

A Vision for Disciplemaking
Key Men's Conference

February 19-22, 2004

Navigator History & How to Finish Strong
Jim Downing

Navigator History & How to Finish Strong

And the things that thou hast heard of Me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. II Timothy 2:2

Introduction - 60 yr H.S. Reunion Transparency

I. Origin and Early History of the Navigators

- A. Santyana quote
- B. Hoste quote
- C. Emerson quote
- D. Profile of Dawson Trotman, at age 21-Letter to President of Dallas Seminary
- E. Milk stool and Wheel Illustration



- F. Dawson the Psychologist as illustrated in Friday & Saturday evening meetings
- G. Experience with Teams – *Discipline without desire is drudgery*
- H. Minute Men Journal
- I. Six week prayer meeting.
- J. Colliers Article of September 13, 1941
- K. TIME magazine article July 2, 1956
- L. Spencer tape
- M. Gas Station picture and illustration

II. The BATTLESHIP as a laboratory

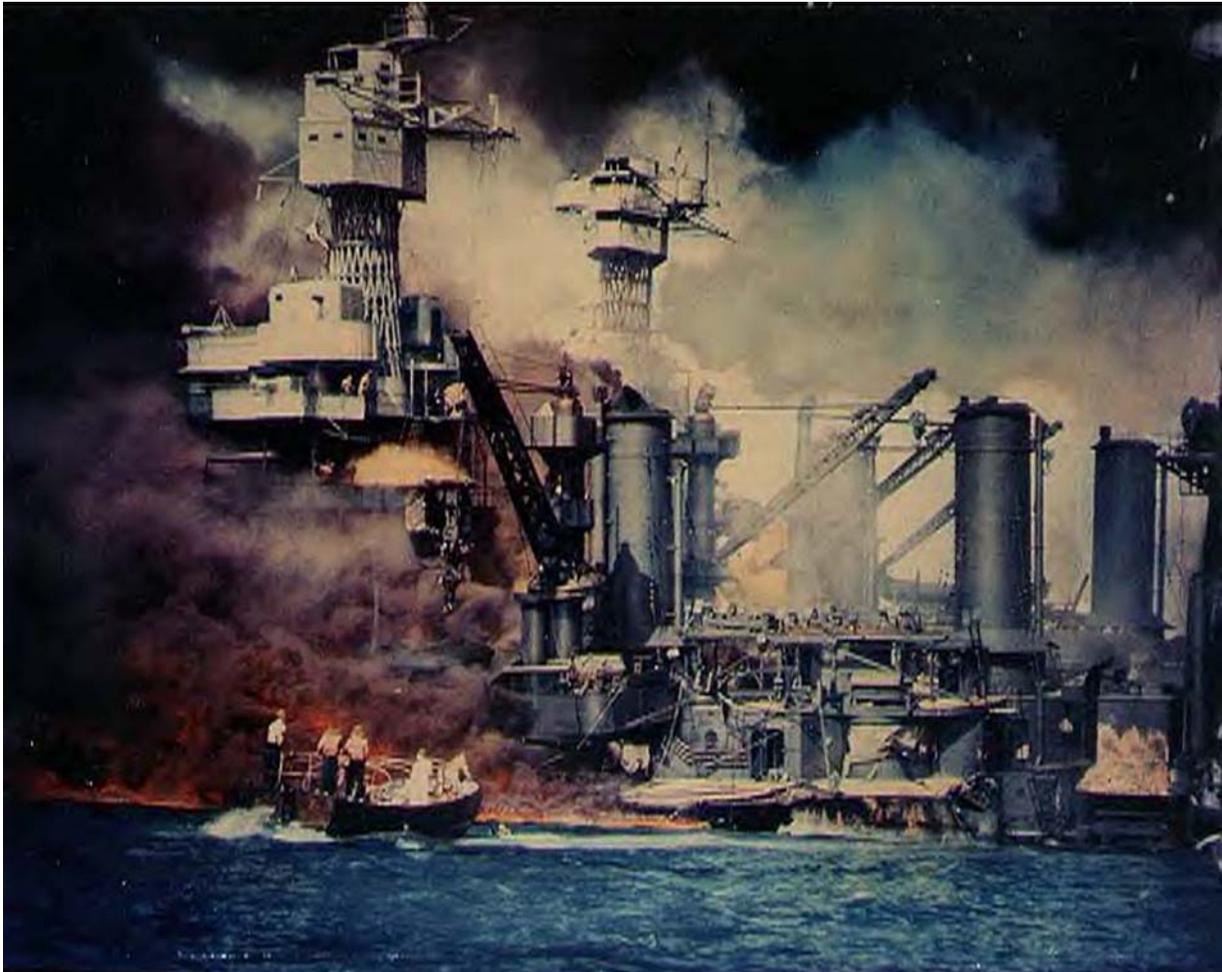


Weekly Routine on USS WEST VIRGINIA

Prayer Meeting 7:15, 11:45, 5:15	Crew Movie 7:30 1000
Breakfast 7:30 0800	Christians 7:30 1000
Work 0800 11:30	Monday N.T. Chapter Study
Lunch 12:00 1:00	Tuesday Evangelistic Bible Study
Work 1:00 3:30	Wednesday Prayer
Personal, Laundry etc 3:30 5:30	Thursday O.T. Chapter Study
Dinner 5:30	Friday Topical Study
Evangelism 6:00 7:30	Weekend Mini Conference

15. Davidson, Prince, Abel
16. Prince and Chaplain Krieger
17. Delay in leaving Navai Shipyard

18. World Impact, Statistical Chart
19. Discovery of II Timothy 2:2 1948
20. Trotman the perfectionist
21. Summary Heritage Video
22. Don Hamilton story
23. DET, Tried and tested
24. DET and Elroy Robinson



USS West Virginia after the Pearl Harbor attack

II. Continuing in the Ministry – *Finishing Strong*

1. Origin of retirement at age 65.

2. Biblical model

Numbers 8:23-26

3. Where would I turn?

John 6:66-68

4. Exercise of gifts is a life time privilege

5. Creativity and purpose

6. What motivates me?

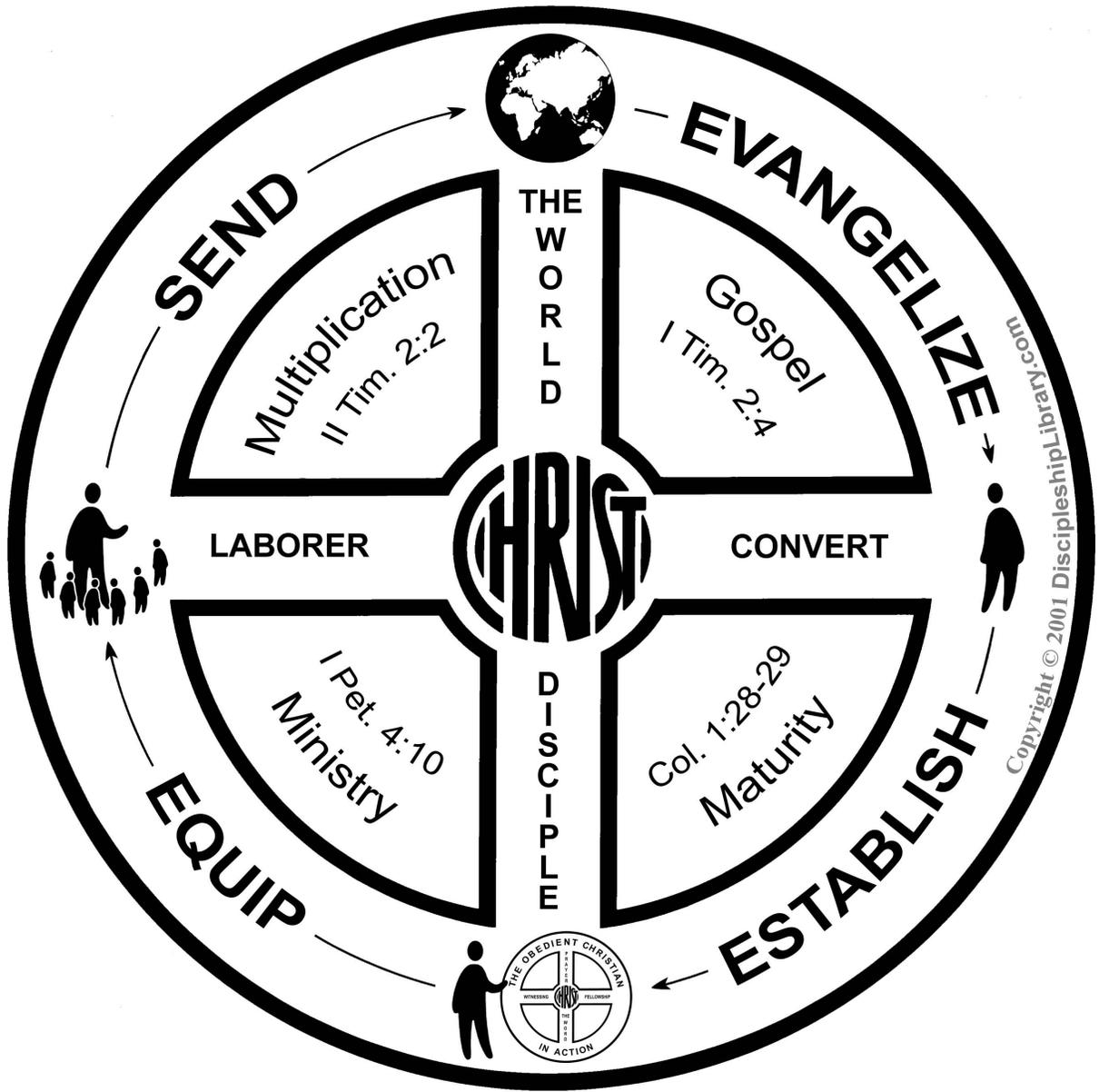
a. *God's love unconditional*

b. *The truth of justification*



USS West Virginia (BB-48) anchored in Sagami Wan, Japan, outside of Tokyo Bay, circa late August 1945. Mount Fuji is in the background. Photo courtesy of Robert O. Baumrucker, 1978. U.S. Naval Historical Center photo. [NH 89362]

Finishing Strong



My Story

By James Downing

RECRUIT TRAINING

On the afternoon of September 22, 1932 my dad turned me over to the Navy recruiter at Hannibal, Missouri. We said our good byes. For the first time in my life I left the security of the family nest to be under the authority of the US Navy until October 31, 1956. After serving for 24 years and 39 days I was retired and to be paid \$308.88 per month for life along with other retirement benefits.

After completing some paper work, the recruiter took me to a cheap hotel. The room had no bath, air conditioning, phone or any other amenity. I didn't sleep much since I didn't have a watch or any way of knowing what time it was and I was afraid I would oversleep. The recruiter was to pick me early the next morning for the six-hour train ride to St. Louis.

A Navy man picked me up at the St. Louis railroad station and took me to the recruiting center where about 30 others from the area were gathered.

We were then asked to take the oath of office. The recruiter warned, "If you don't want to join the Navy, decide so now. After you take this oath you are in the Navy. You can be put in jail for desertion if you change your mind."

After taking the oath we were free for the afternoon. I took a streetcar out to Forest Park on a sight seeing trip. I had never been to St. Louis before.

In the evening we boarded a train for the overnight trip to Chicago and then to Great Lakes, Ill. about 40 miles north of Chicago. We arrived early in the morning and parked on a siding just outside the U.S. Naval Training Station. We were then bussed to Camp Barry, a World War I recruit training facility. We must have been given something to eat and perhaps had a shower, but the first thing I remember is the trip to the barbershop. In an assembly line procedure the barber made about six passes with his electric clippers and the true shape of our heads was revealed to the world leaving only a small Indian brave like tuft of hair on the front of our head. As some of the men with long beautiful hair eyed the barber as they took their seat he would sometimes run his fingers through their hair and ask, "Do you want to keep this?" If the answer was " yes" , he would say, "Hold out your hands."

Then to the clothing outfitters. From experience the Navy clothiers knew that with regular diet and sleep the average recruit would gain about 8 pounds so this was taken into consideration. The clothing issuer made a quick measure of chest, waist and leg length and called out an (oversize) size to the stocker. We staggered out of the end of the line with 60 to 75 lbs of clothing, a mattress and a canvas hammock. At the next station in the line we were furnished three stencils with the letters of our name in various sizes. At the painting station our name in black or white was stenciled on every piece of clothing including our shoes and socks. Underwear shorts were knee lengths.

Included with the clothing issue was a sea bag. We were taught how to roll each piece of clothing in a neat roll and tie it with small white braids called clothes stops. It was a great space saver to store all we owned in a small locker or sea bag for moving. There was also a small canvas "ditty" bag for storing toilet articles.

We were given a choice of donating our clothes to charity or having them mailed home.

The next stop was the barracks. For sleeping there were long rows of platforms about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide and 6 feet long called the "poop deck." A couple of feet above this deck, at both ends, were 2-inch iron pipes running the length of the building. These were for stringing up our hammocks. The Navy hammock is a rectangular flat piece of canvas 3 feet by six feet in size. At each end are a half a dozen "grommets", holes with brass rings. A fan shaped net is attached to these holes and a single rope in a ring completes the hanging bed. There is a mattress cover for a sheet and blanket but no pillow. When first strung up the hammock has not stretched to accommodate an individual size and is never successfully mounted the first try. Every recruit has at least a half dozen falls before getting the "hang" of it. Gradually the middle stretches a little and it assumes a cocoon shape. It is only for sleeping on ones back. Trying to shift to one side means being dumped out on deck. We were not issued pajamas--underwear was also for sleeping.

During recruit training sleeping wasn't very sound since every few minutes all night long we would hear a thump as someone fell out of his hammock bounced off the poop deck and fell another 5 feet to the concrete deck.. Was it dangerous? Yes. Many a recruit suffered cuts and bruises. I remember falling out 3 or 4 times.

On board ship hammocks are hung at 7:00 PM and the following morning stowed in the hammock netting at reveille sounded 5:30 AM. Hammocks were used on all older ships simply because of space limitations. The balancing side to developing spine deformation or kidney cramp is that in a rough sea the hammock swings with the ship's motion giving a "rock a bye baby" peaceful sleep.

When reveille sounds a petty officer checks to see that every one responds instantly. He yells out, "Show a leg." Anyone who doesn't is unceremoniously dumped out of his hammock.

According to some the expression "bare a hand" originated during World War I when women served in the Navy. Their recruit training was conducted by male petty officers. At reveille modesty dictated a change in procedure so the petty officer would command, "Bare a hand." This eventually became Navy language and is now "bear a hand" means, "get with it "on the double."

About 230 men were recruited for training at Great Lakes in September 1932. Two companies of 100 each were formed. Thirty sailors, who were the latest arrivals, were left over. I was among them. We were placed in a "drag company" which meant we would have to wait for next month's recruits to arrive before having enough men to begin formal training.

Camp Barry was the isolation camp. In order to prevent spread of infectious diseases all recruits were quarantined for 3 weeks. The thirty of us spent the first month at Camp Barry with no contact with the outside world except for mail. Some Saturday and Sunday afternoon's girls from nearby Waukegan would visit with us through the high wire fence surrounding the Camp.

We did do a few hours of infantry drill each week but for the most part waxed decks, washed windows, polished brass, and dusted the varnished wood work in the old barracks again and again.

By now floors had become decks, walls were bulkheads, and food became chow, We had our dental needs brought up to date and were immunized against every thing except sin.

Among the 30 of us was Ed Goodrick. We became good friends, which continued throughout life and even after he became famous as the compiler of the NIV Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

After a month of isolation next month's quota of recruits arrived and we were formed into Company 6. Every day consisted of hours of infantry drill on the field at Camp Barry.

Infantry drill is designed to promote instant obedience and engender teamwork. Drill starts out without a rifle but progresses into formations with rifles and bayonets. When the order is given, TO THE REAR, MARCH, the marcher who does not reverse on command will find himself trampled over by riflemen with bayonets fixed.

Infantry drill is the first step in learning discipline then defined as "prompt, cheerful, and complete obedience to all orders received."

This phase of training is the beginning of process in which individual "rights" are taken away and gradually restored as "privileges".

After the seven weeks we moved to the "main side" for advanced training. We were located on The bank of Lake Michigan. Because of the severe weather we drilled inside the armory. Tan "leggings" were added to keep our bell bottom trousers from flopping and colored semaphore flags were tucked inside. A part of our training was to memorize and speed through the alphabet with our semaphore flags.

Infantry training meant more work later in life. In 1944 I was serving as a Gunnery Instructor at the New Construction Gunners's Mate school in Washington, D.C. The Secretary of the Navy put out an order that all students in Navy Schools would participate in 2 hours of infantry drill per week. Only two of us instructors had the know how so we got the job. I was a little rusty and would occasionally lose track of which company was which. The problem was solved by giving a "to the rear, March" command and then identify the company whose number I had called when they turned around.

When President Roosevelt's body was shipped back to the White House from Warm Springs, Georgia in 1945, servicemen from all branches formed a corridor, "manning the rail" from Union Station to the White House. My company lined the street north of the Capitol Building.

At the end of the war there were endless parades celebrating VE day, VJ day, Admiral Nimitz Day etc. The streetcar tracks on Pennsylvania Avenue were covered with boards. We marched from the Capitol to the reviewing stand at 14th and Pennsylvania. In rehearsal I had a hard time shaping up my company but soon learned that when the bands were playing and crowds cheering and the dignitaries returning our salutes, the men marched with a precision Napoleon's soldiers would have envied.

At the Training Station we had sessions in marlinespike seamanship which consisted of learning how to tie every imaginable knot and splice rope and cable.

Sunday DIVINE SERVICE was compulsory during recruit training. I don't remember hearing much from the Bible. The typical outline of the chaplain's message during the 1930s was a variation of "Every day do something nice, See something nice, and Say something nice" and you have it made with God and man. The senior chaplain, Frank Harry Lash, an Episcopalian. later became chaplain on the USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48) In a Bible study he taught he created in me a lasting interest in the book of Philemon. He lived to be more than a hundred and once sent me greetings by a visitor from the U.S Naval Hospital in San Diego.

We also a day at the Rifle range firing into Lake Michigan in the bitter cold. It was my introduction to the military 30-30 Springfield rifle. I had thought the strap hanging underneath was for carrying but was taught it was primarily to lever the rifle butt against the shoulder when firing. Since I had only fired light weapons, I held the rifle rather loosely for my first shot and got spun around with a bruised shoulder from the recoil. I learned the hard way that the weapon must be held so tight it presses the flesh into the bone or severe bruise results.

Our base pay was \$21.00 a month less 20 cents a month medical deduction. On my first payday I bought a wristwatch. On the second a camera.

After a month of training on the "main site", we were allowed to leave the base on liberty. I visited Chicago, and Waukegan, Illinois and Racine, Wisconsin with nothing in mind rather than seeing something new.

My first visit to Chicago, the men I was with were a little more experienced in the ways of the world. We went into a "speakeasy" for a drink. I believe I got a 5-cent coke for 50 cents. While we were sitting at the bar a policeman came in. I imagined I was about to go to jail. But he sat down at the bar for his free drink. Although drinking alcoholic drinks was against the law, no attempt was made by the police to enforce it.

One of the stories which went around in those days was about the gangster who was killed and left a wife and three policemen to support.

We were given a week off at Christmas. I rode the Santa Fe train from Chicago to Baring, MO., five miles from Edina. It was great to be with the family. I soon learned that like the water closes around the circle made by a pebble thrown in the water the circle of my friends had closed without me and I was shifting into a new circle. After Christmas our three months of training was completed and the graduation ceremony took place with great pomp and circumstance. Having served in the Navy for 4 months I was promoted to Seaman Second Class. My base pay was now \$36.00 per month less the 20 cents a month hospital fee. When President Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933, one of his first acts was to cut the pay of all government employees by 15 per cent. My pay was reduced to \$30.60 per month..

Upon graduation we were given ten days leave and I again went home to Plevna. Upon returning to Great Lakes we were placed in the OUTGOING UNIT awaiting assignment.

On assignment day we all lined up ten feet from a bulletin board on which the ships and number of men each was to receive was posted. When a whistle blew we were to rush forward and sign our names on the sheet listing the name of the ship we wanted.

The 30 of us in the "drag company" had formed a special friendship and decided we wanted to go to the same ship, our newest battleship, the USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48) So we formed a flying wedge and pushed off the other sailors while one of our group signed our names on the sheet. This was to prove providential as Ed Goodrick and I were to go to the same ship.

A few days later we boarded a special train of Pullman cars bound for San Pedro, California.

The only stop we made was in Salt Lake City where we were given a tour of the Mormon Tabernacle.

Almost six months to the day after I joined the Navy I, and my sea bag, with all my possessions in it, was in a 50 foot motor launch ploughing through the waves to my new home for the next ten years, the battleship, USS WEST VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO LIFE ON A BATTLESHIP

The new contingent of recruits and I arrived aboard ship mid morning on Friday.

The ship's crew was energetically engaged in "field day". This is an institution as old as the US Navy. It is the day set aside to restore the ship to an immaculate condition. The teakwood decks are scoured clean enough to eat off of by a process known as "holy stoning."

This is accomplished by taking a fire brick and chipping out a hole large enough to receive a three foot length of swab (mop) handle.. The deck is wet down and covered with sand which is used as the abrasive to clean the wood deck. It is no doubt the hardest work ever done by a deck hand. The handle is short so the worker has to put his full weight on the swab handle and then sand the deck with a scrubbing motion. Centuries ago an observer saw a deck hand sanding the deck and mistook his activity for praying ... to the stone. He said, "that stone must really be holy." Since that time the brick replacing the stone has been called a "holy stone" and the sanding process "holy stoning."

We arriving recruits were placed in the "X" division for a weeks orientation in a Deck division, Boiler division, and Engineering and Gunnery divisions. On our first Saturday in California morning we were getting prepared for Captain's inspection and then ashore to see the sights of Long Beach, Hollywood, and Los Angeles.

About 4:00 that Friday afternoon the ship began to vibrate so violently it was difficult to stand. The 80 lb per link anchor chain bounced up and down like it was made of rope. The word spread that the magazines had blown up. Ashore in Long Beach we could see fires breaking out all over the city. Even though a mile away we could hear the sirens of ambulances, fire trucks, and police vehicles

We were introduced to California by the great earthquake of 1933 with it's epicenter near Long Beach.

Because of the extreme devastation we were not allowed off the ship for six weeks. It took that long to clean up the debris and reopen the main streets. California had not yet adopted the strict earthquake building codes it has to day so many buildings including school buildings were wrecked.

What is life like on a battleship? The first impression is--- people everywhere. Compare 1500 people and about 100,000 square feet of living space with your own home which for example is probably about 2000 square feet for 4 persons. Your home would provide 500 square feet per person compared with about 7 square feet per person aboard ship. Of course space is added when you imitate a house fly and sleep on the ceiling in a hammock. However, there is also room to spread out on the non living space on other decks.

Each sailor is assigned a locker with just enough space to hold his clothes, i.e.,if each item is neatly rolled. To discourage being sloppy the Navy has an ancient innovation called the "Lucky Bag." Any

item of clothing or personal item found "adrift" is turned over to the ship's police, (Master of Arms) who is in charge of the "Lucky Bag." To get the item back the punishment is at least two hours extra duty.

During recruit training we had adequate facilities for washing our own clothes. But aboard ship it is a different story. The first problem is the shortage of fresh water. Although there are storage tanks for fresh water obtained from land sources, the majority of the water supply is obtained from evaporating salt water.

Living in close quarters with 1500 others the routine is to shower every day and change into clean clothes.

A regular laundry exists for officers and Chief Petty Officers but the rest of us were left to our own devices..

Our uniforms could be sent ashore for dry cleaning.

Washing and drying clothes for the 1200 plus crew was always challenge. Routine in the crews wash room is something like this:

First you must own a two and one half gallon galvanized bucket which you keep pad locked to any convenient appendage you can find. For security you leave your shoes and valuables in your locker and pick up your towel and soap.. Outside the washroom, you and a few dozen others, undress and put your white things in the bucket and are rationed a couple of gallons of fresh water. The bulkhead has several steam hydrants. Next you slide your bucket over the steam pipe and turn on the raw steam until the water boils. After washing the white clothes you use the same water to wash the dark things. The rinse is done with cold salt water.

Trying to find a place to hang the clothes to dry is challenge. The temperature inside the ship interior of the ship ranges from warm to hot so the task does get done. Loss of drying clothes is not a big problem since every garment is clearly stenciled with the owners name and theft is severely punished including discharge of a repeated offender.

Instructions are posted in the community washrooms. The gist of a Navy shower is:

WET DOWN YOUR BODY WITH FRESH WATER
TURN OFF FRESH WATER SHOWER
LATHER UP YOUR BODY WITH SOAP.
RINSE OFF WITH SALT WATER

In the 20's and 30's a battleship existed to shoot its' guns at another ship or land target.

Therefore the crew exists to train, shoot, and maintain the ship for battle. The major departments are Gunnery, Engineering, Communication, and Supply. Every one has a battle station.

I was assigned to the second division which was responsible for turret 2 which housed two sixteen inch guns. Each barrel weighed 105 tons, and required 500 lbs of powder per gun to send its projectile weighing 1200 lbs to a target 21 miles distant.

The second division occupied the forward one third of the port (left) side of the ship. In addition we were responsible for maintenance and operation of Turret 2 with its five levels and powder magazines, all spaces from the top deck to the double bottoms, the port anchor, and a 26 ft motor whale boat.

My first battle station was handling powder bags in the lower powder handling room which along with the projectile from the shell deck was delivered to the breech of the gun in a series of hoists and hydraulic lifts. About 90 men were required to fire the guns.

In the years I was in turret two, I had the following jobs:

Firing pointer: When firing at a visible target the firing pointer coaches the pointer to get the crosswires of his telescope on the target vertically, and the trainer to do the same horizontally. When he was satisfied he is on target, the firing pointer pulls the trigger.

My first experience was dramatic. When I pulled the trigger the noise and vibration was so severe I thought I had blown up the ship. The guns have to be pointed broadside to absorb the recoil and keep from damaging the ship's superstructure. The 45,000 ton ship which is 624 feet long, (the length of two football fields), skids sideways in the water about 20 feet. All I could see through the telescope was smoke and I assumed we were sinking. But as the smoke cleared, I could see the target a mile away with two holes in its center. We quickly followed with two more salvos scoring 100 percent hits.

Primerman: I also served as primer man for long range Battle Practice. To prevent premature explosion, the primer which ignites the powder is not inserted until the gun is in firing position. After the primer is inserted into the gun's firing lock the primerman steps into an alcove behind the gun. A red line shows the limit of the gun's 48 inch recoil when fired. The alcove is just large enough to allow 6 inches of space between ones' chest and the recoiling gun breech. My body outline was probably embedded in the steel behind me every time the gun fired.

Gun Captain: For several years my battle station was Gun Captain. As such I operated the machinery which opened and closed the breech, cleared the bore, supervised the loading, and turned on the ready light completing the firing circuit. Again my position between salvos was 48 inches to the rear of the recoiling gun. It took a while to get used to seeing that 105 tons steel heading for my chest and having the faith to believe it would stop at the red line marking the designed limit of recoil.

When at sea most every one has a duty station for running the ship and is "on watch" one fourth of the time.

The watches are divided into midnight to 4 AM, 4 to 8 AM, 8 to 12 noon, noon to 4 PM, 4 to 6 PM, 6 to 8 PM and 8 to 12 midnight. The toughest watch is the "Mid Watch", that is the midnight to 4 AM watch. I would go to bed early and dream I was already on watch., then stand the watch, then turn in again and dream I was still on watch. Mid watch standers were theoretically allowed to sleep in until 6:30 AM. But the noise of forty other people getting up at 5:30 and going to work at 6:00 didn't create a slumberland atmosphere. (Those familiar with the Biblical Gideon will remember that he and his valiant 300 did not attack the Midianite camp until the "beginning of the middle watch.". Although a farmer by profession Gideon had enough military savvy to know that those who just came off watch and collapsed in their bunks would practically be dead to the world and the persons on the newly set watch would still be groggy and half asleep).

My first "at sea" duty watch was acting as LOOKOUT. To stand the watch I climbed to the highest point on the ship called the "crows nest". With powerful binoculars my job was to constantly scan the horizon and report anything sighted to the Officer of the Deck by ringing a bell and shouting the message through a two and a half brass voice tube connecting to the bridge.

The correct report was, "Ship (or other object) sighted", and then give the relative bearing of the object sighted. Since the curvature of the earth is several inches per mile, the LOOKOUT has a responsible task to first inform the Officer of the Deck of anything coming into view.

This was a eight years before radar and even more years before satellites exposed the location of sea travelers to the whole world.

The seamanship books we studied at the Training Station were not that up to date. They contained the following instructions:

"Upon sighting a ship (or other object) , Yell., "SHIP" or other object) AHOY".

The officer of the deck will respond, "Where Away?"

The lookout was then to give him the bearing of the sighted object.

After coming aboard a new recruit assigned as lookout had not been instructed as to the WEST VIRGINIA procedure.

He was very excited about seeing his first ship and yelled down to the bridge, "Ship Ahoy."

An embarrassed and startled Officer of the Deck didn't know exactly how to respond to the excited shouts. Fortunately the Captain was from the old school. He yelled, "Where Away" and got the location report. The officer of the deck proceeded to instruct his crew on watch "more perfectly" in the modern way.

I soon graduated to the job of Officer of the Deck's messenger. This is a job of infinite variety. The officer of the deck has a loud speaker system that reaches throughout the ship at his disposal but it is reserved for the more routine tasks. The officer of the deck's messenger is also borrowed by the executive officer and sometimes by the captain, if his orderly is on another errand. This involves delivering messages to anyone including the highest ranking officers. The messenger also has to go into the officers quarters to awaken the officers due for the next watch.

Frequently I used some discretion in editing some messages. During one two year period our Executive Officer, second in command, was not the best liked "exec" we ever had and for good reasons. One day he had the word passed over the speaker system for our senior physician , Dr. Mackey, to report to him on the bridge. When he did not report after repeated requests the executive officer told me to go tell him that if he didn't report to him in two minutes he would have him restricted to his room.

I found Dr. Mackey in the shower and delivered the message to him.

He gave me this message to give to Commander _____, "Tell him if he does, I will have him placed under "medical observation".

My edited version, "Dr. Mackey is taking shower and will be up as soon as he can get dressed."

At the time I didn't realize the extent of the quality training I was receiving during those years of being on the bridge.. When I became a Watch Officer at sea and later Commanding Officer, I was familiar with the equipment and routine.

What did we do when not training for battle? Work, eat , sleep, rest and go ashore on liberty when in port. That is every other day. Half the crew had to be aboard at all times.

The three words which brought terror to a deck hand's weary muscles were holy stoning, mess cooking, and working party. While on duty in port the logistical needs are very demanding. You can picture the work involved in weekly shopping at the supermarket for a normal family's' needs. Multiply that by a family of 1500. And the groceries and supplies has to be transported from shore by boat which means double handling. The six deck divisions rotated being the "working division" for in port needs. And hours of hard labor was required from those of us on duty in the working division.

The supply system was not as sophisticated as computers now provide. The Commissary Officer negotiated directly with the supplier of milk and fresh fruit and other perishable items to be delivered to the dock for transport to the ship via Navy motor launch.. It was more than a rumor that kick backs were involved. I was once on a working party where we handled twenty gallon containers of refrigerated fresh milk.

While traveling from shore to the ship I turned P.I. and pried the top off one of the containers of "milk.". Sure enough it was filled with water. I do not know how many more cans of water the ship bought at fresh milk prices.

The Naval Prison at Mare Island, California was building number 84. It was rumored the prison had an annual world series of baseball with the two teams being made up of Navy Mail Clerks and Commissary Stewards convicted of being dishonest..

The result of this illegal activity led to one of my favorite stories. A sailor was on his death bed while at sea. The Chaplain attending him asked if he had any last request. He did in fact. He requested that in his last hours the Commissary Officer and the Chief Commissary Steward sit on each side of his bed and hold his hands. The Chaplain complied. When the Chaplain asked him to explain this extraordinary request, he replied, " I have always wanted to die like Christ did, BETWEEN TWO THIEVES."

One of my high school class mates (ahead of me) at Novelty had moved to Compton, California. I often visited him and his wife. A distant relative lived in Huntington, and another in Hollywood. The Hagers in Huntington had me out to their home on weekends and took me to my first Rose Parade on one New Year's day. Afterward I used my \$6.00 ticket to attend the Rose Bowl game between Stanford and Alabama.

But I did get to go ashore every other weekend.

My first trip to Hollywood was scary. As I was walking the sidewalk looking for a relative's Apartment address, a police car came alongside and two police officers ordered me to get in. They asked for my identification and quizzed me for half an hour about my recent activities. Apparently my answers satisfied them. They told me there had been a bank robbery and that the suspect was wearing a Navy uniform. They drove me to my relative's home.

A slogan for many years has been: JOIN THE NAVY AND SEE THE WORLD.

Within my first two years in the Navy we had visited San Francisco, Seattle, Tacoma, and the Hawaiian Islands, transited the Panama Canal, and been ashore in Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Norfolk, New York, and Newport, Rhode Island.

Since the Navy didn't get to New York very often, the city gave us ticker tape treatment. We had a parade marching up Broadway from the Battery to Central Park. From 14th Street to 110th street is quite a long march. We were given free theater tickets and admission to all major league ballparks for paying the tax, 20 cents. I got to see Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig play for the Yankees at Yankee Stadium.

It was fun to go to the top of the Empire State Building and visit all the museums I had heard of in school.

After leaving New York, we went to Newport, Rhode Island. When leaving Newport Harbor at full speed the West Virginia couldn't keep up with the ship ahead in formation. We saw a splash in front of the bow and found out why., We had struck a huge whale amidships and wishboned him or her around the bow. We pulled out of formation and slowed down. When enough pushing pressure had subsided the whale unwrapped himself and dove toward the bottom looking for the closest whale chiropractor for an adjustment. One of my prized snapshots is of the whale being pushed by the ship.

Back to reality. Eating involves the most dreaded duty a recruit faces. He is subjected to three months "MESS COOKING".

On the battleship meals were served family style, 20 to a family. Tables and benches with folding legs are stored on the overhead (ceiling) between meals. The "mess cook" had this routine:

An hour before each meal was to be served at 7:30 AM, 1200 Noon and 5:30 in the evening two mess cooks working to-gether would set up their tables, get their dishes and silverware from the scullery where the dishes were sterilized and stored after each meal They got their dishpans and brass coffee pots from the "condiment locker" which had shelves for storing the 75 of these utensils. At mealtime they carried the food and coffee from the galley in "tureens", round metal containers containing 20 portions of the items on the menu, to the hungry men at the table.

Since the ship is more than 200 yards long, the "messes" farthest from the galley and on a deck above or below it, provided plenty of exercise for the mess cook particularly if the sea was rough.

Fifteen minutes before each meal the bugler sounded "mess gear" on his bugle and the Boatswain's mate of the watch gave the command over the loud speaker system, "Clear the mess decks." This was of course so the mess cooks could have clear right of way between their table and the galley. Anyone other than the mess cooks found on the mess decks during this 15 minutes was subject to discipline. On the stroke of the bell at mealtime the Boatswain's Mate of the watch piped "CHOW DOWN" on his Boatswains pipe and there was a mad rush to the tables.

My career in the Navy was highlighted by a long series of special privileges and favors. Instead of regular "mess cooking" duties I was assigned to the condiment locker. A member of the Master at Arms, (the ship's police force) was responsible to inspect the dishpans and coffee pots for sanitation when they were returned to the condiment locker for storage between meals. The coffeepots were two-gallon brass

containers with a handle and spout. After each meal they had to be scoured with bright work polish. Particularly around the spout it was easy to leave some of the polish which of course would pollute the coffee.

The duty of inspecting these coffeepots was delegated to me as the mess cook handed in his dishpan with the coffeepot inside. I used a powerful flashlight and inspected the coffee pot for perfect cleanliness and dryness. If it didn't meet specifications, which many didn't, I refused it and sent him back for further work.

It was in this capacity that I saw all of the mess cooks three times a day. One of them was a sailor by the name of Lester Spencer, who was later to be a strategic Christian in the founding of the Navigators, and a personal influence in my own life.

My only other job was to keep the condiment locker compartment clean and the deck waxed.

I only served a few days as a "deck hand", whose main job is scrubbing and "holy stoning" decks painting, and washing painted surfaces.

My next special job was serving as "bow hook" in our division's gasoline powered 26-foot motor whaleboat. It is an all-purpose boat used for mail trips ashore and any other passenger transportation or light freight needs. It had a three-man crew, coxswain, engineer, and bow hook. My job was to use the bow hook, a long pole with a hook on the end for catching onto the pier or another ship, pull the boat toward it and then jump onto the pier and secure the bow line to the cleat, then secure the stern line. When leaving the pier I was the last one in the boat. The worst part of the job was always being wet. The boat was so low in the water we were showered with salt-water spray with every wave. You can guess who kept the boat clean and painted.

When we made runs while at sea, the crew got in the boat while it was in its' cradle on the boat deck and were hoisted out and into the water by a huge crane. The height was about 40 feet and a little tricky particularly when the sea was rough. I was always glad when we hit the water when being launched or were nested in the cradle when returning aboard.

YEARS AS A TURRET STRIKER

In Navy lingo anyone who is apprenticing for a special skill and rating is called a "striker."

In my division there were only two paths of promotion: Boatswain's Mate and Gunners Mate.

Ten men were assigned for the maintenance and battle readiness of Turret two. There was a Chief Turret Captain in charge assisted by a Gunner' Mate first class, a Gunners mate second Class, two Gunner's Mates third class and four Seaman first Class, the "strikers" in the promotion path to Gunner's Mates or Turret Captains.

My rating after four months in the Navy was seaman second class. Every quarter of the year a quota for advancement to all ratings was given to each ship. There were competitive examinations for the scarce advancements. We had several books to study on the subjects of the Navy Regulations, general military knowledge, and detailed questions on the military specialty being pursued.

I believe I took the examination the first time I was eligible. The examination took longer than anticipated and no one was finished by noon "chow time" When it was announced the exam would be completed after breaking for lunch, we all did the same thing. That is we made a note

Of all the questions to which we did not know the answers and instead of eating we hit the books for the answers. Naturally there were some pretty high scores. As a new Christian I did not feel comfortable with doing what every one else did. I checked off the questions I didn't have answers for before the noon break and made a note at the end of my paper stating what I had done. The response of the examining officer was to put my name near the top of the promotion list. I was now a seaman first class in pay grade 5 earning \$54.00 a month.

The pay for a recruit, Apprentice Seaman (or fireman third class for Engineers) was 21.00 per month. After four months service, seaman were automatically promoted to second class with a pay raise to \$36.00 per month.

The Army and Marine Corps had no automatic provision for promotion after serving four months and it was possible to serve for four years without advancing from Private to Private first class with the compensation being (21.00 a month and a "horse blanket.")

The saying that described this inequity was that, "The Army did the work, the Marines got the credit, and the Navy drew the pay."

As a turret striker our pre-breakfast routine was to phone the Engineering Office to request the electrical power be turned on so we could lower the gun barrels and scrub them and polish the brass decorated plugs called "tompions" which seal the muzzle of the gun.

If anchored and all the auxiliary generators were not "lit off", there was not enough power for all the turrets to have power at once. So at reveille at 5:30 AM I generally phoned the electrician on watch and ask for "power for turret 2" even before having a cup of coffee.

My most embarrassing moment was when I dialed 214 early one morning and instead of a prompt answer the phone rang about a dozen times after which the voice at the other end said, " Hello," Instead of "Log Room."

I requested power for turret 2.

A gruff voice responded, "This is the Captain. Watch those numbers when you dial them." He then slammed down the receiver. The captain had an unpublished number and I apparently dialed it in error.

The Captain never tried to track me down and I was soon promoted to Gunner's Mate Third Class.

There is a lot of grease and oil associated with all the machinery in a turret and we were constantly wiping it up. Between firings we put strips of red "battleship linoleum" on the steel decks which soon got a layer of grease tracked on it.

We couldn't use gasoline and steel wool to clean the linoleum because of the fire hazard. We

Finally discovered an effective cleansing agent.

On of the advantages of being in the turret was privacy for sleeping in a cot, and having our own coffee making equipment.

We kept a supply of sugar, canned milk and coffee grounds. For use in the turret we also had a bale of rags. To make coffee we would wrap a cup of coffee grounds in a rag tied with a string. We had a gallon size varnish tin bucket we would fill with fresh water. Through out the ship there were steam hydrants for heating water. It was a dangerous operation but effective. You simply immersed the steam pipe in the water and turned on the steam until the water boiled.

Boiling the bag of coffee grounds in the bucket produced hot coffee. The left over coffee was the most effective agent we discovered to cut the grease on the linoleum.

My duties as Gun Pointer and Captain, Motor Whaleboat crewman, and assistant to the Master at Arms gave me wide exposure to the decision making officers and petty officers of the ship.

When the Assistant Navy Mail Clerk was transferred to new duty, I was appointed to fill the vacancy, later became the Navy Mail Clerk, (Postmaster), and held that strategic position until the West Virginia, sunk at Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, returned to the Shipyard at Bremerton, Washington for overhaul and refitting in June 1943.

CHAPTER SIX

“CLIMB MOUNT FUJI”

To the Japanese task force approaching Hawaii, these words meant: " Surprise achieved. Proceed with attack ". To me it meant four years of lifestyle I would never have voluntarily chosen.

"The island of Oahu is under enemy attack". Such were the words of Webley Edwards from Honolulu radio station KGMB at about 7:55 AM. Hawaiian time Sunday, December 7, 1941. That explained why the ground below and the atmosphere above were vibrating. Tremendous explosions filled the skies with black smoke punctuated with blossoms of exploding anti aircraft shells.

My first reaction was that the German Battleship, BISMARCK, rumored to be in the Pacific, was being chased by British warships and was headed for a "neutral" harbor. But the next message from KGMB's Edwards ended that speculation. "I have been informed by Army and Navy Intelligence that the island of Oahu is under enemy attack. The enemy has been identified as Japan. All military personnel return to their military duty stations."

Several of us had overnighted at the home of Harold and Belva DeGroff. This fine couple was representatives of the Navigators, a Christian organization ministering to military personnel in Hawaii. Eight of us were finishing breakfast provided by my new bride of six months. The DeGroffs were away for the weekend and we were standing in for them at their large home at 2744 Kalihi Street.

As we hurriedly pulled on our uniforms, Herb Goeldner, a shipfitter on the USS ARGONNE, pulled into the driveway in his car. He had left us a few minutes earlier to teach a Bible Study aboard ship but half way down the six-mile journey to Pearl Harbor he saw the opening phase of the attack and turned around to provide transportation for the rest of us.

My first reaction was "so this is war." When I joined the Navy in 1932 and reenlisted in 1938, I knew that I had been trained to fight. And now it was reality. My immediate concern was for my wife, Morena. As we piled into the car, I quoted a verse from the Bible to her. She responded with, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." We had no assurance that we would ever see each other again in this life.

The mountain walls of Kalihi valley hid our view from Pearl Harbor as we sped down Kalihi Street. Three or four minutes later we came to the end of the valley. We looked in unbelief at the devastation the Japanese aviators were inflicting on the ships in the harbor.

A line of cars was slowly getting through the main gate to the Naval Base so we went a few hundred yards to the Submarine Base Gate where our Christian friend and fellow Navigator Harold Blakeslee was on duty. He waved us through without stopping us as he repeatedly emptied his rifle firing at the Japanese planes.

What about my 10 AM class of High School students at the Honolulu Bible Training School in downtown Honolulu? Would they come to class and wait for me? There was no way to communicate with them.

Anticipating our soon return to the mainland, I had drawn all of my money out of the bank and had it in the post office safe. It amounted to \$450.00. All of the money we had beside that was what Morena had in her purse. I wondered if the safe survived the explosions and sinking of the WEST VIRGINIA? (It didn't and my personal effects, notebooks, and other valuable papers were never recovered).

Was I surprised? Not totally. After President Roosevelt ordered the Pacific Fleet to change home base from California to Honolulu in 1940, fleet Commander in Chief Admiral Richardson flew to Washington D.C. to give the president his opinion that basing the Pacific fleet in Hawaii did not send a warning message to Japan.

The Admiral told the president that before going into combat the Battleships would have to return to the west coast Navy yards to weld up their port holes, take up the fire hazardous teakwood decks, to load their wartime ammunition allowance, and accomplish other war fitting out items. These facts were well known to the Japanese. Actually what we were doing was of benefit to them. The president's response was to fire Richardson and replace him with Rear Admiral H.E. Kimmel on whose flagship, the USS HOUSTON, Roosevelt had taken a fishing trip to Panama after opening the mini world's fair at Treasure Island a few years earlier.

Then there was the fateful weekend.

For eighteen months the Navy kept one third of the fleet at sea to protect against attack and be in a state of readiness for battle. The part of the fleet of which I was a part was on patrol for ten days ending December 5, 1941. During our last patrol we sighted periscopes of supposedly Japanese submarines shadowing us.

Tension between the United States and Japan was such that the Japanese deceptively dispatched a special "peace ambassador" to Washington, D.C. In order to impress him President Roosevelt ordered the Task Force on patrol into port so "peace ambassador" Kurutsu would see our peaceful intentions. One hundred sixty four Navy and Coast Guard ships of all types and sizes were jammed into Pearl Harbor.

(The Honolulu bus system was so overburdened I had to wait in line for nearly two hours on Saturday afternoon December 6, while the busses shuttled from Pearl Harbor to Honolulu and back to pick up a new load of passengers).

Kurutsu's flying boat landed in Pearl Harbor Friday afternoon December 5th. He got an eye full as his plane taxied along Battleship row. The next morning as I watched his flying boat take off for the West Coast and Washington, D.C., I hoped war was not imminent not knowing the Japanese attack fleet of consisting of six aircraft carriers, 2 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers, 3 submarines and eight tankers and support ships were approaching Oahu.

Back to our arrival at Pearl Harbor; my ship, the USS WEST VIRGINIA, was moored to a quay wall at Ford Island. We had to travel a quarter of a mile via motor launch to reach the ship. As we hopped out of the car at the Navy landing we discovered there were no boats running.

Their crews were using the boats to pick up the survivors from the oil covered water. Millions of gallons of crude oil from the sunk and sinking ships welled up on the surface several inches deep and extending out about 75 yards from the burning ARIZONA. A 30-inch blazing wall of fire thwarted their efforts to rescue the men blown overboard and trying to escape fiery death.

Then an olive drab plane, painted exactly like our Army Air Force planes, flew toward us. The pilot banked and his machine gunner's bullets dug a trench at our feet. He was so close we could see his determined countenance. As the plane leveled we saw the rising sun painted under the wings. All of a sudden the war became personal. The drive for survival, even at the expense of an enemy's life, became paramount.

Then the most sobering moment so far. The tanker USS NEOSHO was moving from Ford Island to the nearby submarine base pier. In the narrow channel only a few yards from us her superstructure looked like a skyscraper. She was loaded with about six million gallons of aviation gasoline. One bomb or even a strafing run and we would be blown to bits as well as every thing within a quarter of a mile. There was no place to take shelter. We could only anticipate what was so sure to happen within minutes or seconds.

Continuing in the parameter of disaster we went to the ferry landing. We had to pass by Dry Dock number 1 with the damaged Battleship Pennsylvania showing her bare hull and the two destroyers Cassin and Downes twisted hulls burning and lying at odd angles in the same dry dock as the Pennsylvania.

As the ferry crossed the channel we could see my proud home for the past eight and a half years. Eight or nine torpedoes and two 2000-pound bombs had done their work well. As well as other damage a 140-foot hole had been blown above the second deck on the port side. She had been counter flooded to avoid capsizing and was resting on the bottom at a 6 degree angle in about 40 feet of water with her starboard side jamming the Battleship TENNESSEE against the quay wall.

Practically undamaged the TENNESSEE'S' gun crews had fired every round of anti aircraft ammunition on board.

I boarded the Tennessee from Ford Island and slid down a five inch gun barrel onto the slanting deck of the WEST VIRGINIA so covered with oil it was impossible to stand. Being a Gunner's mate I knew the hazard if the ready ammunition on topside exploded from the oncoming flames. (The fire eventually

burned everything above the waterline). I manned a hose with water pressure from the TENNESSEE and cooled the ready ammunition lockers.

One hundred feet from our stern flames from the burning Arizona leaped skyward like a volcano and the burning oil, not confined to a boiler firebox, set fire to the oil on the water in the surrounding area.

Ahead of us, the bottom of the OKLAHOMA, never visible except in dry dock, seemed strikingly out of place with her huge propellers reaching hopelessly into the air.

Next I began assisting those who were removing the dead and wounded. I had never handled a body before and was challenged by the effort of trying to lift dead weight equaling my own. I made a mental note to write to the family of one of my friends, the Gunner's Mate whose shattered body I was loading onto a boat bound for the hospital morgue.

I grieved as I viewed the human massacre and demolished ships and the oil soaked teakwood decks of the WEST VIRGINIA, which no amount of "holy stoning " could remove. As I looked at what had been her beautiful gray superstructure now blackened and warped, my emotion was anger. Our trusted leadership had failed us.

I was angry at the unchecked ambition of the leaders of a people who gave support to such "mystic beliefs as the Emperor's reputed descent from the sun goddess and his divine mission was to rule the world." (Encyclopedia Americana). I was angry that the empire building ambition of Japan imperialists got away with sinking the USS PANAY in December 12, 1937 with only a whimper of protest from our government. They could now proceed with the plan finalized in 1927 to occupy Manchuria and more of China and then proceed to occupy and loot Indonesia as the heart of the "southern resources area" to get the rubber, tin, and oil needed to build a world conquering war machine.

(I was on hand to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor). Listening to the historically uninformed or misinformed narrator at the USS ARIZONA visitor Center, my anger was rekindled as he seemed to blame the United States for starting the war ignoring the facts of history which show that, "From 1904 to 1941 Japan was planning to build an empire encompassing the most populated regions of Asia" (Encyclopedia Americana)

My next response was resolve. If I ever got in a place of authority we would never again get caught napping. (My resolve was tested later as the Captain of a Navy Ship during the cold war was when I refused to allow unfriendly ships to deny me the right of way I was entitled to in international waters). I believed and still do that to exhibit weakness is to invite aggression).

(Nearly sixty years later I do not harbor a spirit of unforgiveness in my heart against the Japanese people. But our present and future leaders, even if they have not personally experienced the horror of war, must realize that there will always be tyrannical leaders with a passion for imposing their will on their fellow man. Their ambition against our nation can only be thwarted by keeping our armed forces so strong they don't dare challenge us in armed conflict. The Pearl Harbor Survivors Association's watchword have said it best. "REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR, KEEP AMERICA ALERT". I would add, keep America STRONG".

As Santayana has said, " Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".

I was disappointed personally. My ship was scheduled to undergo overhaul at the Naval Shipyard at Bremerton, Washington. Since my new bride and I had been separated more than half the time since our marriage in July 1941, we had looked forward to having some weekends and evenings together.

As I look back on that devastating morning more than 50 years ago, my strongest emotion during the attack was peace. Shortly before the attack I had read about a British soldier who was part of the 340,000 British Expeditionary Force awaiting evacuation at Dunquerque.

They were under constant bombardment and strafing by German aircraft. Because he was right with God and in a vital relationship with his risen Savior Jesus Christ, he experienced indescribable peace in his heart and mind. He even organized and played games of soccer.

In moments of danger, I experienced the same peace.

The Pearl Harbor experience changed my spiritual life permanently. When there is real danger, God's peace indwells His own, the Christian. When I am tempted to worry and be fearful, I know there is no real danger. If there were real danger, the Lord would flood my heart with the peace that passes all understanding.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OTHER PEARL HARBOR AND POST PEARL HARBOR EVENTS

The Japanese used 354 planes to torpedo, dive bomb, horizontal bomb, and strafe our ships, and air bases. All but 28 returned safely to their aircraft carriers and were available to participate in the Battle of Midway five months later. The devastating attack on Pearl Harbor lasted barely three hours.

One wave of Japanese bombers dropped fifty-four 800kg (1800 lb) bombs. 48 were aimed at Battleship row. According to Japanese records there were 11 hits and 37 misses. The West Virginia/Tennessee drew the greatest number with 23 bombs aimed at the two Battleships moored together.

The attack was led by Lt Commander Mitsuo Fuchida. He was one of a handful of Japanese Naval Officers who participated in the Pearl Harbor attack to survive the war.

After the war Fuchida, now a Navy Captain, felt deep remorse over Pearl Harbor. He began writing a book to be titled, NO MORE PEARL HARBOR. However, he was frustrated not knowing any source of moral power which would tame the primitive instincts of greed and violence in men.

One day he was summoned to General MacArthur's headquarters for consultation. As he left the Tokyo train station an American missionary handed him a tract. The tract gave the story of Jacob DeShazer. DeShazer was a crewmember of one of the planes launched from the aircraft carrier USS HORNET that took part in the raid over Japan by General Doolittle. DeShazer's plane was forced to land in China short of its planned landing site and he became a prisoner of war of the Japanese.

While in the prison camp he requested and was given a New Testament by a Japanese guard. Through reading the Bible DeShazer became a Christian. After being released from prison camp at the end of the war he attended Bible School and returned to Japan as a missionary.

Fuchida was amazed. Why would this mistreated ex POW return and try to do good to his enemy?

Since DeShazer was changed after reading the Bible, Fuchida decided to get a Bible for himself. As he read it he responded to the Gospel and became a Christian.

He teamed up with an ex- Chicago police Captain who had a nation wide ministry with youth. My wife and I first met him at a Christian gathering at Honolulu. When traveling through the United States Fuchida occasionally stayed overnight in Colorado Springs.

Although his English was hard to understand, we had some conversations about the Pearl Harbor attack. My information about the purpose of the attack was confirmed.

In 1927 the Emperor of Japan approved a 100-year plan for conquering the world. It was to be in three phases. After defeating the Russians in 1905 the Japanese obtained Taiwan and Korea and were well positioned. The next phase was to occupy Manchuria and other parts of China for resources and manpower. Phase two was to capture what they called the "Southern Resources Area" for rubber tin and oil available mostly in Indonesia. With the British, French, and Dutch who controlled Malaysia,

Singapore, Indo China, and Indonesia involved in Europe with, Hitler and a large segment of our fleet in the Atlantic, it seemed the opportune time to strike.

It is also true that to protest Japanese hegemony, the invasion of China , and the fortification of their islands in the Pacific, President Roosevelt imposed some restrictions on their imports from the US and the movement and cargo of their huge fleet of merchant ships, the MARUS.

In the middle of the sea lanes, hindering Japan's access to Indonesia, was the Philippines controlled by the United States. The Japanese had a 200,000 man army, supported by 800 aircraft and about 92 troop transports standing by to invade the Philippines. From their intelligence network the Japanese believed that our plan for defending he Philippines involved stationing our Battleships in strategic areas in the islands to turn their giant guns on any invader. With the knowledge that most of our Battleships were disabled, the first phase of the invasion began December 10 followed by an 80 transport landing of the Japanese Fourteenth Army on December 22, 1941.

The Japanese came to Pearl Harbor with two objectives:

1. Sink or disable the Battleships.
2. Destroy all US aircraft, which might pursue them.

The last planes to fly over Pearl Harbor on December 7th were reconnaissance planes taking pictures. When Fuchida had documented the sinking and damaging of the Battleships, he was ready to return to Japan, mission accomplished.

The Japanese could now get on with their plan to invade the Philippines and occupy and loot Indonesia.

Overwhelmed with their success at Pearl Harbor the Japanese advanced their timetable 50 years.

They hastily put a fleet together to conquer Midway Island to use it for a base to occupy the Hawaiian Islands which would in turn be used as a base to land on the West Coast and proceed to occupy the United States. Admiral Yamamoto boasted he would ride a white horse down Pennsylvania Avenue and dictate the peace terms in the White House.

Their disastrous defeat at Midway caused them to revert to their old plan and fortify the Southern Resources so heavily they would be able to keep the conquered territory when peace terms were established. They intended to fight a defensive war to keep their war machine intact so they could use it in phase three, which was to conquer the western world.

What do people think about in the heat of battle when not fully engaged with their weapons? Fighting men have a fine sense as to when real danger exists and when it doesn't. In those moments in which danger does not actually exist, life is fairly normal. They often turn to humor to dispel the tension.

Japan had done a great propaganda job in concealing their real fighting potential. Anything made in Japan was synonymous with being cheap and of poor quality. We boasted that a war with them would be

over in three months because of the poor quality of their equipment, training and leadership. It was our common belief that they couldn't shoot straight or hit anything.

Since our 16-inch guns were useless in an attack like Pearl Harbor and we were without electrical power. My Chief Turret Captain, "Spud" Crawford, was standing by on the boat deck to help any way he could with the anti aircraft guns. A Japanese bomber released his 1800 lb bomb over Honolulu seven miles away. We were not up on bombing and thought a bomb fell straight down instead of traveling with forward momentum.

Seeing the distant bomb, Spud said, "See they can't hit a thing."

The bomb continued toward him. Seeing it was going to hit, Spud scrambled under a life jacket locker. The converted 16-inch gun projectile came crashing down on the Tennessee to which we were moored. Fortunately the arming mechanism didn't work but the bomb broke in a thousand pieces scattering unexploded powder pellets all over the area. Spud emerged from the protection of the life jacket locker and muttered, "See, just as I said. They can't hit a thing."

We had on board a Naval Reserve Ensign on active duty named Frank White. He was about 6 feet 6 inches all, well built, a huge man, with feet to match. Behind his back he was affectionately referred to as "big foot" and or "snowshoes". When on the bridge on the four to eight o'clock morning watch he had a habit of complaining about the coffee the wardroom steward served not being hot.

One day the steward who also came on duty at four AM had a plan. He preheated the oven to 450 degrees with a heavy porcelain regulation coffee mug inside. When Ensign White asked for his coffee the steward served it in the heated cup. When White saw the steaming coffee he said. "Now that is the way I like my coffee." He put it to his lips not knowing how hot the heavy porcelain cup was. Blisters arose on both his lips and for days after the burns were very visible.

During the battle he heroically provided initiative and leadership. During a lull, my shipmate Gunner's Mate Felix Young remarked to me. I hear "big foot" has just been awarded medal for his gallantry in action. I asked how White won the medal. He responded, "For tromping out fires."

Ensign White later became Captain White and was very popular with the crew. He often attended our annual USS WEST VIRGINIA reunions in the 1980's and 1990's.

In the first few hours after the attack one of my shipmates, to whom I had witnessed about Christ, came running up to me. "Deacon" he said, "I was blown over the side when the first torpedo hit. I tried to swim ashore with my clothes on. I ran out of breath and was afraid I wasn't going to make it. I knew my shortness of breath was due to smoking. I prayed to God, "if You will just give me enough breath to make it to shore, I will never smoke another cigarette."".

As he proudly finished his testimony my glance shifted from his eyes to his hand. In it he was holding a lighted cigarette of which he seemed to be totally unaware.

Not all battle field decisions stand the test of time.

Once the dead and wounded had been removed and the fires were out, what does one think and do?

You think of every one of your friends and ask every one you see, "Did _____ survive? You do this until you have an account of all of them. The concussion of the explosions knocked a number of people unconscious. Along with the dead their bodies were laid out on shore on Ford Island and reported as dead. We were all fortunately wearing "dog tags" so it was easy to identify everyone.

Many of those laid out eventually regained consciousness and got up and walked away. A case I recall was the Marine barber, David Secor. The person who handled his body told me that he had been killed. The next day in the food line I found myself standing behind a man who looked like David. I moved forward and looked him in the eye. It was Secor. Now I know how the Disciples of Christ felt after thinking Christ was dead and then seeing Him very much alive.

Back to the attack: After what seemed like a few minutes I realized I was hungry. During the latter part of the attack, I had given my watch to a friend aboard the TENNESSEE, Gordon (Gus) Gustafson to hold for me so it wouldn't be bathed in the spilled fuel oil which was underfoot everywhere.

I had been using a hose from the Tennessee to fight fires. I asked Gus if he knew anyone in the galley who would give me a sandwich. He took me to the galley of the practically undamaged Tennessee where I was given a sandwich. I glanced at the clock. It was 11:45 AM. I couldn't believe it. Events of the last three hours seemed like 30 minutes.

There was a Naval Receiving Station at the Pearl Harbor Naval Base. A Receiving Station is a facility for housing and feeding transient Naval Personnel transferring from one assignment to another. It had facilities for 350 men. The number of homeless sailors from sunken and damaged ships suddenly arose to 4000.

The galley crew heroically tried to feed them. The lines were so long that by feeding from early morning to late at night it was only possible to get two meals per day. Personnel from the Receiving Station acted promptly and efficiently. They collected all the clothes they could round up and distributed them. What we were wearing was soon covered with crude oil, which was floating on the water several inches deep over the entire harbor. Barrels were provided for our washable soiled clothing and returned laundry was put in barrels for us to forage in for something that fit. With clothing that did not match or fit we looked like a rag tag army

The clothing store was opened and we each helped our selves to a mattress, pillow, and blanket. The Block sports arena had just been completed outside the Pearl Harbor base for fleet athletic events. This became our temporary home as we made our beds on the seats. It quickly was renamed the "mosquito bowl" by those of us who slept there. Mosquitoes apparently moved in from all over the Island to participate in the feast.

The Receiving Station opened their store and gave out all of their toothbrushes and toilet gear on a first come, first served basis. My friend and best man at our wedding, Marvin Lokkesmoe, (Lokki), and I shared a toothbrush for several days.

Fearing a return attack, a blackout was ordered for the night. It was executed and a little ironic since the flaming Arizona was to burn like an erupting Mauna Kea volcano three days and nights with the flames visible for 50 miles.

The Pearl Harbor Naval Hospital and Amy's Tripler hospital and civilian hospitals heroically worked around the clock to care for the wounded.

The Pearl Harbor hospital set up a burn ward for the dozens of men whose oil soaked bodies had become a fiery torch. Sunday afternoon I visited one of my friends, (Claude Knuckles) from the battleship California. He was coming up the ladder from the main deck to the boat deck when a bomb exploded. It blew him up in the air and when he came down he was on the second deck. He thought he was on the main deck and rushed to the nearest exit to escape the heat and smoke. But instead of an exit, he ran into a steel bulkhead. He was further down one deck and there was no exit.

He was intensely sincere about where he was but his sincerity didn't provide an exit where there was none. I have had well-meaning people tell me that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere. That is a fallacy. It is possible to be sincerely mistaken.

Most of the patients were in suspension and couldn't use their hands. I went through the ward asking various ones to dictate letters for me to send their parents so they would know their condition.

The Honolulu police did not have radios. They took over the two local radio stations for police communication. Like thousands of others my wife Morena spent the night of December 7th listening to the police radio during the enforced curfew and blackout.

Although the telephones were restricted to urgent and emergency calls, Lokki phoned Morena on Monday and told her to bring her military ID card and she might get on base. She did and although I was in my oil soaked uniform and without a shave, we had a joyous reunion.

I was still the Postmaster. Monday morning Lokki, who was a carpenter, got some plywood from the Submarine Base Carpenter Shop and built a sorting case for me. I set up the outdoor USS WEST VIRGINIA Post Office on the Navy Landing.

Since considerable distance and weight was involved in handling the mail, I went to the Navy Yard Supply Officer and asked if he would issue me a bicycle, which the Supply Department carried in stock. He refused saying that since the West Virginia was sunk he had no account to charge it to. I talked one of our ship officers who apparently got through to him. I got a message that a bicycle was waiting for me.

Hundreds to other ships were transferring USS WEST VIRGINIA survivors, except for a Salvage Crew. I was also given the death certificates of the 105 who had been killed. Sorting, forwarding and returning the mail occupied most of my day for the next few weeks. Tons of Christmas packages, which the mailers had wisely mailed early, had to be dealt with.

For censorship purposes I was not allowed to explain why the mail of those killed was being returned to sender. I simply stamped the returned mail, UNKNOWN. Our Captain, Mervin Bennion, was killed during the attack. After returning several Christmas packages his family had sent him, I got a letter from Mrs. Bennion explaining who he was and that he had been killed in the Pearl Harbor attack. (When we lived in Naval Housing at Pearl Harbor from 1952 to 1955 our address was 1120 Bennion Street named after our former Captain.

Mail censorship was activated soon after the war began. We were limited to one page in our letters. An upside was that free mailing privileges were extended to all active duty military personnel.

Then there came "V" mail. To cut down on the weight factor transporting mail to the mainland all armed forces overseas wrote our letters on a special form, which was microfilmed, flown to the US, and then the microfilm was developed and the letter sent to addressee.

Immediately after the attack, the Navy set up a temporary outdoor Command Post at the Receiving Station to handle routine and emergency situations. Many of the men whose ships were sunk swam ashore and took refuge in the Aeia cane fields. After spending a few dozen hours in the mosquito infested fields, they concluded Hawaii had not been occupied by the Japanese, were thirsty and hungry, and began to show up at the Command Post.

The Navy had a mechanized efficient personnel records system and within 48 hours most families had been notified of those reported dead and missing.

One such report hit close to home. One of my friends, a Christian Radioman Johnson, was serving aboard USS ARIZONA. He sent for his wife and daughter who arrived December 6, only to be told that her husband had been transferred to Johnson Island the day before and was aboard the cruiser Indianapolis transporting him and others to that little island 600 miles from Hawaii. Her faith was tested. She felt the Lord had led her and her daughter out to Hawaii. Here she was. Her husband would be away indefinitely.

Then Tuesday, December 9th, a message was forwarded from her home telling her that her husband was missing and presumed dead. We tried to console Dorothy that he was probably still on record as being on the ARIZONA. When the attack was over the INDIANAPOLIS was ordered back to Pearl Harbor. Johnson was aboard and very much alive and well. He was transferred to a Pearl Harbor communication facility and stayed there for the entire war. His wife took an important defense job and they were together for the next four years..

Other duties of the Command Post were to provide a firing squad and bugler for the mass burial of those who died in the Hospital the night before.

I overheard and witnessed the following incident:

Some stragglers from sunken ships showed up at the Command Post. The Chief Petty Officer in Charge gave them a dressing down only a veteran salty chief could administer. He called them a bunch of cowards and let them know that their families had probably been notified that they were dead or missing.

One of them said, "Chief, I didn't think it was that serious. What do you think they will do to us?"

The Chief replied, "I don't know but if I had my way they would shoot you."

At that moment a messenger whispered in the Chief's ear that the ambulances with the dead from the hospital had arrived enroute Red Hill cemetery for burial and were ready to pick up the firing squad.

The Chief gave a loud order, "Pass the word (over the loud speaker) for the Firing Squad to report to OOD's desk.

There were some pale faces and trembling sailors among the stragglers before they discovered the Firing Squad was not being summoned for them.

Monday morning December 8th, the Disbursing Officer got a crew from the Navy Yard to go out to the ship with a metal burning torch to open his safe, (it was above water and fireproof). He retrieved the several hundred thousands of dollars and put it a safe ashore.

Since many of us had lost all of our money, he quickly set up a temporary office, and took sworn statements to make new pay records on which we could get an advance.

When I went in to his desk Disbursing Officer Ensign Vance Fowler, turned pale and began to breathe heavily.

Since I did business with him daily we were good friends. In every letter from his mother, she included a Scripture verse. One day he showed me one of her letters and said, : "Deacon, here is one Bible passage I bet you \$5.00 dollars you don't know." He stumbled through the identifying reference, II Chronicles 7:14.

I replied, "Does it go something like this? 'If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways...'"

He got on his feet, slammed the letter on his desk and said, " I give up. You know every verse in the Bible."

I tried to explain that was one of the best known verses in the Old Testament and probably the only verse in II Chronicles I knew.

When we faced each other the morning of December 8th he was visibly shaken. He put his arms on my shoulders and began to run his hands up and down my arms. He said, "Deacon, am I ever glad to see you."

I replied I was glad to see him too, but we never had a ceremony like this before.

He then explained: "Do you know who walked out the door just before you came in? It was the Chaplain. HE TOLD ME HE HAD JUST BURIED YOU".

There was a Gunner's Mate striker in the fifth division with the same name as mine. He had unfortunately been killed in the attack. It was he at whose burial the Chaplain had officiated.

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