

My full name is Frederick Stephen Ellis. I was born in Amite, Louisiana, on October 20, 1924. I grew up in New Orleans, LA, where I attended school and college. I entered Tulane University in the fall of 1941, where I studied civil engineering, and joined the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps. In February, 1944, my class was commissioned a year early. I was nineteen years old. I was sent to Camp Bradford, VA, for training as a gunnery officer on an LST. The crew to which I was assigned went to Pittsburg, PA, where we were assigned to the LST 751. Aboard that ship, I participated in the Leyte, Mindoro, Linguyen Gulf, and Brunei Bay, Borneo, campaigns. After the war ended, we made two round trips from the Philippines, and then were active in distributing troops around the islands for the occupation. I became the executive officer shortly after we got to Japan, and served in that capacity for a number of months.

In the spring of 1946, I was ordered to China to take command of the LST 1026. I flew to Shanghai, where I found the ship. The local poo bahs conducted an inspection of the ship, and found her wanting in a number of respects. They would not permit the change of command until the defects were remedied. The 1026, along with a number of other LST's, was sent to what was then French Indo China to pick up some Chinese Nationalist troops and take them to Manchuria to fight the Communists. While in Haiphong to pick up the Chinese, the ship was found to be in sufficiently good shape for me to assume command. I had ridden down to Haiphong as a passenger. Punch Miles, who was then the skipper, made the rest of the trip as a passenger. We deposited the Chinese in Hulutao, Manchuria, and returned to Shanghai.

By that time, my points were up, and I was eligible to return home. One of the catches was that you had to find a successor who was qualified to command. The only officer like that on the 1026 was Jim Hare, the first lieutenant. Jim was one of the first black officers in the Navy, and highly qualified. I called over to the Flotilla, and explained the situation, and told them that I would not recommend Jim for command unless they said it was all right, because I knew there could be a problem because of his race. The flag lieutenant told me that it was ok. So I wrote a letter to the appropriate authority, recommending Jim. When we got back to Shanghai, Jim and I went to the Navy captain who was in charge of such things. I received the worst chewing out I ever got, without a word being said about what I had done. But I knew. Jim and I returned to the 1026, and the next morning, my relief arrived, and I was on my way home.

I am attaching a copy of a photo that was taken the night I got back to the states. I am the guy on the left, wearing the blues. The guy on the right is DeWitt Clinton McGee, who was one of the officers on the 1026 while I was in command. I

