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Gordo! Awesome. Funny how we spent all that time on GLACIER and this is the first I learn of your Coast Guard heritage! … I’m not sure if our dads ever crossed paths in the Philippines, but Captain West was in the same convoy, and told me he remembered the SAVAGE from a highline with them to bring an injured crewman from SAVAGE to his ship somewhere in the Pacific.

My dad’s CO was John M. Waters, who wrote the book Bloody Winter after retiring from the CG. In my dad’s edition, he wrote, “Capt Waters as a Lt. Comdr was the skipper of the USS Savage DE 386 from about the first of 1944 ‘til 1946 when she was eventually converted to a Navy radar ship. I served on the Savage as a radioman for approximately 2 years – on both the Atlantic and Pacific until WWII ended. Donald C. Underwood RM2 U.S.C.G.R.” I don’t have many good photos of my dad, but I love this one in his peacoat and the mirror image of his hat…J Best, Dog

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Dog, great to hear the CG service of your Dad. He might have crossed paths with my Dad in the Philippines. He enlisted in St. Paul, MN and served on an 83 footer in the Caribbean (the old wooden ones) as a QM1. Then went to OCS at “Splinter Village” at the Academy as a 90-day wonder and then served on a ship in the Philippines until the end of the War. Back when they still wore “Greens.”
Brought back a Japanese pistol and a scimitar sword, and met my Mom, a WAC who served on Eisenhower’s SHAEF HQ staff at Versailles, where she walked through the gardens each morning to work and went to Mass in the Hall of Mirrors. Not many stories from the Pacific, but in I heard stories from the Caribbean where they would “water ski” on a piece of plywood – your turn lasted until you fell or your arms gave out.

While visiting my Uncle Ray Schadegg, in his 80’s, I saw a picture of the battleship USS South Dakota on the wall. On questioning, Ray said he served on her in the Pacific as a Gunners Mate, and was on board for the Battle of Guadalcanal, which was the first major naval victory for the US in the Pacific. Ray was assigned as a spotter in “Sky 1” which was one of the “crow’s nest” towers that gave input to the gun batteries. The afternoon before the battle, he was reassigned to the Bridge. In the battle, the South Dakota took heavy fire from Japanese battleships and cruisers and had significant damage. Sky 1 was hit, and all the sailors manning it died. Ray never knew why his assignment was changed. I never heard him speak of the war until I questioned him. Typical.

USCG - Richard Buckingham, CGA72
USCG - Albion Buckingham (Father), Storekeeper 1st, USCG
(Note under Jimmy Ng’s story, see connection between Jimmy Ng and Richard Buckingham marked in blue.)

My Dad went in CG in July ‘42 and got out late-Fall 1945. His time in was split between TRACEN Groton, CT & aboard a CG manned Navy Oiler. Got out as an SK1.

USCG - Michael Matune, CGA72
USCG - Michael Mark Matune Sr (Father)

My Dad served I the USCG for a brief period during WWII. He contracted rheumatic fever during boot camp and was medically discharged – Take care & stay safe,

USCG - Tom Yearout, CGA72
USA - Yearout (Father), 548th AAA AW Battalion
USCG - Clyde William “Bill” Allen (Father-In-Law), Chief Damage Controlman

Gordy,
My Dad was Army. Like most of our classmates Dads, he didn’t talk about it very much at all. I have requested his records but all I received was his discharge papers. Just a couple of pages. I believe the majority of the records were lost in the major fire several years ago.

However, my father-in-law, Chief Damage Controlman Clyde William (Bill) Allen lied about his age and joined the Coast Guard at 16 in July of 1942. He started with Beach Patrol Duty on the beaches of Oregon. Later he was assigned to two different troop transport ships delivering troops and supplies to numerous Pacific Islands. He finished up bringing the troops home after the war ended. Thad has all his records and a much better recollection than I do about some of his exploits. The two ships were the General H. L. Scott and the Hodges.

My Dad was with the 548th AAA AW Battalion in support of the 102nd Infantry Division. They landed in Normandy in November of 1944 and pushed their way all the way into Germany to the Elbe where the Germans were defeated sometime around June of 1945 I think. He spent about 6 more months in Europe during the occupation before being shipped home.

Dad was wounded (shrapnel) less than a month after arriving in Normandy. He drove a truck with a Howitzer gun on a trailer pulled behind. Five times he had the truck shot out from under him. By the end of the war, all that was left was the truck frame, part of the cab and the gun had been mounted to the frame of the truck.

Let’s hope our children never have to face such a war.
Tom Yearout

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USCG - James Cooper, CGA72
USCG - Hudson Mitchell Cooper (Father), LT and W-4 Chief Supply Clerk

My father was in the Coast Guard for 31 years, 1935 - 1966. Spent first 4 years in Seward, AK then with the Navy(?) somewhere in the South China Sea; didn't talk about the war time at all. He is also heralded in the book "Watchmen of the Sea" for some action he took while boat crew in AK.

He was promoted to LT during the war then after returned to a warrant officer. He retired as a W-4 CHSPCK (chief supply clerk). Last job was CO, Supply Depot Seattle. I think in the register of officers, he is listed as a LT (highest rank held)

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USCG  Jim Meyer, CGA72
USN - Wallace Meyer (Father), Liberty Ships & Seabee, USN
USCG - Harold Meyer (Grandfather ), USCG
USA - William Meyer (Great Grandfather), Spanish American War, USA

My dad (Wallace Meyer) was navy and built liberty ships and was Seabee on second wave at Okinawa.

My grandfather (Harold Meyer) was CG dock patrols in Tacoma. He had fought in WW1 at age 16 and got gassed twice. He was with Pershing and got to chase Poncho around Arizona when they came back. When Pearl Harbor was hit, he tried to get back in the Army but was now over 40 and they would not take him so he ended up with the CG. I have a Japanese Ariska rifle that he impounded from
returning soldiers. His actions really confused my dad because after grandpa’s experiences in WW1, he had told dad if there was ever another war, to dig a hole and hide until it was over. When Pearl Harbor was hit, he was pounding on the door of the recruiting station threatening the recruiters if they did not take him.

My dad was Wallace Meyer and Grandpa was Harold Meyer. My great grandpa was William Meyer and he was in the army in Cuba for the Spanish American War. I only have seen an old photo and did not notice rank. I will ask my sisters if they have the picture.

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USCG - Greg Johnson, CGA72
USCG - Walter Edward Johnson (Father), CDR

My dad, Walter Edward Johnson, started his journey to the CG in 1940 at Oregon State University. An interesting coincidence because when I graduated High School in Texas in 1965, my dad was transferred to Portland OR MIO and, lo and behold, I had a three year stint at Oregon State before I was accepted into the great CGA class of 72. During his first year at OSU, he applied to and was accepted to the US Merchant Marine Academy graduating in 1943, the second class to graduate and at the time when all academies were graduating in 3 years for the WWII war effort.

During WWII 1943-45 and then to spring of 1950, WEJohnson sailed as an assistant engineer for Matson Lines in the Pacific. I was born in Seattle July 1947. As many classmates have mentioned, I did not hear much, if anything, about his years in the Pacific Theater. I know he was one of a few CG officers in MIO who had earned a Chief Engineers License, unlimited HP. I'm fairly certain he earned that license while with Matson. But in 1950, WEJohnson was offered a direct commission to the CG as a LTJG. He was one of many merchant sailors to enter the CG as a '219er' to help populate the recently established Marine Inspection organization. After his commission he was stationed in CGC Klamath (Seattle), [side note, can you imagine being the EO and one of your asst engineers has a chief engineers license!!!], then MIO Cleveland, MIO Duluth, EO Dexter [the recruit training ship for TRACEN Alameda], MIO Galveston, MIO Portland OR, retiring as a CDR in 1970.

Many, many CG stories could be told, but one interesting one is about one of my dad's first Klamath shipmates and roommates, Ens. Richard (Dick) Malm CGA '51. Almost 24 years later, June 1975, CAPT Malm was CO Midgett and a visiting ship in Portland OR at the Portland Rose Festival. I was a JG in D12 (ene) and flew up from Alameda to Portland to do a ship check for a big ship alteration and yard package. My dad retired in Portland and so I invited him to meet me downtown for lunch and do the ship check with me. So who do you suppose was at the quarter deck when my dad and I came aboard. Yep, Dick Malm and my dad locked eyes and yelled out in unison, "Walt! Dick!" Big hugs, handshakes and smiles all around while the Quarter Deck watch stood amazed at the sight. I'll never forget it. And we, the class of 72 are blessed to always have the same connection to one another. Go Bears, Go 72.

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USCG - Larry Brudnicki, CGA72
USA – J. Arthur Brudnicki (Father)

My father served in the Army. He was in the last of the US Cavalry that rode horses. His horse’s name was Big Red. He served in the South Pacific. At my incoming of Change of Command for TAMAROA,
he read the program and had remembered seeing the USS ZUNI in the South Pacific. Small world! He
didn’t tell any war stories. The only WWII pix of my dad, J. Arthur Brudnicki.

USCG - Loren Marovelli, CGA72
USN - Marovelli (Father), Pharmacist Mate, 2/c
USN - Marovelli (Uncle), PT Boat
USA – Mother’s 4 Brothers (Uncle) – Aviation Mechanic, Paratrooper, Technical Specialist (2)

I have both a Father and Uncle (his Older Brother) still Alive who dropped out of High School to enlist
in the Navy during WWII. He enlisted in 1945 and was recalled to Active Duty as a Reservist in
1950. Just a few days after I was born.

My uncle survived (2) PT Boats being "Shot Out from Under by Japanese" off New Guinea. Forced to
take Survivor's Leave, 1 of only 3 Navy Sailors not killed from a crew of 11.

My Dad was a Navy Corpsman who served during both WWII and the Korean Conflict.

For anyone interested my Uncle's WWII experiences in the S. Pacific as a Survivor of a PT Boat sinking
have been documented by the WWII History Museum in New Orleans. I have a copy of the 90 minute
CD Interview conducted a couple years ago. He was in good enough health to take a Joy Ride on the
"Restored PT Boat" on Lake Ponchartrain, last summer. However, I believe that PT Boat was a survivor of Mediterranean Ops and the only such "Fully Restored PT Boat" in existence.

Now, for Mom's Family. She had (4) Older Bro's all of whom served w/ US Army in Europe.

#1. was an Aviation Mechanic stationed in England w/ 8th Air Force. Suffered w/a Bad Limp on his Leg owing to Flack Damage over Germany.
#2. was a Paratrooper who was dropped into Belgium.
#3. & #4. were Technical Specialists who entered through France. One married a French girl who later became my Godmother (Raymonde').

BTW/ My Dad's Bro was a Torpedoman 1/c and Dad was a Hospitalman 2/c

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USCG - Christopher Waring, CGA72
Merchant Marine - Waring (Father), Captain

My father was the Captain of a Merchant Marine freighter. He left Pearl Harbor a week B4 it was attacked by Japan, and then he was Captaining a freighter in the North Atlantic when it was sunk by a German U-Boat. Fortunately he and most of the crew were rescued by other ships in convoy He was the youngest Captain of a these US ships the time, being only 21 years old.

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My Father’s WWII Participation for Class Notes but I respectfully call attention to the name that appears in Bold near the end of my notes.

Gerald Healey joined the Army on February 26, 1943, at age 18 years 2 months. Assigned to Company A, 114th Regiment, 44th Infantry Division (“Old Hickory”).

Served as a Scout and Rifleman. Participated in campaigns/battles including Northern France (defense of Foret de Parroy, Luneville) after landing in Cherbourg (7/25/44-9/14/44), the Rhineland (Vosges Mountains, Dossenheim, capture of Avricourt, liberation of Strasburg, taking Ratzwiler and the defense of Sarreguemines along the southern part of the Maginot Line, then crossed the Neckar River to capture Mannheim) (9/15/44-3/21/45) and Central Europe (captured Ehingen, crossing the Danube, then liberated Fussen, Berg & Wertach before capturing Imst noting they also took in a group of V2 scientists including Wernher Von Braun ) (3/22/45-5/11/45).

Returned home and was discharged on March 15, 1946. Earned the American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Medal with 3 Bronze Battle Stars, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal and the Sharpshooter/M1 ribbon.

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My father started off in ROTC but dropped out and enlisted in the Air Force in 1946. Early in his career he was in a training detachment moving often to different bases. He became a fire control technician and technical manual manager for the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress and the Convair B-58 Hustler. His primary assignments were at Tactical Air Command (TAC) bases in CONUS. He retired in 1973 in Grand Forks, ND and moved back to Florida.

My uncle Paul Noll enlisted in the army and trained at Fort Ord near Monterey, California. He served in Korea fighting the war there.

My Grandfather Mark Daniel Noll joined the army in 1917 at age 19 and went overseas to fight in World War I with the Coast Artillery Corps and in the Philippines during World War II with the Quartermaster Corps. and in Korea in 1946.

Anne’s family has relatives who served as way back as the revolutionary and civil wars. Her dad (James A Cleary Jr, USN) and five uncles (Ben Cleary and the McGuire brothers Judson, John, Robert & Charles) served in WWII and her brother (James A Cleary III, USA) during the Vietnam war. Anne’s mom (Mary McGuire Cleary) worked in Zaire with a Methodist mission group to build houses and in the US with hurricane relief.

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Ben Eugene Crye Army Air Corps (Father) entered the service late in the war. Trained as a diesel and auto mechanic. War ended before deployment.

Uncle Clarence Crye B-17 Tail gunner or US Army Air corps. Flew many sorties in various Pacific campaigns. Plane was shot down by Japanese and he lost one eye in crash landing.

John Henry Bouma (Father-In-Law), Navy Corpsman served behind the Japanese lines in China with the Flying Tigers and OSS. One of Seven boys from one Minnesota family. All enlisted in Navy, Army Air Corps or Army. All made it through without serious injury. After the war Jack went to medical school and worked as a psychiatrist/ psychoanalyst for the CIA for many years.

My father was 4 F with a heart murmur and died of a heart attack at 54 (2 weeks before graduation). He worked construction during the war and was no less a good father and good American than those who served in the military. He encouraged me to try for Academy appointments and ROTC scholarships and was very pleased that I got into the CG Academy. I had 2 uncles that were in the CG.

My father, Richard E. Gormanson, served 20 years in the Army. He entered the Army just before the close of WW2 and never deployed. His specialty was in the Medical Corp making artificial limbs and braces. After basic and medic training, he was stationed at Fort Percy, MI and Fort Lewis, WA where I was born. He deployed to Korea in 1951 to 1953 and was stationed in Pusan (now Busan). After Korea, he had duty stations at Camp Polk, LA; Fort Campbell, KY; Frankfurt, Germany; Augusta, GA; and Fort Campbell, KY. He retired in Nov1965 at the SP6 (E-6) in lieu of orders to Vietnam.

One of my best memories is asking my Dad whether I should accept an appointment to the USCGA or 4-year Army ROTC scholarship. He stated that he was always more impressed with Academy officers. Thus, I accepted the appointment to USCGA. He also presented my USCG Commission in lieu of Spiro T. Agnew since he had retired from the Army.

Wanted to pass on that my Dad served in the Army in the Philippines.
My dad was in the SeaBees and participated in D-day. He was one of the guys who assembled the portable docks under fire. As I understood it, they floated the docks in sections, anchored a section to the beach, and then connected sections. May have constructed the dock that Tom’s dad drove on to offload his tank.

He told one story that stuck with me. At the same time he was in a landing craft towing a section of the dock waiting to land on the beach, the Navy was having a problem with a particularly effective German gun emplacement. They needed the gun to show itself by shooting at something so they could get a better range and bearing to take it out. They were looking for volunteers to be a decoy and somehow my dad’s boat got volunteered. Apparently, everyone onboard agreed to the arrangement. As they headed into shooting range of the German gun, it shot at something else, the Navy ship spotted it and took it out. I guess you could say that is why I am here today to annoy you.

He did not talk about D-day much, but he did brag that he got a personal invitation to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. I'm not sure if that was because he participated in D-day, he volunteered to be a target, a case of mistaken identity or if everyone who fought in WW2 got an invite. I know he didn’t go since I was three by then and too much for my mom to handle alone. Anyone else hear this from their day, or was he punking me?

He finished out the war in Okinawa preparing floating docks for the invasion of Japan. By that time he was an E-6.

My Dad never really talked about the war, until the 90’s when we attended a couple of Iwo Jima Veterans Reunions. After that he opened up a bit. Dad was in medical school at the University of Arkansas when WWII broke out. He received a commission in the US Navy Medical Corps and continued at UA until he completed medical school. Upon completing medical school, he was assigned to Oakland Naval Hospital for his internship. Among his effects I found a picture of Adm Chester Nimitz visiting sailors in the hospital. After his internship, Dad was assigned to an APA, The USS Mellette, where he was a Beach Medical Officer. Beach Medical Officers landed with the Marines to set up medical aid stations. After amphibious training at Coronado, Dad only participated in 2 amphibious assaults. One was Eniwetok. The second was Iwo Jima.

For the Iwo Jima invasion, Dad was assigned to the reserve Marine Division. He was supposed to land on D-Day +3 and relieve the invasion force. At 2100 on D-Day a messenger came to his stateroom and told him to grab his gear, he was going ashore. It seems the Japanese targeted the medical aid stations and had wiped out everyone in the original invasion force. Dad landed on Iwo Jima at midnight and set up his aid station and began treating wounded Marines. He told me that when the sun came up he was in the middle of the invasion beach and all he could see in both
directions was bodies and wrecked vehicles. One interesting fact was the ship on the beach next to his aid station was a USCG manned LST. Dad remained ashore for 3 days. When the reserves landed, he was sent to a hospital ship to evacuate the wounded to Guam.

Dad worked with Nimitz’s staff in planning the medical aspects of the planned invasion of Japan. The planning factor they were told to use was a million US casualties. They figured that the first wave casualty factor was 100%. This was bad news since Dad was assigned to go ashore with the Marines assigned to the first wave. Then Truman dropped the 2 A-Bombs and Japan surrendered. The USS Mellette sailed into Yokosuka and Dad walked ashore on a dock with the Marines.

The USS Mellette was anchored right next to the USS Missouri for the formal surrender. Dad and his shipmates witnessed the surrender ceremony from close aboard. With the war over, the Navy flew my Dad back to the states, where he spent many months performing physical exams to process sailors out of the Navy. After many tries, the Navy approved Dad’s resignation, which allowed him to begin a residency in orthopedics at the University of Chicago. After his residency, Dad returned to Little Rock and founded the first orthopedic practice in Arkansas.

Dad was the first surgeon to successfully repair the ACL, anterior cruciate ligament. Shortly before he passed away in 2018, Dad was recognized by the NFL for his contributions to sports medicine. He received a beautiful plaque, an honorary membership in the NFL Physicians Association, and a football autographed by Roger Goodell. He was also invited to the Combine and to attend any Dallas Cowboys game in Jerry Jones’s box. By then, he was too infirm to take advantage of either invitation.

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USCG - Joe Kyle, CGA72
US Marines – Kyle (Father)

Dad enlisted in the Marine Corp right after finishing high school in a small town in south central Arkansas. He started on two, successive State championship teams. After boot camp at Camp Pendleton, he was selected to play for the Marine Corp football team while his fellow marines were shipping out for the horrors of the South Pacific. He played in Balboa Stadium until he was shipped out for the invasion of Okinawa in early 1945 - which occurred on April 1, 1945.

Dad and his fellow marines in the 6th Marine Division were assigned to secure the northern 2/3rds of the island, while the 10th Army was assigned to secure the southern 1/3rd, which included the heavily fortified Shuri Line and the population center of Naha. The marines quickly reached the northern end of the island, but had little time to celebrate as the Army was bogged down on the Shuri Line and they were ordered south to reinforce the army.
I think dad’s bloodiest battle was the capture of one of the heavily fortified hills in the Shuri Line, a ridge that overlooked Naha. Dad was one of only six men in his company who was not killed or wounded on Okinawa, with most of the casualties occurring on the Shuri Line assault. Dad said they made two assaults on the hill, and were shot off it twice. After the USS Tennessee was called in to provide naval gunfire support, dad said they walked up the hill the third time and secured the position. Typical of the marines; charge first, take casualties, maybe do it again, and then ask for help.

I guess as payback for his football days in San Diego, he was sent to China as part of the Occupation Forces to oversee the Japanese withdrawal. Don’t think he was mustered out until the spring of 1946 and went back to Arkansas.

Like your fathers, he never spoke about his combat duty. I knew he “ran up a hill twice, got shot off twice, and walked up the third time after the battleship bombardment”, but no other details. And I knew he was one of only six to survive unscathed, but no details. Those men did not share.

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USCG - John Giglio
USN – Giglio (Father), Radioman, RM1c
USN – John Goglio (Uncle), Submariner

My dad was only 16 on Pearl harbor Day. His older brother, my uncle John, (real name “Rosario”) was a career submariner (26 years in those WWII submarines – can you imagine?) and his boat was at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked. Naturally, my dad wanted to join the Navy too and finally, when he was 17, my grandfather gave in to his pestering and signed the waiver allowing him to enlist. He showed special aptitude and advanced rapidly to RM1c. He was assigned to LST-325 as senior radioman and saw action in North Africa and Sicily, including several air raids and numerous beach landings and resupply operations. After Sicily was taken, the ship was sent to England and trained for the Normandy Invasion in which it ultimately took part. My dad was transferred to the Pacific and arrived there on another LST just in time to prepare for the invasion of Japan. When the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki obviated the need for an invasion, he became part of the Occupying Force in Tokyo where he continued to serve as a radioman in a shoreside naval facility. When he was brought back to the States near the end of 1945, he was placed in the Naval OCS program at Columbia University, which was discontinued at the end of 1945 and became instead a Naval ROTC program. He only lasted one semester there, as he and my mom wanted to be married. So, that's what they did, in September of 1946. Our parents were/are remarkable people. Thank you, classmates, for sharing the stories of your parents. If we don’t remember, who will?

An interesting thing about LST-325 is, of the 1,051 LSTs built, she is the only one still operational in the States and in WWII trim. She’s a museum vessel in Evanston IN. I’ve attached a picture of the crew of that ship, and my dad is sitting cross-legged in the front, immediately to the right of center. Here is a link to the ship’s web page: https://lstmemorial.org/

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USCG - Ben Abiles, CGA72  
Civilian – Abiles (Father), Phillipines

My dad never shared stories of WWII and what he went through after the fall of Bataan/Corregidor. When we went to the Philippines years, we went to Corregidor and toured the facilities; saw the barracks where my dad lived at one point. My dad said he survived captivity because he got assigned as a cook for the Japanese. He had nightmares at times and all mom ever said he was they were related to his time in captivity.

Growing up in Seattle, we attended many functions sponsored by the Bataan/Corregidor Survivors Club, mainly Filipino members but some Caucasian members. They never seemed to share stories.

My mom always said during the occupation, that they would go hide in the forests/jungle whenever Japanese soldier came through town.

 USCG - Charlie McCarthy, CGA72  
USN – McCarthy (Father)

My dad said very little and I wish I had asked him more about WWII. He was onboard USS Astoria during the battle of Midway when the flag was transferred to her. He was also on Astoria when she was sunk at Layte Gulf. I think he carried a piece of shrapnel in his wrist until sometime in his 70s. He was offered senior chief but turned it down. He would have had to go Vietnam and decided WWII and Korea were enough.

The good news for me was that his last tour was pushing boots at NTC San Diego which meant he trained me well for swab summer. I do miss him and hear his voice in mine often.

 USCG - P.J. Howard, CGA72  
USA – Howard (Father), Army Air Corps, 2nd LT

Like many of your Fathers, my Dad never talked about the war. Dad was a 2nd LT in the Army Air Corps. He was a navigator/bombardier on a B17. Dad flew missions over Europe and Africa. Without a doubt, they are the greatest generation.
PJ

 USCG - Mike Hathaway, CGA72  
Marines – Hathaway (Father), Combat Trainer

Like many of you my Dad didn't talk much about his war-time experiences. But over the years I was able to piece together some of what he did. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from a small-town high school in northwest Ohio. He was sent to Long Beach, California and stationed at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro until he shipped out on some sort of troop transport. His job? To teach hand-to-hand combat skills to the marines who would be further deployed throughout the Pacific theater. He never saw combat. While in Long Beach before shipping out he met my Mom (who had moved to Santa Ana, California from a small town in Illinois after graduation from high school). They met at a USO dance and married after a two-week whirlwind romance.
USCG - Bruce Melnick, CGA72
USN Wave – Melnick (Mother), Photographer’s Mate

My Mom was a Navy WAVE Photographers Mate. Since not a lot of photography wasn't being done by the Navy, she volunteered to crew bomber ferry flights to Europe. When we dropped the bombs on Japan, she was one of the first photographers to get sent to Nagasaki to document the damage on the ground. Probably not a coincidence that she died of cancer, of several of her internal organs, in March of 1975, at 53, shortly after pinning my wings on me in Pensacola.

Yep, they were the greatest generation!!!

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USCG – James McCarthy, CGA72
USA – McCarthy (Father), Squadron Commander

As with all of you, my father never ever, talked about WWII. Although, he did have 16mm film of a lot of the things he captured in the service starting with a year before graduating from Norwich and ending in 1945.

You are all welcome to watch it. I do apologize that the film quality has deteriorated due to age of the old film, then being transferred to VHS tape, then to DVD, and finally, my "ripping" to a movie file format.

The beginning is of course a lot about family...which you may find interesting as you get to see clothing styles, old vintage cars, horses, army life in the field, the beginnings of how the US Army was trying desperately to catch up to the German War machine (i.e. the US ARMY was still in Horseback calvary ..and the Germans had mechanized Panther (1943), and Tiger (1942) tanks. As you watch, take a close look at what I call the US WWII model T (1st prototype tank).
With VLC pgm, you can skip a lot of the film, to get to the 10,000 mounted horse review. Around min. 17. The largest one captured on film. That said, my dad, narrated the entire movie and discussed his role as a squadron commander in the European theater. He tells of how many lbs of bombs his unit dropped, amount of ammo was used, how many trains were damaged or destroyed, etc. That starts at minute 37.

I hope you all watch the full video. It can be watched at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LjBoa0JR44r5Y8en25T5Lne-qHnRWd76/view?usp=sharing or, click here: Tiger's Dad WWII films

Most Humbly and Honored to share with you all.

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USCG - John Larned, CGA72
USN – John Larned Sr (Father)

I have enjoyed all the details on our various Dad’s in the War. It was an amazing thing where pretty much all of them were called up in one way or another. So here’s a brief snap shot of John Larned Sr’s story. He was 30 years old in 1941 and I am confident that he never would have ventured outside of RI had he not joined the Navy. His contribution to these great stories is that he left a brief but comprehensive diary of his ship’s activities in the back of his “Blue Jacket’s Manual”. He was on a newly built Fletcher Class Destroyer.. the USS Saufley DD-465.. For all of the pilots, the namesake is the same Saufley the first or early Naval Aviator that the field in Pensacola is named for.

Like all the other Dad’s he spoke very little about any combat. He talked a lot about the “Life or humorous” side of the Navy, practical jokes with his shipmates, the Shell Back initiation and Libo twice in Australia and once in Hawaii. As a 10 year old when there was much interest around JFK and the PT 109 story I remember we had Life magazine or some other publication with a map of the Solomons showing where the incident took place and him pulling out the diary. He was very proud to show via his diary that he and JFK were more or less at the same place at the same time…. Otherwise any other significance went over my head. And he never spoke about anything else.

He lived to be 93 and in his later years I asked him to tell me more about his service. He pulled out the diary and with him in his 80ties and me about 50 I got a completely different view of it all. I looked it over – and said: “Gee Dad – you were everywhere weren’t you? I had no idea!” He said “Yeah, we were everywhere that mattered except Iwo Jima and Okinawa” Further to that he said that by the time of Okinawa the requirements were very clear. If a ship couldn’t do 30 knots and maintain fleet speed they weren’t called on for that campaign and by that time the Saufley had sustained hull damage and was too beat up to hold to the fleet standards. If you read the diary you will see that they came back to San Francisco or Mare Island for yard work following the Marianas in mid 1944. It was a complete technical refit and replacement of worn out guns etc. The Saufley was a real work horse.

By the way this diary was “unauthorized” He told me that it was strictly against the rules to keep a diary on a ship in wartime but that he took the chance on a few brief notes here and there. I’m glad he did and only wish he could have written more.
One more item is Admiral Halsey’s citation attached. I think anyone who had an at sea command will like the Captain’s comments… Absolutely classic… and for Ben Abiles.. you will see that he took your father’s situation very seriously!!

Finally John Sr considered himself a “Navy Man” thru and thru but he was happy with my choice of the Coast Guard as my service.

Enjoy and best to all!

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USCG - Jim McEntire, CGA72
USA – McEntire (Father), Army Signal Corps & Army Air Corps
USN – McEntire (Uncle), Electricians Mate

My Dad was in the Army signal corps and then the air corps during the war. Never left the states and mustered out in 1946 at an airbase in Santa Maria, CA. Repaired and maintained radios on fighter aircraft at InConus training bases. He didn’t have any stories to tell, but made lifelong friends from his service.

My uncle (Dad’s older brother) was an electricians mate in USS Coney, which was in a number of WESTPAC naval battles. He never talked about his service, and was a very quiet man anyway, rather like my Dad. One time I was poking around in my uncle’s attic and found some mementos- among them were several .50 cal cartridge cases inscribed with battles his ship - USS CONEY, a destroyer- was involved in. I know he and his ship were at the battle of Surigao Strait (the last battleship gun duel), Tinian, Saipan, and maybe Okinawa.

When I was little, I remember that occasionally we would go over to some of my parents friend’s houses for a summer picnic, and all the men would sit together and talk about their service. They tolerated a young lad (me) sitting outside their circle of lawn chairs and just listening to their conversation. There was no bragging or heroics, just a quiet matter-of-fact recounting of shared experiences and the humble bonding amongst men who had experienced an extraordinary time. I can’t remember any of the details, but I remember wanting to be like them when I grew up.

As many have said, we are the generation once removed from the greatest generation. What a legacy our fathers gave us.

I’m so glad we have these stories to tell. Along with our own.

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USCG - Greg Lapp, CGA72
USA – Lapp (Father), Army Air Corps

My dad was in the CCC in his home state of Wisconsin, then went into the Army Air Corps in 1939 at age 18. He was at Hickam Field when Japan attacked, and spent the whole war in the Pacific theatre. He said he spent the night of Dec 7th in a bunker with a guy that he had pulled out of the line of straffing fire, only to find out in the morning that it was full of ammunition. His outfit followed the island conquests setting up airfields and maintaining the aircraft. He related to me that he saw the flag raised by the Marines on Iwo Jima, and that he worked on the P51 Mustang fighters, tuning the engines by ear.
Those experiences combined with a 20 plus year career in the Air Force made him hard of hearing in later years. Three out of his five brothers served in WWII, and his oldest brother was in the Army before the war. Their generation truly made the greatest sacrifices.

USCG - Ben Stoppe, CGA72
USA – Ben Stoppe Sr (Father), Infantryman, E-7

My father, Ben (yes, I’m the firstborn son & Jr.) got married very late in life. He was about 50 when I was born in 1950.

He joined the Army in the 1930’s as best as I can determine. He was born in CT to Polish immigrants & grew up in Nutley, NJ., the oldest of six children - all boys.

Like other Classmates, my father didn’t speak about his Service or wartime experiences much, and, I had other things on my mind growing up in a moderately sized town in South Jersey near McGuire AFB & Ft. Dix, NJ.

He was an infantryman in the Army, w/ a food service MOS. Read that as cook - in the field food service & on maneuvers. As a bachelor, he was stationed at several Texas bases. I have some photo albums in disarray from moves & storage that show him stationed in the heart of the U.S. before WWII, doing what an Army does w/out a war - drill & maneuvers.

I don’t have much info as the war broke out, or where he was stationed during the bulk of it, but, I do know he participated in D-Day at Normandy - not the first few waves - but, much later that day. The troops need to eat after the beach head is secured.

He fought & fed his way across France & participated that Winter of 1944-45 in the Battle of the Bulge, where he developed some medical conditions that plagued him in pain for the rest of his life - mostly arthritis.

After WWII, he was posted w/ the US Occupation Forces in Japan, where he met my Mom, Emiko Yamaha. Rumor has it that being an Army cook has its advantages in that one can shower ones girlfriend’s family in food gifts. Most Japanese families after the war were scrapping to stay alive. From some references, my Mom may have been “awarded” to my Dad as a thank you for keeping the family alive after the war. Mom is truly a Japanese War Bride.

They were married first in a Japanese rite ceremony at the Buddhist temple, which the US didn’t recognize. That’s quite clear on my birth certificate from the US Consulate in Kyoto, Japan. The footnote states words to the effect that, “delay in reporting child’s birth due to fact that parents were not legally married at the time”. They were married in a civil ceremony in Japan shortly afterward.

My father had a few TAD assignments of some months in Korea after June 1950, w/ the start of the war there. Setting up mess halls as an E-8. Had some type of disciplinary problem & got busted back to E-7 (retired as E-7).

Dad got transferred to Camp Kilmer, then Ft. Dix, NJ in 1952. Off he went, leaving me & his wife behind.
My Mom braved a US troop transport w/me (about 18 mo. old) & several steamer trunks to journey to a new land. Entered US in Seattle, then flew (paid for by a veteran’s organization), to Idlewild Airport, NYC, to join my father.

He retired after 30+ yrs. in the Army, served about 10 more years as a civilian working for them, and died in 1978.

My Mom is still alive at age 97, in a nursing home in NJ, attended to by my younger brother & his wife.

The newspaper article is from April 1952. That’s my dad in uniform, my mom, and less than 2 yrs. old – ME. It seems back then, the newspapers used to do this type of human interest story, incl. getting the photo done. They then took the article & had it encased in plastic. I found this when I was cleaning out my mom’s home before she went to assisted living (now, in nursing home section at age 97).
As I indicated previously, my father was in the State Dept. foreign service. Dad, spent his time in Argentina and Brazil basically trying to find out what the Germans were trying to do in South America and relaying back to the states. One incident I know of was the Germans first torpedoing and sinking of a US passenger boat... Robin More off the Brazilian cost.. Dad brought back the ship's manifest and documents to the State Department and congress. He also interviewed the passengers crew and arranged the stateside return of the US passengers. Interesting part is the German captain stopped the ship and ordered all passengers and crew and captain off the ship and onto life boats before torpedoing it, because the Germans thought it carried war material that would be used against them. He then radioed their position to be rescued one or two days later. Of course the sub was long gone.

My mom's brother, my Uncle George was in Army intelligence. I know he landed in Normandy about three days after the invasion and was part of the Army Intelligence core whose mission was to interrogate German soldiers. He basically followed General Patton through Europe and up to the battle of the Bulge. Trying to get intel on what the Germans were up to. His specialty was interrogation of German officers.
The family story is the US Army needed as much Intel on what the Germans were doing up until the Battle of the Bulge so Uncle George was ordered to go behind the German lines and capture a German Officer and bring him back to be interrogated. According to Mom and my Aunt Lydia he and his group brought back several. That being said, there is no proof. Most of his personal effects were burned in a fire and his eventually divorced wife was on bad terms with mom and her sisters. They never spoke. My brother discovered he received the Bronze Star shortly after the Battle of the Bulge for his work on interrogation in my mom's effects. My brother also tried to find out about the award and of all things his best sources were Jack Higgins and Ken Follet both of whom said based on what he wrote them and Uncle George DD2 form they came to the same conclusion about arriving 3 later after the Normandy landing and following Patton up to the Battle of the Bulge. They also confirmed there were operations to go behind enemy lines and capture German Officers, but we have never confirmed they involved my uncle. However the Bronze Star was for something. Uncle George died of lung cancer in the early 50's. I never met him. Copy of citation here.

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USCG - Jack Synovec, CGA72
USCG – John K Synovec (Father), Yeoman 1/c, CDR USCG

I know many of our Classmates may find it strange, even unfathomable, that I do not check our class email on a daily or even weekly basis (yeah I know "That’s unacceptable, drop and give me twenty"). However, yesterday while stuck inside waiting for Cristobal to pass through New Orleans, I caught up on Class email and found myself captivated by the stories shared by other classmates concerning the military service of their parents and relatives. I now find myself moved to respond & share some info on my Dad’s service. I would appreciate it if you would include some of the info in the compilation that you are putting together for the Class Web site.

My Dad, John K Synovec, enlisted in the Coast Guard shortly after the start of WWII. After quickly advancing in rate to Yeoman 1/c, he was sent to OCS at the Academy (It’s possible that Gordo’s dad and my dad may have been classmates at the Academy OCS although I’m sure CG ran many 90-day wonder classes back to back during wartime so I don’t know for sure). After receiving his commission, my Dad was sent to the Pacific theater. Following the war, my Dad continued to serve in the Coast Guard Reserves until he retired as a CDR in June 1972 after presenting me my commission at graduation.

Similarly, as in the stories told by several of our classmates about their dads’ military service, my Dad did not talk about his war time experiences. While I knew he served aboard two ships in the Pacific theater, USS Cor Caroli AK-91 and LST 23, he never provided any details about the wartime
operations in which he had been involved. Yes, there was the tidbit or two that he spoke of (one such was that upon extracting Marines off an island where they had been slugging it out with the Japanese for weeks, the ship threw open its galley and wardroom to the worn out & famished Marines who proceeded to gorge themselves to the extent that many suffered significant gastrointestinal distress which required medical attention). But as far as battle details > nothing – NADA! It wasn’t until after his death in 2000 when my brother (retired Army Officer) and I came across a stowed away journal of sorts in which my Dad had chronically listed all of the island movements his ships had been involved in (some 25) as part of MacArthur’s island hopping strategy that I got some insight as to my dad’s wartime service. Of particular note I found that he had served aboard the USS Cor Caroli for the invasion/2nd battle of Guam and that while assigned to the LST 23, that ship had participated in the amphibious landings at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, Philippine Islands (MacArthur’s Return). There was a simple note in the journal, remarking that during that invasion evolution, the LST 23 convoy had been targeted by “two Jap planes  (Judy’s)” Those WWII history buffs upon us may recall that the Japanese had just started the use of the Kamikaze right about the time of the campaign to retake the Philippines.

As to why some of our service parents were reluctant to talk about their wartime experiences? It is my thinking that they may have felt it hard/painful to put into words what they had saw and encountered, besides, they were just doing their duty to country. In the days immediately leading up to his death, my Dad made an odd remark somewhat out of nowhere to my brother lamenting that the Japanese had not given us any acceptable alternative other than to drop nuclear bombs on two of their cities resulting in horrendous destruction and death. My brother did not press my dad on the comment and when he relayed the statement to me, we both were somewhat dumbfounded as to “what prompted that”. Later, I found that in his last journal entry, my Dad entered that his ship, the LST 23, participated in transporting troops & equipment of the Army of Occupation in Japan. I doubt seriously that my Dad ever left the boat when in Japan let alone went anywhere near the nuclear bombed cities, but I am of the mind that he came across personnel who had 1st hand knowledge of the destruction found at Hiroshima and/or Nagasaki and what he had heard obviously left its mark on him.

Judging from presentations on the History and American Heroes cable channels, there has been effort over the last decade or so to have WWII Vets speak personally of their wartime experiences in war documentaries. I live just outside of New Orleans and therefore have had the opportunity to visit the WWII Museum downtown on several occasions. The Museum has made an extensive effort to interview and record the 1st hand experiences of remaining Vets for posterity and I was happy to read that Marv’s uncle had been interviewed by the Museum. Also happy to hear that Marv’s uncle had gotten to ride the PT-305. That Higgins PT boat and also a Higgins LCVP (Amphibious Landing Craft) were painstakingly reconstructed by Museum patrons and volunteers which included a junior officer who had served in my last Reserve Unit. If any of you ever come down to New Orleans for some R&R after this Convid 19 episode ends, you will find it well worth your time to spend a few hours or more at the WWII Museum. It’s setup is unique.

We’re CG; it’s been a big part of lives. Face it, we’re going to be bias when it come to the CG (and damn well should be) and always highlight its military contribution to the nation. Nevertheless, no matter the rank or the rate, no matter the branch of service served in, our parents and relatives who served during WWII were very special in their service and commitment to our nation. Greatest Generation? Imho: Absolutely!!!

Best Regards & Thanks for your work on this compilation initiative

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My dad enlisted on Governor's Island, NY in 1942. His enlistment papers show his civilian occupation as "Electrician Apprentice". He was 22 at the time and, not surprisingly, the Army made him an 'airplane instrument specialist' and sent him where he wanted to go; the 8th Air Force, 381st Bombardment Group. He may have flown over several CG manned ships navigating the Channel on his way to various pre-war historic cities and other places of interest, and back, but, like most of his generation, he didn't like to talk about it. The closest we came to a 'discussion' was when, in HS, I gently enquired about the slight, but noticeable, misalignment of his nose. He explained that it was a souvenir of a B-17 crash landing. He did so in a way that, to me, did not invite further discussion. So, who knows? He ended the war a Staff Sargeant, came home, married and raised a good family. Quietly. He served as a volunteer fireman (all of Long Island was so served, and still is) into his sixties. We buried him in his Fire Commissioner's uniform (augmented with my raincoat collar devices). He was a good man, and a good father.

USCG - Carlos Morales, CGA72
USA – Morales (Father), Philippines Scouts & USA Korean war

O.K. here’s my story: I grew up an army brat, but I never bothered to talk with my Dad about his army career. He retired my junior year in high school and passed away the summer between our third class and second class year at CGA. During the past few years every time I go to visit my Mom, I try to get information on their lives.

My Dad was a soldier in the Philippine Scouts when Japan invaded the Philippines. He was with the American forces that defended the Bataan peninsula and was taken prisoner when the American forces surrendered in 1942. I assume he was marched to the prison camp in the northern part of Luzon. This was the famous Bataan Death March where so many Americans and Filipinos died. Don’t know the exact year, but Mom said he was carried back to Angono (our home town) on a stretcher and couldn’t walk for many months. But she said he was able to get back into the fight before the war ended. Again I’m assuming some kind of guerrilla action. After the war the soldiers in the Philippine Scouts were given the option to become U.S. Army regulars, automatic citizenship, and U.S. citizenship to their children and future children (that’s how I got mine). Mom had to go thru the naturalization process.
So Dad was U.S. Army in 1946, went to America and left pregnant Mom in the Philippines. Some time before 1950 he was able to get home and made me before going to war in Korea. Mom didn’t have too much recollection of the Korean war (she’s 97 years old). In 1954 I guess he gained enough rank to be able to bring dependents with him and we all moved to Okinawa.

We finally made it to the USA in 1956 via the Army transport ship General Edwin Patrick. My first sea voyage Okinawa to Tacoma Washington. He spent the next five years at Fort Ord California where his main thing was being on the Seventh Army competition pistol team. In 1960 he transferred to Fort Carson Colorado where he was on the 4th Army pistol team. After he lost his edge, he was on the Army Marksmanship Training Unit, till he retired in 1966. 30 years between the Philippine Scouts and the U.S. Army.

USCG - Jim Morton, CGA72

USCG – Morton (Father), DWO on USS Bedford & CO on CGC Bonham

Jack’s tremendous story of his Dad’s WW II service, plus the numerous other accounts have finally moved me off “Top Dead Center” to recount my Dad’s story too.

Dad was a local student in Andover, MA when he was selected to attend Phillips Andover on scholarship as a member of the Class of 1942. He commuted every day to campus from home in Andover. He was honored to be a classmate of President George H. W. Bush at Phillips. Upon graduation in 1942 Dad initially tried to enter the U.S. Navy, desiring to be a submariner. Evidently he had some physical disqualification and next applied to CGA (again whatever it was did not stop him at CGA). He was accepted as a member of the Class of 1946, arriving in New London, CT in June 1942.

As Jack and others related, CGA was a busy place during WW II. OCS was on the lower field and the Academy was up the hill. The CGA curriculum for Dad’s class was shortened to three years (the Class of 1945 and 1946 graduated together I’m told) and when all was said and done Dad was commissioned an Ensign in 1945 (May or June?). Interesting to note that CGA had only received authority to grant a Bachelor of Science degree in addition to a commission as an ensign in the Coast Guard in 1941.

Dad’s first assignment in 1945 was as a DWO on the USS New Bedford (PF – 71) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_New_Bedford_(PF-71)) destined for service in the Pacific. The first CO was LCDR J. S. Muzzy, USCG. From the previous Wikipedia link you can read that after commissioning USS New Bedford was in service escorting convoys across the North Atlantic, but was soon shifted to duties in the Pacific. She departed Boston on July 31st 1945 bound for the Panama Canal, Hawaii and then Pacific duties. Somewhere between Boston and the Panama Canal my father joined the ship and made it into the Pacific enroute to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. USS New Bedford never made it into the WW II fighting as the Japanese surrendered on August 14, 1945. The ship made it to Hawaii on 27 Aug. USS New Bedford and Dad continued into the Pacific theater for weather station duties.

At some point the newly minted ENS Morton received orders to depart USS New Bedford and travel to LORAN Station Attu, AK as CO. I’m assuming the CG merely told Dad “last in, last out” and here are your orders. He spent some 7 months on Attu (probably felt like a lifetime) before he PCS’d to lovely Coos Bay, OR for assignment as OPS, then XO, and finally CO on a CG Bonham (WPC 129), one of the 125 foot patrol boats. Can’t imagine riding 1920’s built, 125 footer with a max speed of 13 kts over the Columbia Bar. Leaving Attu Dad asked my mother to join him as soon as his feet hit Seattle and they were married immediately on April 18, 1946.
My last note is my Dad was able to replicate his trip on USS New Bedford while serving as CO of CGC Hamilton (WHEC – 715) (1969-1971), sailing from Boston to the Panama Canal, Hawaii and onto the Pacific for an 11 month deployment on the Vietnam Gun Line.

Apologies to all who read this summary for its lateness. My summary is generally lacking in detail as Mom and Dad passed on Pan Am 759 on July 9, 1982. Would have been great to be able to hear the sea stories. Thanks for reading.

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USCG - Rich Knee, CGA72
USN – Alfred Knee (Father), Seabees

Amazing story Carlos. I am not an avid reader of WWII books but I have read one pertaining to the war in the Philippines. It is "Indestructible" by John R. Bruning. It is the story about Paul "P.I." Gunn. He was working as a civilian in Manila with his family. He escaped the invasion and joined the Army Air Force. His family didn't and spent much of the war in a concentration camp. Compelling story on a personal level, and the fly boys would enjoy it from the descriptions of seat of the pants flying and modifications made to aircraft to make them more effective in that theater.

My father (Alfred Knee) was a Navy Chief in the Seabees during WWII. Spent almost the entire war at Dutch Harbor, Alaska, as part of the fortifications against a potential north Pacific invasion. He had a BS in civil engineering from NYU and nearly 10 years work experience. He felt he should have been commissioned. The essence of the Navy's denial had to do with his birth in Ireland and his citizenship being derivative from his mother's naturalization. This was such an irritant with him that when I received a late Secretary's appointment to the USNA after having committed to CGA, he was willing to forfeit the CGA deposit so that I could get on a track to be a Navy officer. Giving up money was not part of his depression era DNA. I opted to stay with CGA which ended up being the far, far better path for me.

In this chain there has been a couple of references to the WWII museum in NOLA. As it turns out my wife's (Meg) uncle served with Army intelligence in Europe during the war. He had been born in Germany and spoke the language. After my mother in law's passing, Meg found a SS Honor ring in her mother's safe deposit box. It had never been mentioned so we don't know the when, why, or how of it was acquired by Meg's uncle. (He passed in the 1960's.) The ring is silver and is engraved with SS on one side and a swastika on the other. It also has a name engraved inside. It is also huge. Whoever was the" honoree" had fingers the size of bratwurst. Those rings were supposedly not widely awarded by the Nazis. (Albeit there are apparently many counterfeits.) It exudes evil. Meg's brother donated it to the WWII museum. It has been authenticated and now is part of its artifacts. I haven't been there for a while so can't say if it is displayed.

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USCG - Tom Meyers, CGA72
USNR – Charles W Meyers (Father), Radarman


13 June 1946 - 74 years ago to the day as I write this. It was literally the last entry written in a date-book-turned-diary that my Dad started on 21 December 1944. Short, pithy comments recount the service of LST 1039 from pre-commissioning, commissioning, service in the Pacific, decommissioning, and a short time thereafter with his shipmates. It also describes what he and his shipmates and friends were thinking and doing - usually in a very matter-of-fact but extremely personal way.

Note: "Arrived Great Lakes" refers to the Navy Separation Center at Great Lakes Naval Training Center. He and many of his midwest shipmates went there by train from Seattle WA immediately after the ship was decommissioned. "Called home & Jo." Jo was the woman to whom he was engaged at the time, Josephine Parise - my Mom.

21 April 1945 - Honolulu

Classmates: I was moved by the many fascinating, remarkable biographies of our parents' military service. Enough so that I was finally inspired to write a short version of my Dad's service.

Like others have reported, my Dad never really shared his WWII experience. All his service memorabilia was boxed up in a metal sea chest, the lid bolted shut. I remember exactly where he stored it as we moved around the country and where it was located in our garage in Miami when I left for the Academy. I do remember him occasionally opening it, but never fully sharing all its contents. I know it had his uniforms, some medals & ribbons, Japanese war souvenirs, and some papers. One noteworthy exception is a framed 24" x 20" photo of LST 1039 underway in San Francisco harbor; the photo was ALWAYS hanging someplace prominent in my Dad's workshop or garage. I now have it near my basement workbench. My Dad died young at age 56 of cancer - and I don't know what happened to everything in the sea chest. Fortunately a diary, photo album, and a scrapbook with memorabilia were saved and made it to me a couple years ago.

My Dad wanted to fly, and started aviation cadet training... but ended up on LST-1039 from pre-commissioning to decommissioning. LST is Landing Ship, Tank. He was a signalman/radioman sort of non-rate and left the Navy as an E-4 Radarman. Because he spent a lot of time on the bridge and radio central, he had access to and saved some interesting stuff - such as the handwritten rough log of the ship on its precom trip from Dravos Shipyard in Pittsburgh to Louisiana via the Western Rivers - which included several USCGR Warrant Officers and Petty officers as river pilots. His bridge and communications duties provided good scuttlebutt for his shipmates and diary as well.

He also saved some "official" precom photos of the ship and crew taken in the shipyard about the time of commissioning. One of the paper records he saved was a list of the entire commissioning crew with
their rank/rate and home addresses. My Dad also took a lot of photographs in the Pacific Theater which can be matched up in his diary if you know what to look for. Regret that most of the pictures don't have captions or identify who the shipmates are, except that some locations are lumped together - Maui, Oahu, Iwo Jima, Saipan, Eniwetok, Manilla, Tokyo, Yokahama, Sasebo, Fusan, and others.

Pre-commissioning at Dravo Shipyard, Pittsburgh December 1944

Commissioning crew December 1944 - Dad is 4th row from the back. 3rd column in.

Almost every day, In very few sentences and abbreviations, his diary describes underway operations, weather, battles, sights, sounds, and routine shipboard life. Intense moments: "Sighted another mine."
Passed thru 40 miles of mine field around midnite." OR "Emergency turn to avoid mine. A narrow escape at 15 ft." or "Sighted a mine & almost hit it. Off starboard beam at 50 yds. Reversed course to avoid a typhoon.") The last entry was on the same day. And some slightly graphic battle scenes. Among them: "Air raids...suicide into [LST] 534. Fire started. 10 hurt. More killed."

The more routine: "Paint! Paint! Paint!" or "I shaved. First time since left the States," or "Went swimming off the bow doors. Dove from bow door." and "More liberty! Bought souvenirs & canned goods. Mail!" Some more noteworthy from a historical context: Transporting 800 Japanese soldiers on a 9 day trip from Koror Island in Palau to Yokohama, Japan. Later, 150 Korean men, 150 women, and 350 children from Saipan to Fusan, Korea.

And maybe an occasional conduct problem? "Today I got a haircut after the Captain offered buying me a fiddle. Nice of him." and "Racked in & got 6 hrs. extra duty." and "Mother Meyers now has the head to clean for a month along with the compartment & laundry."

And a bit of an official and unofficial entrepreneur. Official: " Took over ship service job." (i.e., ship's store) and "Collected last $20 for services rendered." Unofficial: War souvenirs and such: "[A friend ashore] brought sales to ship & we traded for 65K for his outfit" and "Bought watch for $20.00. Sold same for $40.00" and mention of a few souvenirs he sent home.

Not sure about this category. After transporting an Army unit from Subic Bay to Japan, "Swiped two tables & 5 chairs from the Army. Going to make the compartment more homelike. No curtains tho."

And receiving mail and packages from home was huge. Jubilant with a lot of exclamation marks when he received it; deflated "oh, well" when the mail bag was empty and he didn't get anything. This probably explains why I often found one from him or my Mom in my cadet mailbox, and later in life as well.

After looking at the pictures and the scrapbook many times, and recently transcribing the diary, I was struck how very similar the naval traditions, language, day-to-day routine and operational experiences have carried on over the years. Field Day. Personnel Inspection. Rough log entries before and after taking on fuel and water. Holiday Routine. Captains Inspection. Shipyard availability. Loaded supplies aboard. Crossed International Date Line. Beached and loading 5th Air Force units. Bulldozers to airplanes. Heavy weather & extremely choppy sea. And how about: "During a convoy of 22 LSTs, 15 LSMs, 2 LCI, 2 merchant vessels, & escort of 2 APD, 1 PC, & 3 SC ran into a typhoon; almost collided with other ships. barometer down to 28.52." And maybe closer to home, "Tow broke loose again."

I'm guessing that anyone with the experience of military sea duty would read and see this much differently than others - and those with a lot of sea duty would identify even more. My seagoing experience was a 255' on ocean station with GITMO REFTRA, and then exclusively the black fleet and Little Creek REFTRA. LST duty was like buoy tender duty in many ways. While I was never shot at or had to avoid a REAL mine... sailed in 180' WLB from Alaska to Baltimore and back thru the Panama Canal (an experience my Dad had). Stopped in San Francisco and Seattle and sailed on Lake Washington (same as my Dad). Fleet training at Little Creek (Dad at NOB, Norfolk). Some serious heavy weather on ocean station and routinely in the Gulf of Alaska. Shipboard fire. Man overboard when steady steaming, collision (sorta) during a boarding, recovered crashed aircraft, recovered significant sections of space shuttle Challenger, and some other pretty interesting missions. ANYWAY, I can tell you that as I read my Dad's diary I had a gut feel of what was happening - or had it well pictured in my mind's eye. I know many of you would appreciate many of the situations my Dad captured in written words,
cryptic phrases, slang, jargon, photos and collectables. Again, I think there are those among our class who understand exactly what I'm talking about.

While a fair number of the biographies among our parents have been holy horrendo and truly remarkable, my Dad's reflect the observations, musings and mementos from the life of a simple sailor, a non-rate, during his service in WWII. I feel blessed now that he had the foresight to document his experience, and wish I could ask him more. Again, however - my Dad could not speak of these things. I vividly remember one time while driving me to school after I received my appointment to the Academy he started to describe something from his LST 1039 experience. Tears welled up in his eyes, he pulled over, had a couple short muffled sobs, said, "I'm sorry," waited a minute, and then drove on without another word.

If you made it this far, thank you for taking the time to read it all. Thank you to Joy Ng for the inspiration and Jimmy the encouragement to share.

Warm regards to all. Tom Meyers

As an aside, I have shared a bit of the "official" stuff with the Naval Museum in DC. There is also a LST organization which used one of my Dad's photos I sent them for its magazine cover. I also reached out to the family of one of the officers in my Dad's photo album and sent them a picture of their Dad. I also have an unclassified, operational immediate "U.S. Naval Despatch" (sic) i.e., message, my Dad typed on 10 April 1946 from CTG 96.4. It forms the Task Unit and provided guidance for several ships to sail in convoy from Yokohama, Japan to Pearl Harbor in anticipation of return to the States. Doesn't look much different than the standard operational immediate message traffic I last saw in 2000 - except it's much shorter. HA!

And one crazy last thing - 1039 was kinda my Dad's "lucky number" or something. The crazy strange thing is that it continues to pop up OFTEN for no apparent reason whether glancing at a clock for no good reason, seeing a house number on the street, an odometer, at the weirdest times. One example: After my Mom's burial at the cemetery, my sister and brother and I climbed in the car, started the engine, and the clock time was 10:39. Earlier this week I added up a bunch of parts I need to fix my truck.
$1039. This happens with freaky regularity. In my case, if you want the password to about every account that needs one, just include 1972 somewhere in it.

Lastly, here's the one hanging in my workshop. Taken in San Francisco Bay 14 May 1945 a few weeks before decommissioning in Seattle.

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USCG – Hank Blaney, CGA72
USA – Blaney (Father), Army Airborne

My dad was in the Army during the lead up to WWII through the end of the war. Like many of your fathers, he did not talk too much about the tough times—just the funny stories and friends he made along the way. When I was in junior high, I got interested in West Point, and he told me that if I ever tried to join the Army, he'd break my head. That's when I got my first glimpse that war wasn't always as glamorous as it's sometimes portrayed. After the war was over and he was trying to figure out what career to pursue, my dad thought very seriously about joining the CG, and I guess that thought was a seed that influenced my future, though he later became a carpenter & a diver and worked at Electric Boat during most of my childhood.

Prior to Pearl Harbor, he was in an engineering unit traveling all over Alaska in a power scow-Dutch Harbor, the Pribilofs, Naknek, Adak—putting in airstrips where they knew they'd soon be needed. Gore Vidal apparently had a similar experience & wrote a book entitled "Williwaw" to document his time there. One time in Adak my father bumped into a high school friend whose destroyer came into port. The friend gave him a tour of the ship and my dad's impression was "Those Navy guys thought their life was terrible because their coffee was cold, and here I was living in a hole in Alaska." He was in Dutch Harbor when it was bombed and it meant a great deal to me to visit the place many times on STORIS. Dad's stories about Alaska sounded very cool, and that's what made me consider Alaska when I left the Academy.

My dad saw a recruitment announcement for Army Airborne, and seeing it as a way to get home on leave for a few days, he signed up for jump school and was among the early members of the Eighty Second Airborne. He went to North Africa on a CG-manned troopship (Glen Ford was one of the officers), and trained for the Sicily invasion. He saw combat in Sicily, Anzio, Salerno, and the remainder of the Italian campaign. Years later during a family dinner at our house, he was talking to my father-in-law, a retired Navy chief yeoman. He mentioned Sicily and my father-in-law mentioned he was there, too, on an API. My dad mentioned a famous incident where our Navy shot down a bunch of his division's planes headed for Sicily and a bunch of his friends were killed. My father-in-law looked slightly uncomfortable before saying that his ship was involved in the mishap. Small world!

After Italy, my dad's regiment went to England for recuperation & more training. His regiment did not join most of the Division for D-Day, but they caught up with them soon enough and went through France, Belgium, and Holland, participating in Operation MARKET GARDEN and somewhere along the way earning a Bronze Star. Later in life he lived near a family from the Netherlands who brought him a plant on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Holland and their remembering his efforts touched him greatly. He was involved in the crossing of the Arnhem, a battle documented by the book & movie, "A Bridge Too Far", and was one of the guys in those little boats. Shortly thereafter he became one of the first Allied forces to enter Germany. He was hurt soon after this (not too many details provided here, but I still have the Purple Heart) and sent back to the States. After landing at an
Army base in Maine & bumping into his brother who may very well have helped save his leg, he spent a few weeks in the hospital, then went to Fort Belvoir for the rest of the war where among other things he lined the DC streets for Roosevelt's funeral.

Although he didn't want me to ever have to experience some of the things he went through, I know my dad was always proud of his service, and he was proud of mine. He loved being on the water & told me from the time I was young that the CG was far more squared away than our Navy brethren. The biggest lesson I learned from Sgt. Blaney, though, was the enlisted guy's perspective. I think often of a Bill Mauldin cartoon that he got a kick out of, showing a couple of LTs on a hillside enjoying a beautiful sunset with one saying to the other, "Isn't it beautiful? I wonder if they have one for the enlisted men." He told me about the officers that the troops appreciated and those they thought were jerks, and it boiled down to the way they treated their men and the example they set when it was time to get to work. I always considered those lessons far more important than any other leadership classes I took and tried to emulate them throughout my career. Fell short more than once, but I always tried to be that officer that my dad would have approved of.

USCG – Carl Smith, CGA72
USA – Smith (Father), 100th Infantry Division

My father was the youngest child of a poor working-class family in Lincoln, Nebraska. He started after high school in a ROTC like program called ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program). In late 1943, the program was canceled and he was assigned to infantry training with the 100th Infantry Division. The 100th went ashore after D-Day and engaged the Wehrmacht in the Vosges Mountains in northeastern France in October 1944. It was very rough terrain and weather prevented any air cover. Dad was captured in late December and was a POW until April 1945. He weighed 100 pounds when he was returned to the US Army. When his platoon started into combat, there were 42 men. When he was captured, only eight of the original platoon were still fit for duty. He came home, went to school on the GI Bill, and was the first member of his family to graduate from college. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and CIB.
Sergeant Bing Yee Ng

Bing Yee Ng was born in Guangzhou, China on March 17, 1920. Both Bing’s parents were of Chinese race and culture. His mother was also born in China, but his father was born in San Francisco, California. A child born abroad to one US citizen parent and one alien parent is considered a US citizen at birth. Therefore, Bing had the good fortune of being an American citizen on the day he was born.

The Ng family owned a successful import/export business. They had relatives and business connections in New York City, San Francisco, Hong Kong, and China. These contacts gave them reason to travel between the four places.

Bing first came to the United states when he was seven. He spent a year living in New York City with his family. His parents hired an Italian teacher to introduce Bing and his brother Jimmy to the English language. Then, Bing returned to China to complete his education. He graduated from high school in Shu Shan, Canton, China in 1935.

After finishing school, Bing came back to the United States. He settled in New York City. The ambitious young man took a job working for Chinese Laundries at 13114 Liberty Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. His responsibilities included driving a pickup truck to make deliveries, accepting payments, making reports, and completing minor maintenance on the delivery truck. In the early 1930’s, there were more than 3,500 Chinese laundries in New York City.

In fact, one in four ethnic Chinese men in the US worked in a laundry. Many of the Chinese immigrants had poor English-language skills and a lack of capital. These hard working, entrepreneurial individuals identified a need for laundry service in the city and developed a way to meet the need. They were then able to provide employment for newly arriving Chinese immigrants. Chinese laundries were sometimes the butt of jokes intended to demean the Chinese minority population. However, when the Great Depression hit New York City, these businesses were coveted by other people whose business endeavors could not survive in the hard-economic times.

Bing loved to hang out at nearby Floyd Bennett Field. Between World War I and World War 2, Floyd Bennett Field was used for general aviation. Pioneer aviators and dare devils made history there. Dozens of records were set by pilots flying to or from Bennett Field. Amelia Earhart was one of the airport’s most famous aviators at that time. Bing was enthralled by the planes; he seized on an opportunity to learn to fly.

Bing worked at Chinese Laundries for almost five years, until October 1940. Then, like his father before him, Bing traveled to China to marry a girl chosen for him by his family. Bing’s uncle lived in Hong Kong. With family connections there, Bing and his young bride, Ching Fung Low, began their married lives in the thriving British Colony of Hong Kong.
In 1937, Japan began attacking China. The Japanese invaded city after city. They were brutal, and China was not prepared to defend herself. At that time, Japan was not at war with Great Britain, so Hong Kong appeared to be safe from Japan’s sinister advances.

Claire Chennault, a former American army pilot, was recruited by China’s leader, Chiang Kai-shek, and his bright, beautiful, and influential American-educated wife, Madame Chiang. Chennault was tasked with assembling a group of volunteer American pilots to help China fend off Japanese aggressions. They were officially called the American Volunteer Group (AVG). Though President Roosevelt surreptitiously supported this clandestine mission, the AVG was not openly connected to the United States military. The United States was officially neutral; any role they played in the AVG was kept secret. Most of Chennault’s recruits were former military pilots who wanted to fly fighter planes and who were enticed by the promise of adventure and lucrative salaries.

Chennault was able to arrange for China to acquire 100 American-made P-40 airplanes for his AVG pilots to fly. The Curtis P-40 Warhawk was a single-engine, single-seat, all metal fighter and ground-attack aircraft. The rugged airplane was designed to withstand ground fire. General George C. Kenney reported the P-40 could, “slug it out, absorb gunfire, and fly home.” On July 28, 1941, the first American Volunteer Group arrived in Rangoon, Burma. Burma was chosen as the location from which to base their training and operations because of its proximity to China and because it was part of the British Commonwealth. The base was run-down and poorly equipped, but the pilots trained hard under the leadership of Chennault. He inspired them. They became a highly skilled group of fighter pilots. While they waited for their opportunity to defend China, they trained, played cards or Acey-Deucey, read books, and explored the area. They painted the noses of their planes to look like sharks with huge white teeth, gaping mouths, and beady eyes.

Chennault needed support staff for the AVG. In October, he traveled around the Far East looking for “whatever American civilians happened to be available.” He crossed paths with Bing Yee Ng in Hong Kong. Bing would be an asset to Chennault; he was fluent in both English and Chinese and could serve as a translator for the AVG. Bing, who loved both the United States and China, volunteered.

On December 7, 1941, the same day Pearl Harbor was attacked, Japanese forces invaded Hong Kong. They bombed and shelled the urban areas of the city. More than 4,000 civilians were killed in the Battle of Hong Kong, including Bing’s young wife. Bing was only 21 when he became a widower. On Christmas Day of that year, Hong Kong surrendered to Japan. It was fortunate Bing had already left the area; Americans remaining in Hong Kong were taken prisoner by Japanese troops.

The AVG soon began both defensive and offensive missions. They were uncanny in their ability to accomplish a lot with very little. Their victories inspired the American people during the early part of the United States’ involvement in World War II. They gave Americans both hope and something to be proud of. The AVG was dubbed the Flying Tigers.

During Bing’s attachment to the Flying Tigers, he spent time hiding in the jungles of Burma. He hunted for snakes and monkeys to eat while watching for Japanese snipers. It was necessary for the men to shake out their shirts in the morning to get rid of the scorpions. Bing contracted jungle rot, a chronic ulcerative skin lesion caused by a variety of microorganisms found in
tropical climates. These infections left him with deep pock-mark scars on his legs, a lasting reminder of his jungle experiences.

The Flying Tigers pilots completed their service commitments on July 4, 1942. The toll on their bodies, their resources, and their numbers were great. Though they were in action for only seven months, they fought 50 major battles and never lost one. One of their major accomplishments was turning the Japanese back from the Burma Road, an important supply route into China.

By then, the United States was actively involved in the defense of China. The Flying Tigers pilots and their support staff were encouraged to join the United States Army. Their leader, Claire Chennault agreed to join the army and stay in China. He was assigned the rank of General. Bing Ng traveled back to the United States where he enlisted in the US Army.

In the weeks between his return to the United States and his induction into the army, Bing went to San Francisco. He stayed with his uncle who owned a restaurant at 762 Clay Street. Shortly after arriving in California, Bing was arrested by American authorities because they thought he was Japanese.

The attack on Pearl Harbor caused the United States to fear Japan might invade the continental United States. With most of her Pacific fleet destroyed at Pearl Harbor, the United States was ill-prepared to fend off such an invasion. President Roosevelt confided to a friend that he feared the Japanese could make it all the way to Chicago before they were spread thinly enough for the United States to have a victory.

American military leaders thought Japan might have planted Japanese people in the United States ahead of the war. Their purpose would be to work covertly against the United States when Japan implemented their planned invasion. (They had, in fact, used that strategy in the Philippines.) American authorities rounded up civilians of Japanese descent. They were held in internment camps for the duration of the United States’ involvement in the war, despite lack of evidence against them. Most of the 117,000 interned Japanese civilians were American citizens. Bing was held for only a few days, until he could prove he was Chinese, not Japanese.

Bing’s army career began on July 11, 1942. His enlistment papers documented his schooling and prior employment. His past occupations were recorded as truck driver and cook. (There was no mention of the time period between October 1940 and July 1942; those years, which Bing spent in Hong Kong or supporting the Flying Tigers, were conspicuously absent.) The official records noted Bing was proficient in speaking, reading, and writing Chinese. His hobbies were listed as hunting and playing basketball. He could play the Chinese piano, also known as a Chinese Zither. The ability to play this stringed instrument was a skill, the enlistment papers suggested, which could be used for entertainment.

Bing was assigned to the US Army 66th Infantry Division. The insignia he wore on his left uniform sleeve was a black panther’s head on a circular orange background within a red border. The black panther was chosen to symbolize the attributes of a good infantryman: ability to kill, to be aggressive, alert, stealthy, cunning, agile, and strong. Bing’s job was cooking for the 366th Medical Battalion of the 66th Infantry Division.
The Black Panthers came to France on December 24, 1944. They were summoned to reinforce Allied troops who were fighting at the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, Northeast France, and Luxembourg. In mid-December of 1944, the German Army had begun a last-ditch effort to push the advancing Allied Forces back and regain control of Western Europe. They were determined; they staged a blitzkrieg (lightning) counter-offensive and fought with everything they had. The Allied Forces on the front lines needed help to withstand this onslaught and keep pressing toward Germany and their goal: the defeat of the Third Reich.

On Christmas Eve, 1944, the men of the 66th Infantry Division boarded two former ocean liners which had been converted to troop ships. The SS Leopoldville took more than 2,000 men. The rest of the 66th traveled on the HMS Cheshire. They left the pier at Southampton, England, bound for Cherbourg, France, about 100 miles away. The two troop ships formed a convoy with an escort of four Royal Navy destroyers, including the HMS Brilliant. Enemy U-boats were sighted in the area, so the convoy traveled in a zig-zag pattern. This strategy made it more difficult for enemy submarines to hit the ships with torpedoes. The seas were rough as the group of six Allied ships made their way across the English Channel.

Just before six o’clock that evening, a torpedo fired from the German submarine U-486 struck the Leopoldville. Three hundred men were killed instantly. The Brilliant pulled alongside to take on survivors. The other destroyers in the convoy chased the submarine, attempting to defend against more attacks.

Many soldiers from the sinking ship jumped onto the smaller Brilliant. There was a height difference of 40 feet between the deck of the Leopoldville and the deck of the Brilliant. Many of those who jumped were severely injured. The crew rushed to bring hammocks to the deck to cushion the fall of the jumping soldiers. Some of the soldiers missed the jump completely, fell between the two ships, and were crushed as the waves caused the ships to bump against each other.

The Brilliant picked up 500 survivors. The men were instructed to spread out evenly, both above and below decks, to keep the boat from capsizing. It was very overloaded, with just inches of freeboard. The captain was afraid the ship would sink if they took on any more weight, so they headed to Cherbourg. They hoped other ships would take on the rescue. However, when they arrived in Cherbourg, they noted most of the ships in the port had been scuttled by the Germans. Would-be rescuers were enjoying Christmas Eve parties; they were unaware of the tragedy taking place on the sea just five miles from the safety of the harbor. The Leopoldville sank by the stern at 8:30 pm. Soldiers who weren’t quickly rescued either drowned or died of hypothermia in the 48-degree waters of the English Channel. Bing would always be haunted by the memory of so many dead bodies floating in the water. Over 800 lives were lost that evening, including 763 servicemen from the 66th Infantry Division.

After the disaster at sea, the sinking of the Leopoldville was deemed highly classified. Survivors were warned not to breathe a word of it to anyone. Even the letters they sent home were censored. The army was afraid news of the disaster would discourage the Allied Forces who were still struggling to defeat the Nazis; neither did they want the Germans to know so many reinforcements had been lost. In addition, they didn’t want the citizens on the home front to understand the magnitude of the loss. Besides, it was a great embarrassment to the military. The rescue could have been handled better; there needn’t have been so much loss of life.
The remnants of the 66th Infantry Division gathered in Cherbourg on Christmas Day. Tents were set up to house the survivors. This tent city became known as “Purple Heart Hill.” The people of Cherbourg were not strangers to death and destruction; they had just recently sustained much damage and loss of life in the month-long, intense battle for Cherbourg’s liberation.

One of the first priorities of the Allied Forces when they came ashore on the beaches of Normandy just six months before was to take control of the port cities and establish supply lines for the advancing troops. They cut off the Cotentin Peninsula to isolate Cherbourg. Then, they fought to capture the City of Cherbourg and its port. The task was harder than they anticipated. There was great destruction and many casualties, both military and civilian.

The city’s port was finally captured by a 53-man US Coast Guard special task force under the command of CMDR Quentin Walsh, USCG. Despite heavy casualties, his small force seized the port facilities and took control of the harbor. He discovered that the remaining German garrison at nearby Fort du Hornet held 52 US Army paratroopers as prisoners. Under a flag of truce, Walsh exaggerated the strength of the forces under his command and persuaded the commanding officer of the remnants of the German garrison to surrender. All told, he accepted the surrender of over 700 German soldiers. In the process, he freed 52 US paratroopers who were being held prisoner.

(Many years later, Bing’s son Jimmy attended the US Coast Guard Academy where he became close friends with Richard Buckingham and his parents, Albion and Dorothy Buckingham. USCG CMDR Walsh (see previous paragraph) was Albion Buckingham’s commanding officer when he was stationed in Groton, Connecticut during World War 2. Mr. Buckingham often told his children stories about the hard-nosed, inflexible, by-the-book guy who was his CO. Mr. Buckingham concluded by telling them how Walsh later caused the surrender of the remaining German garrison at Cherbourg. Richard often wondered how much of his father’s version of this story might be mythical. As an adult, he learned the story was not only true, but bigger and more impressive than his dad’s version. A Navy Press Release in 2019 announced its newest guided-missile destroyer, the USS Quentin Walsh, would be named after Captain Quentin Walsh, USCG.)

Taking control of Caen, the nearby transportation center, was even harder than capturing Cherbourg. They had anticipated controlling Caen in a matter of days, but it took two months to free the city from German control. The city was utterly destroyed in the process, with a great number of civilian casualties. Both sides engaged in “total war”, a military conflict in which the contenders are willing to make any sacrifice in lives and other resources to obtain a complete victory.

In Brittany, they met with similar difficulties while capturing the ports of Brest and St. Malo. When the Allies finally had a secure supply line, they made the decision to isolate and contain the remaining German strongholds along the Atlantic Coast. They did not want to risk the additional destruction and blood shed it would take to liberate the French port cities which were still occupied by the Nazis. The Allied Forces left the 94th Division to guard the pockets of remaining German resistance. The rest of the Allied Forces concentrated their efforts on pushing into Germany.

After their tragic loss at sea, the remnants of the 66th Infantry Division regrouped in Cherbourg. Because they had lost a full third of their men, they were diverted from their intended
destination at the Battle of the Bulge. Instead, they were sent to the rear of the lines near the German-occupied ports of Saint-Nazaire and L'Orient in Brittany. They relieved the 94th Division, which proceeded to the Battle of the Bulge.

It is estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 Germans were dug in along the 112-mile front in northwestern France. These pockets of Germans became the responsibility of the 66th Infantry Division.

Bing went with the Panthers who were tasked with containing the Nazis holding out at the highly fortified German submarine base in Saint-Nazaire, France. The U-boats had escaped, but the remaining German troops were determined to resist Allied advances at any cost; they were prepared to fight to the death. In addition to the 25,000 German troops stationed at the submarine base, 3,000 retreating German soldiers also found refuge there. They had enough supplies to last for two years.

The 66th Infantry Division conducted daily reconnaissance patrols and periodic artillery fire on the pockets of resistance. The artillery fire disabled a number of big German guns and sank numerous resupply boats. Their presence kept the Germans in Brittany from staging any offensive efforts.

For the medic team, this was not difficult duty because there was not much fighting. They tended to the needs of the troops and were constantly vigilant. They experienced a time of relative peace and interaction with the newly liberated French people.

Bing enjoyed getting to know the French civilians. He liked their culture and the way they welcomed him into their homes. During the five months he was stationed near Saint-Nazaire, Bing met Suzanne Chedotal. The two were married shortly after the end of World War 2. Bing was sent to Germany as part of the United States Army occupation forces. His young bride accompanied him for most of the ten years he was stationed in Germany. They witnessed and were part of the transformation of Germany from a defeated, war-ravaged, enemy nation to an independent, democratic, economically strong friend and ally of the United States.

It was during this time that their son, Jimmy Ng, was born.

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USCG - John Whitehouse, CGA72
USN – Whitehouse (Father), Aviation Radioman & Flag Cryptographer

Part I - Father in Service.
My father, after graduating from high school joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and worked in the White Mountains of New Hampshire building roads and lodges.

After a little more than a year, sending money back to his Mom, he joined the Navy (pre-WW-II), presumably to “See the World.” He was a Radioman, a “slick-sleeve Chief”, and Flag Cryptographer. He served on two ships before WW-II, USS Houston (CL/CA-30) and USS Indianapolis (CL/CA-35). [Note: Both sunk during WW-II).
His enlistment was up in the Fall of 1941 and he was in San Diego when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He walked into the Recruiting Office on Monday the 8th and said he wanted back in, except he wanted Aviation.

He became an Aviation Radioman and served in the Pacific throughout the War, including photo recon flights over Japan before and after the bombs were dropped. My father, like many others, did not discuss his War years.

He stayed in the Navy after WW-II, married, and started his family. We lived in various places in the U.S. with occasional deployments, mostly to Malta.

Part II - The Academy
I remember as a child, sitting on my father’s lap watching Victory at Sea. It must have been reruns since the original series was Oct 1952 to May 1953. However, when I was seven I remember watching two morning TV shows, the Men of Annapolis (’57) and The West Point Story (’57). Because my father was in the Navy and watching those shows, I set my mind on wanting a military career, preferably in the Navy.

Trying to get a Congressional appointment would prove to be challenging. I distinctly remember my Guidance Counselor asking me if I had ever heard of the Coast Guard Academy and I said no. He recommended that I apply because it didn’t require an appointment but you applied “just like any College.” And, he said, “it is just like the Navy only smaller.” I was hooked and requested a catalog and application and I submitted. However, I also pursued an appointment to one of the other Service Academies. It was a good thing for me I had a strong Math SAT score because I needed it to bring up the low Verbal score.

I believe it was being an Eagle Scout that pushed me over the cut. I also did well on the physical and could have blown it on my interview. I went into Boston and sat across from a CAPT. I don’t remember his name but he didn’t have wings on his uniform. When he asked if I had any questions I asked, “Does the Coast Guard have aircraft?” He had a strange look on his face and said, “yes, helicopters and airplanes.” I responded, “Good, I want to be a pilot!” That ended the interview. When I received the appointment letter was still holding out for a Congressional appointment but the deadline loomed and I sent in my acceptance. A week later I received word I was being appointed to the Merchant Marine Academy. Because I had already given my commitment to the Coast Guard Academy, I politely declined and am happy I did.

I fondly remember my time at Canoe U. mainly because of the people I meet and friends I made along the way. My positive memories certainly weren’t for my academics because I helped make the top half of the class what they became.

And to bring the story full circle, since my father retired from the Navy, he was able to present me my Commission. He was seated behind the Vice President during graduation and had a visible smile on his face. I know it please him to no end seeing his son graduate from the Academy. And, like several of our other Classmates, having my father had me my Commission instead of the Vice President has been a lifelong memory. The cherry on the cake came during my first tour when I was selected for flight training and fulfilled my desire to become a pilot.
Well, I don't often actively participate in the class blog, but you all have inspired me so here goes. I grew up in a Navy family. My dad was a mustang. He enlisted after High School at the beginning of WWII and served on submarines in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters; and, again during the Korean conflict. As so many of you have reported, my father did not speak much about his war experiences. He rose through the enlisted ranks through Chief, and then became a Warrant Officer. Eventually he went to LDO school and graduated as a Commissioned Ensign. As a result of his career we moved a lot. I attended 13 grade schools over the years, four seventh grades in the same year. When I started High School in Charleston, SC, he retired from the Navy as a LCDR and we moved back to Ledyard CT, where my parents still owned a home from a previous duty assignment in Groton. I tell you all this to explain that from my earliest recollections I wanted to be in the military; and, Annapolis was always held out there as a supreme goal. I would be the first in my extended family to attend college. I was a good student and adequate athlete but not what you would call naturally gifted at either. In other words, I always had to work to be successful in and out of the classroom. As with so many of your stories, I was one of four children and there wasn't a lot of money factored in for college. I applied to the University of Connecticut and for a
congressional nomination to Annapolis. CT granted me early acceptance with a scholarship so it became my safety school. Unlike many of your stories I was aware of the Coast Guard and the CG Academy. Living only 11 miles away from the Academy, I was lucky enough to have been on the Academy Reservation many times. (I still have my original travel voucher check for $0.66 to report into the Academy swab summer). I also got to wrestle at the Academy with my High School teammates. So, given this familiarity, I also applied to the Coast Guard Academy. My physical and interview were both conducted at the Academy, but I do not recall who I interviewed with. I also had the opportunity and advantage of a visit in my parent's home from Jim Pennington, class of 69 (he was a from Groton, and therefore had the "townie" experience I was possibly looking at). I don't recall how the meeting was arranged but I do remember we discussed swab summer and he told me to make sure I could do 72 consecutive push-ups, many times/day. We also discussed the rigors of academics. So, as you can see I went into this with my eyes more open than most if not all of you. However, non of these privileges adequately prepared me for the truth of what lay ahead.

Quite surprisingly, when I spoke with my father about the possibility of having to choose between Annapolis and the CGA, he strongly encouraged me to accept the Coast Guard appointment if it was offered. As it turned out I received an alternate appointment to Annapolis but quickly accepted the offer to join our class of 1972 at the CGA when it arrived. Of course, for the next four years I had to endure the constant barrage of CG and "shallow water sailor" jokes from our family's Navy friends, but never from my Dad. He loved it when I came home, especially when so many of you, my classmates, would come too.

I never actually loved the Academy. In fact I dare say that in the early days I really hated being there. One thing about being a home town kid during swab summer/year that nobody thinks about (including me) is how difficult it was to look across the river and actually see the navy housing development you once lived in. It was a real distraction when I was trying my best to block those kinds of thoughts and stay focused on the task at hand, survival. As the years have passed I do look back on the hardships we all endured and know that if nothing else my time at the Academy gave me the self-resilience, aptitude, fortitude and critical thinking under pressure skills to endure the obstacles I have come across in my life. I do not credit the Academy with teaching me leadership. That honor belongs to my father. In fact, I believe the CGA probably stimulated a rebellious attitude in me that was well repressed but persists even into today. Besides the academic education, the best thing I got out of attending the Academy was the endearing and enduring friendship bonds with you, my classmates.

I never did get that military career that I coveted all those years. Some of you may recall that I had shoulder surgery at the Academy our first class year and spent much of that year in a brace and on limited duty. There was some concern and much discussion about me not getting commissioned. However, I recovered and graduated with the rest of you. I reported to the Taney along with Jim Rohn and Gill Calhoun. On our first ocean station deployment after Gitmo, I re injured my shoulder and after a lengthy recovery time and temporary duty assignments I was medically retired from the Coast Guard. As a result, I pretty much lost contact with everyone. However, I gradually started re connecting at events like John Whitehouse's change of command ceremony in FL; and, later his retirement party. Through work relocation and travel I have reached out to various classmates over the years. I now live in Kirk Smith's old home town in TN. While he now lives in Marietta GA, we talk and see each other all the time. Kevin Schied and I joke about how the years just seem to melt away when we talk on the phone or get together. I have had long phone conversations with both Jeff Hibbitts and Dave Engan after decades apart and it was like time had stood still. Jack
Synovec is godfather to our oldest son and still a great friend. We speak regularly. David Noyes and I were close after graduation but drifted apart with life. That connection has been re-established. I am so happy that I was able to speak to and share experiences with Duck (Gary Swan) before he passed away (thank you for that Kevin). I thoroughly enjoyed seeing many of you at the 45th reunion and look forward to our upcoming 50th. I tell Kevin all the time that one advantage of having left active CG service so early is that you are all locked in my memory as 18 to 22 year olds, just beginning your great post graduation adventures. My friendships forged at the Academy are the most important in my life next to my family. You are almost always on my mind.

-USCG - Joe Jones, CGA72
USA - Sgt Joseph H. Jones, Sr (Father), US Army Signal Corps & Army Air Corps

All of the Islands in the Pacific.

No real stories to tell save a picture of his brothers all in uniform with a news paper clip of the Jones Brothers (Ira Jones, Ezell Jones, & Dad) having served their country proudly.

I found a metal watch ban in Dad’s trunk that had all of the island places Dad had served. I can remember Eniwetok and Guam among several other names etched in the aluminum. I would say he was in the Federated States Of Micronesia. He said that he climbed poles and ran the wires to communicate. His Signal Corps was with the US Army Air Corps.

In the trunk were a bunch of sea shells taken from all of the islands where he served.

There was an Eisenhower jacket I wore often to school.
These were his combat boots with the double buckle.

His boots with shoe strings were in much better shape than these are being sold for $120.00 on Etsy.

Or these for $525.