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WARREN ABRIEL - Marine - transcript of phone conversation 7-31-82

He was a gunner on a 22mm amidship on the port side, near HOsey and Ford and Corso

Saw the Japanese plane fly away from the ship, but didn't see it come in
We started pushing the planes over the side, the fighter planes that were on the
flight deck. We had pushed quite a few of them when an explosion occurred down on
the hangar deck and blew the forward elevator up in the air. I got knocked down
in the catwalk on the starboard side of the ship. No, I wasn't injured. Right
after that the captain gave the order to ~~abandon ship~~ abandon ship. I slid down
a chain on the ~~starboard~~ starboard side up near the bow.

CD - was anyone with you?

Well, there wasn't any Marines with me at that time. There were a few
sailors taking the same route, but I don't know who they were.

CD - when you got into the water, were you alone?

I was alone for some time and then we got a group of about 5 to 7 men
together, there weren't any other marines there, and we more or less floated together.

CD - who picked you up?

A destroyer (Cassin Young) . There was an anti-aircraft cruiser that went
by and we were all waving to them and they were waving back to us but they
apparently weren't stopping until there was quite a number to be picked up at ~~a~~ one
~~time~~ spot. Then this destroyer, I forget the name of it after all these years,
picked us up. I know there was one sailor who was from Tennessee or somewhere
and he said they're never gonna get me back on a ship again, I'm going back in the
hills and they'll never find me. He was on the Hornet when it was sunk too.

Then they started shooting from the destroyer before they picked us up, ~~x~~
and we found out later on there was sharks all around us. They were throwing things
and shooting rifles and pistols from the destroyer.

Then I heard there was word that ~~the~~ the Yamato, the Japanese's biggest battle

ship, one of the biggest in the world, was just over the horizon someplace and our destroyer was volunteering to go but they were told no, they had too many survivors on board, which didn't hurt our feelings any.

CD - where were you when the stern blew off the Princeton?

I was in the water at that time. We were in the water probably about 4 hours. It was quite a while. As I recall the bomb dropped just after 9, and it was after noon when I was picked up. We were quite a ways away from , you know, we had drifted quite a ways away. I was in the water when the stern blew off but I was on the Irwin when they tried to sink her.

There was a twist there - Captain Hoskins had lost his foot and they flew him to Mare Island in California to the naval hospital and my sister was a Wave and she was working at that hospital when they brought him in. She knew the ship had been sunk because it was on the news broadcast either that same day or the ~~next~~ following morning, which was very unusual because they never did that until they knew who the survivors were and notified the next of kin. This was an unusual situation and everybody was surprised when they came out with it, on such short ~~notice~~ notice. It was several days until my family knew I was OK. It took that long for them to get together a list of the survivors. They called and then I called them back, and then I send them a letter..

I was on the destroyer for 3 or 4 days and then we were transferred over to the Lexington, and we were then for about a week or so, then we went back to Ulithi, I think it was, and then we got a transport ship. The Marine Major on the Lexington wanted me to stay on there. I had made a cocking device for the 22mm cannons about 6 months before and they hadn't had them on their ship yet, so I put them on all the guns on the Lexington and this Major wanted ~~me~~ me to ~~stay~~ stay there, but I said no, I want to go back and get a leave. Then we were still out there waiting to go home and the Lexington got a torpedo in her fantail and they were back in the states on leave before we got back. it was reall ironic.

ABRIE 3-3-3

He wasn't wounded at all. One explosion was near to his ear and he kind of thought he had a little problem there, but he never did anything about it.

Was on board from the time P was ~~sent~~ commissioned.

Was on the transport ship when Carl Huemann hung himself, doesn't remember name of ship.

Has an album with a number of photos and things from the Princeton in it.

He had thought about writing a book on the incident, but when he saw Buracker's article in National Geographic he figured the story had been told.

Didn't make the Nashville reunion but wants to come to next year's, especially if it's out west.

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2

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~~LARRY~~ LARRY ADDISON, transcript of tape done on last day of Ind. reunion 1-1-1
was in same unit as George green

Lawrence Raymond Addison

came on board at Pearl Harbor in late 43 or very early 44

I was a seaman first class, worked on focsil crew, we handled the anchors, handled the tow lines for refueling, and general deck work

his battle station was number one gun mount with a quad 40 on it (Goerge Green's station) on the focsil, right on the bow, George was right above him in the director/operators chair. I was what they call a second loader, i stood on the deck and passed the shells up to the man who was dropping them in. That's where he was when bomb dropped, he saw the Jap palne - Just a glimpse of the plane was all I saw as I looked up, it disappeared from my vision because the flight deck hung over us. couldn't see the bomb.

We heard a rumble as the bomb hit but somebody must have told us, it seems to me our division officer told us to reamin at our stations that there was trouble. I stayed there x quite a while, it seems to me about an hour but I'm not positive.

Then I went overboard the starboard side, away from the destroyer that was alongside of us. I got on the outside of the railing and jumped.

He got an actual order to x abandon ship, he thinks from his division officer Had a lifejacket on and could swim, thinks he was in water about 2 hours, alone most of the time,

I saw others occasionall and we would try to get together but the waves kept us apart. I lost sight of all the ships and couldn't see anything and then suddenly there was a whale~~x~~ boat alongside and there was another man maybe 40 or 50 feet away, I don't know who he was. I heard some rifle shots, I didn't know where they were from and I wasn't aware of what they were doing until I got aboard, I think it was

ADDISON 2-2-2-

C - what did you lose on board the ship?

A - A lot a momentos, I do collect a lot of ^{momentos} ~~momentos~~, and I had collected quite a few, and of course I lost all my clothes. I went overboard with nothing but my d clothes, I didn't have my wallet or anything. My wallet was in my locker. I had a key chain. I took my shoes off before I jumped in. So all I had was my shirt and pants and shorts and a key chain which I still have.

(was not on the Irwin, or would have remembered torpedos coming back, was on board some ship when the stern blew) was not married at the time, mother was next of kin, heard on radio that ship had sunk, got a V-mail from him about a week later.

There was a fellow that was from Minnisota whose sister called my mother to say that she had heard almost immediately from her brother, and this really, according to stories my dad has told me, really put a strain on my mother because some time elapsed before she heard.

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3

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Salvatore L. Amonte GM3c

My name is Salvatore L Amonte but my shipmates know me as Sam or Sammy. I enlisted Nov 13, 1942 in the Navy. I had just gotten out of high school that June. I was sworn in at Boston and then went by bus to New Port, Road Island, where I went through boot camp. From there I went to gunners mate school in Washington DC. From gunners mate school, I was assigned to the Princeton. This was before it was commissioned. When we went over to Philadelphia Navy Yard, we slept in barracks and the Princeton was still at Trenton, New Jersey. After they floated her across, we went to work on her. You might say I'm a plank owner. I went aboard as seaman 1st class. I was assigned to the 4th division, that was a gunnery division. I started striking for gunners mate, and I made 3rd class gunners mate. Several months before she was sunk, I made gunners mate 2nd class.

The Princeton was a happy ship. I'm 60 years old and to this day, I feel fortunate that I was assigned to the Princeton. She was always known as a happy ship. There were so many good experiences that went along with it. I think we were one of the happiest ships in the Navy really. They seemed to get along. There were some disagreements like when the airdales would rev up their engines, the grease would get on our guns. When we went on liberty or on the beach, even with the large number of personnel we had, we still seemed to recognize one another. The Princeton crew always would stick together if there were any problems.

Our sleeping quarters were in the aft part of the ship, below, on the 4th deck. My first duties I was assigned to at general quarters was a gunner on a 20 mm on the aft on the port side. From there, I got transferred to a first loader on mount 10. That was a twin 40mm and that was aft on the flight deck on the port side. Then my battle station changed to the fantail and I became assistant gun captain of mount 11. That was a quad 40 that was mounted on the fantail.

I remember when we left Philly and went down to Norfolk to get

Salvatore L. Amonte GM3c cont.

demagnetized. From there we went to Trinidad for our shake down cruise. From Trinidad we went back to Norfolk where they did a little work on it. Then we went through the Panama Canal and stopped at Balboa which I think is about in the middle of the locks. We were there for about two days and had liberty. That is where I got the tatoo that I have on my right arm of an anchor that says United States Navy on it. From there we went on out into the Pacific.

I remember well the day we came out of Pearl Harbor, we were backing down to get under way and the starboard screw got stuck into the mud. We never did really correct that. The shaft was bent going into the screw. Our sleeping quarters were right over the shafts and until the day the Princeton got sunk, there was always a vibration whenever we were making any knots at all. We got used to the vibration after a while.

Each division had their own area and would kind of stick together. The gunners mates had the main armory about midship. There were four divisions and we were in the 4th divisions. Each gunnery division had it's own gunnery locker. For the 4th division it was aft on the port side. It was a small room as I recall, probably 8 by 12 feet. I think we had about 10 gunners mates in the 4th division. This is where we would keep grease and tools that we needed to maintain our guns. We also had a joe pot there. That's where we would meet and hang out and have coffee of course. When we needed more supplies or when we really wanted to get together, we would go down to the armory where the gunners mates from all four divisions would all meet and chew the fat. We got real close together.

In the main armory we were in a position to do a lot swapping. Aboard ship that's about all you did. Every time a plane would get shot down or ditch coming in the first thing the pilot would do is come down to the armory and turn in his 45, and we would issue him a new one. All we had to do was clean up the old 45,

Salvatore L. Amonte GM3c cont.

the salt water. People always wanted souvenirs. If there was a cook who wanted a 45 to take home as a souvenir, or if they wanted 20mm or 40mm projectiles we would disarm them and they would make lamps and stuff. For this we would always swap them. If it was a ship fitter, maybe a key ring. If he was a baker he'd always bring up pies and stuff. So we always had plenty to eat and plenty of coffee in the armory. That was all done through this swapping back and forth.

I remember when we'd take on supplies, all hands would turn to taking on supplies and we'd try to be a steady line coming in and down to the stock room. Now and then, one of the gunners mates would get out of line with a case of peaches, or fruit or something that we thought was real good. They came in four one gallon cans to a case. We would store this in our armory and when we had a party or get together at night we would pull all this. All the boxes looked the same. They just stenciled on the side what was inside. This one time at Eniwetok, we saw one of the cargo nets had dropped and they were peaches. We all grabbed a case and there was about eight of us, and instead of heading down for the locker, we headed for the armory. We put these cases in the armory and got back in line before we were missed. This turned out to be funny. When we got under way we looked and we only ended up with one case of peaches and the other seven were cases of string beans. Nobody was too eager to eat string beans, but we had to unload these. It's pretty hard to get rid of stuff when your out to sea. We were in Japanese territory and you couldn't throw stuff over the side because it would float. We'd open up a can of these beans and go out on the fantail at night hoping no one would see you when you were standing watch and you'd have to take a bean out at a time and snap it in half and throw it over the side. Then we had to take wire cutters and cut up the cans into little pieces and flip them over side. It was quite a job getting rid of those seven cases of string beans. When you think of it now, it was a lot of fun. I do want to make a point that I enjoyed my time on the Princeton. It was a great ship and we always seemed to be happy.

Salvatore L. Amonte GM3c cont.

Paul Jackson was gun captain of mount 11 and I was assistant. Mount 11 was right on the fantail. This was a quad 40. Right above that there was two 20mm's. I know we on mount 11 had shot down 14 Zero's and I don't remember how many Judy's. The reason we had downed more planes than anyone else was because whenever we were attacked by planes the captain of course would swing the ship around if planes would, torpedo planes would make a run on us, would swing the ship so the plane attacking us would always come in thru the fantail, and give it less of a target. That put us on mount 11 in the position to shot. We were pretty lucky really. But we also had more opportunity than the other guns.

On the morning of Oct. 24 I know it wasn't raining, but it was cloudy. It was always warm out there. We had gone to general quarters and our planes had taken off. The planes had bombs on them of course for a softening up operation. When the word got out the rest of the Jap fleet at that time that was in the Sea of Japan was coming out. They were spotted. So our planes were order back with the bombs still on them. At the same time the Japs had launched their planes and they started coming at us. It was quite a Turkey Shoot you might call it in the sense that we're shooting at different planes that the Japs had sent Zeros and us. And at the same time our Gunnery Officer would seize us from firing because one of our planes would be coming in. As our planes were landing and what would happen at that time was really, the planes would land, go down the hanger dack, where they would take off the base bombs. Due to time they put alot of them on the ends of the flight deck instead of in the magazines. Then they put torpedo in to go after the Jap planes. There was alot of confusion.

Working the guns during Genenal Quarters on the fantail every-time a plane would come in it would come in real low over us. Several times in different battles I could see blood dripping from them (TBF's), the blood would drip onto the mount where

Salvatore L. Amonte GM3c cont.

we were That morning there was alot of action. All of a sudden a bunch of black smoke started to come back aft from the flight deck, and I mean real black smoke. At first we all assumed the smoke was from one of our planes that cracked up that was shot up coming in. It wasn't until later that we heard on our phone that a Judy had dropped a bomb down our forward elevator, and exploded as it passed thru the hangar deck. The big bombs that we had on our aircraft before that were going to be launched on to the Philippines or Luzon were still on the flight deck they still hadn't had a chance to put them below. These bombs began to explode.

The smoke was getting thicker, and it was getting hard to see on mount 11. I could feel that we were slowing down. The Birmingham came alongside trying to put out some of the fires.

Paul Jackson our first class gunnersmate and I went down to the forth deck to flood the magazines. It was getting pretty hot and sticky in there. Both of us were rather nervous I guess. When we finally got down there we agreed that I would flood Magazine five and six and he would get seven and eight. You don't open the door ~~to~~ turn handles on, and then the water pressure comes on. There is a gauge there and I can remember it was really hot there and even the gauge was hot. You can always hear ^{when} the water comes on, but this time I went to the second one before I realized that we had lost our water pressure. Nothing was getting in the magazines and it was getting hotter, so we left them all on and we really got out of there. Up the ladders and secured the hatch! When we got on topside we reported in that we weren't able to flood the magazines.

Paul Jackson and I were the last ones off the fantail.

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
COMMANDER FIRST CARRIER TASK FORCE

To the Officers and Men of Task Force THIRTY-EIGHT:

Upon being relieved of command I desire to express to the officers and men of this Task Force my pride in the magnificent record of accomplishment attained in their many successful offensive operations when under my tactical command.

The outer defense system of Japan has been destroyed, exposing their vital inner lines to continuing attack. The enemy fleet has been greatly depleted by your efforts; the enemy naval air force which has been our most persistent opponent for ten months has been eliminated. For the enemy, the handwriting is on the wall. The final phase has begun.

The decisive effect of your participation is manifest and I hope that I may again have an opportunity to serve with you.

I wish you great success in the future, and give to all hands a heartfelt "Well Done" for the past.

/s/ Marc A. Mitscher

M. A. MITSCHER,
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy.

ULITHI Atoll,
30 October, 1944.

U.S.S. PRINCETON Detail

Chief of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.
7 November 1944.

MEMORANDUM:

For All PRINCETON Personnel.

Subject: Campaign Ribbons and Engagement Stars.

1. Operations and Engagement stars have been approved by the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet and the Chief of Naval Operations for participation in the following operations:

PACIFIC RAIDS of 1943 (1 star).

NEW GUINEA OPERATION (HOLLANDIA) - 4 September 1943 to Indef. (1 star).

TREASURY-BOUGAINVILLE OPERATION - 27 October to 15 December 1943 (1 star).

GILBERT ISLANDS OPERATION - 13 November to 8 December 1943 (1 star).

MARSHALL ISLANDS OPERATION - 26 November 1943 to 2 March 1944 (1 star).

ASIATIC - PACIFIC RAIDS of 1944 - 16 February to 1 May 1944 (1 star).

2. PRINCETON officers and men will be eligible to wear bronze stars on their Asiatic-Pacific Area Ribbon for those operations and raids under which they qualify when the PRINCETON has been designated, officially, as having participated in them.

3. If a man has been aboard the "P" since 28 July 1943, he will be eligible for stars to designate the above six (6) engagements or raids (1 silver and 1 bronze). This includes the period up to May 1, 1944, only. Stars for engagements after this date will be announced later. (Further details may be found in Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet Serial 6745 of 1 September.)

J. N. Murphy
J. N. MURPHY
Commander, U.S. Navy
Executive Officer

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This is the Salvation Army
report on Ray - you can use it
to build character - but not quote!

Ray Arleguesen
Report from Salvation Army

June 7, 1979 - "This man left
without notice. He was
always gripping at something.
The keep at the office to
and he couldn't find me -
which wasn't true.
Suggest never re-admit."
and

~~July~~
June 27, 1979 - "Discussed
Situation with Major
Scott - we should
reconsider the ^{do not} re-admit.
Although Mr A was
unhappy here and showed
his disapproval in
actions and words -
~~at times~~ ^{at times} language. He
worked in the snack
bar."

Ray Arlequeeuw

Taped 11-28-80 at Downtown LA Salvation Army headquarters

C - Carol Deck
M - Marsha Clark
R - Ray A.

C - when did you first come on board the Princeton?

R - I put her in commission. I was on the Hornet, got sunk on the Hornet, then we went back to the States, got 37 days, then we reported to the Princeton over in Jersey someplace. I was on her from the beginning to the end.

M - What was your job?

R - I was a cook. I went to cook and bake school when I went into the Navy and I was cook on both ships, all the ships actually, there were two more after that.

C - Where were you on the ship when the bomb hit?

R - Between the galley and the butcher shop in a store room on the starboard side, on the level right underneath the hangar deck. The bomb landed in a passageway between the bake shop, galley and radio shack.

C - did you know it was a bomb?

Ray - oh yeah, I knew like from before, the way the ship acts you know, it goes forward a little bit and it pulls back just a little bit then it stops. I was up on the hangard deck later looking at the hole where the bomb went through ~~ix~~ and it wasn't much bigger than, oh this chari seat, where it went through the deck.

C - how long were you on the ship before you abandoned ship?

R - oh, I don't know, 2 or 3 hours, I guess, something like that. I was up on the bow and the Birmingham was taking a lot of the guys off. I figured what the hell should I abandon ship for when I might have to turn right around and come back again, so I'll wait

Ray A. 2-2-2

a while. And then one plane come in, some Jap plane, id didn't do any thing, we didn't have any fighters.

I was up on the bow and I seen some guys going over the side so I figure I might as well go too, so I went down a line and into the water. I found 2 five inch shell cans, that's what I had at first, one under neath each arm. I know about kapok, I tested those things on the other ship and I know they work.

The Princeton sinking, you know, was just one bomb, when we were in the water after the Hornet went down there were bombs and bombs and bombs and shrafig and all that sutff - that was the real thing - where the Princeton was just a bomb. Of course on the hangar deck the damn planes were all blowing up.

C - how long do you think you were in the water before you climbed on that piece of scaffolding?

Ray - I don't know. I was ~~surprised~~ surprised, I thought I was out there by myself, I was surprised to see it, I call it a plank,

C - did you swim to it?

R - you couldn't swim, you went where the swells took you. One minute you're down and you can't see nothing, next minute you're up on top and can see everything. I figured I was all by myself out there and then I spotted this, I call it a plank, and this guy sitting on it, and I think I said something like you take the back and I'll take the front, something like that, and I took off my shoes and socks, I didn't want to get my shoes wet or something! Don't ask me why. I started ~~at~~ wiggling my feet - that's a hell of a thing to do. After I saw "Jaws" I thought about that, wiggling my feet. Jesus, crazy, making all that comotion when you should be quiet.

does're rmemeber taking his helmet off, didn't have any problem

Ray 3-3-3-3

with seasickness. wanted a drink of water when he got on board ship though, fresh water

remembered getting picked up by the destroyer, Cassin Young. worked in the galley at Cassin Young, Fred Plth was on there too.

at sea he worked day on, day off, was off duty the day the Princeton was sunk, so didn't cook breakfast that morning, his whole crew was off duty

had seven cooks plus himself on his watch, same on other watch

There was a lot of beer on board for parties, it was between the hangar deck and the mess deck, there's a void in there, must have had 300 cases of beer in there. When we went ashore we got 2 cans of beer, but we knew there were whole cases of it on board. So me and this Coxswain, who came from the same hometown as I did, one night we decided, well they were watching me and him anyway, because I was the cat that watched the galley, I was the head cook there, anytime I wanted something to drink I could get a gallon of ~~it~~ 180 proof alcohol from a plane captain, he'd bring it down to the galley, I took care of him and he took care of me, I took care of old commander Murphys there, the fat boy, so I told this coxswain on night, I said call down to central station and ask permission to open that hatch there to go in there and get a couple of life jackets, so he did, so we opened this big hatch in the bulkhead, him and I, and we crawled in there. We weren't going to life jackets, we're were going for beer. We knew just about where that beer was, so we crawled through on our hands and knees, no shirt on, big steam pipes right above our backs, but we each got a case of beer, and we just got out of there, just got out of the void and back into the raincoat locker, we had ice, a keg of ice from the ice

Ray A. 4-4-4-

machine, we knew them guys too, we got the stuck all iced down in buckets in the raincoat locker, and we nos ocnor didt hat than they blew general quarters. We though God Dam, God damx Japs dropping some bombs on us. After that was over him and I went in there and drank that nice cold beer

The post office - the only guy allowed inside the post office besides the post master is the captain, no other officers can go inside there, so that's where we used to hold our deals every night, the guys from the ice machine would bring the ice, guys from the geedunk machine would bring the cokes, a plane captain or an aviation mechanic would bring a gallon of alcohol, and I'd call up to the galley for 4 or 5 chickens, gallon of s tuffed olives, french frieds, and they'd send it down. It wasn't so bad.

Both times I got sunk I was sober, didn't have a drink, tha t's what got me, couldn't find a drink. Usually I carried a quart canteen full of pure alcohol, but I didn't have it with me either time I was sunk.

When I got on that Lexington that's when they grabbed me and they gave me a 55 gallon drum of alcohol, sat me down right next to ~~ix~~ it, I had a buddy on the new Lexington from the old Hornet, 55 gallons of alcohol, ice, everything. (How much did you manage to consume - not too much, we weren't on the Lexington too long before they blew general quarters. We were still in the battle zone.

you could drink a lot on ship - but don't get caught. They had master of arms, police on ship. Marines were just messengers for the captain, master of arms werex ~~ax~~ always on our butts, me

Ray A 5-5-5

and this other guy, because they knew we were drinking, one night they pulled this ~~raid~~ ^{raid} on us, but we knew it was coming so we filled up this gallon jug with water and set it right in plain sight, and he came busting through the door and he reached for that - and water.

One night we got some alcohol, and we always take it down to the pharmacists mate and have it tested to see if the stuff's OK, and this stuff came out of a compass or something, for some reason this stuff was bad, I took just one drink of that stuff and it almost killed me I was heaving

several attempts at making synthetic alcohol - one guy made it in galvanized buckets, that almost killed us - you drink anything out there, you know, ~~vanilla~~ vanilla extract and lemon is 84 percent alcohol, so that's 168 proof. You take that lemon extract and you pore it in a glass of tomato juice, it turned the tomato juice white so you can imagine what it does to your stomach - what a big head you get out of that

wasn't a great swimmer, but could paddle around - all he ever did was the 2 laps of the pool you have to do in boot camp

standing on deck of Cassin Young when the P was blown up. When the smoke cleared nothing was there - I never seen anything so fast in my life. Jesus Christ, if anyone was aboard that thing that was it.

when he was standing on the bow, he was probably right over George's head - George was on gun mount one

had on blue helmet with 3 red stripes

Ray A. 6-6-6

he extended his enlistment two years - served as cook on
the Oklahoma, Philadelphia and Minneapolis

got out of service of Feb. 16, 1947 - went in on Feb. 14, 1941
service Valentines Day

was 24 years old when Princeton went down, 22 when Hornet went down

Well Fed Murphys - first time crossed the equator - took all
his clothes off, weighed about 300 pounds, used sheets to make
make a big diaper, built a plane out of wood and he had to push it
from one end of the flight deck to the other, and everytime he'd stop
we'd hit him in the ass, kept him moving - he was a good natured
guy, ~~xxx~~ good fellow, nice guy

he'll be 60 next month (in Dec. 1980)

SIDE 2 -

when Hornet sunk, he was in a rubber life raft with a bunch of
other guys, life raft got scuffed, blown up - he was picked up by
a destroyer

lost on the Princeton - a watch, got a check for \$80 for it

Ray and Fred - only cooks picked up by Cassin Young

was on Cassin Young overnight, transferred to Lexington next day

Had a cousin who was a warrant officer in the navy, always wanted to
be in navy, ~~xxxx~~ tried when he was 17 but parents wouldn't sign for him,
his father and grandfather were in army, but he was impressed by this
cousin

Ray A. 7-7-7

cousin, didn't want any part of the army

✓ chose cooking - let's go ~~with~~ where the food's at, to hell
✓ with the bullets

✓ worked day on, day off, every other weekend got 72 hours off.

✓ When you work in the galley you get all kinds of favors done for
you - everybody wants something and is willing to return the favor.

At least in galley they don't shoot at you -but they always seem to
drop bombs in the galley. The Hornet was hit in the baker shop too -
bake shop always about midship, so likely to get hit

still works as cook, been married and divorced 3 times
worked Vegas, Reno, Palms Springs

Name ~~At~~ Arlequeeuw is Belguin and French, his mother is Irish
They call me Albequeque, Barbecue, all sorts of things
They called him Arly on the ship

weighed 123 pounds when he went into navy

just before stern blew on P, they were all told they were going back
on board

HORNET sank Oct. 26, 1942 - always gets leary in Oct. now

Princeton sank two years ~~xx~~ and two days later

got home for Christmas after both sinkings - 1942 and 1944

got home for Christmas almost every year he was in - even if he had
to sink a ~~xxx~~ ship

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Transcript of tape of Adm. Bardshar, Capt. Mooney, Carol and Marsha,
taped 6-26-80 in San Diego.

Bardshar-Mooney, side 1, page 1-1-1

B - Bardshar, M - Mooney, C - Carol, MA - Marsha

B - Well Fed lives down around here. He doesn't go by Well Fed any more. He's a retired Captain.

Both air groups went on board about April, were on ship about six months before it went down, were about ready to rotate when it sank.

B - We had a very active period. I think the Fighter Squadron ~~xxxxxx~~ probably had a record for kills for the size of squadron over a period of time. We hit about 155 airplanes in the air and with relatively low losses too.

C - Can I get you to run down the sequence of ~~x~~ events that morning?

B - Well, the tactical situation was , we were in Task Force 38 was trying to stop the Japanese forces that were coming through the Sibuyan Sea and out through San Bernardino Straights (see map, pg. 212 of Adm. Halsey's autobiography). The Japanese objective was to keep us from doing that and ~~xxxxxx~~ the Princeton aircraft were part of a strike set up that day. I don't recall whether or not we had been engaged ~~xi~~ Japanese aircraft the day before but my recollection is that we were not, we hadn't been in range yet.

M - That's my recollection too, that we had not.

B - We'd been engaged extensively for some time. We'd been clear up to Okinawa for instance and made the first attacks on Okinawa, come down and had a very lively period off Formosa. We were organized to set a strike in the Sibuyan Sea against main Japanese ~~xx~~ force, torpedo planes escorted by fighters, and the torpedo planes were all loaded and ~~xxxx~~ spotted on the hangar deck and the fighters were up on the flight deck. Then the Japanese began to send aircraft out toward the force and the

force countered in self-defense and put up increasingly more fighters, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ they'd call for a division from this ship and then a division from that ship and so forth. I was sitting in the ready room getting ready to go on this strike. I was the strike leader and it became clear to me that the strike wasn't going to occur and there was no ^{point} in me sitting around the ready room when there weren't any more airplanes left, so my division went off with the last 4 fighter planes that were launched.

C - Do you remember what the weather was like?

B - It was typical of that area, hot and sultry and a medium sort of sea, light air, 12 to 15 knots, probably some scattered clouds dropped down low but essentially clear at altitude. There may have been some build up later but it wasn't a stormy situation. The high ~~w~~ hadn't built up yet, the typical late afternoon ~~w~~.

We went up, the two divisions, we sat ~~up~~ out there at about 75 miles at 10,000 feet. I made several recommendations about going somewhere else, but they were just too busy. We could see this Japanese circus going on out there about 10,000 feet above us in a circle, and they made one pass at us and went into the overcast and we evaded 2 or 3 of them in terms of getting pretty good smoke, I don't know whether we actually hit anything of them enough to ~~kill~~ kill them or not. We were still out over the water at that point.

C - Were any of you hit?

B - Yes, we were hit but no body was hurt.

C - None of the planes were disabled?

B - No, they may have been shot up bad enough that they got rid of some of them because generally ~~in~~ circumstance like that you land on another carrier as we did and then they have too many aboard and the ones ~~that~~ that are ~~shot~~ shot up they just push over the side. There was

Bardshar, Mooney, side 1 , 3-3-3

a bit of folklore about that, you may have heard. The blue jackets always liked ~~xxxx~~ that - they'd put it out on an elevator and then, 1,2, 3 and scream "Buy Bonds" and shove it over the side. You gotta remember they only ~~xx~~ cost about \$65,000-\$70,000.

M - You pay about that much for a 182 today.

B - You pay over \$20 million for a F-14 now.

C - When did you become aware the Princeton had been hit?

B - The first indication I had, and I didn't interpret it ~~xxxxxx~~ to mean the ship had been hit, was a guy who was the chief fighter corrector from Stanford, I can't think of his name now, but I recognized his voice and he called me as as we were coming back in and said they had a fouled deck, but that generally meant some aircraft had crashed on landing and they were ^{cleaning} ~~xxxxxx~~ it out of the ~~xxx~~ gear, but I assume that meant he had a hit at that time, I don't remember the time, but the type of intelligence you get out of something like that is to conserve your fuel, there's going to be a delay in landing and you go into what we call the dog circle, which is a designated bearing from a task force center and circle and wait for someone to tell you to do something else.

[By then I was getting down in over the force and Ix seen the ship smoking and a ship along side and that kind of stuff and we were told to land on the Essex. We landed on the Essex] and a few other people landed on the Essex and Buracker ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ came aboard the ~~xxx~~ Essex and so did John Murphy, who was the ~~x~~ Exec. of the ship and I talked to Buracker that day and he was very emotionally affected by the loss of the ship. John Murphys, the Exec. was known as Mother Murphy.

M - He was also known as "Be No" Murphys, there would be no liberty, be no movies, be no volleyball. As a matter of fact my recollection is that he was one of the true heroes of the day.

B - I think that was generally agreed, but I wasn't there so I

Bardshar, Looney, side 1, 4-4-4

don't know, but Murphy was a very conscientious guy, he was just the sort of guy who was easy to kid and people did.

C - Did all of your men make it to other ships?

B - No,

E - "e lost a man named Kaser, he's on your list, John Merryfield
Kaser. *VF*

B - He was a non-aviator.

VT
Scott, a replacement pilot in Bardshar's group, disappeared that day, they never knew exactly what happened. He was a little tiny guy.

C - Did you see the ship go down? from the Essex

B - No,

C - Do you have any idea what time you landed on the Essex?

B - Well, you take off in an F-6 and you better get back in about 4 hours or you'll be out of fuel and I suspect it was about 4 1/2 hours after we launched and I suspect we launched around 8 or 9 a.m.

C - The bomb dropped at about 9:30, so it was probably in the vicinity of noon when you landed? on the Essex?

B - I was aboard before Buracker came aboard, and I guess it was a destroyer probably that brought him over. I don't remember very much about that. The chief of staff for the carrier was Sherman, Frederick Sherman, and Cap Brown, who was later a four star in the 6th fleet. I remember talking to Cap Brown and Cap Brown and Sherman and I met Buracker when he came aboard. We took the people who came aboard the Essex and they were integrated into air group 16 except for ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ separate tactical.

C - So you stayed on the Essex. *Majuro*

B - Yeah, but not for very long, we went into Juro (?) then we flew from Juro (?) up to Siapan, and then back to Pearl. And when we got

Bardshar-Mooney, side 1, 5-5-5

back to Pearl we essentially had the bulk of the air group there, and we had a picture made

(stuff about Bill ^{Lamb} ~~Har~~, pilot shot down over the Philippines 8 weeks earlier, who got back to Pearl about the same time ^{Bardshar} ~~xxxxxxx~~ did - he was pilot who wore bedroom slippers when he flew and drove Bardshar nuts)

C- After you landed on the Essex, did you ever see the Princeton again?

B - No, not that I recall.

C - how did you find out that she was gone?

B - The sequence there, and I don't know how much of this I saw and how much somebody told me, as I understand it they had things pretty well under control with fire ^{bilge} ~~xxxxxx~~ water from the Birmingham, but then the ^{force} ~~xxxx~~ came under attack again and they decided to put the ~~xxxxxxx~~ Birmingham back out to screen and the ship had no capability of doing fire bilge water herself so the fires sprung up again. The final coup-de-gras was the torpedo magazine itself ~~xxxxx~~ blowing, when Bruce Harwood went in, and ~~xxxxx~~ the abandoned ship at that point. ~~xxxxx~~

There's a sea story that's worth telling. I don't know if you can use it or not. For, do you remember Jim Large?

M - Sure

B - Jim Large was, I guess he was a ~~EE~~ CIC type, he was a Philadelphia mainliner, and that doesn't have anything to do with heroin, and president of the foreign exchange bank (?) and part of that ACI, air ~~xxxxxx~~ combat intelligence program out of Guonet, a very aristocratic fellow, a charming guy. The story was that the

bardshar-rooney, slide 1, 6-6-6

second Lt. of the Marines for the Birminghamxxxxxxx, who was part of the leadership for the fire rescue party, was a cousin and also a Philadelphia mainliner and they were standing on the flight deck of the Princeton and things were blowing up here and there and they were talking to each other and someone overheard what they were saying and they were discussing the xxxixx family and "have you see Aunt Agatha lately" and "have you had a litter from so-and-so, and

M - Sounds very appropriate.

B - Jim Large is still around

M - Jim died. Larry Morgan write me a letter and Jim xxxixx apparently died..

(discussion on reunions and going next year)

MA - I was kind of curious, when you found out about the ship and obviously you couldn't land on it and you knew you had men back there that were under your command.

B - Well, I knew you would ask that question, but I didn't know the Navy or it would be a scenario. It was perfectly normal procedure for me to be in the xxx and there was nothing that I xxx needed to do on the ship when I was in the air because there were other people who would (could?) do it, and they were all organized and there were people in charge, and fundamentally the captain of the ship was in charge and the air group were in an organization that was perfectly well drilled. One of the ways you survive in warfare is to not worry about things you can't do anything about. My feelings about the thing were 'there's nothing I can do about it' and about all I did that day other than get back aboard (the Essex) was to assist that the fighters from VF 27 that were there not get pieced into VF15 aircraft and divisions but fly as a unit, because I thought we were

bardsher-mooney, side 1, 7-7-7-7

a hell of a lot better than VF15.

B - were you from the naval academy, from Annapolis?

B - Yeah. I graduated in 1938. I came aboard the Princeton as

~~xxxxxxx~~

* Exec. of the fighter squadron. CVLs are a peculiar organization.

CVLs were fast ~~xxxxxxx~~ because they were cruisers and they could operate with a fast task force. They were actually a pretty effective vessel. Nobody had any illusions about them being tough, you know, in terms of damage control, so they were pretty much left open and they were easy to live in and ~~xxxxxx~~ obviously had some vulnerabilities.

I think, and I don't have any real basis for saying this, but I think that ~~the~~ the general analysis was the ship could have been saved, it was just a nuisance, at that point in time, as far as the task force commander was concerned. I think the command attention was pretty well diluted and the Princeton was just a nuisance, tactically.

(discussion on attempts to tow, and strategic situation, all hearsay)

B - You've got the story on Harwood, I presume, he was the air officer (?), that's the guy who sort of handles the aircraft on and off the carrier, ~~xxxxxxx~~ the maintenance and that kind of thing. He was a practicing aviator but was not flying at that particular time, he was a ship's officer. He was very well liked, very capable. The story

I heard was that he Buracker asked him to go back and lead a fire party party aft and he went ~~a~~ aft and that thing blew and he was killed.

Stirling

(discussion on the movie about Hoskins starring ~~Stirling~~ Hayden, but no one can remember name of movie)

End of Side 1

(starts with discussion on Fitzgerald's ^{painting} ~~rating~~ of the ship going down)

C - Well, Tom, what did you do that day?

M - Well, to the best I can recall, we were, the torpedo squadron was in the ready room because we were getting ready to carry torpedos against the Japanese fleet, which was a pretty exciting prospect because we had never, at least as airgroup 27, VT27, ever dropped live against the Japanese, that is live torpedos. We had gone out against them on a strike at the Marianas, but they were out of our range and we just returned. We had never carried live torpedos on that ~~particular~~ particular operation. We carried a lot of bombs, but no torpedos. And torpedo attacks were, well, there were not too many experienced torpedo pilots. They are much like kamakazi pilots - you get one flight, because of the nature of the attack, you come in very low and very slow, the airplane only did about 180 knots, and you had to be in a certain position above the water in order to drop it, you had to have the airplane stabilized and you had to do a lot of things that made it very easy to shoot you down, so the prospect was rather ~~stimulating~~ stimulating - many people were shaking with patriotism.

B - the torpedo planes were all loaded and that, I think, accounted for a lot of the explosions on the flight deck itself.

M - I think we had either 12 or 15 planes out there, and I think everything that would fly was loaded.

C - it was a surprise to us that there was napalm aboard. we had never even heard of the stuff prior to Vietnam.

B - we developed napalm. We landed the first tanks that were used for the close support of napalm on Iapan for clearing out.

C - were you aware of what napalm was?

M - when we dropped it we were.

B - it was a hell of a good idea.

A - you have to realize that attitudes in those days ~~xxxxxxx~~ are not at all like attitudes today. There was no concern for the land. You realized that some guy was trying to kill you, so your objective was to try and kill him first.

B - The scheme, overall large scheme, was that, if you visualize that as the bow of a hostile battle ship, the torpedo planes would split and come in on either side and the dive bombers would come in perhaps lead by some ~~fixxx~~ fighters or perhaps with fighters ~~xxxxxx~~ in with them for escort and would come down and bomb and even strafe in an attempt to give the torpedo planes some sort of chance for survival. But the coordination was required to make that happen was very demanding and any kind of interference would prevent that from happening. You probably remember the story of the torpedo A's at Midway, torpedo squadron A, they were all lost except a guy named Don Gay, and they went in essentially in a column, one at a time, and they ~~all~~ got bogged, so that was not being overlooked in the minds of any of these young men.

A - Yeah, we were all very aware of that.

C - But you didn't take off that morning?

A - No, I'm not sure of the circumstances as to why we hadn't launched, ~~x~~ but we were all in the ready room. We shared a common ready room with the fighters, didn't we?

B - No, ²there were 2 ready rooms, you had the after ready room and we had the forward one.

EM- you guys always, and you always had all the automobiles when ~~were~~ were ashore. Anyway, we were ~~xxxxxxx~~ all in the ready room and ~~xxxxxxx~~ we'd been briefed and told what intelligence thought was out there and I recall that the initial impact was very slight, it was

bardshar-mooney, side 2, 3-3-3

Just sort of a jolt, I can't describe it, but it was nothing that seemed catastrophic. I thought, "Hot damn, we've taken a hit, we gotta go home." I thought it was nothing, that something hit aft on the ship ~~xxx~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ somewhere and I thought it can't be significant and the door to the passage way that went by the ready room was open, which wasn't all that common because the ready room was air conditioned and the rest of the ship was not. Ready rooms were air conditioned. But it seemed like in a matter of seconds, maybe three seconds, I don't know, maybe five or six seconds, this gigantic fireball went by the open door, this huge thing, it looked like a little nuclear explosion, it just sailed down the passage way. It was apparently explosive gases that were caused at the time of the explosion when the bomb hit that coalesced some way

B - were picked up by the ventilation system

B - were picked up and just shipped through the ship and that apparently set fires in many places. My memory is that it was one lousy 250 pound armor ~~xxxxxxxx~~ piercing bomb that this guy dropped.

B - it was 250 kilograms, which is like 600 pounds.

B - I considered it an outrageous thing that that one lousy bomb, which, as my memory puts it, as it after it went through the flight deck it passed through the wing of my airplane on which my plane captain was standing and I believe he's still alive. His name is ^{John Larkin} Miller. And ~~xxxx~~ when it went through the wing of my airplane it torched off the fuel in the wing and just covered him with flames, he was just like a marshmallow, just seared. Later, after we were picked up, I saw him, like a cunny, and I thought, he's going to die, but he lived.

B - There's another legend and I don't know if it's true or not, but I heard that when the bomb passed through the flight deck it passed through the conflagration station too, and the conflagration station

bardshar-mooney, side 2, 4-4-4

on the hangar deck is a place where the hangar door and the sprinkler system are ~~xxxxxxx~~ activated and by the coincidence of this X occurring, the ~~xx~~ manual operation of that, which would have normally occurred, did not occur until later and probably gave the fire a start that it wouldn't have otherwise had.

C - (to H.) how long did you stay on the ship?

H - I don't know that exactly but you will be able to tell from the records. There was a time when the order was given was all personnel who were not in the damage control parties to leave the ship and at whatever hour that was, that's when I left the ship.

C - and how did you leave the ship?

H - Fascinating, unforgettable! after the explosion there was a period when we really didn't ~~xxx~~ know what had happened, except when I saw that fireball go by - it made absolutely no sound, it was absolutely incredible, I've never seen anything like it, but I've since learned a little bit from people in the fire fighting business, that in a major explosion that's not uncommon and that's why fires sometimes spread very rapidly in a confined space, explosive gases are picked up and carried and paint, I guess, have components that coalesce and make these things - there was a period when, I think, we just sat in there looking at one another saying "what the hell?", if that thing was as little as it seemed, ~~xx~~ nothing happened to the ship, it kept on churning, nothing came over the speakers as I recall. So there was a period, it might have been two minutes, it might have been 5 or 6 minutes before we realized that we were in big trouble, & and then some kind of announcement did come that said the ship has taken a hit or the ship has been hit and the situation is critical - I remember those were the words, at least as I remember, the situation is critical, and I thought "how can this be?", it's not possible, that thing.

bardshar-mooney, side 2, 5-5-5-

you know, was a fire cracker. So we had some way we could get right out on the flight deck. It seemed that there were hatches, there was a hatch that would open up and go out, right out on a catwalk and get up on the flight deck, and most of us went out that way, I think, because down all the passages all the ships damage control people were running to their stations, we were at general quarters, of course, because we were in a combat zone. But now, the guys that had actual assignments in case of disaster, a hit or something going wrong in the ship, were going to their individual stations for that condition, so the airgroup, the torpedo pilots, one way or another went out the hatch and up on the flight deck. And by then all kinds of things were happening. You could then see the fires, you could see that some of the airplanes on the flight deck were on fire, and the orders were to push airplanes over the side, so everybody just sort of did whatever seemed natural. I guess I pushed some airplanes over the sides, I can't clearly remember how many, but you just would jump into a thing like that and push it as big turkey until it went over the side.

C - one thing I didn't understand, was how it was it that obvious that quickly that the planes couldn't take off?

A - If there was any intention of launching airplanes we never heard it. There seemed to be, to my recollection, no intention of trying to launch airplanes. In the first place, I think, most of the torpedo planes were below decks on the hangar deck because that's where they were loaded, and most of the fighters were off the ship. Once you were up on the flight deck, saw smoke pouring out by by then smoke was pouring out of the open hatches on the hangar deck, and you could see this smoke trail coming out behind the ship, I don't think anybody was interested in going flying. What we were worrying about was what the hell is going to happen now. The key impression

bardhar-rooney, side 2, 6-6-6

X I had was that those people who had assigned duties, meaning the ship's company of officers and men who had stations to go to were the most collected of all, because they had a duty. Us air group types were just useless. We didn't have any official duty, so we just milled around until there was something to be done, so we pushed airplanes over. And then a guy hollared at me that he needed a hand with a hose, or there was a hose that wasn't being used, so I went over and got a hose and was standing up near that number one elevator and was holding a hose to put water into the elevator because there was a gasoline storage area under the number one elevator and the idea was to keep that thing as cool as possible and wet so it wouldn't explode. Now I have no idea how long this lasted, maybe it lasted five minutes, maybe half an hour. But there was one enormous rushing sound, it wasn't even like an explosion, it was an incredible rush of air and the elevator, which was on the hangar deck level straight down, ~~xxx~~ simply came up, ~~xxxxxxrixxx~~ ~~xxrixxx~~ in front of me and went right up straight in the air and went right over the radar mast. I can't remember there being any shock, I don't remember being knocked out or anything. I just thought "Jesus, the number one elevator just flew out. So we decided at that point that pouring water in there anyone wasn't going to be necessary.

I don't remember how long after that that the order came for all but the damage control parties, or non-essential personnel, were to abandon ship. I remember the term non-essential and I was offended at that. I considered myself pretty damn essential, but it was clear that the air group was then to depart, by then guys had thrown all kinds of lines over the side from the flight deck down. In my case there is a personal story about John Hoskins, Captain John, who was a great favorite of the air group, was a super guy that because he hadn't taken command, he was aboard but he had taken command so he would spend a

bardshar-mooney, side 2, 7-7-7

great deal of time in the ready room with the air group, whereas Captain Buracker was in command of the ship, but John Hoskins was, I ~~fixx~~ felt, a friend because we saw him all the time.

B - He'd been on board for quite a ~~xxxxxx~~ lengthy period of time. He came aboard just before that Okinawa strike and was on for all of the Formosa strikes.

A - So we'd gotten to know him well because

B - he was that sort, he was easy going whereas Buracker was rather formal. There's a lot of difference between being a passenger and being a captain.

A - what kind of admiral are you? Are you the formal type?

B - I think so. I'm on the formal side.

A - Yeah, I think you are, on the formal side, but there was never any question who the air group commander was.

C - one question, Buracker had only had command about two years, why was he being transferred? Was that a normal thing?

B - He hadn't had command that long and a year was about normal, about as long as they could handle it.

C - so it was routine for them to rotate them around like that?

B - They did it for two reasons. One, I think they wore out in a year at that pace, and two, they wanted to spread the experience around. It was a short time, but they only keep that job 18 months in peace time.

A - Yeah, that was perfectly normal, because any naval officer would aspire to have command of a combat vessel.

B - Buracker had been on Halsey's staff before that in the South Pacific (see Halsey's autobiography). Buracker, for my money, was a damn good ~~xx~~ skipper. I know there was some criticism of Buracker and some feeling that the ship didn't get the unit commendation that it deserved.

bardshar-rooney, side 2, C-5-8

M - I saw no panic on the ship. I saw some panic in the water but not on the ship.

I remember the Princeton as a very proud sort of ship. Discipline was very strong and good. There was no Mickey Mouse or throw the book away because the war was on, where I had been on a carrier earlier that was much more relaxed and casual, but the first time I stepped on Princeton I knew I was in the Navy.

B - The Executive Officer of the Birmingham was ~~x~~ Winston Folk - he's still alive as far as I know - I remember him because he was a company officer when I was a midshipman, a real pain in the ~~3/4~~ ass, all company officers were meant to be that way. I talked to him later about the thing and I know the thing that really grabbed him was they didn't have the internal discipline to prevent spectators. They had almost as many casualties as the Princeton, and they were senseless, more than ~~xxxxxx~~ half of them were spectators rather than fire fighters.

M - Well, they had cooks, and

x B - it was a pretty damn interesting show to see a boat on fire.

C to (M) - so how did you get off the ship?

M - Well, ~~x~~ it happened that a squadron mate of mine named Manget, Doc Manget, and I were together at the time we decided to go over and I had been carrying a .45 Colt automatic, service issue was a .38 revolver, but a .38 made a big bulge under your arm and a .45 was flat and my father had stolen ~~ix~~ one from the Army in WWI and had thoughtfully kept it so I was carrying that in a shoulder holster.

2 B - it was still a service issue at that time, a .45

M - I couldn't get a .45

B - not for aviation, but it was still a standard issue for a side arm.

M - but that .45 was my prize possession and I knew the old man

~~xxxxxx~~ bardshar-mooney, side 2, 9-9-9

would not like what I was going to do, but I knew I wasn't going in the water, and had no idea how long I was going to be in the water. I was a powerful swimmer and I wasn't scared about going in the water but I knew that I wasn't going to need a gun, it wasn't going to work once I went in the water, so I took the shoulder ~~xxxx~~ holster and the gun off and I laid it in the skippers (?) of the Princeton and then we started down a gas line. They threw gas hoses over because they were handy you didn't have a lot of other things, but if you go down a gas hose, it's pretty big and you gotta let yourself down hand over hand and it's 75 feet from the flight deck of the carrier to the water, and so I went first and Langet was right behind me and as we were letting ourselves down he stepped on my hands and I remember, you know, remonstrating with him, which is a nice way of saying I wish you hadn't done that. Fortunately he didn't break my grip but he kept stepping on my ~~xxxxxx~~ hands because he was in a big hurry to get to the water, so was I but I didn't want to drop, because I figured I wanted to get in the water....

B - did you have a helmet on?

A - no, uh, I can't remember, we ~~xxxxxx~~ must of had helmets on in the ready room

B - One of the things that was bad was people jumping with helmets on and the helmet would fill with water and break jaws and that sort of thing. I'm talking about a flak helmet, not a flight helmet.

A - No, I didn't have a hard hat on or anything like that. If I had had anything it would have been a cloth helmet. We got in the water and the Irwin by then had come along side the Princeton, my recollection is that it was on the port side of the Princeton and the Birmingham was on the starboard side - that would be in your records. The Irwin had gotten there, I'm not sure how much the Irwin was involved, but she was jammed in under the gun tubs of the Princeton so she was

bardshar-mooney, side 2, 10-10-10

locked in somewhere around mid ship, so the ships were rolling together. I had never had any fear of going in the ~~water~~ water. I figured that's a piece of cake, I know I can swim, but I'll tell you man 15 knots of wind in the middle of the ocean is just a lot of wind. When you're in the water, you just go down and you can't see anything, nothing's in sight and then you come up, it picks you up and your up top and you see, ah there's the ship and some ~~xxxx~~ people and then you go back down and the world goes away, and that's not the way I figured it. I figured the water would be nice, it would be like swimming off Hawaii, but ~~ix~~ it was not like that at all.

X B - well, you know the Princeton sunk in what's called the ^{Potillo} ~~Pelelow~~ Deep, which is about 2500 fathoms, a very deep part of the ocean, so nobody will ever go down to look at her, and in the after portion there was a safe used by the intelligence people, and I had a case of 12 year old Dewars Scotch in there that was given to me by a guy who was the west coast manager for McElhannon & Robins, who were the distributors for Dewars, and I stuck it aboard. I don't remember how I got it out of Pearl, but I've never forgotten that.

C - Now it's 48 year old Scotch.

H - And it's probably still drinkable.

B - If you put that in your back you may have somebody going down for it.

HA - what did you lose on board the ship, you had a little bit of time didn't you?

I - No, there was intention of going back to the room or anything like that.

HA - so what did you leave behind?

P. V

B - I remember I had an envelope with some stuff I won in a ~~xxx~~ crap shoot game in Entiwetok (?), it had a hundred or so bucks in crunched up dollar bills in it

M - That's right you couldn't collect for money lost on the ship.

MA - the paymaster lost everything.

B - they had microfilm on everything, the microfilms were mailed out and they could reconstruct the microfilms, and by and large the pay records were picked up very quickly.

M - seems like we ~~xxx~~ were paid in Pearl.

B - we were paid right away.

MA (to M). - so, we left you sitting there in 15 foot waves. Did you have a life jacket?

M - Yeah, but I didn't inflate it because you see once you inflate those aviators types they blow up under your arms, they ~~x~~ keep you up, but you can't do anything, you don't have free movement of your arms and I had elected not to inflate that because I didn't know what was going to happen, and I'd been swimming 3 to 5 miles a day off Hawaii, so I had no fear about being in the water. Somehow I drifted around behind the stern of the Irwin, because the Irwin had rigged all of her rescue nets on their starboard side, which meant that since that was their starboard side it faced the Princeton, and there were no nets on the outboard side where, when when you went off the Princeton up by the bow, which is ^{we} where I went off, you drifted around like this and came around and entered this V, and that's where I saw a couple of things. There was a hospital corpsman on the Princeton, I didn't know his name then and Gold knows I don't now, but I saw him in the water swimming with two people who had been hurt, two Princeton people who had been in sick bay for some ~~xxxxx~~ reasons, I don't know why, but what he had done

bandshar-mooney, side 3, 2-2-2-

X he had taken a rope of some kind of tied it around the waist of each one and then he was in the water with them, how he got in I don't know, but he was swimming with the rope in his teeth, ~~and~~ he was swimming the breast stroke and dragging these two fellows behind him, it was just unforgettable, he was just an incredibly ~~grr~~ courageous guy that, anyway I have a very, very clear picture of seeing that guy. But when you got around ~~and~~ between the two ships then the game got really tough because of the rolling of the ships, ~~they~~ ~~from~~ periodically the Irvin would roll in toward the Princeton and crush people who were in the water between the

Irvin and the Princeton, there would be this big sort of up surge of water ~~as~~ the two ships came together and if you were up towards the bow of the Irvin you would just get flattened against the Princeton and there were ~~xx~~ many people that I saw there who were either killed or seriously injured and then they would drift down through the rest~~xx~~ of us, because they couldn't do anything, they couldn't swim. How long that lasted I have no idea,

B - how'd you get aboard Tom?

X M - well, getting aboard was really great. First of all I climbed the side of the Irvin about six times. They had these two inch lines over the side - you couldn't get near the cargo nets because there was no ~~there~~ there were a couple of hundred people in the water. And I reasoned that these guys who were not good swimmers would be stuck on the cargo nets and that's where they were and there it was a mob scene trying to get up the side of the Irvin. So I would pick out a line to try to grab it and climb back over board and I climbed it about six times and everytime I would get up almost to where I could get my fingers around the shuglers, some guy in the water would grab me by the feet thinking I could pull him up, so after I went back in the water about the sixth time, I decided "this is going to kill me" if I keep

bardshar-mooney, side 3, 3-3-3-

on doing this, ~~xxx~~ I'm just not going to make it. That's why, not having inflated my life jacket I could still take care of myself, I could still climb. So I floated away, figuring that I'd just drift out there until I could figure out what to do. About that time there was a Stewart's mate, or cook, I don't know which, on the Irwin, an enormous black guy, big powerful guy, stripped to the waist back on the fantail of the Irwin and I realized he was hollaring and pointing and I looked over and I saw a flight deck crewman from the Princeton, because (to Bardshar) what were the colors they wore -

taxi directors, catapult crews
Bardshar - plane handlers were green, directors were yellow

Mooney - This guy had a helmet on that I think now was yellow, and he was sort of floating face down in the water but he was moving a little bit so the cook was hollaring and pointing at him and I swam over and got this guy, and I'd been a junior lifesaver so it was nothing to just get behind him and hold his head out of the water. And I floated out there and the cook after a while, I don't know how long, made a great big lasso and threw this line out over it seemed like 100 guys that were in the water and it landed out there so I put it around the waist of this guy, slipped it over his head and under his arms and the cook reeled him in like he was a big fish. And then that great man he made a loop and he threw it out to me, and I ~~xxx~~ slipped that thing around me and he just reeled me in like a big perch ~~xxxxxx~~ onto the Irwin. And I felt so good once I got aboard Irwin that I said "Give me a line, I'll help you." He turned to do something, ~~xxxxxx~~ get me a line or something, ~~xxxxxx~~ fell down on the deck and vomited for about 30 minutes. Just rolling back and forth, throwing up sea water. ~~xxxxxx~~

now

bardshar-mooney, side 3, 4-4-4-

I was physically incapable of any thing for some protracted time, during which I figured the Pacific Ocean was lowered by at least two feet. I don't know who the guy in the water was and I don't know who the deck was, but I'd sure like to know. I went back up and shook his hand warmly and said "thank you, thank you."

X By then the Irwin began issuing all kinds of order to survivors to get the hell out of the way because the Irwin was dangerously overloaded. I think they had a combat crew of 250 or so on the can, something like that, and they had picked up some 400 or 500 guys and the ship was rolling and because all these extra guys weighed so much there was a great danger to the Irwin, so they ordered all of us to go below. And I went below and sat down somewhere in a room and after a while the Catholic chaplain on the Princeton, whose name eludes me at the moment, but it's in the records, he came along and he ~~xxix~~ said "Will you come with me and talk to the men". And he was a cool cat, this guy, because he did have a duty post - you see the rest of us didn't have a thing to do. But this guy knew that his mission was to restore some form of sanity to these guys so we walked around among all the Princeton people and said to stay cool, don't move around. That was the main thing, was stay where you are and we'll get out of this thing, cause the Japanese were coming in and making torpedo runs and there was scuffling and all ~~xxix~~ kinds of nasty things were happening and everybody was in a modestly upset state. So the main thing I realized had to be done was to stay cool, and that helped me greatly, I don't know how long it lasted, maybe an hour or two, we just walked around in circles and told people stay cool, glad you made it and all this. And then for some reason I was allowed to go up on deck, I don't remember why. And it came time to try and sink the Princeton and that was fantastic.

bardshar-mooney, side 3, 5-5-5

These may not be the right facts, this are only the things I remember. I was the ordinance on the Princeton and I knew a little bit about torpedos and I looked at the torpedo mounts on the Irwin and I thought Jesus they don't look right, they look like they're bent or something, and they were. They'd been damaged in all this colliding with the Princeton. And so the Irwin had pulled off and to my recollection was ,she'd been ordered to sink Princeton, so she came to almost a stop, she was almost dead in the water and there was this ~~b~~ig beautiful ship that was my home sitting in the water looking like it could sail if someone were on it - by then the Binghamton explosion had occoureed and all that was over and they were going to sink it, and I remember there was an old chief up on the torpedo ~~m~~ mounts and he would crank these things around and I was pretty interested because that was my job, dropping torpedos, so I saw this fish leap off and it went streaking out and then, impossible to believe, it started turning, and I thought it's going to miss, and then it kept turning and it kept turning and pretty soon it was coming right straight back towards ~~xxx~~ Irwin and it seems to me that the captain of the Irwin, the skipper had suffered a grave indignity - I think he'd been shot in the butt - my recollection that that he was covered with Kotex all over his butt and he was in pretty bad shape and he was on the bridge. And I remember looking up and thinking Jesus Christ, full night rudder, full speed, and the thing started shaking and the thing and it got enough way to make a slight turn and there goes this Navy torpedo right by the thing. And I thought, you know that's fantastic! This can't be happening. But apparently there was no other way, so they decided to fire another one, but the next time though he was moving, he came steaming in there with some way on and they fired another one and it didn't go very far out ~~knx~~ before it turned too, and I thought,

Bardshar-Mooney, side 3, 6-6-6-

"I'm going to die.!" And it went right by, actually; it seemed to be that I could read US Navy right on the fist. I figured after that if they fire another one we're going down, there's no question but we're going down. And then it seemed to be the word came in that Heco will sink the Princeton and I stayed up for that and I did see the torpedo hit and they just whipped in there like professionals and they shot one and it went right in and my recollection is it right right amidship and and it just broke in two and sunk. There was instant damage.

Bardshar - the performance of US torpedos in the early part of WWII was scandalous, particularly submarine torpedos. I suspect that the damage to the Irwin torpedo counts may have contributed to the problem but I suspect there were basic design problems.

Marsha - how long were you on the Irwin?

Mooney - I don't know. We were on it that night and we were steaming to Majuro, which is where we were transferred to Birmingham. Was it Birmingham?

Bardshar - Yes, I remember talking to Folk when I was in Majuro and asking if he would carry us back. Buracker and Murphys and I and perhaps some others went on up to Siapan and went back that way. We waited there until Birmingham got back and then we reorganized.

Mooney - so some of your guys did come back on Birmingham?

Bardshar - some of the fighter pilots, sure. You know we had a 1 1/2 to 1 seat ratio, we never had everyone in the air.

Marsha - wasn't the Birmingham out for repairs for quite a while?

Bardshar - sure, but she could sail, she went back to Pearl Harbor.

remainder of side 3 too faint to transcribe
side 4 also faint, mostly discussions of politics of sailing ships,
Mooney's dislike for all warship duty, some of our work on Leyte,
McArthur & Malsey,

Mooney only - Bardshar
had left.

bardshar-mooney, side 4, 1-1-1

Mooney - There's another aspect of it but I'm quite sure is accurate, I know it's accurate, was that because the landing was in the Philippines MacArthur had overall authority in some way, if not authority, that is he didn't have direct authority over what Halsey would do but he apparently was the theater commander because the operation was to return to the Philippines, and what it really boiled down to was, when a ship is lost at sea in the Navy there are no public reports until the next of kin have been notified, but the loss of the Princeton was announced through MacArthur's public relations staff almost instantly, the instant that the battle reports came in to MacArthur, the Army PR people released to the press that the carrier Princeton had been lost at sea and so the relatives and friends of 1200 people didn't know for several days until the first sea mail, the only way messages got off as to who was alive, because of course the Navy was busy trying to compile ~~XXXXX~~ casualty lists, but the way the word got out was when we got to Ulithi we were allowed to write one mail message on the little tissue paper mail envelopes (sound fades out again) you wrote the message on this thing which was an envelope as well, and you could send one of those and they would dispatch it by air from Ulithi. It was 5 days after the actual sinking that my family knew I was alive and that was true for everybody and that raised hell - obviously it had no national importance but in terms of the people involved, we were outraged.

(more talk on hating mail censoring)

Mooney's wife was home in Rochester, NY with first child. He'll be 60 in Sept., 1980. He majored in geology in college, wanted to go to China and dig oil wells, University of Rochester, but he knew from the time he was 12 that he was going to be a naval aviator. The only reason he went to college is because his old man said he

and repeated the message from the beach. General Tomoyuki Yamashita, the commander of the Japanese forces, could not believe that MacArthur had actually been brave enough to come ashore so soon. Yamashita said later that if he had been able to believe it he would have concentrated his forces in an attempt to kill MacArthur to avenge Admiral Yamamoto's death.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf

So far things had gone according to plan. But the Japanese had a plan of their own. They were marshaling all of their remaining strength in the air and on the sea for a smashing counterattack that was as daring as it was cunning. The complex scheme called for every available land-based enemy plane to hit our fleets. At the same time our sprawling invasion force in Leyte Gulf was to be attacked by sea from two directions.

Early on October 24th the Americans noticed increased enemy activity in the air. In fact the Japanese actually regained control of the air for a while at a particularly dangerous time. We doubled our combat air patrols and put sixteen Hellcats on alert on each big carrier. It was fortunate we did. Eight pilots from Fighting 27 led by Lieutenant Carl Brown were flying CAP over the carrier *Princeton* when a large "bogie" was reported.

This turned out to be a Japanese attack force of eighty planes, including sixty-five fighters. Brown intercepted the dangerous flight with his few F6Fs. Fighting 27 shot down many of them, but help was needed urgently. One enemy bomber had already broken through and would make a direct hit on the *Princeton*.]

Help came in the form of seven more Hellcats from the Fabled Fifteen off the *Essex*. Commander David McCampbell cleared his guns and with his wingman, Lieutenant Roy Rushing, took on

Carrier planes soften up Leyte beachhead





Pilots in the ready room of their aircraft carrier

of the most violent week of aerial fighting in the Pacific. Before it was over we had destroyed 650 enemy planes, and had lost only 89 of our own.

As October 20th drew close, a great American armada formed at sea. From many bases in the Pacific 700 ships converged on the island of Leyte. Even from high in an airplane an observer could not have seen all of the awesome fleet at once. Admiral Thomas Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet was to be the attack force and also shepherd this mammoth convoy which was transporting 193,841 Army troops toward the landing beaches. Halsey's Third Fleet was to stand off and give general support.

Early on the morning of October 20th, planes from Mitscher's carriers as well as Admiral T. L. Sprague's three groups of escort carriers, which were with the landing force, took off for Leyte and other islands in the Philippines. The names of

I thought you'd enjoy seeing this

RETURN TO THE PHILIPPINES

their targets had a familiar ring—Nichols Field, Subic Bay, Clark Field.

[A squadron of Hellcats—Fighting 27—from the carrier *Princeton*, couldn't find anything to shoot at over Manila. Tired of waiting Lieutenant Carl Brown decided to light a cigarette. Then Brown saw a large formation of Zeros. "Fred," he yelled over his radio to squadron leader Lieutenant Commander Fred Bardshar. "I see a welcoming committee topside." Although the Hellcats were outnumbered five to one, Bardshar called his fighters together and slashed directly into the Japanese. Planes began to fall from the sky over Manila—thirty-eight in all—and every one of them was Japanese. When it was all over, Brown noticed that not one of the Fighting 27's Hellcats was missing. Then he felt something burn his lips. It was his cigarette. The whole fight had lasted just as long as the cigarette took to burn down. That day the Japanese lost sixty-six planes in the air while only six of ours failed to return.

The landings on Leyte's east coast near Tacloban and Dulag were a success. General MacArthur sailed in with the invasion force aboard the *Nashville*. That afternoon he radioed a message to all the islands: "This is the voice of freedom, General MacArthur speaking. People of the Philippines! I have returned. . . ." A little later he waded ashore

Frederic A. Bardshar
1681 PASO BONITO • LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92037

12 - 26 - 81

Dear Mrs Clark,

I am pleased to know that
your Prevention book is
progressing.

I have not signed the
release. I will be happy
to do so if you will
allow me to review the
quotes and on historical
factual data attributed
to me.

This position, on my part,
does not, of course, reflect
any lack of confidence in

The capabilities or ethics
of you or Miss Beck
but merely a common
sense reluctance to
sign a blood check

Sincerely

F. H. Ford

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6

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JOHN BECKETT

Dear Mrs. Clark,

Jack had to fly off
to Washington & he asked me
to type & send in his notes.
My typing is not my claim to
fame. Good luck on your
book

Peg Beckett

Marsha L. Clark
3795 Stanton Court
Simi Valley, Calif. 93036

April 27, 1984

Dear Mrs. Clark,

My first reaction to your letter of April 1, regarding my experiences on the USS Princeton (CVL 23) was that I didn't have the time and what would I say? I've had second thoughts and am willing to give it a try. My contribution in trying to save the ship was nil, which has always bothered me. I enjoyed the reunion in Reno so much that the memory of that great ship has taken on new meaning.

My tour on the "Peerless P" was short. I joined the ship at Eniwetok in early July 1944, so I was with the ship less than four months. My memory of the people is hazy. My closest friends were Vic Moitoret, Seymour Parsons, and Ray Egan.

I was ordered to the Princeton after requesting sea duty which I did because I missed promotion from Lt. to Lt. Cmdr. (the reason was lack of sea duty). At the time I was Production Electrical Officer at Mare Island Naval Ship Yard where I had reported for active duty as an Ensign in April 1941. (My commission dated from Aug. 1938, the month I turned twenty-one, and two months after graduating from Stanford University in Electrical Engineering.) After considerable correspondence I broke out of the frozen job ashore when my orders came. I was looking forward to making the Navy my career.

My preference was cruisers. I knew this class of ship from A to Z. I had served briefly on the USS Chester (CA 27), in 1939 but my real experience was as a ship repair officer at Mare Island. I saw much battle damage beginning with two British cruisers and then the damaged ships from Pearl Harbor. I was repair officer for the USS Helena, USS Indianapolis, USS Boise, USS Chicago and the USS Independence (CVL 22).

I expected orders to the Birmingham and was surprised when orders came to the Princeton. I knew little about aircraft carriers but I knew the hull well and looked forward to the adventure.

My early naval reserve cruises were as communications officer above decks; junior watch officer, a more interesting spot to be than in the "black gang" below. My three year active shore assignment insured that I would be an engineering officer. I reported aboard and in a matter of a few days took over as "E" division officer. My battle station was repair V, the repair station just below the forward part of the hangar deck.

On the morning of Oct. 24 we were called to go at dawn, which was usual for a planned day of combat strikes. Repair V was cramped, really just a passageway selected for its location slightly forward and above the two firerooms and enginerooms. Routinely men were bored and would prefer to go back to their bunks or secure and go to breakfast. Repair was not an exciting place until the bomb hit.

There was no warning. We were shaken and deafened by an explosion in what sounded to me like the hangar area just above us. My first thought was that one of our planes or its armaments had let go by accident. There was a small scuttle door in the hatch from repair V to the hangar deck. I opened this, stuck my head through to take a quick look and saw what appeared to be a large fire aft. I assumed that the hangar deck repair party was in control. I waited orders and began checking by phone all the substations of engineering. It was then I learned we were hit by an enemy bomb and that there was trouble in the engineering spaces, mostly smoke, as well as the hangar deck.

I tried to contact the chief engineer, Cmdr. Wheeler, but without success. It was only a matter of minutes before we too were in trouble. The automatic sprinkler system in the hangar deck was working forward, over our heads, and pouring tons of water on the raging fire. Successive explosions from gasoline and ammunition opened up the hangar deck above us and scalding water began pouring into our area.

I had been to firefighter school at Treasure Island in San Francisco and knew how to contend with smoke and fire but I was totally unprepared for scalding water on the deck which burned our feet and ankles and made any kind of work impossible. I gave the order to move forward and away from the fire which was amidships. I knew the major gasoline storage was forward and below us but I thought it was far enough forward to be safe.

Some men in repair V did not hear me or could not see because of the dense smoke. I didn't realize that some were missing until we took count. Ensign ***** wanted to try a rescue but the heat was too intense and we had to give up.

Leaving repair V wasn't easy. We got out by climbing on bulkhead boxes and fittings which were above the scalding water and by hanging on to fixtures on the overhead. I was tall and could hang from cable racks to keep my feet clear. Some of the shorter men suffered severe burns.

I was crowded on the forecastle deck. On the CVL class the flight deck stops short of the forecastle and we could see and talk to the men above us on the flight deck. There was talk of abandoning ship but no specific order was given. Some were jumping overboard.

Three destroyers and a cruiser were coming close alongside to give aid and to pick up men in the water. I watched this for a while while waiting orders from those on the flight deck who seemed to have the best communications with Capt. Buracker and knew the condition of the ship.

Meantime the fire was getting much worse and more were forced to abandon ship. The USS Irwin was close aboard on the port side and I made my decision to swim to her. I'm not a strong swimmer but the Navy had trained me how to go over the side, to swim in heavy seas with fuel oil and debris, and to clear a stricken ship and find a raft or whatever. I made it to the Irwin by swimming around her bow to her port side and away from the chaos between her and the Princeton. Many were lost or injured in the sea between the ships. I was too exhausted when I got to the Irwin to pull myself up. The sailor who had thrown me the line pulled me up. The next thing I knew I was on my back on the deck looking up at a familiar face. It seemed unreal and for a moment I didn't know where I was. The face spoke, "Beckett, what the hell are you doing here?" It was the exec. of the Irwin, Lt. Cmdr. John Dale Pie Hodapp, a classmate from Palo Alto High School. I hadn't seen him since he went off to the Naval Academy. The Irwin ended up with, I think, three hundred survivors and the decks were crowded and top heavy.

Capt. Buracker sent a message that the repair crews were to get ready to reboard when the fires were controlled. The Birmingham went close aboard up wind and prepared to put some of her repair crew aboard. The hulls were identical. While I watched this the bombs in the aft elevator well let go. It was a huge explosion. This was the end, we would not reboard. Her stern was blown off but she remained afloat.

The order came to sink the Princeton. The Irwin was ordered to fire a torpedo which she did but it circled and started to come toward the Irwin. Wreckage had damaged the Irwin and she had only one screw functional. She went full ahead to pull out of the way moving very slowly at first as the torpedo was closing at about forty knots. We cleared but not by much.

Then the USS Reno got the order and did the job. (My cousin was gunnery officer on the Reno.)

Incidental notes: When I first reported and met with Capt. Buracker and Vic Moitoret they told me the gyro compass had a bad habit of going berserk usually at a critical moment. They hoped I could fix it. And during the weeks before we had been hit I had worked on the problem. It was an intermittent fault, very hard to find. But I found it. A small piece of sharp metal from boring holes in the deck to install equipment at the last overhaul had wedged itself between the cables and worked its way into the insulation causing an intermittent short circuit. The electricians mate was extatic, we had fixed the damn thing! This was late in the day before we were hit.

That same day the clothes dryer had burned out. With the large ship's crew and the aircraft crew the laundry was a vital part of the ship. We had no spare parts and it would be weeks before we could hope for a replacement. Two of the electricians mates found some wire the right size and spent all night rewinding the motor, they had it installed and running just before we went to GC on Oct. 24. "D" division would have been heroes that day if events had been different. The electrician mate who did most of the repairs was lost with the ship.

The Irwin took us to Ulithi Atoll where we were put ashore on a sandspit and left to wait for transportation. I got a severe sunburn; there was no shade. There was lots of beer at a small club the Marines had built but little food. We were there about three days before boarding the merchant transport Cape Newenham. This was a miserable experience.

We stopped at Guam but were not allowed off the ship. At first the enlisted men were not allowed above decks but our senior officers had that changed. The merchant sailors were arrogant and unpleasant to all of us. Their union rep. was particularly nasty and I thought that some of our men might throw him overboard. We finally got to Pearl where we were greeted warmly and were joined by the rest of the crew who arrived before us. Then there was the task of reports to make and letters to the families of those who were lost.

My promotion to Lt. Cmdr. came while I was at Pearl. I was still officially attached to the Princeton so it was endorsed by Capt. Buracker.

My subsequent duty was assistant engineering officer on the USS New York (BB 34) . We were at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The New York was a pre WW I vintage ship constantly breaking down and called " the bucket of bolts ". Drop a hammer and it would go right through the bottom.

The first atomic bomb fell on my birthday Aug. 6, 1945. That was the end of the war for me, I had the points and was headed home and was separated from active duty on Sept. 3, 1945

I took some leave and started looking for a job and began planning a civilian career. A job was a first priority as I had a wife and two children. I joined Wesix Electric Heater Co. as chief engineer. After fifteen years I resigned and joined Hewlett Packard Company. I retired from HP after twenty three years (sixteen as director of government relations).

I am now in a new career in venture capital, having joined with an old schoolmate. I have three sons and five grand daughters all living nearby. My second son went through OCS at New Port P.I. and served in Viet Nam waters on a DE.

While with HP in Palo Alto I was involved in civic affairs and was both a State and local transportation commissioner within the Bay Area. A fellow commissioner from Santa Clara Co. was Adm. Inglis, skipper of the Birmingham that ill-fated day. We reminisced about our experiences. He was bold and determined to save the Princeton and might have had out bomb magazine not exploded.

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WATCH ON THE BRINE

presented by

Frank E. Bell

The Torch Club of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

May 23, 1966

WATCH ON THE BRINE

This is not an age of heroics. We are all pretty self-conscious about patriotism - though one of my earliest memories is of vigorously waving a flag at the Armistice Day paradeⁱⁿ ending World War I. Now we are so used to pictures of the horrors of war, to the threat of annihilation- because of the atom bomb - that we forget there are moments of humor, excitement and satisfaction even ⁱⁿ battle. From my battle station aboard the aircraft carrier Princeton in World War II, I would like to recall a few of the good moments of the war in the Pacific, and - if you'll bear with me - even a few heroics.

To begin at the end, several months after my discharge from the Navy in November 1945, my wife and I went to play Bridge with some new friends. The friends knew that I had been on the Princeton when it was sunk, but we had not discussed the war in any detail. Therefore, I was quite unprepared to meet the two excited little sons who had stayed up past bedtime to see a real "survivor." As we arrived for the Bridge game, the two little boys hung expectantly over the bannister, then came downstairs to say "Hello." Their faces fell as they saw ^{me} me. "But mother," said the older boy, "Mr. Bell's no survivor. He looks just like everyone else!"

Like almost every other man in my age group, I had gone into the service in 1942.. The V-5 program of the Naval Reserve had been organized by Commander Tom Hamilton to train civilian coaches and athletic directors to be athletic officers aboard ships and at shore stations. My own four years of coaching and teaching at Williston Academy in Easthampton, Massachusetts, qualified me for the V-5 program, and with a large group of Reserve officers / cadets, I underwent indoctrination and basic training at Chapel Hill, North

Carolina, for six months.

The next assignment was almost too good to be true. In January of 1943 I was sent for six months to the Naval Air Station in Daytona Beach, Florida. Friends in more rugged assignments made plenty of remarks about this good duty ashore: "What a way to spend the winter!" But by June of 1943 I was looking forward to joining the aircraft carrier Princeton as Athletic Officer.

Captain William Buracker, ^{U.S.N.} ~~USN~~, describes the carrier in the National Geographic of August, 1945:

The Princeton began life on the ways as a light cruiser. Early in the war, the Navy desperately needed more flattops; so flight decks were added to ~~some~~ ^{SOME} cruiser hulls and the Independence-class carrier was born. Princeton was the second of these.

Our ship, about half the tonnage of a big Essex-class carrier, carried only one squadron each of fighters and torpedo bombers. But she had plenty of speed.

Built by the New York Shipbuilding Corporation of Camden, New Jersey, she was christened by Mrs. Harold Dodds, wife of the President of Princeton University, in honor of the Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777, which followed George Washington's recrossing of the Delaware.

Her first commanding officer was Captain George Henderson, U.S.N. After commissioning, he took the Princeton with her air group to the Caribbean for a shakedown ~~cruise~~. Most of the pilots and crew were green; only a few had had battle experience. 1.

It was at the close of the shakedown cruise in the Caribbean that I reported aboard, just at the time the ship returned to the Philadelphia Navy Yard, July 3, 1943. Until July 21 we ^{remained} at the Navy Yard to make the changes in gear and equipment which the shakedown cruise had shown to be necessary.

Those of you familiar with the Philadelphia area know that the Navy Yard is quite a few miles south of the Willow Grove Naval Air Station where our Air Group was ^{STAYING} ~~staying~~ during this time. My first sight of our Air Group

X
was unforgettable - not what I imagined at all. Instead of the planes flying to join us as we steamed down Delaware Bay, the planes were taxied under their own power down the streets of Philadelphia like an army of bugs, wings folded but wheels spinning, and then the planes were hoisted aboard the carrier.

At the time we left Philadelphia, we carried divebombers as well as the fighter and torpedo bombers. However, our divebombers, the SBD's, proved impractical from the standpoint of space, since their wings would not fold up. When we reached Pearl Harbor in August, the dive bombers were removed from the Princeton and the other CVL's. Additional fighters were transferred to us to replace the dive bombers.

Our voyage from Philadelphia to Pearl Harbor, by way of the ^{PANAMA} Canal ^A Zone, ^{WAS} ~~as~~ uneventful from the military standpoint. Our planes flew ^U combat air patrols, anti-submarine patrols, and the pilots got valuable experience taking off and landing. Aboard ship we had drills for every emergency: General Quarters, when we would report to our battle stations in preparation for enemy attack; fire-fighting ^{DRILLS} ~~drills~~; abandon ship drills.

My own particular job as Ship's Athletic Officer was to keep the pilots in good physical condition and to arrange athletic events for all the officers and men aboard. Before long I also began to study navigation, and eventually was made Assistant Navigator. I therefore became qualified to stand ^{TOP} ~~A~~ deck watches while the ship was underway. This led to some exciting moments, when the Princeton reached the combat area.

What was the combat situation in the Pacific late in the summer of 1943? Commander James Shaw, U.S.N. ^{has} written:

" By the close of 1942, after the battles of Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons and Santa Cruz had been fought, both Americans and Japanese expected

that carrier vs. warrier battles would be repeated. But these flattop duels ceased abruptly with the end of the Guadalcanal campaign, partly because both sides wished to rebuild their depleted carrier strength and train new air groups, but mostly because the first Allied offensives of 1943 in the South and Southwest Pacific could be readily covered by land-based planes.

The Navy's shipbuilding program included 25 large Essex-class carriers (27,000 tons) and light carriers...built on cruiser hulls. By the summer of 1943 these ships were joining the Pacific Fleet and their arrival ushered in a new phase of carrier warfare, the hit-and-stay offensive.²¹

The Princeton along with the carriers Lexington and Belleau Wood arrived in Pearl Harbor August 9. The Yorktown, Essex and Independence were there already. Operating farther out in the Pacific were the Saratoga and Enterprise.³ The carrier fleet was building up fast.⁵

The Princeton began her active war ^{CAREER} ~~career~~ in the assault and occupation of Baker Island in August and September 1943. The overall plan ^{WAS} ~~was~~ to construct an air-strip on Baker Island so that the islands in the Gilbert Group could be attacked by army bombers. In company with the Belleau Wood, four destroyers and half a dozen transports loaded with troops and equipment, we headed for Baker Island. As it turned out, Jap air resistance was very light. Princeton pilots shot down three Jap planes much to the envy of the Belleau Wood pilots who did not shoot down any.⁴

After Baker Island was occupied, we participated in some air strikes against Tarawa and Makin in the Gilbert Islands. But during the operation our catapult broke and we had to return to Pearl Harbor Navy Yard for repairs and new orders.

On October 10 we suddenly received secret orders to proceed to Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. There we joined the carrier Saratoga and a number of other ships for a practice in joint operations. In November 1943 we really found ourselves in the thick of the fight

protecting landings in the Solomons. With Espiritu Santo as our base, we made many strikes against the Japanese ships trying to break up our landings ^{AT} ~~in~~ Empress Augusta Bay. "Then, still in November, The Princeton joined our main carrier force to give air support ^{FOR} ~~for~~ the Marines assaulting Tarawa and for the occupation of other Gilbert Islands." ⁵

Captain Buracker gave ⁵ an overall picture of this type of action ³:

"The role of the carriers in the Gilberts was a prelude for many amphibious operations later. First we roamed the seas, knocking out Jap aircraft, shipping, and installations; then we gave the immediate objective a going over. During the approach and landing, our carriers kept the air clear of Jap aircraft and attacked any Jap ship, gun, pillbox, troop concentration or other target which might impede our forces. ⁶"

We operated as part of Task Force 58. To picture a task force you must first imagine a task group composed of four aircraft carriers at the center of a circle. Ringing the four carriers at a distance of about 2,000 yards would be up to six cruisers or battleships. The outer circle of the task group was made up of about eighteen destroyers. Our particular task group was designated 58.3. From our group's center position, we could just see the superstructures of the ships in the other three groups cruising ten miles away, each group at a 120 degree angle from the center of the task force. From high in the air the task force would look like three separate, bristling circles in a triangular formation, and a fourth bristling circle in the middle.

The effectiveness of our task force seemed to increase with each operation. The Gilbert Islands were secured by the end of 1943. In January and February of 1944 the Princeton supported amphibious landings in the Marshalls; late in March we proceeded to the Carolines, striking the Jap islands of Palau, Yap and Woleai. ⁷

In May of 1944 the Princeton was ordered to Pearl Harbor for minor repairs. The pilots of Air Group 23 had fought ^{MANY} ~~many~~ combat missions and were due for replace-

ment. Air Group 27 then joined ^{us as we steamed} westward again to rejoin our task force, with orders to capture the Marianas. ⁸

It was good to be back in the task force in the midst of our screen of cruisers, battlewagons and destroyers. During the day this was a thrilling and reassuring sight. At night we kept our proper distances by radar. But at the height of combat, there could be problems.

In June of 1944 while making night strikes on Saipan in the Marianas, I had a close call. June 15 was D-Day for the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions, and a rough day it was. Four days earlier we had destroyed 150 Jap planes, so that we were able to bring our ships in close enough to the island to bombard the beaches. Yet the Jap resistance was fierce.

The Japs sent out a strike of Bettys that night against us. The Bettys were twin-engined torpedo planes. They flew low to the water so that they would not be picked up early by our radar.

As soon as they were spotted on our radar screen, however, the whole task group turned to meet the attack head-on. It is customary to turn directly toward a contact like this or directly away from it in order to present as small a target ^{to} the enemy as possible.

When the Bettys reached our circular screen of destroyers, they kept coming right on down through the task group. All of the ships opened fire on them. I have never seen such a display of fireworks. The multi-colored tracers looked like thousands of Roman candles going off all over the place. The entire spectacle looked like a July fourth celebration exploding all at once.

A few of the planes finally reached a point in between the Princeton and two ^{of} ~~the~~ the battlewagons, the Indiana and the North Carolina, which were off our port bow about fifteen hundred yards. I could see by the tracers

that we were going to be hit by the gun-fire from either ^{OR} of both of our own battle-wagons so I shouted to the men, "Hit the deck!"

Almost immediately the Princeton was hit. Fortunately the splinter shield on our battle station saved our lives. A large hole was blown in our ship about eighteen inches from me. Another shell or two hit the splinter ^{SHIELD} shield and splattered like shrapnel, killing two men and ^{WOUNDING} wounding several others who were directly aft of us at a gun sponson.

There were other casualties aboard the Princeton as a ^{result} of this action and all were caused by the gun fire from our own ships. This was understandable in an engagement of this nature, but one incident that occurred in connection with it has made a lasting impression on me.

All during the attack we were, of course, at General Quarters. Our medical officer with the rank of full Commander was supposed to be in the Ward Room which was to be used as an operating room. Instead he was out watching the fireworks and was ^{WOUNDED} wounded superficially in the leg.

He later received the Purple Heart for this, but I have felt rather cynical about the whole thing. Our medical officer could have been killed instead of being ^{WOUNDED} wounded. ^{He} We then would have had no surgeon to take care of our other casualties. In effect, he was decorated for not being at his battle station during General Quarters, and could have caused the death of some other men who needed his treatment.

When the battle for Saipan was over - at least the Navy's part- we knew that the Japanese would try to ^{STOP} stop us from further activities in the Marianas. Aboard ship we tried to get some rest while planes were refueled for another emergency. ^{AND} And the ships were literally scrubbed down with large Navy mops.

At about this point, General Quarters was rung because a submarine

periscope had been sighted by the ship just ahead of us. We braced for the attack. Suddenly the periscope came closer - and turned out to be a mop handle which had slipped overboard in the general confusion.

Even with a few days' rest, we knew the Japs would soon make an all-out effort to stop the effectiveness of our task force. With almost all the Pacific islands still in Japanese control and with their Mobile Fleet at peak strength, their plan was to send carrier-based planes eastward against our fleet, bomb our ships, fly the planes to island bases for refueling and rearming and hit us again on their return trip. This plan was called by the Japanese "A-Go Operation."⁹

On June 15 Japanese Admiral Toyoda sent this message to his flag and commanding officers:

On the morning of the 15th a strong enemy force began landing in the Saipan-Tinian area. The Combined Fleet will attack the enemy in the Marianas area and annihilate the invasion force. Activate A-Go Operation for decisive battle.¹⁰

Four days passed before the battle took place. On the American side Admiral Raymond Spruance in command of the 5th Fleet and Admiral Marc Mitscher in command of Task Force 58 had decided to watch and wait, not wanting to go so far from Guam and Saipan as to endanger our amphibious forces there. Naval historians still argue the wisdom of this defensive measure. We were fully ready for Jap attack, yet didn't know just where it would be.

The official Naval historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, says, "The usual tenseness that precedes a battle was enhanced by a feeling akin to exasperation over the failure of air search to discover the Japanese."¹¹

Early on the morning of June 19, however, our combat air patrol and air search radar reported large numbers of Jap carrier planes coming from the west.

Our skipper, Captain Buracker, had decided to keep the Princeton's crew and officers informed of all the day's developments via the P.A. system. Before long he announced that there were many bogeys on the screen and shortly thereafter, that our task force fighters were engaged in intercepting the Japanese planes.

(At this point let me remind you that Task Force 58 was divided into four task groups - 58.1, 58.2, 58.3, and 58.4. Without this information the continuance of this narrative would be pointless.)

The next announcement that came over the P.A. system was "Fifty-eight point one is now under attack!"

Almost immediately the next report came forth, "Fifty-eight point two now under attack!"

The next words I heard were not over the P.A. system, but were equally loud, and they came from the mouth of my favorite ~~colored~~ mess attendant whose battle station was at the gun sponson just aft of my battle station.

"Who's we?" he shouted.

When I replied, "We're fifty-eight point three, " there was just a moment's pause before his voice came back.

"Oh - oh!"

As it turned out, my mess attendant had a good day, but for the Japanese the battle on the nineteenth of June was a catastrophe. Four hundred and two of their planes were lost. We called it the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot. The Princeton pilots alone knocked down twenty-seven enemy planes and the guns of our ship accounted for three more, ^{BUT WE DID LOSE} ~~although we lost~~ two of our pilots. Not one of the American ships was seriously damaged, and only eighteen American

pilots and six aircrewm~~en~~ lost their lives in this major action.

You can imagine the excitement aboard our ships. The pilots were issued two bottles of beer apiece to calm them down. ¹² ~~AND~~ CELEBRATE.

We were more than ready to go on the attack, search out the Jap fleet and do as much damage as possible before enemy planes and pilots could be replaced. "Unluckily," writes Morison, "the great weakness of the U.S. carriers here as at Coral Sea and Midway was search. It was not until 1600 (4 PM) on the following day, June 20, that Mitscher had any useful intelligence of his enemy from search planes." ¹³

And here was the problem in Admiral Mitscher's Action Report:

1/ Taking advantage of this opportunity to destroy the Japanese fleet was going to cost us a great deal in planes and pilots because we were launching at the maximum range of our aircraft at such a time that it would be necessary to receive them after dark. This meant that all carriers would be recovering daylight-trained air groups at night with consequent loss of some pilots who were not familiar with night landing and who would be fatigued at the end of an extremely hazardous and long mission. ¹⁴

Yet Mitscher knew the strike must be made. He concluded a little pep talk at 4:10:- "Give 'em hell, boys. Wish I were with you!" ¹⁵

It took two precious hours of daylight ^{EVEN} ~~even~~ to reach the Japanese ships. As the sun set a furious air-surface battle took place, and the Jap carrier Hiyo was sunk by four planes from the Belleau Wood. ¹⁶ Sixty-five additional Japanese planes were destroyed. Admiral Ozawa in command of Operation ~~AGO~~ saw his air power reduced from four hundred and thirty planes on the morning of June 19 to thirty-five planes on the evening of June 20.

The American pilots struggling back through the darkness knew they had achieved a great victory, but they never guessed what a welcome they would have. For the first and last time in the war all the lights of the carriers were turned

on. "The carriers turned on truck lights, glow lights to outline flight decks, and red and green running lights, and flashed signals to identify themselves...." ^{16.} Planes were given orders to land on any carrier available; planes from eight or nine different carriers ended up on the same flight deck. As fuel ran out, some planes ditched into the sea, and the blinking of little flashlights from life rafts and from pilots swimming in the water made the sea look like "A meadow full of fireflies in June." ^{17.}

It was a hectic night. Deck crashes and ditching took a heavier toll of men and planes than the battle itself. When all losses were totaled up, sixteen pilots and thirty-three ~~men~~ crewmen had given their lives the second day of the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

As to the outcome of the battle, Morison writes:

"The immediate reaction in Task Force 58 to the Battle of the Philippine Sea was one of disappointment and vexation. Admiral Clark, only ten days after, told this writer, "It was the chance of a century missed." Admiral Mitscher thus concluded his action report: "The enemy escaped. He had been badly hurt by one aggressive carrier strike, at one time he was within range. His fleet was not sunk." ¹⁸

The argument went on and so did the war. In August of 1944 Admiral Spruance was relieved by Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., and the Princeton became a part of Halsey's 3rd Fleet.

The operations of the summer were bringing us closer to the Philippines. Then early in October we met an enemy more savage than the Japanese - a Pacific typhoon. We had received orders to proceed to Ulithi Atoll which was to be used as a harbor ^{or} ~~or~~ and advanced base for the fleet. Our ships were the first to enter the atoll since it had been recently taken away from the Japanese.

We ~~had~~ ^{HAD} no maps or charts of our own to make the entrance, but

had to rely solely on Japanese charts that had been taken from them. Luckily the charts were fairly accurate and we had no difficulty.

Each ship was given a "berth" which was no more than an indication on the chart where we were to anchor. The Princeton found its berth and let go anchors. All was well for awhile, but the wind kept gaining in velocity.

Before long the wind had increased to such intensity that some of the ships were dragging anchor and were floating around endangering other ships. Shortly the order was received to get underway and put to sea so that we could ride out the typhoon in open water.

It seemed that a typhoon was coming in the direction of Ulithi. The S.O.P.A. wisely decided to get underway ^{way} on the ocean so we would at least not be in the worst of the storm area. I'm sure the atoll would have been a disaster area if we had remained in the anchorage!

The typhoon was fierce. We were fortunate that we did not have to ride it out in the center of its path. The ~~poor~~ destroyers took the worst beating. They seemed to disappear completely under water; they looked like submarines just coming to the surface after each wave. Even the cruisers and battlewagons had green water over their bows.

Aboard the Princeton we were better off than those on the smaller ships. All of our planes had to be double-lashed to the deck to keep them from ~~toppling~~ ^{tipping} into the sea. We had green water over our bow, too, and the water was splashing over the forward part of the flight deck.

For those who are unfamiliar with the nautical terms, the "pitch" is the forward and backward motion as in a rocking chair. The "roll" is the side to side motion. At the worst of the storm our roll was 34 degrees. If you can imagine the flight deck in a roll from port ^{to} starboard so that it pointed

up to the sky at an angle of 34 degrees, you have some idea of the intensity of the typhoon.

There were a few bumps and bruises as some men were tossed and buffeted around the ship. In fact, we heard there were some men washed overboard from one of the other ships. There was also minor damage to some of the ships, but nothing that couldn't be repaired while underway.

Even with all this pounding the 7th and 3rd fleets were at peak strength for the Battle of Leyte Gulf beginning October 24. Our fleets were once again protecting amphibious landings and this time there was a special element of drama. General MacArthur had promised to return to the Philippines; this was his return.

Everyone has seen the pictures of the General wading ashore that memorable day. Unfortunately, a lot of other people got wet, too.

On October 24, 1944, our carrier task group was steaming close to the eastern shore of Luzon Island. Our plan of attack was to get close enough so that we could launch an attack against parts of the Japanese fleet which we knew to be ^{ON THE} the western shore of Luzon.

That morning we were flying the combat air patrol for our group when word came from radar plot that many, many bogeys were coming in our direction, evidently from Manila. Actually there were close to one hundred Jap planes in the attack. The other carriers scrambled their fighters and we scrambled what we had left.

Our planes were first to make the interception. All of the fighters did an outstanding job and knocked ^{down} all but ten or fifteen planes which turned back toward Luzon. All of them, I say, except one, which evidently escaped our fighter planes and had gotten into the clouds above our task group where the

planes couldn't be picked up by our radar.

About 9:40 AM I happened to be looking up into the sky from my vantage point on the forward port corner of the flight deck, and I spotted the lone Jap plane in a dive on the Princeton. It was following the longitudinal axis of our carrier, coming in on our bow in a shallow idve. Other men, including our lookouts, saw it at the same time, but it was too late to take any evasive action, for the clouds were low.

I followed the plane with my eyes and could see the bomb strapped under the plane's fuselage. I saw the bomb as it was released, and I watched the plane pull out of its dive. Our guns opened fire on the plane, but we were too late. The bomb went through our flight deck near the after elevator, went through the hangar deck and exploded just underneath it.

You would not think one five hundred pound bomb could do much damage to an aircraft carrier; that depends on where the bomb hits. This one bomb happened to hit a vulnerable spot. The explosion set the hangar deck on fire and wrecked the sprinkler system of the hangar deck simultaneously.

That morning our torpedo planes were ~~armed~~ and ready for the strike which we were going to make, but when the Jap planes made their attack, our fighters had intercepted them. It was then necessary to have our fighters land, refuel and rearm, for they were going to fly cover for our bombers. In order to land our fighters, we had to put the loaded torpedo planes down on the hangar deck. And they were there when the bomb struck and the fire started.

Without our sprinklers operating, the fire spread quickly. Before long one or more torpedoes exploded, blowing up the after elevator. The fire was raging below decks. Ammunition in what we call the ready magazines seemed to be exploding all the time. The fire kept pushing the men forward on the carrier.

The next major explosion came when more of the torpedoes blew up, shattering the forward elevator.

Rear Admiral Sherman had to proceed with his strike, but he detached the cruiser Reno and three destroyers to give help and protection to us after we were hit. Later, when he realized how badly we were hit, he also sent the cruiser Birmingham and another destroyer to our aid.

The Birmingham came along our port side to help fight the fire with her hoses; the destroyer Morrison came along the starboard side to do likewise. More trouble followed: the Morrison's superstructure caught inbetween our stacks and later had to be pulled loose by another destroyer. Both ships were doing a remarkable job in fighting the fire, making slow but steady progress. At this crucial time another group of bogeys was sighted on our radar screen.

Evidently the Jap pilot who had hit us radioed to his base that there was a crippled carrier off Luzon. A group of about a dozen more planes came after us. However, friendly fighters knocked them all down and none of them got close to us.

When the bogeys first appeared on our radar screen, the Birmingham and the Morrison pulled away from us, so that they would be free to maneuver or take evasive action. The fire built up in intensity during this time. Then the Birmingham attempted to come alongside again after the Jap planes were knocked down.

Just as the Birmingham came abreast of our after elevator, the worst explosion so far occurred as our reserve bomb and torpedo stowage blew up together.

The whole starboard side of the Birmingham was hit with fragments like shrapnel, and some holes blown in the ship were one to two feet in diameter. Their Captain had warned his men to stay below decks, except the ones who were to fight

the fire. But we all know about Curiosity. In this one explosion the Birmingham suffered two hundred and twenty-nine dead and four hundred and twenty injured.

During this same explosion serious casualties took place on the Princeton. At the beginning of the operation some days earlier, Captain John Hoskins had come aboard our ship with orders to relieve Captain Buracker when the Leyte Gulf operation was over. The tremendous explosion threw Captain Hoskins to the deck and then a large fragment of the flight deck almost severed one leg above the ankle. He had applied a tourniquet by himself to stop the bleeding; when the senior medical officer reached the captain, the foot was amputated then and there. The captain received no anesthetic or painkiller till he was being removed to another ship. His bravery was an inspiration to every man who knew what he was suffering.

Later on in the war when a new Essex-class carrier was christened the Princeton, Captain John Hoskins was made its skipper. He was one of the very few men with an artificial leg ever given command of a fighting ship. He surely deserved this tribute from the Secretary of the Navy.

Back on the burning Princeton ^{IT} ~~it~~ was decided that it would be futile to ^{TRY} ~~try~~ to save the ship. ^{WORD} ~~Word~~ was passed to abandon ship; the men did not need a second command! Some had gone overboard earlier, but most of them were crowded on the forward part of the ship and went over the side in the recommended manner of going down lines.

Many of the men were spread over a wide area of the ocean as some had jumped early when we were still underway. Some men were in groups swimming together, some in life rafts and some just floating in their life jackets hoping to be picked up by one of the cruisers or destroyers which had been

left to help us.

My battle station was what is called BAT 2 or secondary control station. if anything happened to put the bridge out of order, I was to take control of the ship from this spot, just off the forward port corner of the flight deck. Actually, BAT 2 was supposed to be the battle station of the Executive Officer, but he preferred to be in Radar Plot.

^{WHEN}
~~One~~ I was about ready to abandon ship, I put on the only life jacket left at our battle station. At the time, I didn't realize that EXECUTIVE OFFICER was stencilled across its back.

One of my best friends aboard ship was the Commanding Officer of the detachment of Marines, Captain Sam Jaskilka. (Incidentally, he is now a full 4-star general, assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. ^{HE RETIRED IN} ~~colonel assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon~~.) His battle station was aft of mine, and he had come forward to my spot as the fire kept sweeping in our direction. We decided to abandon ship together when the word was given.

We went down lines fairly close to each other and ^{hit} ~~lost~~ the water almost simultaneously. Although I was a fairly good athlete in those days, I had never been a competent swimmer. The ocean was choppy, the roll of the ship dunked us up and down on those lines as though we were toys, and if it hadn't been for Sam's encouragement, I might not be here to relate all this.

As it was, we spent about twenty minutes in the water struggling away from the Princeton, heading toward the destroyer Irwin till we were near enough to grasp the cargo net slung over the side. When I finally pulled myself over the rail, I was so tired I couldn't budge.

My own reception aboard the Irwin surprised me: officers and men were so solicitous of my welfare. Soon they started talking ~~up~~ about forming

a boarding party of our men in case we decided to go back aboard the Princeton. About this time I realized I still was wearing the Executive Officer's life jacket.

Destroying the crippled Princeton was the last horror of the day.

Morison describes this vividly:

" In order not to leave her a derelict, Admiral Sherman ordered this gallant light carrier, which had shared his glory and old Saratoga's in the memorable 1943 strike on Rabaul, to be destroyed with torpedoes.

Destroyer Irwin, cramped and crowded with some 600 survivors, was given the job. Unfortunately her torpedo director had been so pounded alongside Princeton as to be useless. She stopped broadside to the carrier one mile away and fired No. 1 torpedo, which curved left and hit the Princeton's bow. The second torpedo missed astern. Third torpedo porpoised, broached and headed back directly for Irwin. The Captain rang up flank speed and hard left rudder, and the "fish" passed about 30 feet away on a parallel course. "Whatever morale was left in the 600 survivors vanished in those few seconds!" Nos. 4 and 5 missed ahead. The track of No. 6, unbelievably, was identical to that of No. 3 and missed Irwin by a closer margin. More than one survivor was thinking of taking drastic action on the bridge, when the task group commander relieved Irwin of her sinking assignment. 19

Finally the Reno was ordered to launch a spread of torpedoes. When these ~~these~~ hit, the Princeton blew up completely, with only a slab of the flight deck tilting gracefully into the sea and settling, we presume, in the depths of the Philippine trench.

Night fell and we steamed away from the battle area. On that last day the Princeton had lost 10 officers and 98 men from a crew of 1500.²⁰ We were headed for Guam and eventually a 30-day Survivor's Leave in the United States. Although some of the Princeton's men were sent to sea again, most of ⁷ ~~1~~ us

were given shore assignments.

The ending was both real and apparent. I had locked my wrist-watch and other valuables safely in my vault aboard the Princeton and now my watch was not on the brine but under the brine.

I have not ^{*crossed*} ~~seen~~ the Pacific Ocean since returning from the tour of duty I have described. But I hope someday to ^{go} back and retrace the path of the Princeton in the Pacific. Next time I'll take a camera.

Footnotes

1. William H. Buracker, "The Saga of the Carrier Princeton," National Geographic Magazine. LXXXVIII, No.2 (August 1945), 189.

2. James Shaw, Introduction to vol.VII of Samuel Eliot Morison's History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, p.xxvii.

3. Edward L. Clifford, Unpublished Memorandum to George K. Brakeley, October 23, 1945, paragraphs 15-16.

4. Ibid., para. 19.

5. Buracker, op. cit., p.190.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., pp.191-192.

8. Ibid., p.192.

9. Samuel Eliot Morison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol.VIII, p.215.

10. Ibid., p.221.

11. Ibid., p.258.

12. Ibid., p.284.

13. Ibid., p.285.

14. Ibid., p.291.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p.302.

17. Ibid., p.304.

18. Ibid., p.313.

19. Morison, op. cit., vol.XII, pp.182-183.

20. Buracker, op. cit., p.218.

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Princeton Alumni Weekly, vol.XLV, no.34, June 20, 1945, pp.

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Henry R. Bellavance

3 Asselyn Rd.

Scarborough, Maine 94974

883-2581 (207 area code)

I was in repair 5 attached , on the starboard side on the sculler_____, my primary purpose was to flood magazines in the event of any hits, on the ship or when I was relayed a message to flood all magazines. On that particular morning, I heard a tremendous roar of the hit, the ship bounced quite a while, I was on my hands and knees, I looked up and I saw all sorts of fire shooting right out., and then I heard someone come down and say get away from the area, bomb hit this area. I didn't know exactly where , there was no lights, smoke was heavy, I looked across the door, the door opened from aft from the forward part of the mess deck, on the starboard side, I seen the side fountain gates fall right over. Immediately I flooded all magazines. I started going aft, I opened the hatch going to R1 R2 division, it was dark, smokey, no lights, only battle lights, I was proceeding on, in the meantime I had run into Lt. Bradley, our division officer, he told me to make sure I had all the hoses lined out, make sure we had water for the fire mains. In the meantime I could feel the heat, smoke, so I grabbed a cloth and held it around my face, to hold back the smoke. Lt. Bradley told me he would proceed down the aft stairway to make sure these men were out of there because communication was cut off. He went on and I proceed on aft underneath the flight deck on the deck. I opened the hatchway going to the hangar deck. As soon as I opened that heavy hatch I looked up and there was a torpedo plane on fire. I immediately closed the hatch, went back down, and proceeded on further underneath the elevator deck, I continued toward the ship fitters sop and I heard a tremendous explosion, sounded like it was forward of me, I was proceeding back. Then I knew that Lt.

nashville 13-13-13

Bradley and the others would never come back out, so I proceeded on aft, trying to get to the after quarter, but I couldn't, I was isolated, so I continued on back to the ship fitters shop and I went toward the port side aft of the elevator, went up top side into the gun wells. I seen people in the water, there ~~were~~ were all jumping off, I was ~~about~~ on board about 45 minutes to an hour to get to this area. I heard another tremendous explosion, fire went around my face, my arms, I felt something hit my hand, I see somebody down below struggling, apparently he didn't know how to swim, he was struggling to stay above water.

I jumped off the flight deck gun well and as soon as I jumped off I immediately proceeded to help this young fellow I knew ~~who~~ was struggling. I didn't have no life jacket, my gun gone, I'd taken my hat off before I jumped in so I wouldn't ~~choke~~ choke to death..

I saw a piece of floating log come by. I took that piece of ~~float~~ floating log and I gave it to the young fellow that was struggling, he couldn't stay up in the water,, was going up and down. So there was a life raft come by, I put him on the life raft and I took the piece of log and I continued on until I saw the chief in the water, (who?) his side was cut open. I proceeded back to the life raft and put him on ~~in~~ it and I continued on with this piece of log. In the meantime I floated around for ~~a~~ quite a while until the USS Gatling icked me up.

got ~~purple heart~~ purple heart - wounded in back of neck and hands. ~~He~~ Shrapnel removed on board Gatling.

No. 22 on chart

(500 ~~and~~)
Cannizzaro from Saint Points NY

Buck & Carol Glands, from Whiteing, Ind.

Jerry & Caroline Tell from Grand Rapids, Mich.

Hank Popham from Fountain Valley, CA

John & Helen Duncan, Garfield, NJ

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Les Blythe

CAG27

Real name is Robert L. Blythe, Ensign

On Oct. 24th we were involved in a predawn launch. Red Shirley was the division leader. On several intercepts shot down at least two planes. Men were sent on an intercept back toward the Philippines climbing to altitude 20 to 25000 feet and intercepted a large group of Jap planes coming into the fleet. That got into a big dogfight and we shot down quite a few planes. I think, that day, I shot down three. The first one we shot down, we shared credit for. We shot it down on intercept on patrol and two of the planes in dogfighting that I saw burn. One on the initial run when we first rolled over and went in on them we hit the top cover and I closed in on one of those so I couldn't miss and shot him down. We broke off from that run and we were all scattered all over the place. By the time I got back to the main flight, I can't remember the guy's name, but I picked up one of the new guys in the squadron. He had a plane on his tail chasing and I closed on him as it turned so I could shoot the plane off his tail. He joined up with me. I don't think he was shot up, just excited. We ended up going back to the fleet and being told to orbit about 20 miles from the fleet. before we got there, they told us to come on in but to use every recognition signal on approach. I landed back aboard just a few minutes before the bomb. I was in the ready room when it hit.

Q: How did you feel about Burracker and Murphy?

A: They were fine people. I didn't have any close contact with them. My contacts were with squadron officers and the commander.

Q: do you have any stories you can relate about other battles you guys fought in?

A: I missed the fight in the Marianas Turkey Shoot. I can tell you a sad story there. There was myself and Robert Hill and a couple of others, about 6 or 8 of us in the ready room

Les Blythe CAG27 cont.

when they first sounded general quarters on the morning of the Marianas Turkey Shoot. When they realized there was a big group of planes coming in, they went to general quarters and told the people in the ready room to man the aircraft. After we got in the planes, they delayed the launch. Then by that time the rest of the people had come up to the ready room. The exec got their division together and came up and relieved us in the planes and they took off on the turkey shoot. we just missed that. We did fly in the afternoon, but things had pretty well quieted down.

One story that you might find interesting is that several of us including Townsend, who was a real good pilot, never got to qualify on carriers until we got to the fleet on Espiritu Santo. We were trained on the east coast and then went to the west coast for carrier training. We got checked out in Corsairs, but were shipped out before we qualified for carriers. We went to Pearl and then to Espiritu Santo. We were there a couple of months when the Princeton came in. They gave us training- that was Commander Curtis. They brought some planes ashore. In a days operation, they checked us out on carrier landings. I think I made four landings and Townsend made two. I went out with the Princeton for about 6 weeks as part of VF23. Then we went back to Pearl and VF23 was relieved. Because we were only out for a short time, we didn't go back to the States. I think you had to be out for 3 or 4 months to qualify to go back. We stayed at Pearl and were pecked up by Vf27. We actually were in both air groups that served on the Princeton.

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report on Ray - you can use it
to build character - but not quote!

July: Frequent

Report from Situation Army

June 7, 1979 "This man left
without notice. He was
always gripping at something.
The key of the office to
said. He wouldn't find me -
which wasn't true.
Suggest never re-admit "
find

July

June 27, 1979 - "Discussed
Situation with Major
Goth - we should
reconsider the ^{admit} re-admit"
Although Mr A was
unhappy here and showed
his disapproval in
all sorts and kinds -
~~at times~~ ^{at times} language. He
worked in the snack
bar "

Ray - Anonymous:

aged 11-1-80 at La Guardia LA Salvado Army Air Guard 10

C - C. A. L. Book:

H - Harsha Clark:

R - Ray A.

C - When did you first come on board the Princeton?

R - I was in the kitchen. I was on the corner, at the end of the
ramp, when I came back to the stairs, at 37 days, I was brought
to the Princeton over in Jersey near the shore. I was in her from the beginning
of the war.

H - What was your job?

R - I was a cook. I was a cook and baker since I when I went
into the Navy and I was on both ships, all the time, really,
in the Navy and in the Air Force.

C - Where were you on the ship when he built his?

R - Well, in the galley and the butcher shop. I was on the
deck, on the side, on the level right and the deck. The
bow landed on a piece of wood on the back of the ship, the
red a shock.

C - Did you see it? A bomb?

Ray - Oh yeah, I know like from before, the way the ship was
built, it was a little bit of a little bit just a little bit
when it stops. I was up in the hangar and I was looking at the
where the bomb went through in and it was a much bigger than, oh
it was a little bit, it was a little bit bigger than, oh
it was a little bit, it was a little bit bigger than, oh

C - How long were you on the ship before you were released?

R - Oh, I don't know, I don't know, I was, something like
that. I was up in the bow and the Birmingham was a little bit
the guys off. I figured that the hell should I abandon the ship
I might have been a little bit around and come back again, or I might

Ray -3-3-3

with seasickness. wanted a drink of water when he got on board ship
though, Irish never

remembered getting picked up by third destroyer, Captain Young.
worked in the gallery at Captain Young, Fred Fish was in there too.

at sea he worked day in, day off, was off duty the day the
Princeton was sunk, so didn't eat breakfast that morning, his wife
eaten the off duty

had seven or ten plus himself in his watch, came in on a watch

There was a lot of beer on board for supplies, bottles between two
hangar deck and main deck, there's a void in there, must have had
300 cases of beer in there. When we went ashore we got a case of beer,
but we knew there were whole cases of it on board. Some of this
Commander, he came from the same hospital as I did, and with me
decided, well they were watching me and him anyway, because I was the only
one who looked like a Jew, I was the only one of that type, anyone I wanted
was there. I said: I'll give a gallon of 100 proof alcohol then
a line of rain, he'd bring it down to the galley, I was sure of this
and he was sure of me, I took a lot of old beer of a Murphy's case,
and a boy, so I could have some on edge, I said I'd come to
could I get a case of beer from the main deck hatch there to go in
there and get a couple of 100 proof cases, so he did, so he came with this big
hatch in the bulkhead, Al and I, and we crawled in there. We
weren't going to take just one, we were going for beer. We knew just
about where the beer was, so we rolled through on our hands and knees,
not in the, big steel pipes right above our heads, but we reached
a case of beer, and we just got out of there, just got out of the void
and back into the main deck hatch, we had two, a lot of beer in the case

Ray A [- -]

and this other guy, because they know we were drinking, so might
they did this ~~xxxx~~ ^{raid} on us, but we know it was something we did fill
up this other guy with water and set it right in plain sight, and
he came back in from the back where we had the bar - and
what.

One night we got some alcohol, and we always take it down to the
barbecue house and have it. Because, see if the stuff's OK, of this
stuff on a lot of a couple of something, for some reason this stuff
was bad, I took just one drink of it and it almost killed
me. I was lying.

Several days later they brought alcohol - our guy told us
it was good. That's about all it was - you know, vodka, so
there, you see, with vanilla extract and lemon is 30 percent alcohol,
so that's all right. You take that lemon stuff and you pour it in
a glass of brandy, it makes the brandy taste like lemon. I can
imagine it's a good for you drink - that's a big head guy, but
of the

That's a great swimmer, but could not go around - I'll be over
did it. The other day I was looking at a book in the library.

According to the book of Genesis when the flood came up. When
the water came, it was a flood - I never seen anything as big in my
life. Jesus Christ, that guy was the only one who was in it.

When he was on the boat, he was probably right over
the water - I don't know.

no one else looking at the water.

10-1-1

He owned a big oil pump air plane - served as co'l. on the oil team, a little while ago. I know who he is.

... and of service of Feb. 14, 1947 - went in on Feb. 14, 1947
14-00000 Valerius Jones

NOV 11 1960 (in Dec. 1960)

SECRET

Los. el. Am. Irine von - am. Ich, der ...

Revised 1994 - only a few, close to the Canadian border

was an American citizen, and was born in the United States. He had a cousin who was a merchant and was in the navy, and was known as the "old" one. He was 17 years old when he was killed by the Japanese, and was known as the "old" one. He was killed by the Japanese, and was known as the "old" one.

Ray A. 7-7-7

cousin, didn't want any part of the army

chose cooking - had to go with where the Fed's at, to hell
with the bullets

worked day on, day off, every other weekend got 72 hours off.

when you work in the galley you get all kinds of favors done for
you - everybody wants something and is willing to return the favor.

At home in galley they don't shoot at you - but they always seem to
drop bombs in the galley. The Hornet was hit in the boiler room -
boiler stop always about midnight, is likely to get hit

still works as cook, been married and divorced 3 times
worked Vegas, Reno, Palm Springs

Home at Albuquerque is Belgian and French, his mother is Irish
They call me Albuquerque, barbecue, all sorts of things
they call it the Arly on the ship

weighed 143 pounds when he went into navy

just before steam blew out, they were all told they were going back
to board

HORNET said: Dec. 26, 1942 - always gets lorry in Dec. now

Princeton sunk two years ~~in~~ and two days later

got home for Christmas after both sinkings - 1943 and 1944

got home for Christmas almost every year he was in - even if he had
to sail a ~~him~~ ship