



October
November
December
2004

"Rest well, yet sleep lightly and hear the call, if again sounded, to provide firepower for freedom..."

THE JERSEYMAN



The Battle of Leyte Gulf...

Sixty years ago, naval forces of the United States and Australia dealt a deadly and final blow to the Japanese Navy at Leyte Gulf. Over a four day period ranging from 23 - 26 October 1944, and in four separate engagements, the Japanese Navy lost 26 ships and the US Navy lost 6.

With this issue of *The Jerseyman*, we present another look back at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, record some new stories, and present a few 60 year old, but "new" photos sent in by the men that were there. Our sincere thanks to all WW2 veterans, and Battle of Leyte Gulf veterans for their contributions to this issue.



History also records that the Battle of Leyte Gulf was the one time in the Pacific war that **Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey**, flying his flag aboard battleship **USS NEW JERSEY**, had a chance to take on the giant Japanese battleships **IJN Musashi**, and **IJN Yamato**. But in a controversial decision that is studied and discussed to this day, Admiral Halsey took the bait of a Japanese carrier decoy fleet, split his forces, and headed **USS NEW JERSEY** and the Third Fleet North. Admiral Halsey lost his chance. The greatest sea-battle victory in history fell instead to the older ships of the United States Seventh Fleet.

We can only speculate on what it would have meant if Halsey's Third Fleet had been there with the old Seventh Fleet battleships of **WEST VIRGINIA, CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA**, and **MISSISSIPPI**, and had added the firepower from fast battleships **NEW JERSEY, IOWA, MASSACHUSETTS, SOUTH DAKOTA, WASHINGTON** and **ALABAMA...**

The flag shown is on display in the museum area of the ship. It is the flag flown from the mast of **USS NEW JERSEY** at the **Battle of Leyte Gulf**.



THE JERSEYMAN

The Battle Of Leyte Gulf, and Surigao Straits...

Admiral James L. Holloway III, USN (Ret.), served as Chief of Naval Operations (CNO,) from 29 June 1974 to 1 July 1978, and is currently Chairman of the Naval Historical Foundation.

At the time of Leyte Gulf in 1944 however, he was then Lieutenant Holloway, and the Gunner Officer aboard **USS BENNION (DD-662.)** As he reflected back... ***"BENNION was a 2,100-ton Fletcher Class destroyer with five 5-inch 38's, eight 40mm guns, a dozen 20mm's, ten torpedoes, and a full complement of depth charges. She gave the taxpayers a lot of bang for the buck."*** Admiral Holloway is a reader of *The Jerseyman*, and we thank him for sending the address he made at the Naval Historical Foundation Symposium 5 years ago. It was then the 55th battle anniversary of **The Battle Of Leyte Gulf, and of Surigao Straits...**



USS BENNION (DD-662)

"...We were at GQ most of those days and a lot of the nights. When we weren't shooting, we were replenishing ammo from the accompanying ships. At first while alongside to transfer ammo, the combatants would break away when bogeys approached to within 15 miles. After a day or two of this conservatism, it became apparent that little ammunition would be transferred unless bolder criteria were established. I recall remaining tied up alongside an ammo filled Liberty Ship transferring 5-inch 38 AA common rounds loose in skip boxes, while FM-2 Wildcats from the jeep carriers tangled with Zeros directly overhead."

"By the day following the landings, the invasion force was under almost constant air attack. When Bennion was not at GQ -that is Condition One - we set Condition One Easy, which allowed a small percentage of the crew to leave their battle station to flake out, clean up, eat, or man the transfer stations for replenishment. A man from each battle station would go to the galley to fetch rations for the others. During those days, I was almost continually in the Mk 37 director. The Captain, exec, and navigator took up the slack on the bridge in the absence of the other top watch standers. When Condition One Easy was set, I dozed on a pile of life jackets on the director platform. It took a pretty hard downpour to disturb my rest."

"By the morning of the 24th of October, word was filtering down from the bridge that a large Japanese naval force was reacting to the invasion, and that a major battle was imminent. Throughout that afternoon, dozens of PT Boats noisily passed us on their way south to Surigao Straits. I will never forget the racket of those PT engines."

"Let me take a moment here for a geography lesson. Leyte Gulf has two sea approaches: a wide entrance on the east through which our invasion forces had entered, and the narrower passage on the south - Surigao Strait - between Leyte and Mindanao. The gulf itself is about 80 miles long in the north-south direction and about 40 miles wide, narrowing in the south to form the Surigao Strait."

"During the afternoon of the 24th, the six battleships, eight cruisers, and 28 destroyers of Rear Admiral Oldendorf's bombardment and fire support group started moving south to take up positions to attack an enemy force coming north through Surigao Straits. Orders were received by Bennion to prepare for a night engagement. As we proceeded with the rest of DESRON 56 to our positions in the disposition, the battle plans were explained to the crew by Bennion's captain, Commander Josh Cooper. The battleships and cruisers would be formed in an eastwest line in the northern part of the straits forming the crossbar of a T, so all main-battery guns could be brought to bear on a Japanese column emerging north through the straits. This would effect the classic naval maneuver of crossing the t. Two destroyer squadrons, deployed down into the straits on both flanks of the advancing Japanese, would conduct torpedo attacks on the enemy column under the fire cover of the main batteries of Oldendorfs six battleships and nine cruisers."

"By sundown, all of Oldendorf's ships were in place. DESDIV 56 was organized into three, three ship divisions steaming slowly in column at close interval. Torpedoes and main battery had been readied for a surface action and safeties popped as the engineers maintained steam pressure for full power. At sunset we had set Condition One, and we could overhear on the TBS the tactical commands and reports among our own ships as we waited tensely for the enemy during this dark and squally evening. By midnight we began to think that the Japanese would disappoint us and a general relaxing was perceptible. Suddenly about 2:00 am, over the TBS we heard one of the PT Boats reconnoitering in the southern strait call out excitedly, "I've got a big one in sight!," then a pause and, "my god, there are two more big ones, and maybe another." Suddenly the TBS became alive as the "martinis" - that was the call sign for the PT Boats - got ready for their torpedo attacks."

"The main Japanese column, tentatively identified as three battleships, was moving north at 18 knots when the PT Boats started their torpedo runs. On Bennion, our concern that there wouldn't be any Japanese ships left for the destroyers was quickly dissipated when the martinis reported their torpedo attacks completed, and that the Japanese force remained intact and had increased speed to 25 knots. By now the Japanese units were emerging from the landmass, and we were picking them up on our own radar. Now the destroyer units were ordered to deploy for the attack. The tactics had been carefully planned and were well suited to the configuration of the gulf. The ships would conduct their torpedo attacks in successive waves by division units, approaching along the coastline on each side of the strait, then launching from both flanks, off each bow of the Japanese column. Bennion formed up as the second ship of the third element of DESRON 56. As we headed south at 30 knots making maximum black smoke, we kept a 300-foot interval on the destroyer ahead, of course with no lights showing."

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"From my battle station in the director, I had a view of the whole scene, from the panorama of the two fleets to a close up of the Japanese ships through the high powered lenses of the Mk 37 director. As our destroyers started the run to the south, we were immediately taken under fire. It was an eerie experience to be rushing through the dark toward the enemy at a relative speed of 50 knots, not firing our guns or hearing the enemy fall of shot around us. The awesome evidence of the Japanese gunfire were the towering columns of water from the splashes of their 14 and 16-inch shells, some close enough to wet our weather decks. Star shells hung overhead and the gun flashes from the Japanese battle line illuminated the horizon ahead.

"About the time our division made its final turn to run-in for the torpedo attack, Oldendorf's battleships and cruisers opened up with their main batteries, and it was a comforting sight. Directly over our heads stretched a procession of tracers from our battle line converging on the head of the Japanese column. I recall being surprised at the apparent slowness of the projectiles. They almost hung in the sky, taking 15 to 20 seconds in their trajectory before reaching their target. It was a spectacular display. Through the director optics, I could clearly see the bursting explosions of our battleships' and cruisers' shells as they hit the Japanese ships, which were now enveloped in flames."

"It had been planned for each division to launch torpedoes at the individual capital ships in the enemy column at a range of about 10,000 yards, and then retire to the north at high speed. Our column was headed directly for the lead battleship, the Yamashiro, so the division had to turn in a Corpen movement for a clear shot, each destroyer launching successively as it executed the turn. As Bennion was the second ship in the last element, at a 50-knot relative speed, our firing point closed rapidly with the Japanese battle line. We started launching our five torpedoes at a range of about 7,000 yards. At this distance the silhouette of the Yamashiro completely filled the viewing glass of the range finder optics. I recall my reaction - "that looks exactly like a Japanese battleship with its pagoda foremast," and then realizing that it was a Japanese battleship."

"As we retired to the north in formation at 30 knots, still making max black smoke, explosions erupted close off our port beam. It was one of our destroyers; the A.W. Grant being hit by large caliber shells during the retirement. The scene of action was becoming confused and Oldendorf ordered his battle line to cease fire for concern of hitting our retiring destroyers in the melee. About this same time, we noted large caliber tracers coming from a major warship only several thousand yards on our starboard beam. These rounds were being fired over us and directed toward our destroyers retiring up the western side of the strait. We quickly decided that this was not a friendly ship because of the sequential nature of her salvos as opposed to the simultaneous fire characteristic of US ships, and the immediate decision was made to launch our remaining five torpedoes at this target of opportunity and continue our retirement."

"The destroyers had reformed north of the strait by about 0430 and as first evidence of morning twilight appeared, we were ordered once again to proceed south and engage and destroy any surviving Japanese ships. In the pale pre-dawn twilight the scene in Surigao Strait was appalling. I counted eight distinct fires, and the oily surface of the gulf was littered with debris and groups of Japanese sailors who were clinging to bits of wreckage and calling out to us as we raced past. Bennion did not pause to pick up survivors, as we had sighted the Japanese destroyer Asaguma, badly damaged, on fire and limping south. Asaguma was still afloat, and if she still had torpedoes aboard, she constituted a definite threat to our ships. With orders to destroy the Japanese ship, we changed course to close the Asaguma and opened fire with five-inch salvos at about 10,000 yards. We shifted to rapid continuous fire at 6,000 and she blew apart and slipped beneath the waves as we passed close aboard."

"As Bennion turned to rejoin the formation, a Zeke popped out of the low clouds heading toward us. The five-inch battery was manned and ready, and in a no deflection shot, an influence fused AA common shell scored what was as close to a direct hit as I have ever seen from a five-inch gun. The Zeke blew apart in a terrific explosion and the flaming pieces fell into the sea."

"Aboard Bennion the crew was dog-tired, but spirits were elated. As we listened to the reports come in over the TBS and witnessed the hundreds of survivors clinging to the smoking wreckage of the Japanese fleet, we all sensed that a great victory had been won. A major Japanese force of battleships and cruisers had been virtually annihilated with serious damage to only one of our ships, the destroyer A.W. Grant. Suddenly - and the transformation of spirits was dramatic - elation turned to real alarm - when over the TBS we heard that the Taffy Groups - the jeep carriers off the eastern entrance to Leyte Gulf - were under attack at close range by Japanese battleships and cruisers. In the broadest historical sense, Surigao Strait may be most notable in marking the end of an era in naval warfare. It was the last naval battle in which air power played no part."

"It was the ending of an era for me as well. A week later, during an intense air attack in Tacloban Harbor, I transferred by whaleboat from Bennion to a departing Liberty Ship to begin a long slow hitchhike east across the Pacific. I had orders to flight training. As I was saying goodbye to **CDR Josh Cooper**, a splendid gentleman and a great destroyer captain, he asked me one final time if I wouldn't like to reconsider and continue my career in the destroyer navy. I pondered only a moment before replying: "Captain, in the past week as a destroyer gunnery officer, we've silenced three shore batteries, shot down two Zeros, battled a Japanese cruiser, sunk a destroyer by gunfire, and scored a torpedo hit to help sink a Japanese battleship. What is there left to do?" So Bennion went on to Lingayen and Okinawa and a Presidential Unit Citation without me. I went on to flight training and a career as a carrier pilot. But I can't recall any night quite as exciting as the 24th of October 1944 in the Surigao Strait."

History note:

Six future Chiefs of Naval Operations participated at Leyte Gulf...

RADM R.B. Carney Chief of Staff for Admiral Halsey, **RADM F.P. Sherman**, Admiral Nimitz' Chief Planner, **RADM W.M. Fechteler**, CTG 78.2, **Commodore Arleigh A. Burke**, Chief of Staff to VADM Mitscher. And at the time of Leyte Gulf, both **Lieutenant Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.**, and **Lieutenant James B. Holloway, III**, were attached to destroyers of **RADM J. B. Oldendorf's** Seventh Fleet Bombardment and Fire Support Group at Surigao Straits.

THE JERSEYMAN

USS HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS (DD 663)

“October 24th 1944. - USS Heywood L. Edwards DD 663 was a designated fire support vessel for which she became well suited. Other DD's were best utilized as screening vessels or outfitted with special radars to serve as radar picket ships. The assault on Leyte had gone reasonably quiet for the Navy except for an occasional air attack. In fact as a fire support ship we were assigned a specific sector and anchored in that location providing support fire to the troops through both air and land spotters. About mid-morning we were advised that a sea battle might be imminent. As a fire support vessel we were armed with the type of armor piercing shells suitable for a surface engagement. We were then directed to an ammunition ship and found ourselves in a line of destroyers waiting to be served proper ammunition. At the same time there were several air attack alerts that were more harassing than actual. Regardless, with each attack we were directed away from the ammo ship, and finally directed to an anchored position. The next morning we were directed again along side an ammo ship for AP ammo for our five-inch main battery. We were allocated a specific amount of time, about 20 minutes, to get as much aboard as possible. Cargo nets full of shells were dropped on the decks and distributed to ammo storage of all five main batteries. We then regrouped with the ships heading for the north entrance to Surigao Strait and took up our position as directed on the right side of the squadron.

As sonarman, my duty station was aft of the pilothouse on the bridge. I had the 2000 to 2400 watch. My relief who was seldom on time was early this evening. We were all very nervous and things had been very quiet. Talk in the pilothouse was at a low murmur. My relief, Clarence Tobin, asked me to stay a while. He was a close friend and so I did.

About midnight I stepped into the pilot house behind the helmsman and as I did the TBS cracked and a high pitched voice spoke in Japanese! It literally brought hackles up on the back of my neck. Our CO **Captain Joe W. Boulware**, ordered GQ and since I stood next to the switch I hit the general alarm, yelled good luck to Tobin, and headed to my battle station on Gun 27, a 20 mm machine gun located on the fantail. There were three guns nested there, and gun 27 was right in the middle, just aft of guy 5.

It was a few minutes after midnight, and finally I lay down on the canvas gun cover along side a buddy, Tom Robinson. I started to doze when someone shouted “Hey you guys, you're missing the sea battle!” The battle ships had opened up and the shells were visible arching overhead. It was stunning to watch. Our talker advised us that we were going to make a torpedo attack. A few moments later he said we were “standing down.” Then a few more moments passed when we started to pickup speed. Our CO came on the speaker system and said; “Men, (I had just turned 18) this is what we have been waiting for.” Away we went under that big caliber shell still arching overhead. Our ship led our section of the squadron in a torpedo attack on the Japanese battle line. We could see the hit with sparks flying, a blast of light and then a secondary blast as it exploded. One of our squadron, **USS ALBERT W. GRANT**, was the only ship that got hit that night, and most of the hits came from our own cruisers. As we passed down the side of some cruisers on our starboard side I swear I could hear yelling to “go get 'em!” We were in a wonderful position to watch the Japanese ships get riddled and we could see the gondola superstructures in the glare of the explosions. Suddenly a star shell burst right over our port quarter and then we realized we had been taken under some serious fire. They straddled us several times most likely from their secondary batteries. When leveled out with a slight turn to starboard we attempted to fire the torpedoes, but we suffered a malfunction in the port torpedo director. This forced us to turn back toward the enemy line and elicited a comment... “What's he going to do” Hand them to them?”

As we continued to take fire in the glare of the star shell we all hit the deck. I was slow and had nowhere to go. We could see some of the shells coming in and one I watched that I was certain was going to hit us landed directly in our wake and exploded. We finally kicked out our torpedoes as did the rest of our section (**USS LEUTZE** and **USS BENNION**). We made a quick a turn to starboard and made smoke through the smoke generators on the fantail and the stacks. Finally about 0700 we were fed on stations. We were each given a cup and if you were lucky you got coffee first, then beans in the same cup. If unlucky you got beans first, and then coffee.

We were then dispatched with cruisers to head south down the strait to pick off any stragglers. We encountered a Japanese destroyer (**ASAGUMO**) lying close in to the shoreline with her bow blown off. Along with the cruisers we took her under fire with our main batteries. The cruisers took credit but we were at point blank range, and I saw our five-inch shells slam into her hull and she sank. The cruisers also claim she fired back. Interesting. From our close vantage point and through our fire control optics, there was no life seen on the destroyer. She had been abandoned. Evidence of this was the amount of Japanese survivors floating on the surface. There were hundreds of them as platonic as if it were a casual swim in the ocean. We were advised to pick up survivors and cautioned to be careful... that some may be armed. Small arms had been broken out, and many of us topside were armed with rifles and machine guns. Cargo nets were laid over the side to invite survivors aboard but most refused. Finally one Japanese close by grabbed the net and started to climb aboard when another grabbed him and cut his throat. Then he brandished the knife in the air and yelled something at us. He was shot. Finally we were directed to regroup with our squadron under the advice that a second and more powerful Japanese fleet had broken through San Bernardino Strait - another surface engagement was eminent. We set the watch and lucky me, it was still my 8 to 12 watch tour. As I arrived on the bridge I over heard my CO say to the exec: “That SOB! I will never, ever forgive him.” Later on I heard he was referring to Admiral Bull Halsey who had abandoned the entrance to San Bernardino Strait, and leaving Taffy 3 to a fate they did not deserve. This also could have allowed a more powerful Japanese fleet access to Leyte Gulf. We were greatly relieved to learn that there would not be a second surface battle for which we were very poorly equipped. The day ended with a smile. It was a life experience I will never forget.”

Bob Chantler, Sonarman
USS HEYWOOD L. EDWARDS, (DD-663)
Westborough, Massachusetts

THE JERSEYMAN



USS FRANKS (DD-554)

Quartermaster First Class Michael Bak was also at the podium of the Naval Historical Foundation Symposium 5 years ago, and spoke of his Battle of Leyte Gulf experience along with **Admiral Holloway**. His 60 year-old story remains fresh to him today, as it was all recorded in his hand-written diary... "I mostly wrote in the diary at my cleaning station, and in the chart house, a small space just off the bridge. I used the chart table..."

"**October 25, 1944. Today is a date I will never forget as long as I live!** At 0455, GQ was sounded and I had the Quartermaster watch again. We were steaming with six Escort Carriers, 3 Destroyers, and 4 Destroyer Escorts... When **USS SAVO ISLAND** launched planes, one went over the side and we were designated to pick up the pilot. It was very dark, and luckily the pilot of the F4F cleared the plane and swam with a small flashlight in his hand. (Actually the pilot did not have a small flashlight in his hand as I originally noted in my diary. I learned later, after I wrote my comments, that pilots had a special one cell battery flashlight attached to their Mae West life jackets.) **Mel Collins** dove into the water and swam about 100 yard to tow the pilot back safely. We learned that his name was **Lt. Roger Mulcahy**, and he was credited with downing 18 Jap planes..."

"After chow at 0700, the Captain's voice (**CDR. D. Richard Stephan**) said: "**An enemy task force was sighted bearing 250 degrees True 15 miles. All hands man your battle stations!**" When I reached the bridge and took over the QM watch, carrier planes were attacking, and with a force of Jap ships comprising 4 battleships, 8 cruisers, and about 7 destroyers. We lit off all boilers and were traveling at our highest speeds to close for a torpedo run with the **HAGGARD** and **HAILEY** of our Destroyer Division.... Three of our Destroyers then went in for a torpedo run, which seemed impossible with all those guns of the Jap Battleships. At 0842, the **HAGGARD**, **HAILEY** and **FRANKS** were 12 miles off the main enemy body in column formation heading in for a torpedo run, when a salvo of 6 projectiles dropped off our Starboard beam only two hundred yards away, and my heart sank... A minute later, another salvo of six projectiles dropped into the water 200 yards on our port beam. They had our range and I thought we were goners. We must have been traveling 33 knots or better trying to get out of their range. Two minutes later, another salvo landed 200 yards astern in our wake. We opened out to 16 miles and could see their ships hull down when another salvo landed 250 yards on our starboard bow... just when we thought we were getting out of range, an American F6F swooped down and began strafing our can (destroyer...) I was on the starboard wing of the bridge looking aft when the plane started his attack. I thought it was a Jap plane diving down on us when he started to strafe. I was too scared to take a second look. As the bullets were inching up the fantail toward us I entered the pilot house and dove under the chart table for protection. The Captain's talker, Chief Yeoman Ken McRae landed on top of me. Before the bullets reached the FRANKS, the U.S. pilot must have seen the US flag and aborted his attack. We were astern of the carriers, and he must have mistaken us for the Jap Task Force. Luckily, he did not return, or we would have shot him down. Two minutes later another salvo came sailing 300 yards dead ahead... I was sure scared and didn't think I'd ever get to write about it as we were heavily outnumbered and no surface protection. "At 1530, Radio Tokyo claimed they sank 4 carriers, 2 Cruisers, and 3 DD's. More propaganda. We secured GQ at 1540..."

QM1 Michael Bak,
USS FRANKS (DD-554)
Surf City, New Jersey

USS FRANKS (DD-554)

"On that morning, we had just secured from dawn general quarters, and the crew was beginning breakfast when we were called again to our battle stations by sounding of general quarters. The Franks and Desron 47 had already seen action in the Pacific at Guam and Palau, as well as a class B sinking (confirmed after the War) of a Japanese sub. So we were ready for service as part of "MacArthur's navy," the Seventh Fleet. We were assigned to the baby carriers, which were smaller than light carriers, or the fleet Essex class carriers. They consisted of 3 task elements with the call signs "**Taffy 1**" under **RADM. C. Sprague**, "**Taffy 2**" under **RADM. Stump** and "**Taffy 3**" under **RADM. T. Sprague**. They were positioned just north of the entrance to Leyte Gulf to provide air support and supply for the troops being landed, and until an airfield could be constructed.

As a relatively new ensign, I had been at the Palau invasion and was qualified to stand watch as the OOD at sea. My battle station was as Anti-Aircraft machine gun officer on the deck of the Main Battery Director just above the bridge, with responsibility for the 20mm and 40mm guns.

Once at my battle station I observed large splashes to port and starboard. The splashes were about 30 feet high and colored red or green. As I was responsible for air attack, I kept looking in the sky, but saw nothing there. However, I soon noticed that there were large ships to the north. The pagoda masts and superstructures of the Japanese battleships were unmistakable, as was the large "meatball" battle ensign on the sterns of the Japanese ships. Taffy 3 to the north was already under attack, and our sister ships, **JOHNSTON**, **HOEL** and **HEERMANN** were making torpedo runs. The air groups off the carriers were also attacking. Fortunately, Taffy 2 planes were Avengers loaded with torpedoes if the southern group of Japanese in Suragao Strait penetrated into Leyte Gulf.

During the action our Taffy 2 units of the **FRANKS**, **HAILEY** and **HAGGARD** were initially sent to aid the ships of Taffy 3. As we got into position for our torpedo runs we were recalled in case the Japanese broke through, and we were needed for in close action to defend Taffy 2. Taffy 1 was too far to the south to assist... While this was going on, one of our fighters started to strafe us. I recognized the type as an F6F and called the bridge who radioed the flagship. The Flag then sent out a message for Taffy planes to knock off the strafing Taffy ships."

Leon Cooper, LCDR, USNR (Ret.)
Los Angeles, California

THE JERSEYMAN



USS DENNIS Destroyer Escort 405...

Mailman 3rd Class Charlie Touzell, served aboard the Destroyer Escort **USS Dennis DE-405**, and remembers the Battle of Leyte Gulf very well. His small DE was one of those that attacked Japanese Cruisers with torpedoes... The destroyers **USS Johnston**, **USS Hoel**, and Destroyer Escort **USS Samuel B. Roberts** of his "Taffy 3" squadron did not survive the battle.

To give some idea of size, **USS DENNIS**, a Butler class DE of only 1,300 tons, was 600 tons less in gross tonnage than a single 16" turret aboard **USS NEW JERSEY**. The **USS DENNIS** was 306 feet in length, and her beam



width 36 ft 8 in.

"I joined the Navy along with my brother on 9-11-43 after my mother & father had signed for us... we were both 17 years old, and we trained at US Naval training center in Sampson NY. After boot, my brother was transferred to Great Lakes. I was transferred to Miami, Fla., Anti-sub training and learned to operate Sonar equip. After four months in Miami, eight of us were sent by train to Galveston, Texas, and to the Brown Shipyard where my ship the **USS Dennis DE-405** was near completion. After shakedown off Bermuda Island, we proceeded to Pearl Harbor for assignment. We did screening for several escort carriers (CVE's) escorting them to Guam, Ulithi, and other islands. Our first action came at "Morotai Island" where we shot down two Japanese aircraft. After Morotai we proceeded on to Guam, where ships were assembling for the invasion of Iwo Jima. This is where I caught up to my brother who was assigned to **APA George Clymer**, and we were the screen for the amphibious ships going in to IWO. After IWO and more screening/escort work, we were assigned to the 7th fleet and proceeded to the Philippines and Leyte Gulf, where we became part of Task Unit 77.4.3 (Taffy 3.) Thankfully, my brother and I both survived the war and were discharged in March of 1946."

BATTLE OFF SAMAR...

"On Oct. 25, 1944 we were operating with Task Unit 77.4.3 (Taffy 3) off the island of Samar. We were part of the screen, which consisted of **USS Johnston**, **USS Hoel**, **USS Heermann**, and four Destroyer Escorts; **USS Dennis**, **USS Samuel B Roberts**, **USS Raymond**, and **USS John C Butler**. This made up the screening ships for six carriers - all CVE's. The **USS Gambier Bay**, **Fanshaw Bay**, **Kalinin Bay**, **Kitkun Bay**, **St.Lo**, and **White Plains**. We were under the command of Admiral Sprague, and assigned air support for troops landing on Leyte. On this historic day, we came under attack by a large Japanese fleet, consisting of four Battleships, eight Cruisers, and numerous destroyers. We were ordered to make smoke around the carriers as the unit proceeded to head south into a rain squall for protection. Then we were ordered to attack three Japanese cruisers as they were closing on the carriers. All the screening destroyers attacked with torpedoes, and my ship, **USS Dennis** made two torpedo runs, missing with two, then closing to within 1800 yards, we made a hit with one torpedo, later confirmed by a pilot and also by Adm. Sprague. We were hit by 8"inch armor piercing shells four times and lost 5 shipmates, but managed to stay afloat and continued to fire on these cruisers with our 5"inch guns, making several hits on target. We continued this for approx. (2) hours, when all of a sudden the Japanese broke off their attack, and turned north. All the while we were being harassed by our own aircraft, and the returning aircraft from the rest of the Task units. In the battle we lost two destroyers, the **USS Johnston**, **USS Hoel** and one **Destroyer Escort**, **USS Samuel B Roberts**, plus two light carriers, **USS Gambier Bay** and the **USS St. Lo**. We lost more than 800 shipmates in this battle, but managed to inflict a heavy toll on the Japanese fleet. Our planes caught up to the stragglers and sank most of them. I think most of the ship commanders received the Navy Cross and our ships and their crews were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation."



"Our ship, **USS Dennis**, took four hits from the cruiser, one up forward at the starboard side bow and approx. 3ft above water line, another mid-ship interior passageway under the torpedo tubes, one hit back aft in the 40mm director killing (4) crewmen, one hit on top of the forward 5" gun mount, and it went out the vent window into the sea as the gun was trained to port."

Charles W. Touzell (Radio Room)
USS DENNIS (DE-405)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE JERSEYMAN



Loading torpedoes aboard
USS DENNIS...



Ens. Crenshaw, at the
torpedo storage deck racks
of USS DENNIS

Photos of **USS TENNESSEE (BB-43,)** taken from **USS DENNIS**.
Hull number 43 is clearly seen in the original photograph...

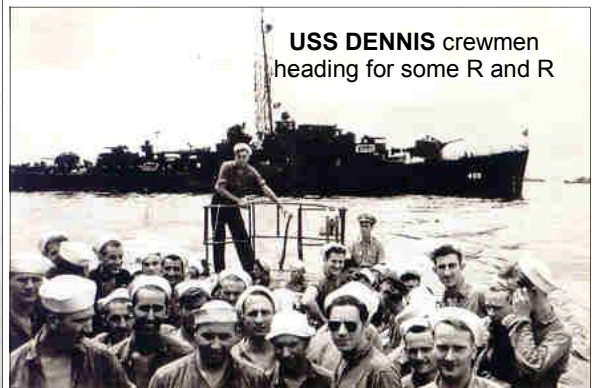


An unidentified Independence Class CVL. Out of 9 carriers
in this class, 8 participated at Leyte Gulf...

**USS INDEPENDENCE, USS PRINCETON,
USS BELLEAU WOOD, USS COWPENS,
USS MONTEREY, USS LANGLEY, USS CABOT
and USS SAN JACINTO**

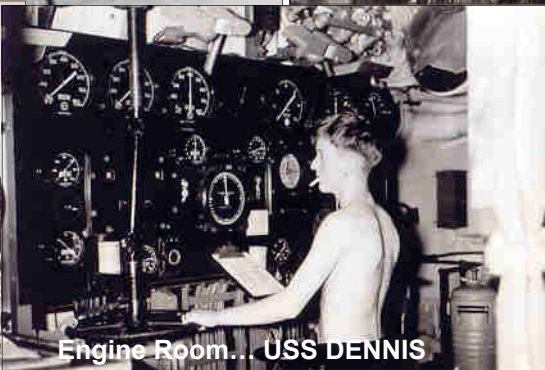


4 angled funnels were unique to
the "Independence" Class



USS DENNIS crewmen
heading for some R and R

"Our Destroyer Escort Division...
USS BULL DE-402, USS ROWELL DE-403,
USS EVERSOLE DE-404, and USS DENNIS
DE-405. "We lost USS EVERSOLE in the
Philippines..."



Engine Room... **USS DENNIS**

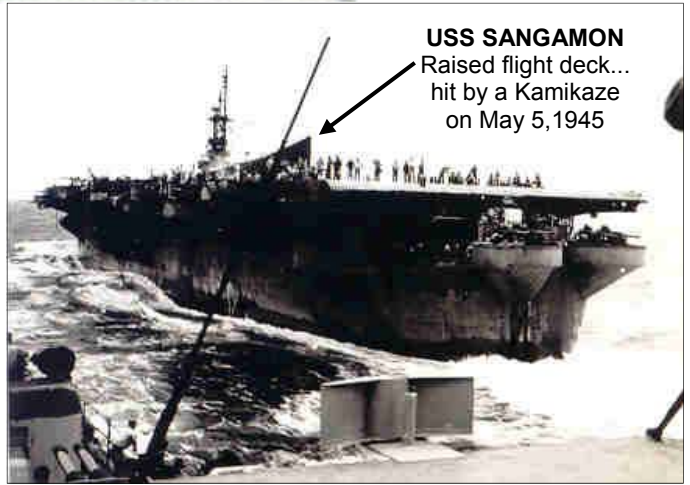
Photos courtesy of
MaM3/c Charles Touzell

**USS DENNIS
(DE-405)**

THE JERSEYMAN



USS GAMBIER BAY
hit by Jap shelling...



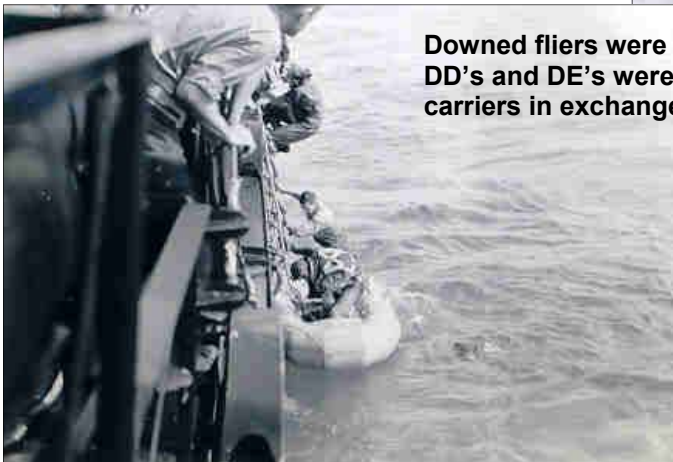
USS SANGAMON
Raised flight deck...
hit by a Kamikaze
on May 5, 1945



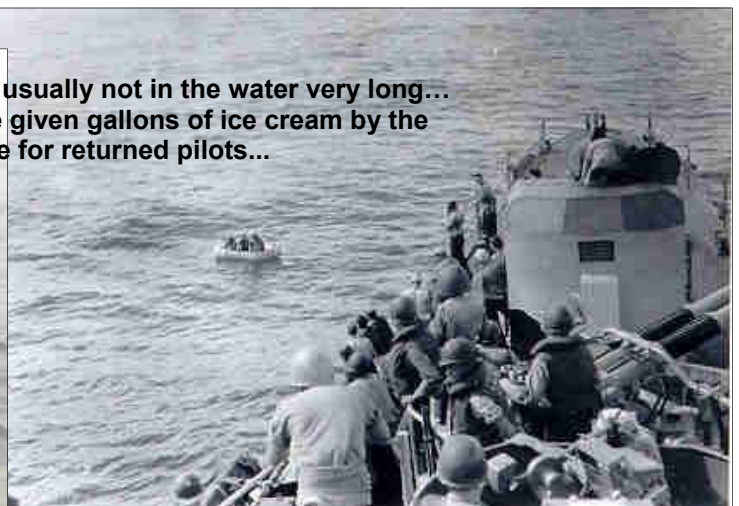
“These are rockets from our HEDGEHOG firing at an underwater contact. Right after we fired these, we dropped depth charges. The sub probably went deep and waited us out. At this time in the war, the Japanese couldn't afford using subs to attack our destroyers... they used them to supply their outposts... we had sunk most of their surface supply ships...”

Photos courtesy of
MaM3/c Charles Touzell

USS DENNIS
(DE-405)



Downed fliers were usually not in the water very long...
DD's and DE's were given gallons of ice cream by the
carriers in exchange for returned pilots...



THE JERSEYMAN



USS DENNIS Destroyer Escort 405...

(Note: When this photo was first received, we thought it may have been taken aboard a ship other than **USS DENNIS**. The beam of BUTLER Class DE's such as **USS DENNIS** was only 36' 7". The 40 MM Quad gun tub dimensions that are still visible in the deck aboard **USS NEW JERSEY** are about 19 feet wide. We asked Charlie for additional details on this photo, and to describe life aboard **USS DENNIS**...)

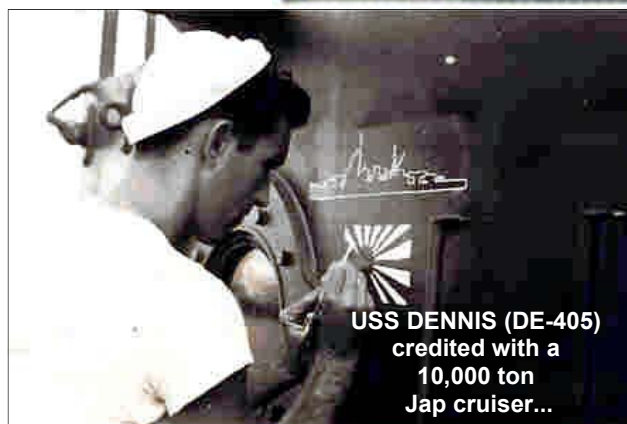
"That's our aft quad 40mm aboard **USS DENNIS**, and this was installed after we arrived back in the states to repair our battle damage. We originally had a two barrel. I really can't explain why our guys are not wearing lifejackets. Maybe it was taken enroute back out to Pearl from Alameda, California. The only time we wore jackets was at GQ. Most of the time we kept

our jackets at our GQ stations. Remember that our ship, a Destroyer Escort, only had about 283 crew members. It was a small ship, and we had no restrictions as to what we wore while at sea, and the only time we wore whites was at an inspection, and sometimes blues if we knew that the top brass were around, or coming aboard. Our ship was very relaxed, and the shipmates enjoyed this. You can tell this by a lot of the photos I sent you. That's why I was always thankful for being assigned to a ship like a DE. Every shipmate I know feels the same way, it was like being home, and wearing old dungarees and skivvies. I remember being below the equator and heading for Hollandia, New Guinea. The temperature was up to 143 degrees, and we used to get these tiny blisters on our arms and legs.

You know, the earlier DE's were diesel powered and only carried 3 inch guns forward and aft. In 1943 they improved on them with the Buckley Class of ships and these were steam turbine driven and contributed to more speed than the diesels. The Buckley Class also had 5 inch guns forward and aft. Both models carried three torpedoes, but as far as the rest of the armament, they were the same. I trained aboard a diesel DE while attending anti-submarine warfare school in Miami, Fla. I was glad when I heard that I would be on a new Steam Turbine though, as the diesel one stank of diesel fuel throughout the ship, and it used to make me sick

While at New Guinea we were on RR and sections of the crew went ashore and boarded trucks that took us up in the mountains to a USO camp (30) miles above sea level. What a trip up... when we got there a shipmate and I looked over the plateau of the mountain, and watched an aircraft (Piper Cub) flying below us and between the mountains, boy what a sight - it was awesome! We then boarded an LCI which took us across the lake to a native village. The kids were wearing loin cloths and had bows and arrows. The older natives wore hardly anything. Then they took us to their thatch roof school hut, that used logs split in two for benches. There was a big blackboard up front, which to our amazement had algebra on it! We were told that Dutch Missionaries had taught in the village before the Japanese took over. It was a remarkable sight and one I will never forget. The kids followed us all around trying to get cigarettes or any thing we would give, but we didn't mind. We gave them candy, and some other trinkets that we had."

Charles W. Touzell, USS DENNIS (DE-405)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



USS DENNIS (DE-405)
credited with a
10,000 ton
Jap cruiser...



THE JERSEYMAN

USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)

"I came into the navy underage, and under a false name because I was only 16 years old. We went to boot camp in Farragut, Idaho. Then I reported aboard **USS WEST VIRGINIA** in March of 1944 and only left her after the war - in May of 1946 I think it was. I used the name of a friend of mine, Carl Wayne Newton, and that is how I was known until the Battle of Leyte Gulf and Surigao Straits. My GQ Station was the # 3 Starboard mount - 5-inch handling room. After the battle, it was announced that with all the 16" salvos, West Virginia had a split seam. It was then that I got to thinking that if I go down with the ship, somebody else's family would get the insurance money. It was \$10,000 in those days.

Mindoro Islands followed Surigao, and it was just about then that I turned 17, so I went to the Chaplain and told him about it. From that point on, I used my own name. Today, I belong to two different organizations of folks that were underage volunteers in World War 2.

I have a couple of shipmates from the West Virginia, that I will ask to call you with more information... LT(jg) Don Siebold is one of them, and he lives in Estes Park, Colorado."

Joseph D. Variot - Seaman 1/c

USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)

Mancelona, Michigan

USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)

"I was part of a Battalion of Engineers, and we spent 4 months as midshipmen at the US NAVAL ACADEMY before reporting aboard **WEST VIRGINIA** in May of 1944. About October 17th, we had scraped some coral, and bent a couple of screws, so that cut our speed to 18 knots from a normal 21 knots. That was how we went into the battle after landing troops on Leyte - October 20th... My GQ was Steering Aft, and about 3 decks below. I can remember that I was reading "Forever Amber" just before the battle, and the Chaplain came on the loudspeaker as the battle announcer. The battle didn't last too long, but I know the **WEST VIRGINIA** fired more steel than any of the others. We fired 93 rounds of 16" in just 9 1/2 minutes. The first salvo was confirmed a direct hit on the Japanese. I know there has been a dispute on who gets credit for taking down the **YAMASHIRO**, but we all believe it was the **WEST VIRGINIA** that did that job.

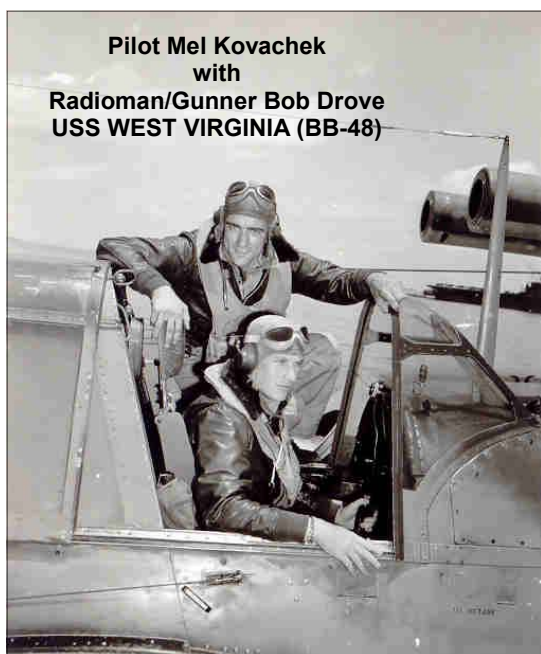


You need to talk with **Mel Kovachek**, who lives in Redlands, California. He was the Junior Aviator aboard **WEST VIRGINIA**, and the only pilot aboard during the battle. The other 2 senior pilots flew their OS2U "Gooney Birds" ashore just before the battle. Mel knew the Captain, and got to watch the whole thing from the bridge..."

Don Seibold

USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)

Estes Park, Colorado



**Pilot Mel Kovachek
with
Radioman/Gunner Bob Drove
USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)**

USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)

"I was the junior pilot aboard the West Virginia. We had 3 pilots, and the other 2, Rodgers and Walker, took our 2 planes ashore before the battle. The ship's aviation unit didn't have any assigned station during General Quarters so I was able to go up on the bridge and be there with the Captain. It was my opportunity to see the column steaming towards the group that was coming up the Surigao Straits, and there were 3 separate units as I understand. Our jeep carriers were outside the bay, and they took on one group. Another group was a decoy going up North, and that was the one that Halsey went after. After they finished up with them, they found that the problem was down here, so they high-tailed it down here to join us.

The night was pitch black. Boy, I can remember that night, and the academy boys are all taught to cross the "T," in a battle of big ships. So this is basically what was happening. They were steaming up towards us in Surigao Straits, and we weren't sure exactly what they had. We assumed it was a heavy cruiser and some destroyers... maybe even a battlewagon, but we weren't quite sure. So we started steaming towards them. I think there were 5 of our battleships, and they we made a 90 degree turn to the left, and started crossing the "T." I think it was the **CALIFORNIA**, or one of the battlewagons that missed it's cue in the turns, and they had to break radio silence to bring her back into line. After all the ships were in line, our ship was the lead ship and we had the latest radar equipment.

(Continued next page...)

THE JERSEYMAN

So after the Captain gave the coordinates to the other ships, it was a thrill to hear the Old Man say, "Commence Firing!" and to watch 2 projectiles go sailing out from the first turret. They were red hot, like they had lights on them, and then the rear turret fired two, and then the second turret fired two shells. There was a big explosion out in the channel, and it appeared that we had hit the ship, but we didn't know how badly it was damaged... we just kept on firing, to the point that we ended up with about 7 projectiles for each gun... then we ceased firing...

... The next morning we went out looking for Japanese survivors, and we didn't find too many. Those that we found in the water didn't want to be rescued, so the Marines just used their BAR's on them. We sent one enlisted man down the line to help a Japanese, and in turn he got stabbed. That didn't sit too well with the boys...

I don't remember if we ever got a list of the ships that were there that night..."

Mel Kovachek
USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)
Redlands, California

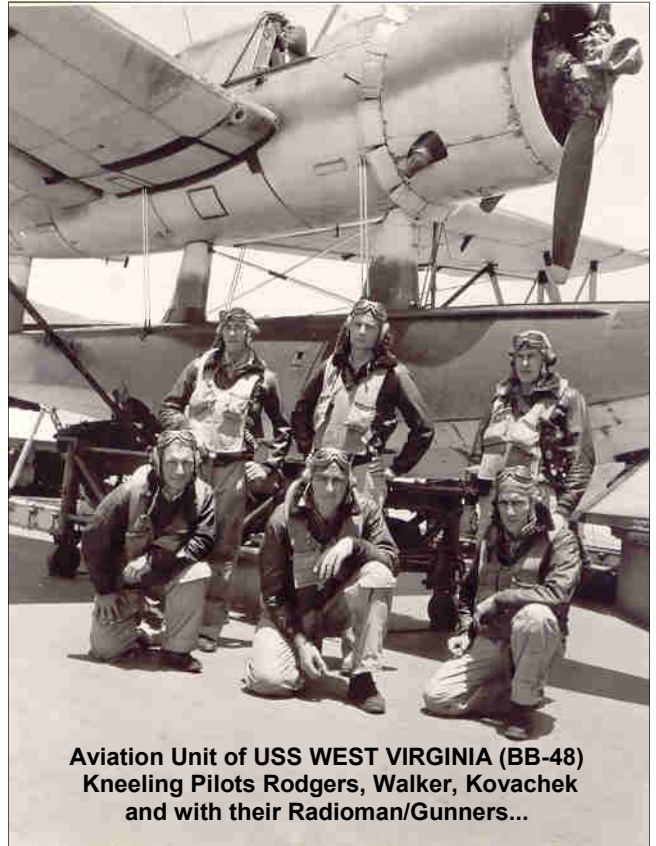
USS WEST VIRGINIA
Aviation Unit photos are
courtesy of Mel Kovachek

History notes:

Of the six old battleships that met the Japanese fleet at Surigao Straits, five of them were present at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and were heavily damaged during the Japanese attack. They were **WEST VIRGINIA, CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, MARYLAND,** and **PENNSYLVANIA.**

USS WEST VIRGINIA, and **USS CALIFORNIA** were both sunk at their Pearl Harbor moorings by torpedoes. They were soon raised, and rebuilt with added hull protection along with battleship **USS TENNESSEE.** The repairs included huge torpedo hull "blisters," and the newest Mark 8 Radar equipment used with such tremendous effect at the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

~~~~~  
**USS MISSOURI (BB-63,)** is today permanently moored at the same pier that **USS CALIFORNIA** occupied when she sank on December 7, 1941. **USS MISSOURI's** bow directly faces the **USS ARIZONA** memorial at Pearl Harbor...

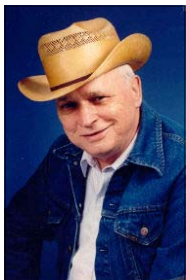


**Aviation Unit of USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)**  
Kneeling Pilots Rodgers, Walker, Kovachek  
and with their Radioman/Gunners...

## USS TENNESSEE (BB-43)

"This photo is **USS TENNESSEE** with bow damage caused by a night collision with **USS CALIFORNIA** - with a little patching, this is the way that we made the Leyte Invasion and the Battle of Surigao Straits... I was working as the "cradle-man" (shell dumper) in the right gunroom of turret one at the time of the battle of "Surigao Straits" where we could see nothing. We kept asking the gun captain what he could see out through the gun barrel as he wiped the mushroom, and threw the loading tray into the breech. He answered "It's just all red out there..."

The thing that I remember first of this engagement, was having to move all of our green bombardment projectiles back down below, and bringing up the black armor piercing shells, since we KNEW what was coming up the strait on October 23-24, 1944. We were all "popped out" from shifting ammo long before the action started..."



**Hamp Law,**  
**Seaman 1/c**  
**West Monroe, Louisiana**



**Shipmate Hamp Law**  
draws our great  
"Battleship Swabby"  
cartoons seen in each issue  
of *The Jerseyman*.



## THE JERSEYMAN

### USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38)

*"West Virginia, Tennessee, and California, equipped with the newest Mark-8 fire control radar, had a firing solution to the main battery plot and were ready to shoot long before the enemy came within range. These three were responsible for most of the battle line action. West Virginia opened fire at 0353, and got off 93 rounds of 16-inch AP before checking. Tennessee and California, starting at 0355, shot 69 and 63 rounds of 14-inch AP respectively, fired in six-gun salvos so as to conserve their limited supply. The other three battleships, equipped with Mark-3 fire control radar, had difficulty finding a target. Maryland picked it up by ranging on West Virginia's splashes and got off 48 rounds of 16-inch in six salvos, starting at one minute before 0400. Mississippi fired a single salvo and Pennsylvania never managed to locate a target and took no part in the action."*

Source: *United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume XII, "Leyte"* (Pg 224) by Samuel Eliot Morison.

### USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38)

"October 23, 1944 was my birthday. The very next day, in the early hours of 24 October, I remember it was a very dark night in Surigao Straits, and I was serving as Signal Officer, and Tactical Watch Officer aboard **USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38.)**

We were ready to fire with the other battleships, and I think it was **MARYLAND** that moved out of line and blocked us from firing. We didn't get off one round... As I remember it, the ships in line received the TBS order to "Turn 15," and **MARYLAND** must have copied it wrong. In any event, she came about in front of us and we were in danger of running into her, hence we turned away from the battle line to avoid a collision. It took quite some time to regain our position in line.

I don't agree with Morison's explanation in his LEYTE book on NAVAL OPERATIONS in WW2. He said that old radar was the reason for **PENNSYLVANIA** not firing, and that we could not find a target. I was signal officer in **PENNSYLVANIA** at the time, and I remember that order to turn... it had nothing to do with us having old radar."

**RADM Ed Snyder, USN (Ret.)**

**(Former Commanding Officer of USS NEW JERSEY 1968-1969)**

**McLean, Virginia**

### USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38)



"Sometime on the morning of the 24th, we heard Chaplain Sullivan's "This is your Chaplain on the Bridge" address. He informed us that our carrier search planes had located two Japanese forces headed in our direction, and that they were each composed of battleships, cruisers and destroyers. There could be no doubt about what was about to take place. This was going to be the BIG one. That afternoon, carrier searches found a third Jap force composed of carriers, battleships, cruisers and destroyers. We had 3 groups coming at us from 3 different directions."

"Throughout the day when we were not busy with air defense, we were making everything as secure as possible on the ship, even welding many things to the deck or bulkheads to keep whatever we could from flying in case we were hit..."

"... I relieved the man on duty about 5 minutes before midnight, and put my earphones on. I just sat down, and began to wonder if we would make it through this one, and if my family would ever really find out what happened to us, when things started to happen... I could hear over my phones that destroyers and PT boats were going south past us down into Surigao Strait, and that the battleships California, Maryland, Mississippi, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and West Virginia had formed their battle positions..."

"... About three hours later, reports were coming through that the PT boats and destroyers well down in Surigao Strait had made contact with the enemy, and was doing a good job with torpedoes and guns. It was pitch dark that night, and I can't remember the moon or any stars shining. The only thing that could be seen was an explosion when a ship was hit, or when a large gun was fired..."

"... The West Virginia was the first battleship to open fire, followed by other battleships and cruisers. Pennsylvania never fired a shot, and later the scuttlebutt was that because one of our own ships was out of it's assigned area, the Pennsylvania would have sunk our own ship if we had fired. Not much comfort for the crew of the Pennsylvania, who were truly disappointed for not being able to sink at least one Jap battleship."

**Jess Dennis, Shipfitter 3/c**  
**USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB-38)**  
**Memphis, Tennessee**



## THE JERSEYMAN

### USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)

(Note: Although all Leyte Gulf action reports are available from US Naval Archives, we chose that of USS WEST VIRGINIA as the lead battleship in the battle line, and for her record firing of the most AP projectiles at Leyte Gulf... 93 were fired in 10 minutes.)

Capt. H. V. Wiley, USN  
Commanding  
USS WEST VIRGINIA  
US Navy photo



#### "24 October 1944

- 0332 - Received orders from Commander Battle Line to commence firing at 26,000 yards.
- 0332 - DD's report they have attacked.
- 0333 - 4000 yards to go. Gunnery officer reports range 30,000 and has solution with a large target.
- 0345 - Saw explosion in target area. Talked with gunnery officer to be sure our target was not among our own DD's. Fire control stated he had been on target for some time. CIC stated our DD's were clear.
- 0349 - Starshells in target area. Can't tell if our DD or enemy is firing them. Our range 24,000. Am hesitating to fire until certain target is enemy. ComBatDiv 4 directed open fire.
- 0351 - Our cruisers on our right flank opened fire. Our gunnery officer says he has had same big target for a long time and it is enemy. Commanding Officer ordered commence firing.
- 0352 - Notified Commander Battle Line we were opening fire.
- 0352-10 - First salvo 8 guns range 22,800 yards AP projectiles.
- 0353 - Could hear gunnery officer chuckle and announce hit first salvo. Watched the second salvo through glasses and saw explosions when it landed. [Note: target later identified as Yamashiro.]
- 0354 - Salvos very regular about 40 seconds interval. Other BB's opened after our second or third salvo.
- 0356 - See explosions in target.
- 0358 - Gunnery officer reports target is stopped and pip is getting small.
- 0402 - BB turn 15 on signal. Ordered cease fire. Have to think about small amount of ammunition on board. (110 AP left). CIC reports targets turned left and reversed course.
- 0405 - CIC reports target speed 0.
- 0411 - Pip reported to "bloom" and then fade.
- 0412 - Target disappeared. Can see ships burning -- one is a big fire."

### United States Navy ships sunk at the Battle of Leyte Gulf:

|                            |                                                          |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Taffy III Escort carrier   | <b>USS ST. LO (CVE-63)</b> , by KAMIKAZE aircraft        |
| Taffy III Escort carrier   | <b>USS GAMBIER BAY (CVE-73)</b> , by naval gunfire       |
| Taffy III Destroyer        | <b>USS HOEL (DD-533)</b> , by naval gunfire              |
| Taffy III Destroyer        | <b>USS JOHNSTON (DD-557)</b> , by naval gunfire          |
| Taffy III Destroyer escort | <b>USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413)</b> , by naval gunfire |
| TG38.3 Escort Carrier      | <b>USS PRINCETON (CVL-23)</b> by bomber aircraft         |

A total of 6 US Navy ships lost = 37,000 tons

### Imperial Japanese Navy ships sunk at the Battle of Leyte Gulf:

|                        |                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Fleet Carrier:       | <b>IJN ZUIKAKU,</b>                                                                                  |
| 3 Light carriers:      | <b>IJN CHITOSE, CHIYODA, ZUIHO</b>                                                                   |
| 1 18 Inch Battleship:  | <b>IJN MUSASHI</b>                                                                                   |
| 2 14 Inch Battleships: | <b>IJN FUSO and YAMASHIRO</b>                                                                        |
| 6 Heavy cruisers:      | <b>IJN CHIKUMA, CHOKAI, MOGAMI, MAYA, ATAGO and SUZUYA</b>                                           |
| 4 Light cruisers:      | <b>IJN NOSHIRO, ABUKUMA, TAMA, and KINU</b>                                                          |
| 9 Destroyers:          | <b>IJN NOWAKI, HAYASHIMO, YAMAGUMO, ASAGUMO, MICHISHIO, AKITSUKI, HATSUTSUKI, WAKABA and URANAMI</b> |

A total of 26 IJN ships lost = 306,000 Tons

#### Sources:

"United States Naval Operations in World War II," Volume XII "Leyte," by Samuel Eliot Morison  
"The Battle Of Leyte Gulf" by Thomas J. Cutler, Bluejacket Books, USNI Press, Annapolis, Maryland  
"The Last Stand of the Tin-Can Sailors" by James D. Hornfischer, Bantam Books  
"The Last Big-Gun Naval Battle - Surigao Strait" by Howard Sauer, Glencannon Press Maritime Books



## THE JERSEYMAN

### USS PRINCETON (CVL-23)

"It has been sixty years since the battle of Leyte Gulf, and my memories may be a little vague. I was aboard **U.S.S. South Dakota** (BB 57) in task force 38.3 along with **U.S.S. MASSACHUSETTS** (BB 59.) The TF 38.3 carriers



were **LEXINGTON, ESSEX, LANGLEY and PRINCETON**. Also in the task force were the cruisers **USS BIRMINGHAM, USS SANTA FE, USS MOBILE**, and there were many, many destroyers.

At about 1000 on the morning of October 24, 1944, the ship was at general quarters. I was either in Sky 1 or Sky 3 fire control tower when a single Japanese plane (either a zero or Judy) suddenly came out of the clouds. I clearly remember our firing at the plane along with several others - including **USS PRINCETON**, which was hit by one of the bombs. We were about half mile from **PRINCETON** (within 40mm range,) and I could see a tremendous amount of smoke. My most vivid recollection was of the large group of men gathered on the fantail. Many men were in the water, some were in life rafts. We did not pick any of them up, but the destroyers did.

I can remember destroyers going alongside the burning ship, and **USS BIRMINGHAM** was alongside when a huge explosion occurred. I found out later that **BIRMINGHAM** lost 229 killed, and many wounded. **PRINCETON** lost 108 killed, and 190 wounded. Later on, we watched as a destroyer fire torpedo after torpedo at the carrier. We were gone by the time she sank."

**FC/3 Richard Silvers, USS SOUTH DAKOTA**

**King of Prussia, Pennsylvania** (Richard Silvers is a volunteer aboard **Battleship New Jersey**)

### USS IDAHO (BB-42)

"I have a story that I can set straight from April 12, 1945 when I was aboard **USS IDAHO**. I had just recently been transferred from Ship's company IDAHO into the Flag Allowance - Commander Battleship DIVISION THREE. **ADM Lynde D. McCormick**, USN was my boss. We were under attack and I was at GQ on the flag bridge. I almost ran into the Admiral when he rushed to the port side and I was heading starboard... there have been many reports through the years saying that a Kamikaze hit IDAHO. It did not. The plane crashed into the sea about 100 feet off our port quarter and broke up into thousands of pieces, and the pilot did too. Many of the pieces of the plane, and the pilot, ended up on our quarterdeck - including the pilot's watch. It was stopped dead at 1520 hours... and I will always remember that time. The plane's debris did do a number on our port side



blister though, and this is why most folks think we took a direct hit. It was a near-miss. We shot down 5 of the Kamikaze's that day... **Admiral McCormick** made me SM2/c shortly after the April 12, 1945 attack. "

**SMCS (Senior Chief Signalman,) David Graham, USN (Ret.,)**

**San Diego, California**

**Senior Chief Dave Graham** is Founder/Chairman of the **American Battleship Association**

(ABA,) and of the **USS IDAHO** Association. (**USS IDAHO** is shown above as photographed from **USS TEXAS** on April 12, 1945 off of Okinawa. The Kamikaze is seen diving at the ship in this Naval Archives photo.)

### Reflections of a Seabee - Tinian Island 1945...

"I stood perimeter guard duty on Tinian, and on Okinawa. Our orders were to shoot anything that moved outside the perimeter, from sundown to sunup. Whenever we shot at any movement we immediately evacuated our position, because the flashes gave our position away. This meant we were vulnerable to incoming fire. In the morning we would check over the area for bodies. Didn't find any but did bag a few pigs and two dogs. One of the other guards bagged a horse. Pretty funny until one night after a movie some of the guys fooling around approached from the wrong direction and one Seabee was killed, shot by his best friend. A terrible accident to live with the rest of your life." (The photo shows a 505th Bomber Group B-29 fuselage with US Navy Seabee insignia honoring 4 Naval Construction Battalions. "It was their way of taking the Seabees along and saying thanks for building the runways..."



**William H. Corp, 9th Naval Construction Battalion (NCB,) Tinian Island... Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

**"OUR DEBT TO THE HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT WOMEN IN THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY CAN NEVER BE REPAID. THEY HAVE EARNED OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE. AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR SACRIFICES."**

**HARRY S. TRUMAN**



## THE JERSEYMAN

### Midway Island before Pearl Harbor was hit...



"When I read the **SQUALUS** bell story in the July *Jerseyman*, it also reminded me that when I arrived at Midway mid-August 1941, a submarine was tied up at the dock. It was the **SAILFISH**. I happened to have followed the tragedy of the **SQUALUS** and knew it was raised and renamed **SAILFISH**. She was just in to Midway for a refueling, or whatever. To my knowledge, at the time no subs were assigned to the area on permanent basis. Immediately after 7 Dec the **NORWALL** and **ARGONAUT** were the only naval vessels screening the island. They patrolled out to the west and NW. I suppose on a random search mission. At night they would sometimes be in pretty close and we would pick them up on our Mod. 270 radar operated by Naval personnel. Just a bit of history that you



would have trouble finding if you were really interested...

Your *Jerseyman* readers may also be interested to know that after 7 Dec 1941, two double apron barbed wire barriers were built at waters edge from Frigate Point up to the curve of the island near the Pacific Cable Station location. Added to that our armory guys built land mines. Two styles. One was 8 sticks of dynamite in a wooden box that was attached to a short post near the barbed wire, and facing the water. The box had a piece boiler plate on the back side, toward the island. On the front side, facing the beach it was packed with nails, bolts and nuts, jagged cuts of metal, and whatever. We had them connected to a telephone wire and we had a crank EE-8 telephone connected so we could detonate a string of them. Or, on the back, toward the island there was a black 3" painted dot that if fired at, and hit would set off one single mine. The small contact mines were in a box like 8" square and 5 or 6" in depth. Two pieces of metal on top where if stepped on would close a battery powered circuit and fire the mine. Some shrapnel etc... was also packed in the box. One of the guys that worked on them is still alive and lives in Roseville ,Ca. (just down the hill) He plans on attending the reunion in San Diego in Sept. If you are interested in the mines I can ask him to tell me more about them. (*The Jerseyman* is interested...) But what I have told you here is basically correct. The NW side of Sand facing toward WELLES HARBOR was, and still would be, the most logical beach to land on Midway from seaward. Pan Am and Pacific cable both brought in most of their supplies in whale boats and a towed small barge for a number of years. The Harbor channel was not deep enough for a ship of any size. Hawaiian dredging deepened the channel in late 1940. Smaller coastal type cargo ships came in and out and the pier was built. When I went out in Aug 41, a small advance party of 150 or so boarded two cruisers (the **USS ASTORIA** and **USS CHESTER**) and a barge was towed out to the mouth of the channel. We boarded the barge and were pulled into the navy pier area where we offloaded. Later, and before hostilities, I believe they dredged it deeper. Two days before the BOM (Battle of Midway,) the heavy cruiser **USS ST. LOUIS** came in and unloaded some badly needed supplies, and a few reinforcements. The turning basin was small for it and I believe the harbor tug assisted in getting her away from the dock so she could run straight out the channel. I don't know anyone to verify that last sentence, but I believe it to be correct.."

**John V. Gardner, USMC, WW2**  
Nevada City, California



### SHIP'S BARBER - USS NEW JERSEY...

(Submitted by Joe Ford - Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania (US Army, 1962-65)

"I am sending this email on behalf of my Father-In- Law, **Leo M. Bulat** who was an original plankowner on BB-62, and served aboard during 1943 as the ship's barber.

While he was cutting the hair of a sailor aboard **New Jersey**, this sailor told him that his name was "on the draft," and he was going to be shipped out to **USS SIMS**. That unidentified man was able to arrange transfer aboard **USS Texas**, which is where Leo served until World War 2 ended. This transfer to **USS Texas (BB-35)**

instead of to the Destroyer **USS Sims** saved his life..."

### History note:

(**USS SIMS (DD-409)**, and Fleet Oiler **USS NEOSHO** were attacked by 61 Japanese planes on May 6, 1944 - the day before the Battle of the Coral Sea. With a complement of 241 men, only 14 from **USS SIMS** survived. On May 11, the destroyer **USS HENLEY (DD-391)** took off the surviving 123 of **NEOSHO's** complement of 304. **USS HENLEY** then sank the crippled ship.)

Source: *Dictionary of American Navy Fighting Ships* (DANFS)



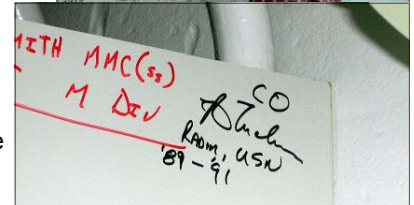
Photo courtesy of the South Jersey Courier Post

**RADM Ronald D. Tucker, USN (Ret.)**

On July 13, 2004, the last Commanding Officer of **USS NEW JERSEY, RADM Ronald D. Tucker, USN (Ret.)** paid a return visit to the ship...

"My wife, Christy and I really enjoyed our recent visit to the Battleship. She looks great and the volunteers are doing a wonderful job! We took some time to tour the ship and were very impressed with the historical displays. Lots of memories there. I also told the ship's Archives Manager Bob Walters, about the Halsey coffee table that was in the Captain's cabin at the time of decommissioning (1991.) It was stored below in a storeroom with some other high value items of historical interest. I hope someone can find it and put it on display in the cabin. We hope to make the reunion next year..."

**RADM Ronald D. Tucker, USN (Ret.)**  
**19th Commanding Officer, USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)**  
**Anthem, Arizona**



**Battleship NEW JERSEY Dedication - Chapel of Four Chaplains...**

The last command chaplain, **James P. Nickols (Captain, Chaplain Corps, USN (Ret.))** visited Battleship New Jersey on August 6, 2004. Nickols, and his wife Janell, also a Navy chaplain, and the first Navy chaplains to meet and marry on active duty, donated a number of artifacts to Battleship New Jersey, and then toured the ship with Bob Walters, Archives Manager. Nickols participated in the final decommissioning of **USS NEW JERSEY** in February of 1991.

Nickols first reported aboard **USS NEW JERSEY (BB 62)** in July 1989, and served under Captain Ronald D. Tucker, the ship's last commanding officer. Nickols' former commanding officer, now RADM Tucker retired, had visited the ship only a few weeks before.

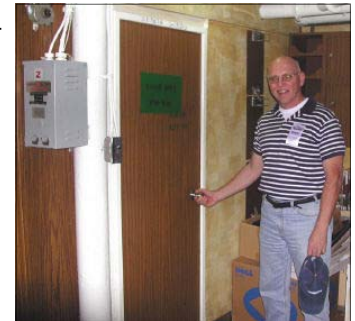


After **NEW JERSEY**, Nickols reported aboard **USS MISSOURI (BB 63)** in February of 1992. He served in **USS MISSOURI (BB 63)** during the Gulf War, the ceremonies marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the ship's decommissioning in March 1992. After the ship's decommissioning, Nickols became the Regimental Chaplain for the 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, and was deployed to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. Upon his return to the States, he became the command chaplain for the Marine Corps Base in Twenty nine Palms, Ca. His next assignments were Command Chaplain in **USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73)**, Director, Operational Ministries for the U. S. Atlantic Fleet, and finally as command chaplain, and plankowner, in **USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76)**.

Nickols returned to the ship again on Aug. 17 to rededicate the **USS NEW JERSEY** ship's chapel as the "**Chapel of Four Chaplains**."

Nickols is pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation, located in Newport News, Va. He was installed as pastor on Sun., Nov. 1, 2003, after concluding nearly 27 years of service as a chaplain.

Pastor Nickols and his family now reside in Williamsburg, Va.



**"Every child in America should be acquainted with his own country.  
He should read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice.  
As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country."**

**-- Noah Webster**





**USS NEW JERSEY (BB 62)**  
**Camden, New Jersey**

**Rededication of the Ship's Chapel**

**Tuesday**  
**17 August 2004**

Our Gracious Creator, we gather in this space to set it aside once again as a place of worship, prayer, and as a visible reminder of your presence not only now and into the future, but also of as a testimony to your presence in the lives of the Sailors who served in NEW JERSEY.

May every person who tours this ship, attend special functions, or participates in over-night events, find within this special place the solace that comes from praying to You, strength that comes from being committed to You, and the wisdom that comes from learning how Sailors of faith worshipped and served You.

Bless those whose contributions of time, talent, and treasure restored this special space and those who seek to interpret the story of ministry to the Sailors and Marines who served in NEW JERSEY.

James P. Nickols  
CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret.)

# BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS...

## THE JERSEYMAN



**Volunteer Sharlene Sullivan**  
Sharlene's father, **Salvatore Favieri**, served in the army in WW2...

"This is something I wanted to do for him, and when the **NEW JERSEY** came to Camden, I jumped at the chance. I started volunteering in 2001, and I have been proud of every minute..."

**Sharlene Sullivan** is a Special Education Teacher in Camden, New Jersey

**Volunteer Arlene Baker**

USAF Reserve Airman 1976-1977, and she was trained as a C-5 Mechanic's Apprentice.

This was followed by service in the US Army (NJ) National Guard from 1977 to 1981 as a Personnel Specialist (E-5.)

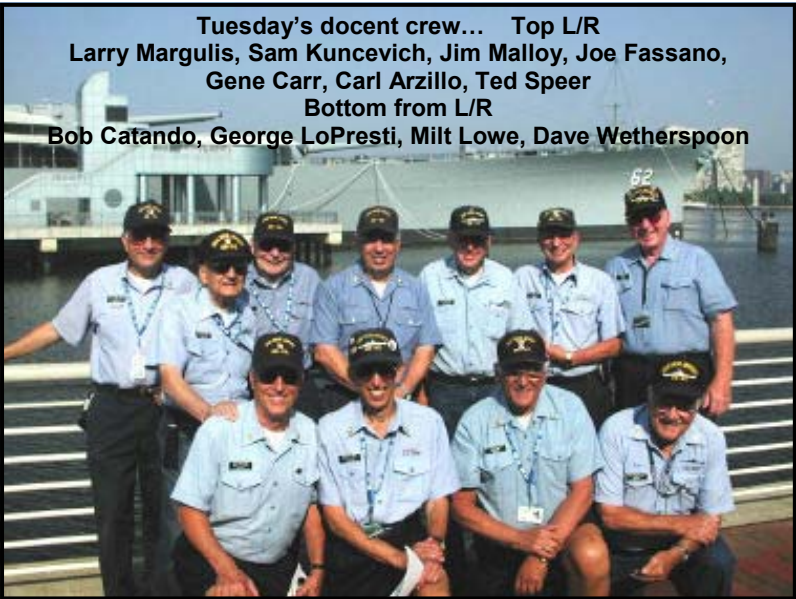
**Arlene Baker** is a Haddon Township High School Librarian in Westmont, New Jersey



**Sunday's docent crew... L/R Frank Chiacchio, Sharlene Sullivan, Phil DiCiano and Bill Hamilton**



**Monday's docent crew... Left to right Art Hill, Arlene Baker, Tony DeLucas, Bill Schact, Jim Standiford, Skip DeGlavina, Volunteer coordinator Pat Haines, Norm Roton, Harry Frank, Bob Day, Frank Foord, and Charlie Long**



**Tuesday's docent crew... Top L/R Larry Margulis, Sam Kuncevich, Jim Malloy, Joe Fassano, Gene Carr, Carl Arzillo, Ted Speer Bottom from L/R Bob Catando, George LoPresti, Milt Lowe, Dave Wetherspoon**

**Battleship NEW JERSEY docents...**  
We have recently had several visitors aboard that told very detailed stories of how USS NEW JERSEY firing missions had saved their lives in Vietnam. Other stories have also been told to docents about USS NEW JERSEY firing missions that were observed during the Korean War.

With your help, *The Jerseyman* would like to interview these veterans, and possibly record their memories for future issues.

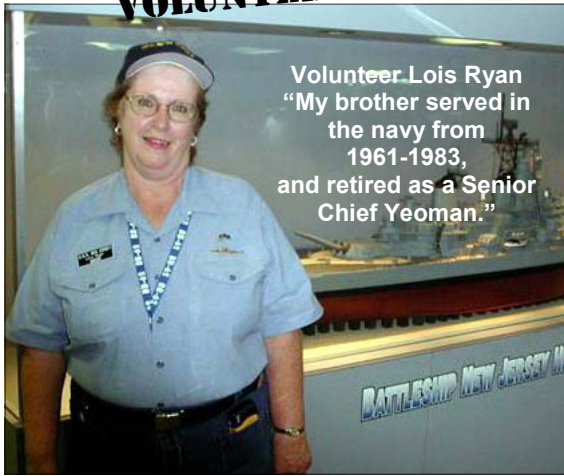
If USS NEW JERSEY stories are offered by your visitor's, we ask that you please jot down the person's name, phone number, and a brief description of the story subject.

Please leave them in *The Jerseyman* mail slot aboard ship.

Many thanks...

# BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS...

## THE JERSEYMAN



Volunteer Lois Ryan  
"My brother served in  
the navy from  
1961-1983,  
and retired as a Senior  
Chief Yeoman."



Wednesday shipmates... L/R  
Jack Croghan, USS WORCESTER 1948-1952  
Charles Weiss, 420 Ord. Evac. ETO, 3rd Army, 1943-1946  
Earl Cargen, US Navy - Philippines, 1945-1946  
ED Haas, Troop G, 12th Rgt, 1st Cav., 1945-1948



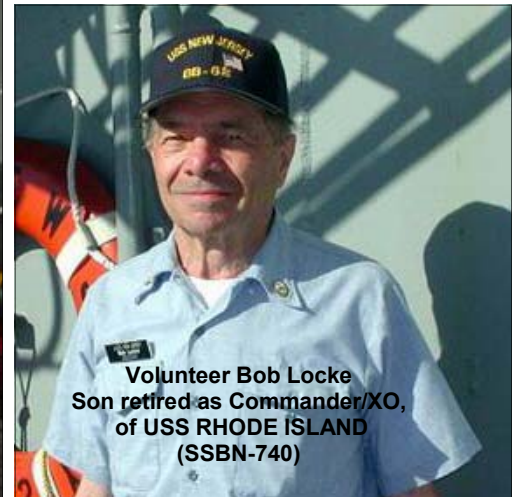
Volunteer Charles Higgins  
707th AAA Gun Bn.  
Pennsylvania Army National Guard  
1953-1962



Volunteer Frank Chiacchio  
USS REMEY (DE 688)  
1956-1960



Wednesday "Line handlers"... L/R  
Russ Collins USS NEW JERSEY 1943-1946  
, Joe Donnelly USS PICKAWAY 1943-1945  
Jack Croghan, USS WORCESTER 1948-1952  
Dick Sowers, WW2/Korea USN/USMCR



Volunteer Bob Locke  
Son retired as Commander/XO,  
of USS RHODE ISLAND  
(SSBN-740)

## THE JERSEYMAN



**AHOY!**  
C Division crewmen of **USS NEW JERSEY** from 1955-1956 are looking for shipmates...

Trying to find:  
**TEC Wallace Doty**  
**RMC Ben T. Watson Jr.**  
**RM1 Joseph A Busch**  
Please contact:  
[billjahn@charter.net](mailto:billjahn@charter.net) - Thanks!

### SHIP'S BELLS

Photos received - Thanks!  
**USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47)**

Ray Thompson  
East Coast Ass'n Director  
Woburn, Massachusetts

**USS HOUSTON (CA-30)**  
Ms. Val Poss, Exec. Director  
USS HOUSTON Survivors Ass'n.,  
and "Next Generation"  
Georgetown, Texas

**USS BOGUE (CVE-9)**  
Omer S. Olson  
Spokane Valley, Washington

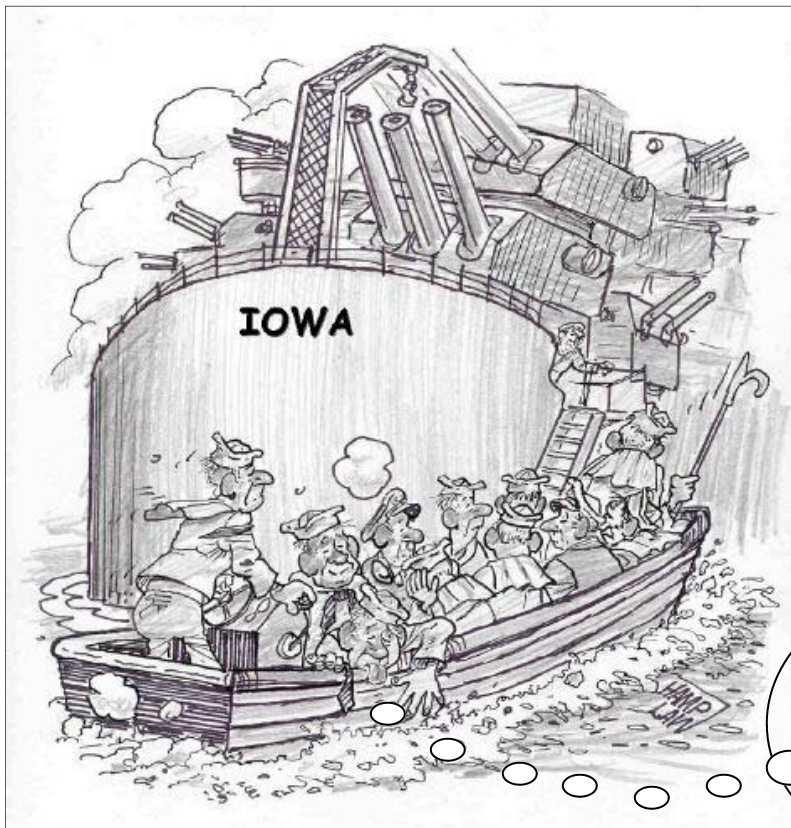
**USCGC BRAMBLE**  
**USCGC STATEN ISLAND (Active)**  
**USCGC BLACKTHORN (WLB-391)**  
Scott T. Price  
Historian, U.S. Coast Guard  
Washington, D.C.

#### Notes:

**DOES ANYONE HAVE A SHIP'S BELL PHOTO FROM USS IOWA (BB-61)??**

#### Answer to a recent question...

We regret that hard copy *Jerseyman* subscriptions cannot be offered. If you are having trouble with downloads of *The Jerseyman*, and want a hard copy... One reader has suggested asking a local copy shop for a color printout from *The Jerseyman* archive websites. Copy shops usually have internet access, and up-to-date Adobe Acrobat capability.



"...hope it's my  
**NEW JOISEY...**  
they all kinda  
look th' same..."

# BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS...

## THE JERSEYMAN



*"From 1953 to 1957, I served aboard **USS General W.A. Mann (AP-112.)** The mission of the ship was transporting troops (2,000) to Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Formosa (Taiwan,) and dependents to Japan. I had a lot of windshield time as we steamed 100,000 miles/year at 18 knots.*

*I reported aboard as gunnery officer, but after a year, the guns were removed and I became the transportation officer (liaison between the crew and the passengers,) and underway OOD. We didn't miss much from births to deaths and everything else between. I left in December 1956 as a LT(jg.)"*

**Jack Ledebor,**  
Wyncote, Pennsylvania

We thought it would be of interest to once again share with new readers and volunteers, a few of the ships and stations represented by the volunteers of Battleship NEW JERSEY...

315TH BOMB SQ. (B-25's)  
USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)  
USAAF (B-26's)  
S/S PARK HOLLAND  
USS GREAT SITKAN (AE-17)  
USS MACON (CA-132)  
USS ALBANY (CA-123)  
USS MIDWAY (CVB-41)  
MARDET - USS NEW JERSEY  
USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63)  
USS SIMON LAKE (AS-33)  
USS HENLEY (DD-553)  
USS SOUTH DAKOTA (BB-57)  
USS DAVID W. TAYLOR (DD-551)  
334TH FIGHTER SQ. -KOREA  
USS IOWA (BB-61)  
US NAVAL SECURITY GROUP  
USS VESUVIUS (AE-15)  
4TH INF. "IVY" DIV, WW2  
USS SANTA FE (CL-60)  
USS DES MOINES (CA-134)  
USS CABOT (CVL-28)  
USS DUPONT (DD-941)  
USS SHASTA (AE-6)  
US ARMY TNG CTR. FT KNOX  
LST 515  
PCS 1386  
USS AMERICA (CV-66)  
USS RANGER (CV-61)  
228TH ARTILLERY, US ARMY  
USS PICKAWAY (PA-222)  
AMD LAKEHURST, NJ  
497TH RECON SQ., USAF  
MARDET - USS NORTH CAROLINA

27TH FIGHTER WING, ADAK  
USS ESTES (AGC-12)  
BEACH JUMPER UNIT ONE  
F.E.WARREN AFB, WYOMING  
US ARMY MILITARY POLICE  
USCGC DUANE (WPG-33)  
111TH INF., US ARMY  
USS MILIUS (DDG-69)  
USS ACCOKEEK (ATA-181)  
USS T. ROOSEVELT (CVN-71)  
NJ AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
USS SALEM (CA-139)  
USS ARCADIA (AD-23)  
US ARMY INF, 5TH DIV. MECH.  
NSA, FT. MEADE, MD.  
USS MEREDITH (DD-890)  
USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64)  
USS JOHN J. WEEKS (DD-701)  
2ND PIONEER BN, USMC  
210TH COMBAT AVIATION BN.  
2ND MARINE DIV.  
22ND ARVN RANGER DIV.  
USS PANAMINT (AGC-13)  
1ST ARMORED CAVALRY DIV.  
VS-22 QUONSET, R.I.  
35TH NAVAL CONST. BN.  
USS CHARA (AKA-58)  
USS MISSISSIPPI (BB-41)  
SHIPWRIGHT, PNSY  
HQ, SQ 8 (PBY'S) CASU 6  
USS POCONO (AGC-16)  
USS SNYDER (DD-745)  
USS HORACE A. BASS (APD-124)  
USS CAPERTON (DD-650)  
USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65)  
USS F.D. ROOSEVELT (CVA-42)  
USS HAMUL (AD-20)  
USS MOALE (DD-693)

4TH INF. DIV, 46TH AAA  
USS ESSEX (CVS-9)  
1ST CAV. DIV (FIRST TEAM)  
USS HISSEM (DER-400)  
USS FULMAR (MSC(O)-47)  
US ARMY DENTAL CORPS  
USS MISSOURI (BB-63)  
HMS IRONBOUND R.C. NAVY  
FAW 14, VPB205 (PBY, PBM)  
USS BUNKER HILL (CV-17)  
278TH REG. COMBAT TEAM  
50TH ARMORED DIV NAT. GD.  
USS RUSHMORE (LSD-14)  
VF 174  
1ST CAV, 12TH REG'T  
USS ROBERT L. WILSON (DD847)  
FMF 13TH INF. BN. USMC  
US ARMY TNG CMD. FT. BLISS  
USS LOS ANGELES (CA-135)  
USS HORNET (CV-8)  
USS FORRESTAL (CV-59)  
LCI (L) 492  
USS COLUMBUS (CA-74)  
S.S. BENJAMIN D. WILSON  
1ST MARINE AIR WING  
USS WILLIAM C. LAWE (DD-763)  
112TH FIELD ARTILLERY, NJNG  
USS NORTH CAROLINA (BB-55)  
USS HYMAM (DD-732)  
USS RHODE ISLAND (SSBN-740)  
USS CAROLINE COUNTY (LST525)  
NAS ATSUGI, JAPAN  
NAS AGANA, GUAM  
NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND  
USS CHELEB (AK-138)  
US ARMY SECURITY AGENCY  
533RD ROCKET FIELD ARTIL'RY  
JET SHOP MACDILL, AFB  
USS WARRICK (AKA-89)  
USS TRUXTUN (DLGN 35)  
USS NIMITZ (CVN 68)  
USS SALEM (CA 139)  
USS ROBERT A. OWENS (DD 827)  
USS J.D. BLACKWOOD (DE 219)  
USS SNOWDEN (DE 246)  
Brown River Navy (22nd UDT)  
USS GRANT (AP 29)  
25th Inf. Div, 35th Inf. Regiment  
USS GEN. W.A. MANN (AP-112)

(There are many more...)

### Disclaimer:

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Master Chief Tom Helvig, USN (Ret.) - Volunteer Writer/Editor **The Jerseyman** © 2004

## UNITED STATES NAVY SHIP'S BELLS

A Naval Heritage Display  
of Battleship NEW JERSEY (BB-62)  
and *The Jerseyman*

### CRUISERS

### USS HOUSTON (CA-30)

#### USS HOUSTON (CA-30)

Displacement: 9,050 Tons  
Length: 600' 3"      Beam: 66' 1"      Draft: 16' 4"  
Speed: 33 knots  
Class: *Northampton*

The second Houston (CA-30) was launched by Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia on 7 September 1929, and commissioned as CL-30, 17 June 1930. Her designation was changed to CA-30, on 1 July 1931. Before the outbreak of World War 2, **USS HOUSTON** had been flagship of the Asiatic Fleet, and she was a favorite of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had cruised with her four times.

In the early morning hours of March 1, 1942, **USS HOUSTON** was in company with Australian light cruiser **HMAS PERTH**, and both cruisers were sunk in Sunda Strait between the Indonesian Islands of Sumatra and Java. **USS HOUSTON** was commanded by **Captain Albert H. Rooks**.

Less than 24 hours after the Battle of the Java Sea, and low on fuel, both unaccompanied cruisers had come upon a large Japanese landing force headed for Java. This force consisted of 60 loaded Japanese transports escorted by one aircraft carrier, seven cruisers, and more than 20 destroyers under the flag of **ADM Takeo Kurita**. **HMAS PERTH** was hit by four torpedoes and sank at 11:45 PM on February 28, 1942. **USS HOUSTON** continued to fight on valiantly and alone, and she also took a fourth torpedo. **HOUSTON** was listing heavily to starboard when the Japanese destroyers formed a semi-circle, illuminated her with searchlights, and concentrated fire on her. **Captain Rooks** was killed by shrapnel on the bridge, and the order to abandon ship was given just minutes before she sank at 12:22 AM on March 1, 1942.

**USS HOUSTON** had a crew of 1068 men. Seven hundred of her crew perished in battle. After the ammunition ran out, many were strafed on the ship, and in the water. 368 Houston survivors were taken as prisoners of war. Their fate was unknown until 1944 when US submarines picked up Allied survivors from Japanese transports sunk by the submarines. Among these survivors, were four men from **HMAS PERTH** who told their story, and of the inhumane treatment received as POW's, and of being forced to work on the Burma-Siam railway. The notorious Bridge over River Kwai was one of the 47 bridges these men were forced to build. After the Atomic bomb was dropped on Japan in August of 1945, and after 42 months captivity, the remaining 289 crewmen were liberated in September of 1945. 79 had died in POW camps. For his actions, **Captain Albert H. Rooks** (US Naval Archives photo,) was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism. In addition to two battle stars, **USS HOUSTON** was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

#### Sources:

**USS HOUSTON** survivor histories of **Otto Schwarz**, **Walter G. Winslow**, **Alan Payne** and **Valson S. Roberts**.

**Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS), Volume III, Pg. 374-375.**

**HISTORY OF UNITED STATES NAVAL OPERATIONS IN WORLD WAR II, Volume III, Pg. 363-370, by Samuel Eliot Morison**



#### Leyte Gulf - "Payback..."

In September of 1941, and three years prior to the Battle of Leyte Gulf, **Captain Jesse B. Oldendorf** (US Navy Photo) was relieved by **Captain Albert H. Rooks** as the new Commanding Officer of **USS HOUSTON (CA-30.)** Just a few months later, in Feb/March of 1942, **Japanese Admiral Takeo Kurita** led the attack that sank **HMAS Perth** and **USS HOUSTON** in Sunda Strait.

During the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October of 1944, **ADM Jesse B. Oldendorf** chose as his flagship, the cruiser **USS LOUISVILLE (CA-28.)** **USS LOUISVILLE** was a **NORTHAMPTON** Class cruiser, and a sister ship to **USS HOUSTON (CA-30.)** This old flagship, leading Oldendorf's Seventh Fleet Bombardment group of 6 aged battleships, 4 Heavy Cruisers, 4 Light Cruisers, and 28 Destroyers, defeated **VADM Takeo**

**Kurita's** forces. At the Battle of Leyte Gulf, US and Australian naval forces sank 26 Japanese ships for a combined total of 306,000 tons destroyed.

**USS HOUSTON** bell photos were contributed by: **USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)** crewman **LT(jg) Bill Lynch**, (1953-1956,) in memory of his brother **Charles Lynch**, who made the supreme sacrifice in **USS HOUSTON (CA-30),** and **Ms. Val Poss**, Executive Director, **USS HOUSTON Survivors Association**, and "Next Generation."

**USS HOUSTON's** monument was dedicated to her gallant crew on November 11, 1995 at Sam Houston Park, Houston, Texas