

Contributed by Charles B. Cameron

My father John Beverly "Bev" Cameron was a bit older than most in outbreak of the Second World War. Bev enlisted into the Navy Reserves three weeks before his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 27, 1940.

From Commander Bev Cameron's hand written notes from May of 2002 about the launching of LST1082.

**"Floating down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in route to Okinawa Island, Japan."**

"It was in 1944 that I was assigned to be the commanding officer of a ship in the US Navy, being built in Pittsburgh, Pa Navy Yard. After floating down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, we arrived in New Orleans, Louisiana. In the Navy ship yard the USS ship LST1082 was put in commission and my Dad and one of my sisters came from Kansas City for the ceremony. There we were assigned to proceed to Panama City for shakedown which was for training the officers and crew how to perform their duties aboard ship. We held "General Quarters" drills where the officers and crew proceeded to their battle stations to man the guns in case of a submarine or airplane attack. The proper procedure was to go forward on the starboard side (right) of the ship, and go to the stern (rear) and the port (left) side of the ship.

After shakedown we proceeded back to New Orleans where pontoon strings were hung on both sides of the ship. Our destination to deliver those pontoon strings to Okinawa Island in 25 the Pacific Ocean.

We were ordered to proceed to the Panama Canal. We proceeded through the Canal and came out on the west side of the canal in the Pacific Ocean. On our way to Okinawa, we went to "General Quarters" one hour before sunset to be ready for an enemy ship or submarine attack.

After arriving in Okinawa, we unloaded the pontoon strings. The purpose of the pontoons was to connect them and they would be used as docks for ships to come along side and discharge their cargo, or take aboard supplies. Okinawa had no sandy beaches for LST's to go on. The Island had coral reefs which were sharp and could damage a ship.

While we were in Okinawa, we were subject to attacks from the sky by Japanese bombers. In these cases we would anchor our ship by the stern anchor and we had smoke machines on the rear of the ship and the prevailing wind would blow the smoke to cover the whole ship and the enemy pilots could not see us. Luckily we were not hit by the Japanese pilots and that's this end of the story."

From my Dad's records, at the end of the war, he captained the LST 1082 back to San Francisco in January 1946 where he was relieved of command due to the end of the War and the ship was put into Pacific Reserve Fleet.

From my own family history that I have written about Bev's years aboard the LST 1082 I have written the following:

In June of 1945, there was a record low in the barometric pressure (the Perfect Storm) in the Pacific waters while he was at Saipan. Bev had to put to sea so the ship would not be tossed around the harbor. He related a story that one time during the storm Bev had to go outside of the coning tower. The flat bottom boat was slapping the ocean surface. On one wave Bev held onto the railing for dear life and his feet were parallel to the deck. When the ship slapped back down, he got his sea legs and hurried back inside. Two days after this storm, the LST 1082 arrived in Buckner Bay, Okinawa. While in the anchorage in Okinawa, the ship hid under a smoke screen during many air alerts for the island.

Lt Commander Cameron was ready for the invasion of the Japanese home land, but with the dropping of the Atomic Bombs, the War was soon over. LST 1082 had been in dry dock in Pearl Harbor for repairs when the good news of the end of the War came. On August 15, 1945, the LST 1082 took 210 Marines and their equipment bound for the occupation duty in Japan and reached Sasebo, Japan on September 23rd. Lt Cmdr Cameron then embarked to the Philippines several times before picking up 185 officers and men of the Army Aviation Battalion and took them to Sasebo. On November 23, 1945, LST 1082 set sail for San Francisco via Saipan and Pearl Harbor. The ship finally reached California on January 16, 1946. In the Astoria, California shipyard on August 5, 1946, LST 1082 was entered into the Pacific Reserve Fleet. LST 1082 was awarded a **Battle Star** for their support in the Okinawa invasion.

Bev remained on active duty till 1946. He returned to Kansas City and became the Commander of the Kansas City's Naval Reserve Station. In 1962, John B Cameron retired from the Reserves at the rank of Commander after 6 ½ years of active duty and 15 ½ years in the Naval Reserves for a total of 22 years. He wanted to make sure that there was no question about how much credit he would have once he reached retirement age of sixty-five.