

LST 534 Newsletter

October/November/December 2008

Volume 11, Issue 4

In His Own Words, Part II

Continued Story, by Cecil Cowart, SC2c:

“While we were trying to survive the war, the Germans were making buzz bombs in robot planes. While we were tied up at a pier where some other LSTs were, we thought we were safe until the Germans started sending planes by remote control loaded with TNT, and some were very effective. While we were tied up at a pier, the planes found some ships, and one in particular was blown apart. I believe it was said all the crew aboard was killed. The generals didn't know where they were coming from but they had planes up in the air at the time the buzz teetotaled the mountain they were coming out of, several every night, but that soon stopped when our planes blew up their operation

and after that things settled down, and we took a deep breath and went on to the US of A.

After about 2 or 3 months, we went back to England and had our LST checked and after everything was OK we headed back to the USA where we were docked at Pier 92 or close. I was sent to pick up another ship in Port Arthur, Texas, and this time it was an oil tanker headed for Korea to my sorrow. It wasn't bad but long trips back and forth carrying oil, it was rough waters most of the time, but the Good Lord was on my side from start to finish. The oil tanker wasn't my choice, but you go where you're needed. Coming back from one of those trips, our ship caught afire in the tanks (glad they were empty) right outside of Norfolk, Virginia, and we put out a May Day for

help, but the ships passed right by our ship and never replied to the May Day signal. We made several trips to Korea, and after our ship caught fire, we had to have lots of service to maintain the fire under control. I survived so close calls, but I was fortunate to survive. This was not my type of transportation, but I couldn't walk on the water. I had to obey. I stayed on this tanker for quite a while but we were given leave and, while I was home on leave, I was hospitalized at the Bethesda Naval Hospital where I thought this was my last home port, but a turn for the better kept me moving toward my home at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida.

After several weeks, although it seemed like years, I was sent to Staten Island for assignment on a sub Chaser and thought it

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was an accident ready to happen, but everything went along fairly good for several more weeks, and we went to Bermuda and Azores Islands where we were based for air and ship rescues. While on board the S.C. 1332, we were being refueled at sea. We got too close to the stern of the ship that was refueling us and crashed by the stern of the tanker that was refueling us. Our crew closed the hole up quickly with mattresses and other materials. Sub Chaser was severely damaged and had to work hard and long to get it seaworthy again. This duty went on for several months, and then we went back to Staten Island, New York, where the ship was decommissioned.

I went to Washington Navy Yard where I went on leave and again I was sent to the Naval Hospital after a time, and then to Charleston Naval Hospital. A blood vessel burst in my head and caused me to be discharged from the United States Hospital, and that wound up my career. I really loved all of it except the time I had of close calls. I was retired from all naval activities and was retired

from service from Charleston Naval Base and then sent home.

I was retired after 20 years of service. I served most of the time on active duty. During the action months, we touched base in several foreign countries which included: Iceland, Newfoundland, England, Scotland, France, Germany, the Azores Islands, and Bermuda. But little did I know I'd wind up in Charleston, South Carolina, until I was discharged and retired from service.

It really wasn't over until peace was signed. We had one of the best crews anywhere. On my ship they were excellent and close. We were a happy group when the bells rang and the whistle blew. We knew it was over. Then my feelings fell down about my knees thinking about what we came through, and I had to sit down and gain my posture back. All your crew members as well as the officers held hands, with bowed heads, and said a short prayer for us and those that didn't make it back safely.

Never again I hope and

pray.

We never had time to really think about the circumstances involved around the crew and our ship. We had observers to keep a sharp eye for other ships we couldn't recognize and report all happenings while we were in route to a prescribed destination. I had the ship's food service to deal with; I had to be sure our food supplies didn't get out of hand. I don't believe I slept a full night while in route to our destination. We kept food available at all times so the crew could be happy and well fed.

We knew if we let our guard down most anything could happen, but nothing serious did happen during our many miles and hours in the Atlantic Ocean. There was no doctor aboard our ship, but we had a jam up hospitalman aboard. We kept hot coffee and food for as long as we could during these operations.

Our captain was a real fellow who knew how to steer his ship on a safe course. We had several weeks of foul weather, but our expert crew kept us

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afloat. Can't forget about the Good Lord above. He was with us all the time. When all was quiet, we had target practice where we could be alert at all times. I don't believe I slept a full night's while aboard the ship.

While we were in convoy formation, we had to stay that way even when we were shot at. I had to leave the ship a number of times for medical care. I'll have to say it was a scary time, but we survived.

I was on about 5 or 6 ships while serving my country. I just hope there won't be another world war to serve in, but you never know what's in store for us. I thank the Good Lord above for keeping me safe.

I hope this never happens again, but more so I hope I'll be here if needed again.

All in all it was a trying, terrible experience for a country boy. I'm glad it's over and I'm still here. After looking back how things were, I feel the Good Lord above was watching us because of the narrow escapes we had.

My service medals were:

- ♦ ETO Ribbon, 1 Bronze Star
- ♦ Good Conduct Ribbon, 5 Bronze Stars
- ♦ Korean Ribbon (which I do not have at this time but will soon – green and white)
- ♦ American Theater of Operations

Note: The balance of my service time was limited to routine except when I entered the hospital in Bethesda, MD, and later Charleston Naval Base, USN Retired. Service disability resulted in my hospitalization time. Seems like a hundred years ago.

Love you all.

—Cecil Cowart, SC2c

HOLIDAYS:

OCTOBER

13 Columbus Day
31 Halloween

NOVEMBER

2 Daylight Saving Time Ends
4 Election Day
11 Veteran's Day
27 Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER

7 National Pearl Harbor Day
21 Winter Begins
25 Christmas
31 New Year's Eve



Hip-Hip-Hurray!

BIRTHDAYS:

October 27

Johnny Medeiros
c/o Sheila Sexton
1505 NE 55th Street
Ocala, FL 34479

October 31

Oscar Cress
9701 E. Hasket Dr.
Dayton, OH 45424-1615

November 11

Albert Straka
643 Foothill Road
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

November 27

George Popham
6575 Juniper Drive
Missoula, MT 59802

December 5

Norris Long
Ocean Trail Nursing & Rehab
630 N. Fodale Ave.
P.O. Box 10249
Southport, NC 28461

December 20

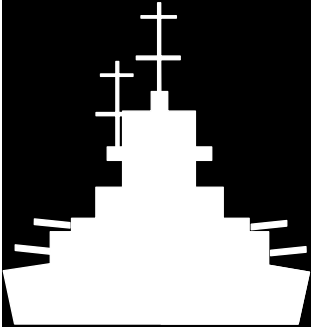
Wayne Jens
4275 Owens Rd.
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December 25

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Just for Fun

Perks of Being Over 50

1. Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
2. People no longer view you as a hypochondriac.
3. There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
4. Things you buy now won't wear out.
5. You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
6. Your eyes won't get much worse.
7. Your investment in health insurance is finally beginning to pay off.
8. Your joints are more accurate meteorologists than the National Weather Service.
9. Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them.
10. Your supply of brain cells is finally down to a manageable size.

Nautical Terms:

Greenhorns—Never crossed the date line.

Squall—A sudden, violent wind often accompanied by rain.

Editor and Comments:

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