

TALKING POINTS, FOR THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

1. I ALONG WITH A FRIEND OF MINE ENLISTED IN THE ARMY IN MID 1942. HE WAS SELECTED AND SERVED THE ENTIRE WAR IN THE UNITED STATES. THE FURTHEST HE EVER GOT FROM MONTGOMERY WAS ARKANSAS SOMEONE NOTICED THAT I WAS NOT YET 18 YRS OLD. I EXPLAINED THAT I HAD MY PARENTS PERMISSION. HE SAID TRY THE NAVY THAT THEY WOULD TAKE 17YR OLDS.

A FEW MONTHS LATER ON 5/17/43 I WAS DRAFTED. DURING THE PHYSICAL EXAM THE DR. NOTED THAT I HAD A TREMBLE IN MY HANDS. HE SAID I WAS 4F AND AGAIN HE WAS ABOUT TO SEND ME BACK HOME. I CONVINCED HIM THAT I WAS JUST NERVOUS ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. HE BOUGHT IT!

THEN I WAS SENT TO A SMALL ROOM WHERE THEY GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE WHAT BRANCH OF SERVICE IN WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO SERVE. I REQUESTED THE ARMY INFANTRY. I HAD NOTED ON MY QUESTIONNAIRE THAT I HAD EXPERIENCE WORKING AS A MACHINIST, HE ASKED? "WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE IN YOUR TRADE? I SAID OK WITH ME. HE SAID, "THEN I APPOINT YOU TO THE NAVY.

THEN I WAS SENT TO ANOTHER SMALL ROOM WHERE I STUCK MY HEAD IN THE DOOR AND THE RECRUITER LOOKED UP AT ME AND SAID" I SEE THEY APPOINTED YOU TO THE NAVY." I SAID, "YES THEY DID." HE THEN SAID, "I ASSIGN YOU TO THE NAVY." AND THAT IS HOW IT ALL STARTED. SOMEHOW I FELT THAT I HAD VERY LITTLE CHOICE IN MY GOING TO THE NAVY. I GUESS ON THAT PARTICULAR DAY THAT THEY HAD MORE NEED FOR MACHINIST THAN A FOOT SOLDIER. I NEVER COMPLAINED. I JUST WANTED TO BE A PART OF THE WAR EFFORT.

2, AFTER BHAM I WAS SENT TO THE NAVAL TRAINING STATION AT BAINBRIDGE, MD. I STAYED THERE ABOUT SIX WEEKS. DURING THIS TIME I WAS GIVEN MANY APTITUDE TEST TO SEE WHERE I WOULD BEST SERVE. I SCORED EXTREMELY HIGH ON ALL OF MY TEST. I DON'T KNOW WHY. I WAS NEVER THAT GOOD OF A STUDENT AT SIDNEY LANIER HIGH SCHOOL. LATER IN YEARS I FOUND THAT I HAD A HEARING PROBLEM FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD. I NEVER REALLY KNEW WHAT THE TEACHERS WERE TALKING ABOUT.

I ASKED TO BE SENT TO A MACHINIST SCHOOL FOR TRAINING AND THAT I WOULD GET A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE "CAPITAL CITY MACHINE WORKS" CONFIRMING MY ABILITY AS A MACHINIST. THE INSTRUCTOR SAID, "DON'T BOTHER, WITH THESE GRADES YOU CAN GET ANY SCHOOL THAT YOU CHOOSE."

NEXT I WAS SENT TO THE AMPHIBIAN TRAINING BASE AT LITTLE CREEK, VA. I WANTED TO BE A COXSWAIN OR DRIVER OF THE SMALL AMPHIBIAN BOAT. ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS WAS THAT

YOU HAD TO LEARN SEMAPHORE TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE OTHER SMALL LANDING CRAFT. I DID LEARN HOW TO USE THE HAND HELD FLAGS AND COMMUNICATE AS NEEDED.

ONCE AGAIN, FATE STEPPED IN. IT SEEMS THERE WAS A GREATER NEED FOR SIGNALMEN THAN EITHER MACHINIST MATES OR COXSWAINS. I WAS ENROLLED IN A SIGNALMAN SCHOOL THAT INCLUDED ALL TYPES OF VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS. MY PERSONAL TUTOR WAS A SENIOR SIGNALMAN NAMED MINHART LEONARD FELDMAN 3rd. WE SERVED TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE NORMANDY INVASION. HE LATER BECAME (I WAS TOLD) IN CHARGE OF ALL WORLD RESOURCES FOR EXON MOBILE OIL. VISUAL SIGNALS WERE SAFER THAN RADIO SIGNALS, BECAUSE RADIO SIGNALS COULD BE RECEIVED BY THE ENEMY FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES. VISUAL SIGNALS INCLUDED, 1. SEMAPHORE WAS USED MOSTLY DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. 2. BLINKING LIGHTS USING THE INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE WAS USED FOR GREATER DISTANCES BUT HAD TO BE WITHIN THE FIELD OF VISION. WE ALSO USED A NIGHT VISION SYSTEM CALLED "NAN GEAR" THAT COULD ONLY BE SEEN BY USING SPECIAL FILTERS THAT COULD ONLY BE SEEN BY SOMEONE USING THE SAME TYPE OF GEAR. NAN GEAR WAS TOP SECRET AND HIGHLY CLASSIFIED. 3. FLAG HOIST CONSISTED OF ONE TRIANGLE SHAPED COLORED FLAG FOR EACH LETTER IN THE ALPHABET. WE ALSO HAD THREE REPEATERS THAT WAS USED TO REPEAT LETTERS IN THE ALPHABET. A REPEATER REPEATED WHAT A REPEATER REPEATED AND NEVER REPEATED A REPEATER IT REPEATED WHAT A REPEATER REPEATED. THE FLAGSHIP WOULD USUALLY RAISE THREE FLAGS AT A TIME TO THE TOP OF THE YARDARM. ALL THE REST OF THE SHIPS IN THE CONVOY WOULD REPEAT THOSE FLAGS ON THEIR OWN SHIPS. SIGNALS GIVEN INCLUDED COURSE CHANGES, SPEED CHANGES, ETC. PULLING THE FLAGS DOWN ON THE FLAGSHIP WAS A SIGNAL TO EXECUTE THE MANEUVER. IT WORKED VERY MUCH LIKE A DRILL SARGENT GIVING RIGHT TURN, ABOUT FACE, ETC ORDERS. I USUALLY NEW WHAT THE SHIP WAS GOING TO DO BEFORE THE CAPTAIN.

3. NEXT I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE "GUNFIRE SUPPORT CRAFT LCF9". THIS WAS A PRELUDE TO THE INVASION OF NORMANDY. WE WERE TRANSPORTED TO GLASGOW SCOTLAND ABOARD THE "QUEEN ELIZABETH" THE LARGEST SHIP AFLOAT AT THE TIME. WE SAILED WITHOUT ANY ESCORT SERVICE. THE SHIP WAS SO FAST THAT MOST ESCORTS SHIPS COULD NOT KEEP UP. IT WAS RUMORED ABOARD SHIP THAT WE WERE UNDER SURVEILLANCE FROM GERMAN U-BOATS MOST OF THE TIME. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A PRIZE FOR THE GERMANS. THEY NEVER CAUGHT UP WITH US OR THE QUEEN ELIZABETH AT ANY OTHER TIME DURING THE WAR. THEIR ONLY HOPE OF CLAIMING THE QUEEN ELIZABETH WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR

THEM TO POSITION THEIR U-BOATS IN THE PROJECTED PATH (WHICH CHANGED FREQUENTLY) OF THAT GREAT SHIP.

AFTER ARRIVING IN GLASGOW, WE WERE HOUSED IN QUONSET HUTS AND LATER ASSIGNED TO THE "LANDING SHIP FLAK 9" (LCF9). MY SCHOOLING CONTINUED DAILY DURING THIS TIME. THE LCF9 WAS OWNED BY GREAT BRITON AND WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR A LANDING CRAFT. THE CARGO DECK WAS COVERED WITH A WELDED STEEL PLATE AND THEN MOUNTED WITH ANTI AIRCRAFT GUNS TO PROVIDE AIR COVER FOR THE COMING NORMANDY INVASION.

ACCOMMODATIONS WERE SKIMPY AT BEST. WE SLEPT IN HAMMOCKS THAT WERE HUNG DIRECTLY ABOVE THE DINING AREA. WHICH MEANT AT MEAL TIME, WE HAD TO GET OUT OF THE HAMMOCK, SECURE AND STORE THEM, IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE IF YOU HAD JUST CAME OFF THE TWELVE TO FOUR MID-NIGHT SHIFT OR NOT. WE HAD NO REFRIGERATION AND ATE MOSTLY C RATIONS. TILL THIS DAY I STILL SLEEP WITH MY FEET CROSSED AS I HAD TO DO IN THE HAMMOCKS. HABIT I GUESS. I WAS ON THIS LCF FOR APPROXIMATELY NINE MONTHS.

WE SLOWLY MADE OUR WAY SOUTH TO LANDS END AND PULLED IN TO FALMOUTH ENGLAND. THERE WE STAYED FOR QUITE AWHILE. AS THE INVASION TIME DREW NEARER WE CONTINUED EAST IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL TO PLYMOUTH ENGLAND WHERE WE DROPPED ANCHOR ALONG WITH MANY OTHER SHIPS THAT WERE NOW IN THIS STAGING AREA. THAT FIRST NIGHT WAS MY REAL FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY. THE GERMANS CONDUCTED AN AIR RAID THAT NIGHT IN THE HARBOR. I WAS AT MY BATTLE STATION ON THE BRIDGE ALONG WITH OTHERS AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP. I SAW A LINE OF BOMBS COMING STRAIGHT FOR MY SHIP. LUCKILY ONE HIT THE WATER JUST BEFORE REACHING US. THE NEXT BOMB HIT THE WATER JUST BEYOND US. WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF TWO BOMBS WITH NO DAMAGE AT ALL TO US. WELL, ALMOST, I WAS SO SCARED, I THOUGHT FROM THE MOVIES I HAD SEEN THAT SURELY NO ONE COULD SURVIVE SUCH AN ATTACK.

A FEW DAYS LATER WE PULLED OUT ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF OTHER SHIPS FOR OUR JOURNEY TO NORMANDY. I RECEIVED A VISUAL FIVE LETTER CODED MESSAGE THAT INFORMED US THAT THE INVASION WAS OFF BECAUSE OF THE BAD WEATHER FORECAST. BACK INTO THE HARBOR WE WENT. THE NEXT DAY WE PULLED OUT AGAIN. THIS TIME THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK. WE WERE ON OUR WAY FOR THE BIG SHOWDOWN.

JUNE 6th,1944. OUR MISSION WAS TO GO IN FIFTEEN MINUTES AHEAD OF THE FIRST WAVE OF LANDING CRAFT (0630) AND PROVIDE AIR COVER FROM THE LUFTWARF AND FIRE FROM THE BUNKERS IMBEDDED ALONG THE COASTLINE. I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT AREA WE WERE IN (OMAHA BEACH ??). I DO REMEMBER A SMALL COVE WITH SMALL BOATS INSIDE AND JUST TO THE RIGHT OF

THAT WAS A LARGE CLIFF WITH WHAT LOOKED LIKE A HUGE GUN EMPLACEMENT. IT WAS UNDER HEAVY FIRE FROM THE BATTLE SHIPS LAYING OUT BEYOND US. THE PROJECTILES WERE SO LARGE THAT WE COULD SEE THEM COMING OVER US.

FOR US THERE WAS VERY LITTLE ACTION AFTER THE FIRST DAY. I DID SEE A LOT OF SMALL CRAFT THAT HAD EITHER BEEN HIT BY ENEMY FIRE OR HAD HIT MINES PLANTED IN THE WATER. I SAW MANY AMERICANS SWIMMING FOR THEIR LIVES AND MANY MORE JUST FLOATING FACE DOWN.

A FEW DAYS LATER I SAW MY FIRST BUZZ BOMB. IT FLEW, AT A VERY LOW ALTITUDE, DIRECTLY ABOVE US ON ITS WAY TO SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND. TILL THIS DAY, I CAN STILL HEAR THE WEIRD SOUND IT MADE, SOMETHING LIKE A SMALL GASOLINE ENGINE WITHOUT A MUFFLER,

THE BIG STORM; DURING THE THIRD WEEK OF THE INVASION A VERY DANGEROUS STORM SWEEPED THROUGH THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. THE WATER WAS SO ROUGH THAT NONE OF THE LANDING CRAFT COULD BRING IN MUCH NEEDED SUPPLIES TO THOSE THAT WERE ENTRENCHED ON ENEMY SOIL. THEY BROUGHT LARGE CARGO SHIPS IN CLOSE TO THE BEACH AND ANCHORED THEM DOWN TO FORM A SEA WALL IN AN EFFORT TO CONTINUE THE FLOW OF SUPPLIES. WE TRIED TO RIDE OUT THE STORM ON OUR OWN. FIRST WE LOST OUR MAIN ANCHOR, THEN WE LOST OUR SECOND AND LAST ANCHOR, THEN WE TIED UP TO A LARGE CARGO SHIP FOR AWHILE. WHILE TIED UP, A LARGE SEA MINE HAD BROKEN LOOSE FROM IT'S ANCHOR ON THE BOTTOM OF THE CHANNEL AND WAS HEADED STRAIGHT FOR US AT ABOUT A 45 DEGREE ANGLE, WHEN IT WAS WITHIN 18 INCHES OF THE SHIP IT TURNED IT'S DRIFT TO PARALLEL ALONG SIDE OF THE SHIP. THE BACKWASH FROM THE WAVES KEPT IT ABOUT 18 INCHES FROM THE SHIP ALL THE WAY DOWN THE PORT SIDE OF THE SHIP. THEN AS SOON AS IT PASSED OUR BOW IT AGAIN TURNED BACK TO IT'S ORIGINAL PATH. AS SOON AS IT WAS IN OPEN WATER, OTHERS AND WE OPENED FIRE ON IT AND EVENTUALLY BLEW IT UP. AT ONE TIME I WAS LOOKING STRAIGHT DOWN AT IT NOT MORE THAN SIX FEET AWAY. IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT I MIGHT BE IN ANY DANGER. A FEW MINUTES LATER THE SHIP THAT WE WERE TIED UP TO STARTED DRAGGING ANCHOR AND HE MADE US CUT LOOSE, BACK IN THE HIGH SEAS WE WENT, THEN WHILE TRYING TO KEEP OUR BOW INTO THE WIND, WE LOST OUR RUDDER. WE WERE NOW AT THE MERCY OF THE STORM. DECK HANDS WERE HOLDING ON FOR THEIR LIVES. MANY TIMES THE WAVES WOULD BREAK OVER THE SHIP WITH THE DECK HANDS STANDING IN FOUR TO FIVE FEET OF WATER. THE FORCE OF THE WATER WOULD TRY TO TAKE THEM OVERBOARD. FINALLY A LARGE WAVE PICKED US AND SWEEPED US WAY UP ON THE

BEACH. WHEN THE STORM PASSED WE WERE STRANDED HIGH AND DRY ABOUT A BLOCK FROM THE WATER.

WHILE WE SAT THERE WITH NO WHERE TO GO, A FRIEND JAMES LAMAR FOSTER A FELLOW SIGNALMAN FROM LOUISIANA AND I DECIDED TO DO A LITTLE SIGHT SEEING. BIG MISTAKE. WHILE WALKING INLAND FROM THE BEACH WE CAME TO A SMALL FARMHOUSE WITH A MAN AND HIS WIFE PASSING OUT WINE TO THE AMERICANS. WE HAD A GLASS WITH THEM. AS WE CONTINUED UP THE LITTLE ROAD A JEEP CAME BY AND OFFERED US A RIDE. WE GOT IN WITH A 2nd LT. AND OTHERS. THEY ASKED WHERE WE WERE FROM. WE TOLD THEM OF OUR SHIP SITTING ON THE BEACH. THEY TOOK US STRAIGHT TO A FENCED IN AREA WITH HUNDREDS OF OTHER DETAINEES, PUT US INSIDE, HANDED US A SHOVEL TO DIG A FOXHOLE, AND LOCKED THE GATE. THEY DIDN'T EVEN SAY GOODNIGHT. WE WERE LOCKED UP WITH ALL CLASSES OF PEOPLE; SOME GERMAN, SOME FRENCH, AND PROBABLY OTHER SIGHTSEERS LIKE US. ABOUT MIDNIGHT THEY CALLED OUR NAMES AND TOLD US TO COME TO THE GATE. WITHOUT A WORD THEY PUT US IN ANOTHER JEEP AND DEPOSITED US BACK ON THE BEACH NEXT TO OUR BEACHED SHIP. TILL THIS DAY I DON'T KNOW WHY WE WERE PICKED UP OR WHY WE WERE LATER RELEASED WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING TO US.

LATER THEY CAME IN WITH A BULLDOZER AND DUG A CANAL DURING LOW TIDE UP TO AND AROUND OUR SHIP. WHEN THE TIDE CAME BACK IN WE WERE SURROUNDED BY WATER BUT STILL WERE SITTING ON LAND. THEY THEN BACKED A TUGBOAT UP TO US AND TIED A HEAVY CABLE TO OUR BOW AND WITH ALL THE COMBINED POWER OF THE TUGBOAT AND OUR OWN TWO ENGINES WE SLOWLY INCHED OUR WAY BACK TO DEEP WATER. WE WERE FREE AND HEADED BACK TO ENGLAND. REMEMBER WE HAD NO RUDDER. WE DID HAVE TWIN SCREWS AND BY CHANGING SPEED OF THE TWO ENGINES WE WERE ABLE TO EVENTUALLY GET ACROSS THE CHANNEL.

REMEMBER WHEN I LEFT THE STATES I WAS A SEAMAN SECOND CLASS. WHILE IN SCOTLAND I TOOK A TEST FOR SEAMAN FIRST CLASS AND FINISHED SECOND IN MY CLASS. BEFORE BEING PROMOTED I TOOK A TEST FOR SIGNALMAN THIRD CLASS. I MADE A PERFECT SCORE. AFTER GETTING BACK TO ENGLAND I WAS PROMOTED TO SM 3c. I SKIPPED S 1c.

AFTER A TEN-DAY R&R LEAVE IN PENZANCE ENGLAND I RETURNED BACK TO THE USA ABOARD A US SHIP. IT WAS TOO RISKY TO GO TO LONDON. THIS WAS DURING THE TIME THAT THE BUZZ BOMBS WERE CONSTANTLY HITTING THAT AREA.

BACK IN THE STATES AT LAST; I HAD JUST COMPLETED A VERY EXHAUSTING TOUR OF DUTY ON FOREIGN SOIL TIME I THOUGHT FOR SOME GOOD OLD SHORE DUTY AS SO MANY OF MY FRIENDS WERE ENJOYING. IT DIDN'T HAPPEN. AFTER A 25-DAY LEAVE HOME I

REPORTED BACK TO MY BASE IN NEW YORK CITY. THEY ALREADY HAD PLANS FOR ME. I WAS PUT ON A TROOP TRAIN HEADED FOR CALIFORNIA.

AFTER ARRIVING IN San Diego I WAS ASSIGNED TO ANOTHER LANDING SHIP (LSM260) IT WAS BRAND NEW AND WAS DESIGNED TO LAND CARGO ON THE BEACHES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC. UNKNOWN TO US THE DESTINATION WOULD BE IWO JIMA, ONE OF THE HARDEST FOUGHT BATTLES OF THE WAR.

WE MOVED UP THE COAST TO San Francisco AND ANCHORED IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY FOR A FEW DAYS. ANOTHER STAGING AREA OF HUNDREDS OF SHIPS.

DESTINATION HONOLULU AND BEYOND.

AFTER PASSING BENEATH THE “GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE” WE HEADED OUT TO SEA WHERE WE JOINED UP WITH A HUGE CONVOY OF SHIPS INCLUDING ALL TYPES AND SIZES. THE WATER WAS VERY ROUGH AND THE WAVES WERE FIFTY FEET HIGH. MANY TIMES WE COULDN’T SEE ANY OF THE OTHER SHIPS BECAUSE OF THE HIGH WAVES. MOST OF THE CREW, INCLUDING ME, BECAME SEASICK. THIS WAS THE ONLY TIME I ACTUALLY THREW UP DURING MY TIME IN THE NAVY.

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY AND I THINK IT WAS IN HAWAII, WE BROUGHT A SQUADRON OF MARINES AND THERE EQUIPMENT ON BOARD SHIP. THEY WERE WELL TRAINED AND COMBAT EXPERIENCED AND THEY FIT RIGHT IN WITH THE REST OF US. THERE WAS A CORPORAL, IKE RIGELL, AND ONE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THESE MARINES. I HARDLY EVER SAW THE OFFICER. HE STAYED HOLED UP FOR THE MOST PART IN THE OFFICERS QUARTERS. IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE START THAT THE CORPORAL WAS IN CHARGE. IKE AND I BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS, HE WAS FROM SLOCOMB ALABAMA, BUT NOT TYPICAL, I FOUND OUT THE HARD WAY THAT HE WAS UNBEATABLE AT THE CHECKER BOARD. CHECKERS LIKE CHESS IS A GAME OF TOTAL SKILL WITH NO LUCK INVOLVED. HIS KEEN MIND WAS SO FAR AHEAD OF THE REST OF US. THOSE WHO WERE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE HIM, SOON FOUND OUT THAT HIS MIND WORKED BEYOND ANY OF US. I DON’T THINK I EVER GOT A KING. IKE AFTER THE WAR ENROLLED IN “THE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AT GEORGIA TECH”. AFTER RECEIVING HIS DEGREE, HE WENT TO WORK FOR NASA IN HUNTSVILLE AL. AFTER A FEW YEARS HE TRANSFERRED TO CAPE CANAVERAL. DURING THE FIRST APOLLO LAUNCH, THE ONE WITH ARMSTRONG ABOARD AND THE FIRST MOON SHOT, IKE WAS THE CHIEF ENGINEER ON THE LAUNCH PAD.

AFTER HAWAII WE TOOK A SOUTHWARD COURSE AND BRIEFLY CROSSED THE EQUATOR. DESTINATION “THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND

BEYOND. WE TURNED NORTH STOPPING AT, GUAM, SAIPAN, AND TINIAN. NEXT DESTINATION IWO JIMA.

ONLY AFTER WE WERE AT SEA, WITH NO CHANCE TO BLAB OUR DESTINATION, DID WE FIND OUT THAT WE WERE NOW A PART OF THE INVASION FORCE ASSEMBLED FOR THE IWO INVASION.

OUR MISSION WOULD BE TO DROP OFF THE MARINES AND THEIR EQUIPMENT WHEN THEY CALLED US IN TO THE BEACH. I NEVER KNEW WHETHER MY FRIEND IKE HAD LIVED OR NOT. IT TOOK SEVERAL YEARS TO FIND OUT. WE HAVE HAD TWO VERY EMOTIONAL FACE TO FACE MEETINGS IN THE LAST YEAR.

I DON'T REMEMBER THE EXACT DATE OR TIME (FEB 19, 1945) WE FIRST LANDED AT IWO. I DO REMEMBER WE WERE THERE FROM THE BEGINNING. OUR FIRST LANDING LOCATION WAS AT THE EXTREME NORTH END OF THE LANDING AREA PROBABLY THE MOST DANGEROUS SPOT OF ALL THE LANDING AREAS AND THAT REMAINED OUR DESIGNATED LANDING AREA FOR THE REMAINING TIME WE WERE AT IWO. THERE WAS NOTHING BETWEEN US AND THE ENEMY EXCEPT FOR ABOUT TWO HUNDRED FEET. THE JAPS WERE ENTRENCHED IN DEEP CAVES THEY HAD CARVED IN THE HILLSIDES. WE COULDN'T SEE THEM BUT THEY COULD SEE US. WE WERE SO CLOSE TO THE ENEMY THAT THEY COULD HIT US WITH A GOOD SLINGSHOT, AND ANY OTHER WEAPONS THEY HAD. THEY WOULD ROLL OUT WHAT EVER THEIR WEAPON OF CHOICE WAS AND START SHOOTING AT US. THIS CONTINUED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS UNTIL THE MARINES FINALLY DROVE THEM OUT WITH FLAME THROWERS.

ONCE WHILE SITTING ON THE BEACH UNLOADING SUPPLIES FOR THE FIGHTING MARINES. A MARINE PARKED HIS TRACKED VEHICLE NEAR OUR STARBOARD BOW AND ASKED PERMISSION TO USE OUR "HEAD" (TOILET). HE SAID HE HADN'T HAD A DECENT MOVEMENT SINCE LANDING ON THE BEACH. WE SAID SURE COME ABOARD. THE HEAD WAS LOCATED ALONG THE STARBOARD SIDE, THE SIDE EXPOSED TO THE JAPS, WHILE SITTING THERE TENDING TO HIS BUSINESS, THE JAPS DECIDED TO ROLL OUT SOME OF THEIR HEAVY ARTILLERY AND WE TOOK SEVERAL DIRECT HITS, ONE PENETRATED THE BULKHEAD JUST A FEW INCHES FROM WHERE OUR GUEST WAS SEATED, LEAVING A TWO INCH HOLE. HE WAS UNHARMED BUT VERY SCARED. HE CAME RUNNING OUT AND SAID YOU CAN HAVE THIS !!!!! THING. IT IS SAFER ON THE BEACH. UNKNOWN TO HIM, HIS VEHICLE HAD TAKEN A DIRECT HIT AND WAS TOTALLY DESTROYED. THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO WAY HE COULD HAVE SURVIVED THE HIT.

THE NOW FAMOUS FLAG RAISING AT IWO JIMA.

WE HAD SEEN THE FIRST FLAG GO UP AND WERE EXTREMELY PROUD THAT THE AMERICAN FLAG WAS NOW FLYING ATOP Mt. SURBACHI. IT WAS OFF TO OUR LEFT BUT EASILY WITHIN EYESIGHT.

WHILE SITTING ON THE BEACH THERE WAS A SISTER LSM BEACHED A FEW FEET AWAY ON OUR PORT SIDE. THEIR SIGNALMAN SEMAPHORED ME THAT THE MARINES HAD JUST BORROWED A FLAG TO BE RAISED ON TOP OF Mt.SURBACHI. I WONDERED WHY? AFTER ALL THEY ALREADY HAD A FLAG UP. I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WANTED A LARGER FLAG. BECAUSE OF HIS TIP I CONTINUED TO WATCH THE TOP OF Mt.SURBACHI.

I DID SEE THE FIRST FLAG COME DOWN AND THE NOW FAMOUS FLAG GO UP. NEVER DID I EVER THINK THAT THIS WOULD BECOME THE MOST REMEMBERED PICTURE TAKEN DURING WW2. I HAVE AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF THIS FLAG IN MY POSSESSION.

ALONG ABOUT THE SECOND OR THIRD WEEK WE WERE SITTING ON THE BEACH UNLOADING SUPPLIES DURING A TIME WHEN I WAS NOT STANDING ANY KIND OF WATCH. IT WAS A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY AND AS PEACEFUL AS ANY SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN THE PARK. KNOWING THAT WE WOULD BE THERE FOR QUITE AWHILE, I AND ANOTHER FELLOW SEAMAN DECIDED TO ONCE AGAIN TAKE A STROLL AWAY FROM OUR SHIP. BIG MISTAKE AGAIN. WE STARTED INLAND HOPING TO FIND SOME SOUVENIRS TO BRING HOME. I DID COME ACROSS A JAP OFFICER STANDING UPRIGHT IN A SMALL ROUND HOLE DEEP ENOUGH TO AFFORD HIM SOME SORT OF PROTECTION BUT NOT ENOUGH. HE WAS DEAD. I LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND SAW BOTH A SIDE ARM AND A SWORD ATTACHED TO HIS BELT. I WANTED THEM REALLY BAD BUT WAS AFRAID THAT HE MIGHT BE BOOBY TRAPPED, SO I GAVE UP. WE CONTINUED ON INWARD REACHING A SMALL BANK THAT LED UP TO THE AIRSTRIPS ON THE ISLAND. WE CLIMBED TO THE TOP AND STOOD UP. ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE. THE JAPS MUST HAVE BEEN PLANNING AN ALL OUT ATTACK WITH MORTARS ON THE BEACH. WE WERE AROUND THREE HUNDRED FEET FROM OUR SHIP WHEN IT ALL STARTED. WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RUN FOR OUR LIVES. I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY MY BUDDY WENT. I FOUND MYSELF RUNNING AS FAST AS I COULD TOWARD MY SHIP AND THE MORTAR FIRE CONTINUED AT AN ALL OUT PACE. I KNEW I COULDN'T MAKE IT BACK TO THE SHIP SO I DOVE IN A WELL ROUNDED FOXHOLE BELONGING TO A MARINE. WITH HIS HOSPITALITY I STAYED THERE UNTIL THINGS QUITTED DOWN. AFTER THINGS WERE QUITE, ONCE AGAIN I LEFT MY NEW MARINE FRIEND AND HEADED BACK TOWARD MY SHIP. PROBLEM WAS, THINGS HAD GOTTEN SO ROUGH ON THE BEACH THAT THEY HAD BACKED BACK OUT TO SEA. THERE I WAS WITH NO SHIP. AFTER LOOKING AROUND I SAW THAT THERE WERE AROUND TEN OR TWELVE OF US IN THE SAME PREDICAMENT.

EVENTUALLY OUR SHIP DID COME BACK IN AND DROPPED THE FRONT LANDING RAMP. WE WERE GREETED BY A VERY ANGRY SKIPPER.

ANOTHER TIME WHILE THE SHIP WAS SITTING ON THE BEACH. I WAS ASLEEP IN MY BUNK (REMEMBER WE STOOD FOUR HOURS ON AND FOUR HOURS OFF WATCH, PLUS HELPING WITH OTHER UNRELATED DUTIES TO OUR WATCHES). WHEN WE COULD GET A CHANCE TO GET A LITTLE SLEEP, WE TOOK IT. THE GENERAL ALARM SOUNDED WAKING ME FROM A DEEP SLEEP. THE BOATSMAN MATE CAME RUNNING THROUGH OUR QUARTERS SCREAMING THAT THE JAPS HAD JUST BROKEN THROUGH AND WE WOULD HAVE TO BACK OUT TO SEA AGAIN. IN MY SEMI TRANCE I COULD INVISON THAT THE JAPS HAD ALREADY STORMED OUR SHIP. I THOUGHT I WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT MY WAY TO MY BATTLE STATION. IT TURNED OUT THAT ONLY ONE JAP HAD COME RUNNING ON THE BEACH SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS. HE WAS SOON KILLED. THIS WAS THE SECOND TIME THAT I WAS REALLY AFRAID FOR MY LIFE. REMEMBER THE AIR RAID AT PLYMOUTH ENGLAND? THESE WERE THE ONLY TWO TIMES IN MY WAR DAYS THAT I WAS REALLY AFRAID THAT SOMETHING COULD HAPPEN TO ME.

ALONG AT ABOUT THE END OF MY TIME AT IWO AND I WAS ASLEEP AGAIN, WE WERE SITTING ON THE BEACH UNLOADING SUPPLIES WHEN A LCI SITTING NEXT TO US LOST CONTROL AND BROACHED. HIS STARBOARD STERN SWEEP AROUND AND WITH THE WAVES HELP, DUG SEVERAL GAPPING HOLES IN OUR PORT SIDE ALL BELOW THE WATER LINE. MY SLEEPING QUARTERS WERE FLOODED WITH SEAWATER. THE GENERAL ALARM SOUNDED AND I AWOKE TO FIND WATER ALREADY UP TO WITHIN A FEW INCHES OF MY BUNK. THERE WAS NO REAL DANGER TO ME, AFTER ALL THE BOW OF THE SHIP WAS ALREADY SITTING ON THE BEACH. THE DAMAGE CONTROL CREW TOOK OVER AND FASHIONED A SYSTEM TO SEAL OFF THE GAPPING HOLES. THEY TOOK MATTRESS PADS, LARGE PLATES OF STEEL AND PULLED THEM ALL TOGETHER WITH DRAW BOLTS AND FORMED A WATER TIGHT GASKET.

THIS ENDED OUR TOUR AT IWO. WE SAILED BACK TO GUAM WHERE THEY REPLACED THE GASKETS WITH WELDED ON PLATES. OUR ENTIRE PORT SIDE WAS ALREADY HEAVILY DAMAGED FROM THE BANGING WE TOOK WHILE TIED UP TO THE CARGO SHIPS. THE STARBOARD SIDE WAS FULL OF BULLET HOLES MENTIONED EARLIER.

FROM THERE BACK TO HAWAII. THE REPAIRS WERE TOO EXTENSIVE FOR THEM TO TAKE CARE OF. A DECISION WAS THEN MADE FOR US TO RETURN TO SAN DIEGO. WHILE THERE THEY REPLACED OUR ENTIRE PORT SIDE AND REPAIRED THE HOLES IN THE STARBOARD SIDE.

LUCKY FOR ME I GOT ANOTHER TWENTY FIVE DAY LEAVE TO VISIT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY BACK HOME. I GOT BUMPED OFF MY FLIGHT BY SOMEONE WITH A HIGHER PRIORITY IN MISSISSIPPI. THE

BUSES WERE ON STRIKE (REALLY) AND I HAD TO HITCHHIKE ACROSS MISSISSIPPI. THE BUSES WERE RUNNING IN ALABAMA AND I CAUGHT ONE TO MONTGOMERY. AFTER RETURNING TO MY SHIP WHICH WAS STILL BEING REPAIRED THEY DROPPED THE BIG BOMB. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THE WAR WAS OVER. LATER IT WAS MADE OFFICIAL. I HAD WATCH DUTY THAT NIGHT AND MISSED ALL THE CELEBRATIONS IN DEIGO. IT MUST HAVE BEEN EXCITING.

ONCE AGAIN I THOUGHT. HERE I SIT IN SAN DIEGO THE WAR IS OVER. I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE LARGEST INVASION IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER AND ALSO THE BLOODIEST BATTLE IN THE PACIFIC. IT MUST BE TIME TO PACK MY FEW BELONGINGS AND HEAD HOME. WRONG AGAIN.

SOON AFTER THE REPAIRS WERE MADE AND WE WERE DECLARED SEA WORTHY, WE GOT ORDERS TO LOAD UP WITH SUPPLIES AND BECOME PART OF THE OCCUPATION FORCE OF JAPAN.

WE SET SAIL FOR JAPAN ALONG WITH MANY OTHER SHIPS THAT WERE TO BECOME PART OF THE OCCUPATION FORCE. I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY WE NEEDED TO GO. MAYBE IT WAS JUST TO SHOW THE JAPANESE THAT WE WERE STILL A VIABLE FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. I DID ENJOY SEEING WHO AND WHAT WE HAD BEEN FIGHTING. I WAS SURPRISED AT THE DAMAGE THAT WE HAD INFLECTED ON THEIR HOMETLAND FROM ALL THE BOMBING. THE JAPANESE PEOPLE WERE BOTH HUMBLE AND COURTEOUS TO US. I FELT SAFE WALKING THEIR STREETS AND SEEING THEIR CULTURE FIRST HAND. THE MEN USED THE CURBS TO RELIEVE THEIR KIDNEYS. NOBODY EVEN NOTICED EXCEPT FOR THE FEW AMERICANS AMONG US. THE MEN AND WOMEN SHARED TOILET FACILITIES FOR OTHER NEEDS. NOTHING LIKE THAT EVER HAPPENED IN ALABAMA.

AFTER JAPAN IT WAS BACK TO THE STATES THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL AND EVENTUALLY INTO NEW ORLEANS. FEB. 26th, 1946. THIS IS WHERE AND WHEN I WAS FINALLY SEPARATED FROM THE NAVY. THE SHIP LATER WENT TO BROWNS TEXAS WHERE IT WAS SALVAGED.