the changes the Coast Guard had sent but had not corrected the individual maps. So instead of spending time ashore with my signalman pals, I dug out the changes and went to work.

There were some shore lights that had changed their flashing schedules. Some channels were deeper and had different compass bearings, some wrecks had been removed so the channels were clear, and stuff like that. The Captain was pleased to have correct updated charts, especially since our LSM was to be the lead ship of the convoy again. I was surprised that the Captain was instrumental in getting a rate increase for me because of the work I saw that needed to be done, and I did it on my own without being told.

When the other LSMs were also ready to go, the Captain told me to plot the courses needed to leave Manila. We would need to pass Corregidor, a few other small islands, some wrecked hulls, and miss inbound ships. After leaving the harbor we would thread our way through the larger islands and head for Surigao Strait. The course changes became so numerous that I had the signalman stop sending each one to the other ships and send "Follow us." They did and we all left the Manila Harbor,

passed through the islands, and the Surigao Strait and ended up in the Pacific Ocean.

ON OUR WAY HOME

Entering the Pacific Ocean, we first headed to Guam to refuel. There we saw part of the island and enjoyed movies the Army showed at night in an open air arena. One of the soldiers said it was not unusual for un-surrendered Japanese soldiers to sneak out of the bush to also see the films. We didn't know if this was true or not, but we didn't stay there long enough to find out.

When we left Guam we experienced a very unusual sea condition that is rarely seen by sailors the world over. A once-in-a-lifetime event occurred: we began to sail on a very calm glassy smooth sea. There were no waves, swells, or ripples of any kind. It was smooth, smooth, glassy smooth. Wow!! It stayed that way for maybe 30 minutes until a light breeze began to bend the mirror surface and stir the water. Soon the sea returned to its usual wave and current movements. We never saw anything like that calm glassy sea again. It was eerie, as the only motion the ship had while sailing on it was forward. There was no yawing off course, no rolling from side to side or bobbing up and down on the waves. Just a wonderful smooth sail. A taste of a bigger bite to come — only in my dreams.

We left Guam and sailed to our next refueling stop at Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands. We had also stopped there to refuel on our way out, so we knew it would be the same lonely atoll. There was nothing ashore for R and R so all hands stayed aboard, ready to leave for Pearl Harbor as soon as refueling was complete.

Since I was responsible for gathering navigational data needed to plot our course, the Captain relieved me of my regular 4 hours on, 8 hours off quartermaster sea duty.

It was now necessary for me to use a sextant to take star shots as the sun was coming up and again as the sun was going down. Then at exactly 12 o'clock noon, a shot of the sun was taken to determine how high it was above the horizon. A sailor would assist me by recording the angle and the time on our chronometer. It was set to the universal English Greenwich time. By adjusting our time, we could calculate our latitude and longitude position within a mile or two.

Unless there is something unusual that happens when sailing, the day by day routine becomes tiring and boring. Standard sea duty has most sailors stand a 4-hour watch then 8 hours off. The 4 hours on are used to maintain the ship and keep it moving. Each section has specific things for the sailors to do. The 8 off hours are yours for sleeping, eating, cleaning, writing home, etc. Since there is not enough time to get it all done, you decide what is the most important and do that. To keep sailors from being stuck in the undesirable midnight watch, the time is dogged with 2-hour periods instead of the usual 4 hours. This rotates the time, so everybody eventually gets the better duty.

Nothing unusual happened sailing from Guam, to Enewetak, and on to Hawaii. They were typical monotonous trips until we got to Pearl Harbor. It had been over a year since we were here on our way out. Most of the

sunken and damaged ships had been cleared. Some were repaired and back in service.

Seeing buildings, cars, and civilians again, we happily realized we were back in civilization. Bars were numerous and visited. Some served doubles with cream mint or other flavors. I had more than one with whip and a cherry topping. I finally asked the bar tender what they called what I just got addicted to? With a grin for the dummy he said, "A BANANA SPLIT."

When you are aboard a ship for any length of time, you develop sea legs and sorta walk like a duck. You take steps with legs slightly apart for stability, so you don't slide or fall when the ship moves on the waves. It really is like a duck walk. After walking aboard ship for several days, you finally get your sea legs and are not affected by the ship's movements. However, when you leave the ship and walk on solid ground, you might become dizzy and lose your balance or become a little tipsy. If the shore patrol should stop you, it might take considerable time and effort to make them believe you were only drunk on ice cream.

Liberty in Honolulu was pleasant. One of the USO's had a genuine Hawaiian band that played real Hawaiian music. When the four of us became hungry, we went to one of the cafes in the city. After taking our orders, the waitress brought us our drinks and a big loaf of freshly baked bread with a supply of real butter. Immediately all four of us in unison reached for a slice, buttered it, and wolfed it down. There was not a

crumb left when the surprised waitress served our meals. Would you care for anything else? YES, more bread.

The reason all of us enjoyed the bread so much was not because we did not have a good baker. He had discovered that the rocking, dipping, and rolling of our flat-bottom ship prevented the yeast from rising. Instead of a regular loaf of bread, ours was about $\frac{1}{4}$ the size, coarse, flat, and tasteless. No wonder the Hawaiian bread evaporated so quickly.

When our group of LSMs had been supplied and fueled we left Pearl Harbor for the last leg of our trip home.

Hey! We are going home!

Going HOME! GOING HOME!!

The sailing days became routine again, but not as tiring or boring on this trip because we were going home. However, when we were only about 3 days from Frisco it was discovered that the small leak in the hull of the aft steering compartment had become larger. The water became deep enough to short out the electric motors that move the rudders. Now a seaman had to stand in waist deep water and steer the ship by hand.

Earlier attempts had been made to pump the water out with gasoline-powered portable pumps, but they would not start. Next seamen tried the electrical powered submersible pumps, but they would not work either. So the leak had become a major concern as the ocean water was now even with our aft well deck which is usually 4 to 5 feet above the sea.

Our officers had been busy signaling for help from the other LSMs. If we had not been able to borrow a working pump from another ship, we probably would have gone down before we reached the golden gate. Fortunately, the pump was able to remove more water than what was leaking in so we made it on to Frisco.

Some have wondered why the leak was not found earlier, then welded or caulked to stop the water from coming in. The problem was that the aft steering compartment had so many I beams and angle iron braces that crisscrossed all over the place among the steering machinery that it was impossible to detect just where the water was coming in.

The water didn't spurt in under pressure like a fountain but eased itself in through the opening. Also, with the water moving around from one bulkhead to the other, the leak could not be seen.

Again, we gave thanks for the loaner pump.

APPROACHING SAN FRANCISCO

Everyone aboard ship was eager to see the shore line as we approached the good old US of A. However, our vision was hidden by a thick fog that we sailed into while we were still a mile or two from land. Fortunately, our radar equipment was working to guide us into the harbor. As we entered we had two surprises. The first was when we noticed the power boat alongside had a cameraman aboard who was taking a picture of our ships. Later he brought copies for sale, so of course I bought one. That is me on the conning tower by the signal lamp. A pretty blob, No? If you come to visit I will show it to you.

The second surprise was there was no fog inside the harbor. We expected there would be some because there was all that thick fog just outside the gate. There was just no fog. None at all anywhere. Why not?

It seemed as the light breeze rolled the fog over the shoreline hills a change in temperature caused it to condense. No fog!

That was another thing this seaman from the dusty flat farm land of Kansas had never seen before — fog condensing before your eyes.

Another event that I like to brag about is that I am the only one in our family that has gone both over and under the famous Golden Gate Bridge.

It took several days to get our ship unloaded; we had brought back a load of army tanks, and to get the crew ready to leave so we had lots of liberty.

Usually the three of us went ashore, rode on a cable car, saw a play at a live theater, went through China Town, and gazed at the tall buildings. One thing that was strange about San Francisco was there were no trees except in the parks. No room for them to grow.

I had written the folk that I was in Frisco and would get started home soon but didn't know just when.

It finally became my turn to leave the ship and board a train to get to the base in Norman, Oklahoma, where I was to be discharged.

The next day all the papers were processed, signed, and stamped. I found out I had been in the service 2 years, 3 months, and 2 days; received an honorable discharge with a rank of quartermaster 2nd class; had one battle star; a few other medals; some mustering out pay and a ticket home.

It wasn't difficult to resist their recruiting effort for me to enlist in the regular Navy.

I had to stay the night at the Navy base since there was no public transport available until morning. During the night there was a good old Oklahoma thunderstorm that woke me up a little after 2 a.m. The snapping lightning and the loud thunder reminded me of the time when

the Captain anchored our ship between a destroyer and the shore. He did not know the destroyer was designated to fire star shells ashore to light up the battle areas.

When I was awakened from sleep I was not nervous, shell shocked, scared, upset, or afraid. It was only the bright lightning and the loud thunder booms that woke me and reminded me of the earlier event.

HOME AT LAST!

From Norman I had to go through Wichita to catch a local going west. It was dark when I got off the train at the Larned depot. I had not notified anyone of my expected time of arrival because trips are often late or cancelled, so I was not disappointed when there was no one there to greet me. Later I found out that some of my old classmates had planned a big reception with a pep band and everything. That would have embarrassed me. I even declined an offer from the Larned police to give me a ride up the hill. I wanted to walk through the familiar town and go home at 9th and Kansas.

I think it was my little sister who opened the door and yelled, "Hey!, It's Wayne! He's home!" I was finally home.

I was home!!!!

Being from English-German backgrounds, our family never did show a lot of outward emotion. There was never any hugging, kissing, or tear shedding.

I said, "Hello, anyone home?" They said, "Yes, come on in." I showed them a few souvenirs I had picked up, talked a little bit about sailing, the farm work, school, the weather, had some ice cream and went to bed. I overheard my dad tell mom, "It's hard to believe that Wayne is finally home."

Maybe I was missed a little.

Finally home, YEA!!

Dec 7, 1941 Sunday

It was a typical Sunday afternoon with not much to do so I went to the local hangout - The Gun Ton Cafe in downtown Larned Kansas. I met ^{some} guys, had a coke and decided to go home. ~~As~~ I was at the cashier's counter waiting my turn to pay, when the radio music ^{was} stopped for a very important announcement - The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor Honolulu, Hawaii in a sneak attack. They sank several big ships, ~~and~~ bombed the air fields, and strafed parts of Honolulu, killing about 2000 people.

We didn't even know ^{that} ~~what~~ Pearl Harbor was our naval base where most of the Pacific fleet was anchored.

Oh my - we were at war.

Dec 8 Monday

Mr. Finney, our School Superintendent, had the High School assemble so we could hear President Roosevelt address the nation over the radio. We heard his message that centered on the sneak attack that Japan had made on the U.S. an attack that would live in infamy, and that a state of war now exists between the US + Japan.

A lot of the guys who had already graduated from H.S. signed up for service. Some of our classmates even quit H.S. to join up. Those who stayed in High School and would graduate didn't have much say as to what they were going to do with their lives. They had a choice of which branch of service they preferred Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, etc. ^{Future career} ~~Future career~~ ^{plans} ~~plans~~ would ^{need to} be delayed.

Wayne's WWII memoir draft (2016)

Map Images

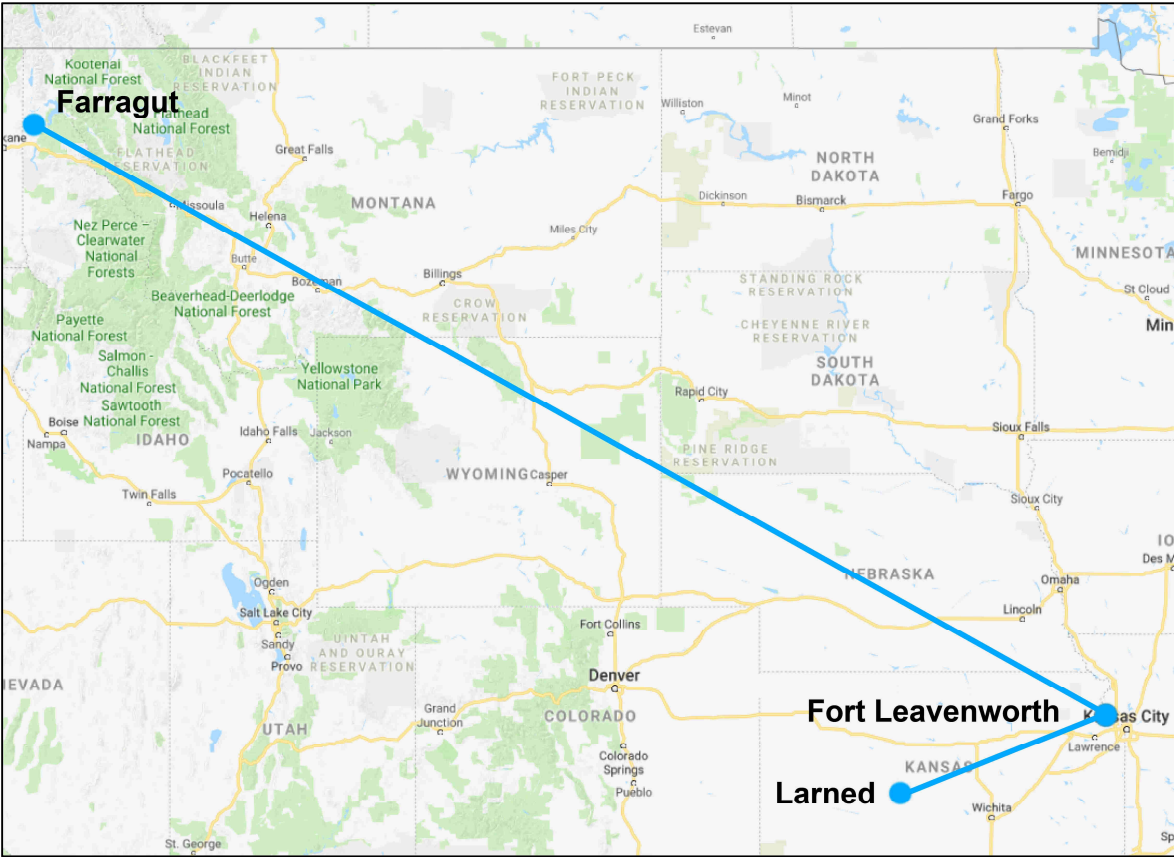


Image 1

Source: Google Maps

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II

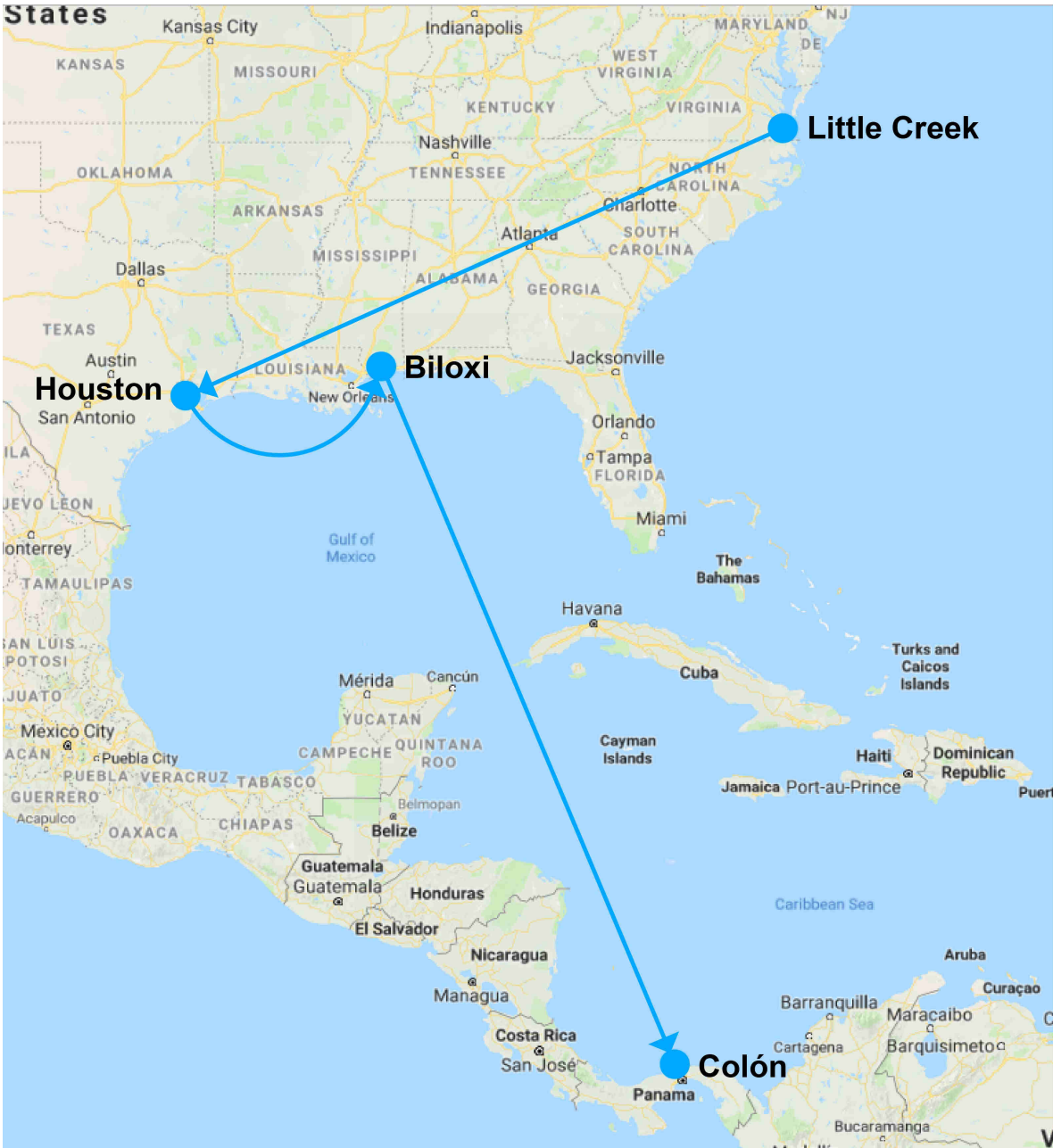


Image 2

Source: Google Maps

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II

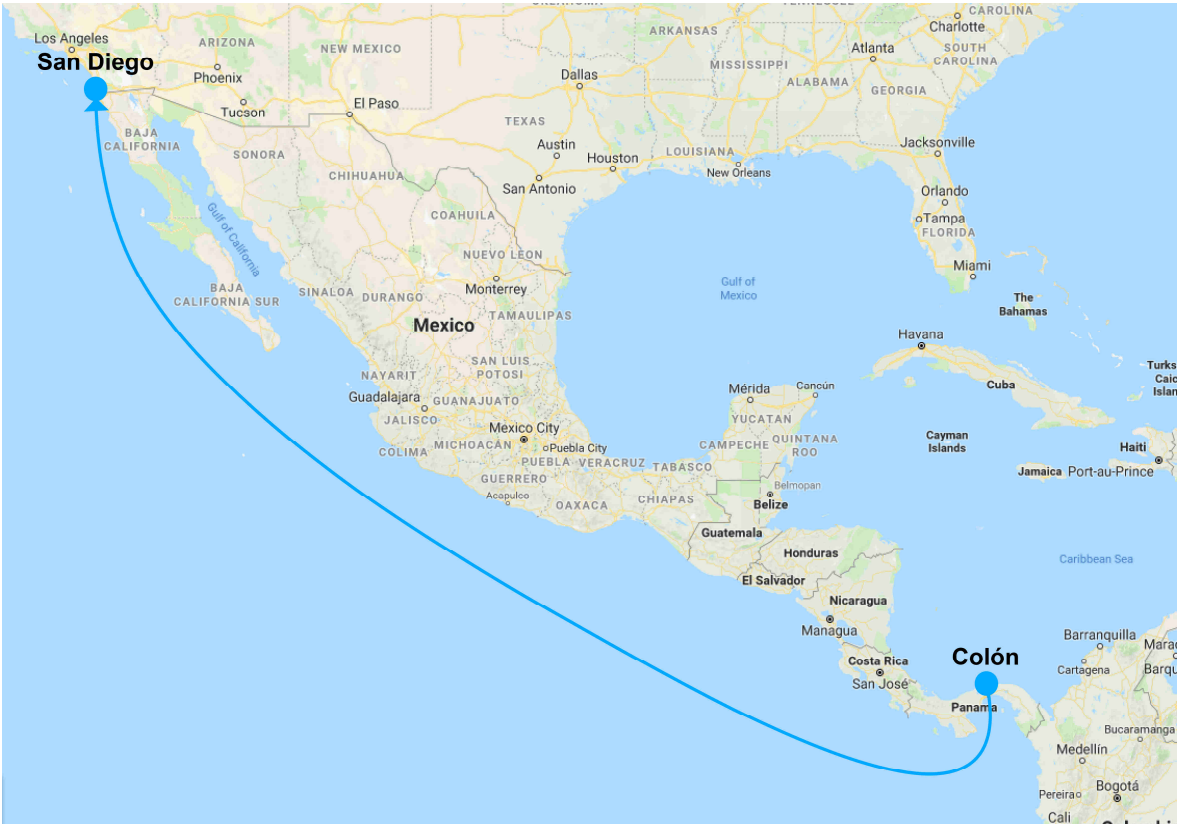


Image 3

Source: Google Maps

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II

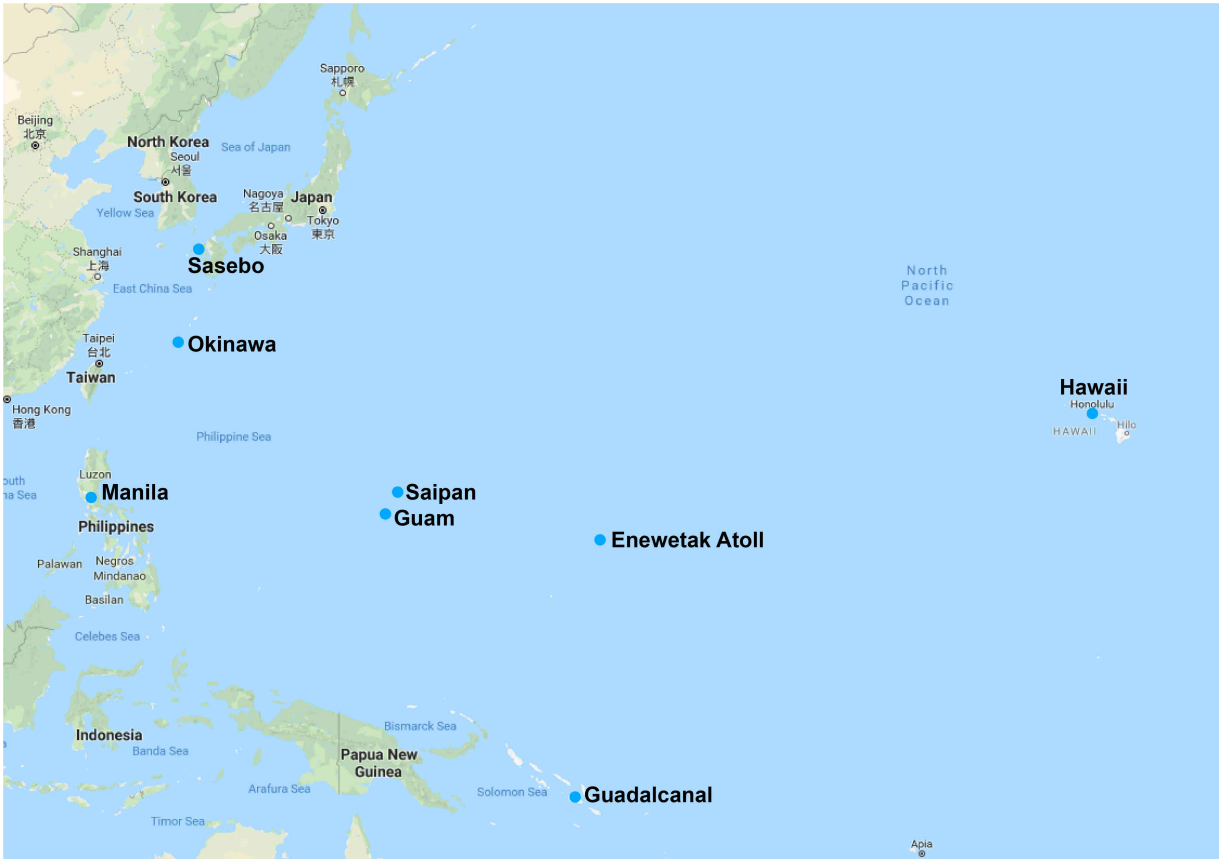


Image 4

Source: Google Maps

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Image 5

Source: Google Maps

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Image 6

Source: Google Maps

Training Photo Postcard Collection
The U.S. Naval Training Station — Farragut, Idaho



Navy Training Station Farragut Idaho - by Ship's Service Studio

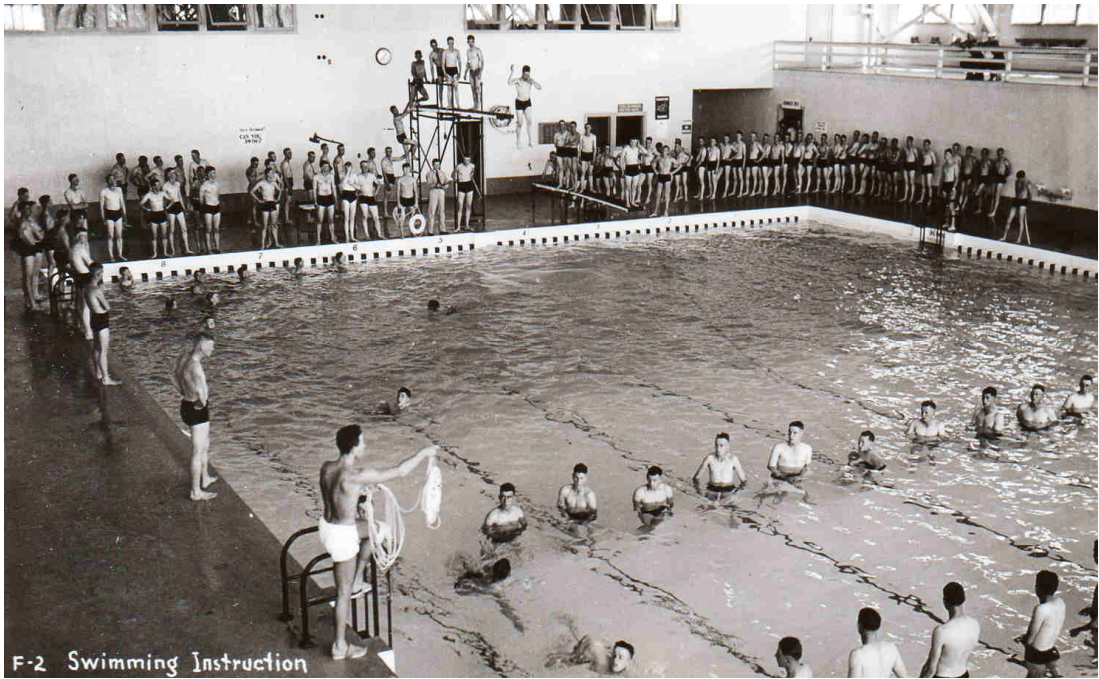


Mess Hall - by Ship's Service Studio

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Marlinspike Instruction - by Ship's Service Studio



Swimming Instruction - by Ship's Service Studio

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Making Colors - by Ship's Service Studio



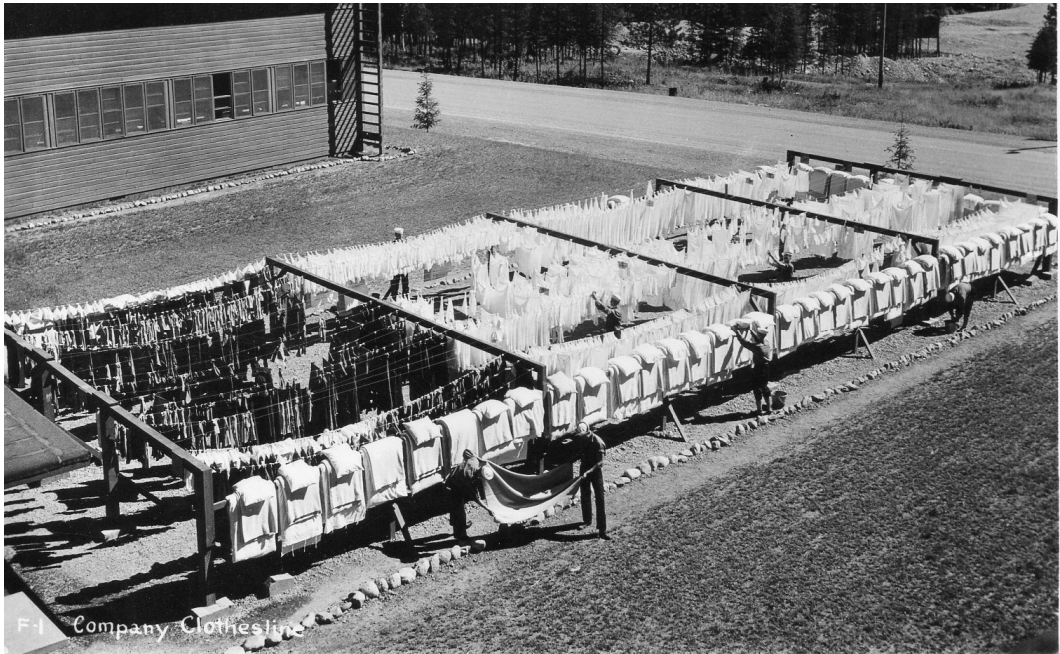
Lexington Memorial Chapel - by Ship's Service Studio

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



F-13 Ship's Service Store

Ship's Service Store - by Ship's Service Studio



F-1 Company Clothesline

Company Clothesline - by Ship's Service Studio

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



F-8 Regimental Barber Shop

Regimental Barber Shop - by Ship's Service Studio

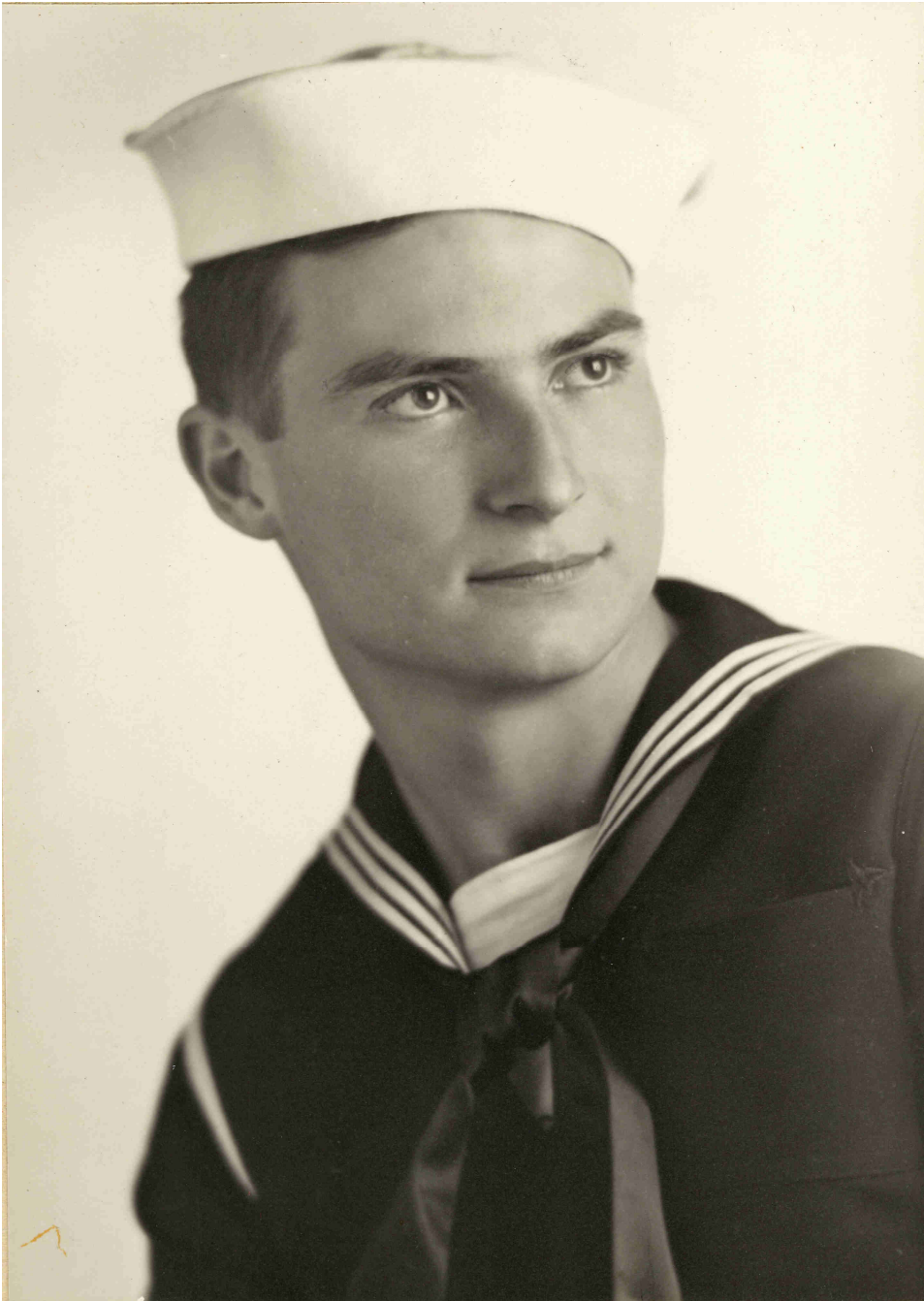


Barracks Interior - by Ship's Service Studio



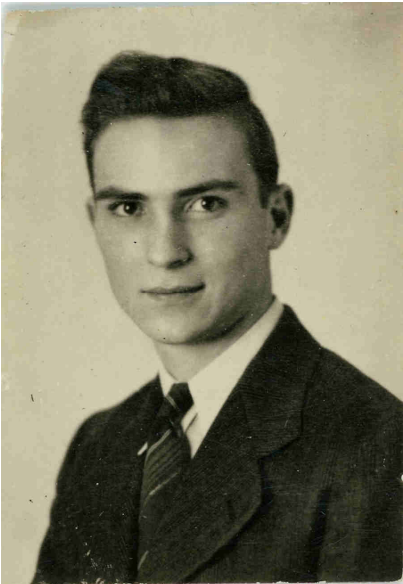
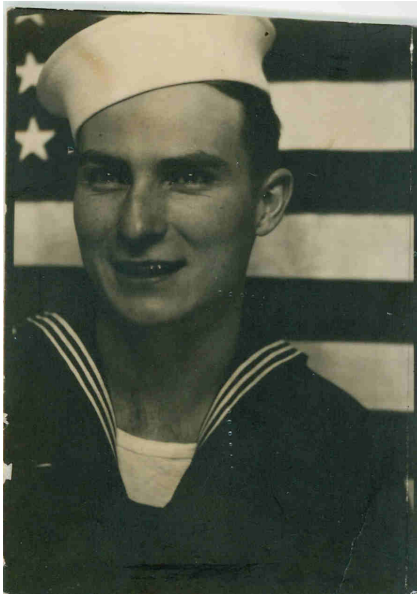
Greetings from Farragut Postcard (1944)

Wayne Doll Photo Collection



Wayne Frederick Doll
April 14, 1925 – October 7, 2018

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Wayne Frederick Doll

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Co. 204-44, Regiment 2, Battalion 8, - U.S. Naval Training Station – Farragut, Idaho – J.J. McConville, C.Sp. [A] Co. CMDR. March 15, 1944

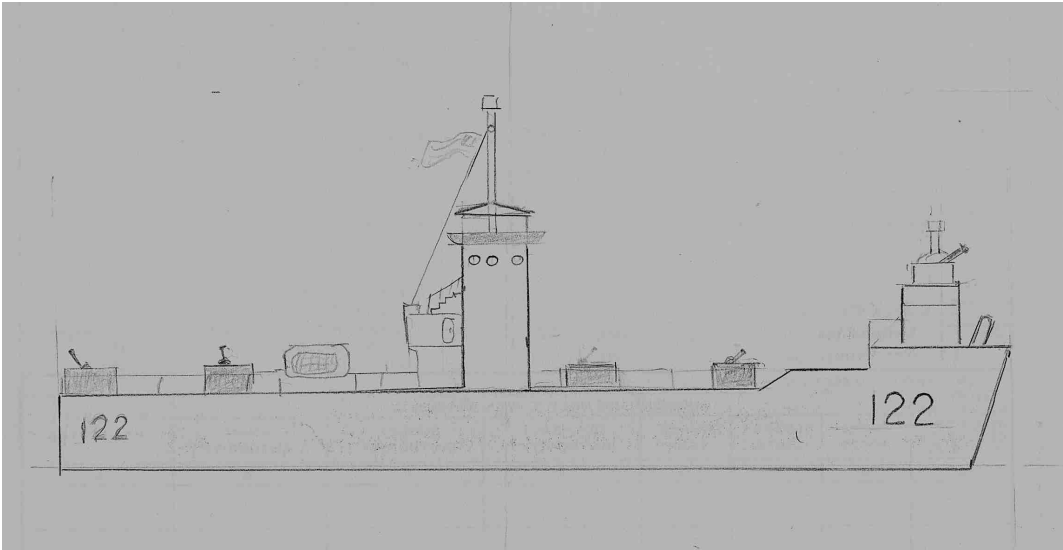


The 11th from the right to the middle, on the 4th row from the bottom

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



USS LSM-122 Approach the San Francisco Bay, circa 1945-46



Sketch of the LSM 122 (by Wayne Doll, July, 2018)



Wayne Fredrick Doll Honorable Discharge Certificate May 17th, 1946



In Service ID tag

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II

gbv 2362

Authority for discharge ALNAV 395.45

FOLLOWING DATA TRANSCRIBED FROM NAVPERS-553, NOTICE OF SEPARATION.

Serial or file number 956 63 70

Date and place of birth 14 April 1925 Larned, Kansas
(Date) (Place)

Date of entry into active service 16 February 1944

Highest rank or rating held Quartermaster Second Class

Service (vessels and stations served on)

NTS, Farragut, Idaho

USS LSM 122

PhibTraBase, Little Creek, Virginia

PAID \$100 M.O.P. 17 MAY 1946

ORIGINAL COMPARED WITH RECORD

#1240
 State of Kansas, Pawnee County, ss:
 his instrument was filed for record
 on the 20 day of May
1946 at 3:30 o'clock A. M.
 and duly recorded in book DBB
 on page 605-N Fee \$ no chg.
Ether V. Seaman
 REGISTRAR OF DEEDS

Remarks Point System

Victory Medal

American Campaign Medal

Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal--One Star

F.A. Buntin U.S.N. ~~xxx~~
 F.A. BUNTIN, Lt.(jg)

Other entries previously made hereon now covered by NavPers 553, Notice of Separation.

U.S. Navy Notice of Separation (served Feb. 16, 1944 – May 17, 1946)

Wayne F. Doll Family Photo Collection



Frederic Doll (first from the left) with his parents, grandparents, and siblings



Frederic Doll (Wayne's Father), Larned, Kansas

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Edna Barstow (Wayne's mother, lady in the middle right back row) with parents and siblings



Edna Doll (Wayne's mother, the 2nd lady from the left) and siblings

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



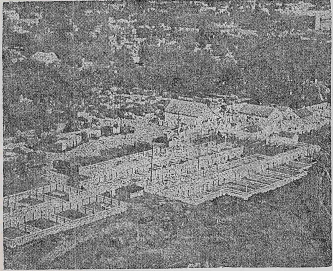
Wayne's grandparent family farm house



Fred Doll's family farm harvest workers and horses

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II

SERVING
The Farmers
and Stockmen
of the
LARNED TERRITORY
For The Past
25 Years



PROSPERITY
Is The Result Of Good Production
PLUS
A GOOD MARKET

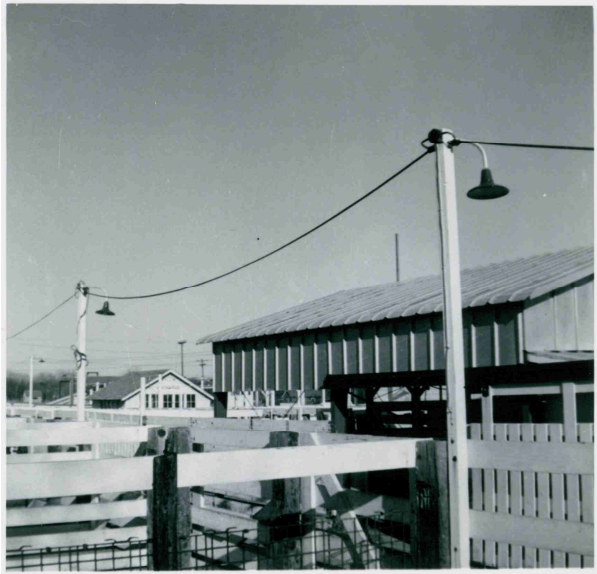
We are proud to have furnished a good market for this community's livestock during the past 25 years and pledge to continue to serve you in the future.

HOG SALE EVERY **Wednesday**
CATTLE SALE EVERY **Thursday**

NO CHARGE FOR SELLING 4-H LIVESTOCK WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY PRODUCER

FRED DOLL
Livestock Sales Pavilion
LARNED, KANSAS

Fred Doll family livestock sale business, Larned, Kansas



Fred Doll family livestock sale business, Larned, Kansas

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II

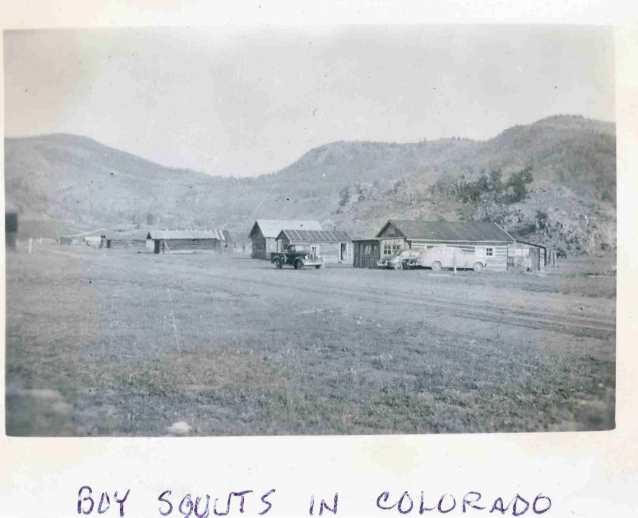


Wayne, Margaret, Lucile, and Jack Doll (siblings)



Wayne Doll's family house, Larned, Kansas

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Working on wood is Wayne's hobby



The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



K-State graduation with parents and son David



With son David and daughter Diana, S. Carolina

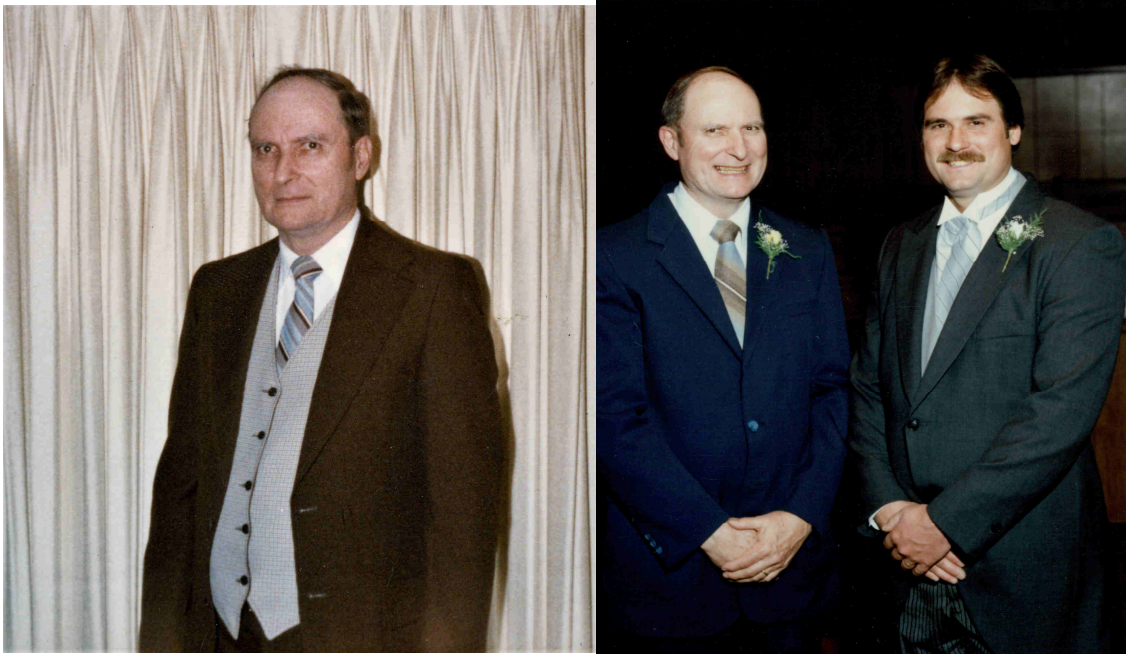


Wayne and daughter Dalene



A new car gift from mom Edna Doll

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Wayne and son Daniel

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Wayne Doll is reading his WWII memoir, July 16, 2016

The Experience of Wayne F. Doll's Military Service in World War II



Wayne Doll shows the LSM 122 photo, his memoir, and memorial items, July 16, 2016