

1941 to 1945

Allen Frank Price – Pacific Theater Sailor



Serving from the first day to the last day

Second Edition



Asiatic-Pacific
Campaign Medal

Allen's actual
Good Conduct
Medal

Ruptured Duck
Discharge Medal
WW II

American
Defense
Medal

Victory
Medal

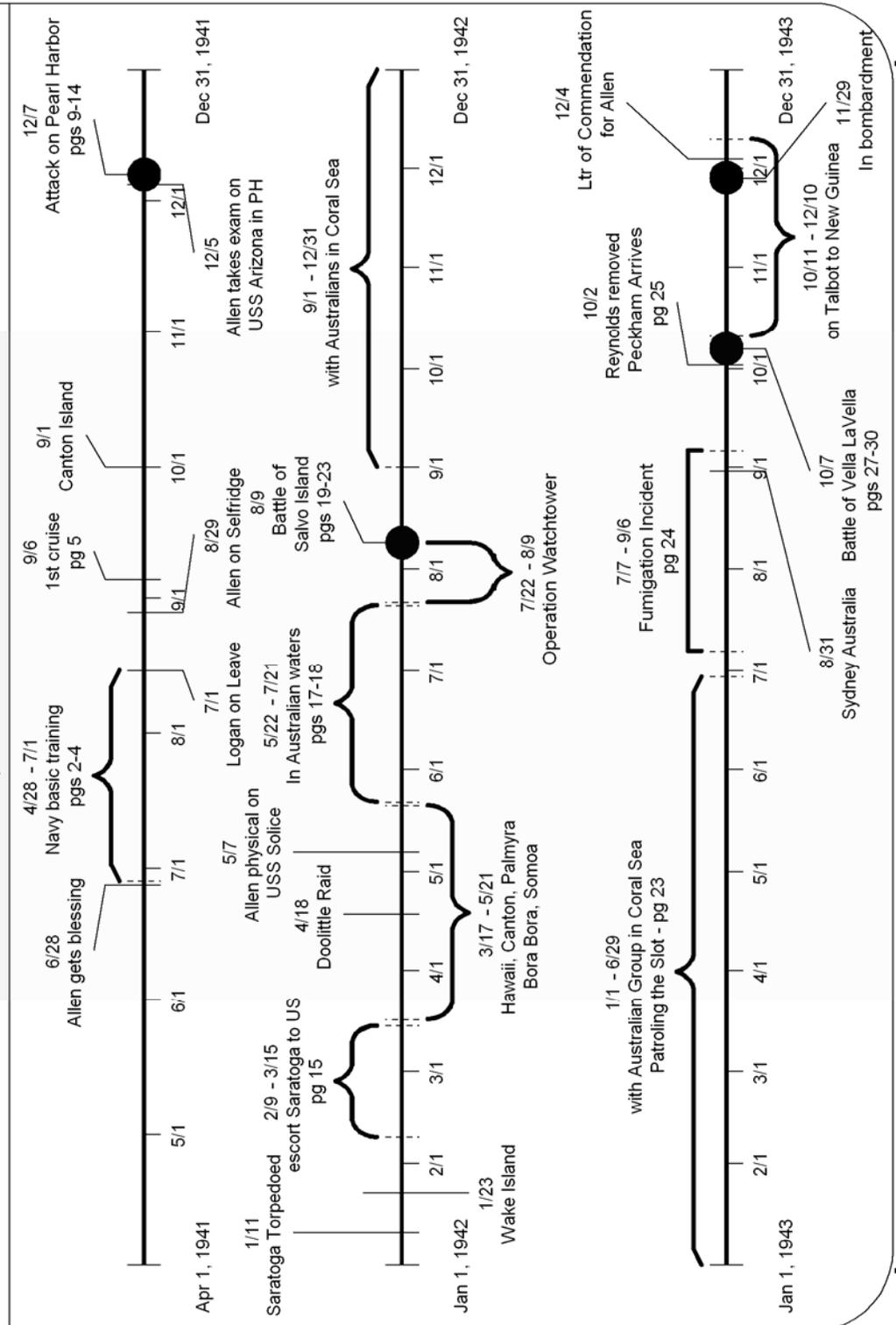


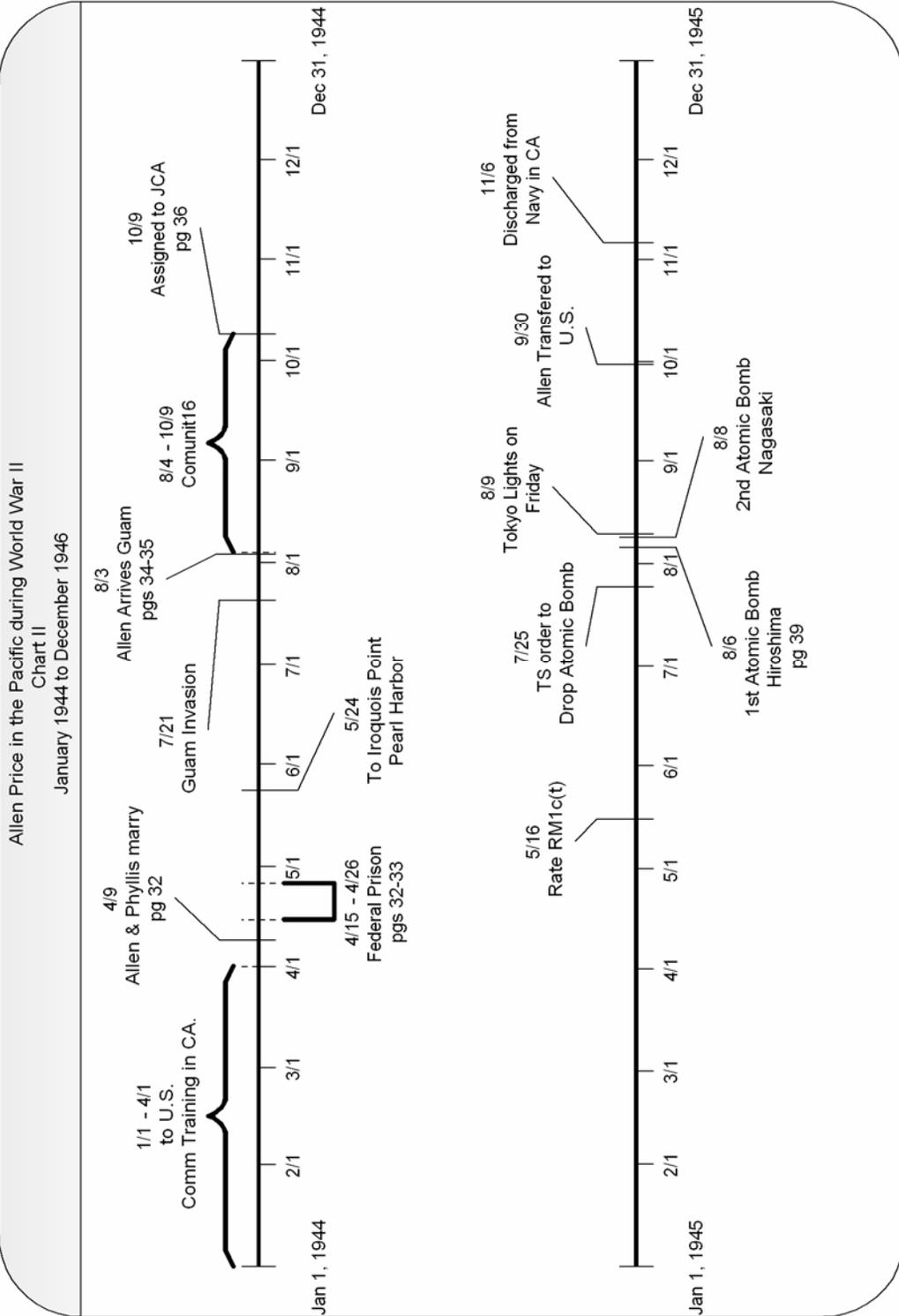
This history is dedicated to Allen Frank Price who served his country, God, and mankind during World War II, and who continues to serve, even now.

For a copy of this history, contact

*Wynn C. Phillips
161 West 4100 North
Pleasant View, UT 84414
(801) 510-1404
e-mail: wynn.Phillips@on-digital.com*

Allen Price in the Pacific during World War II
 Chart 1
 April 1941 to December 1943

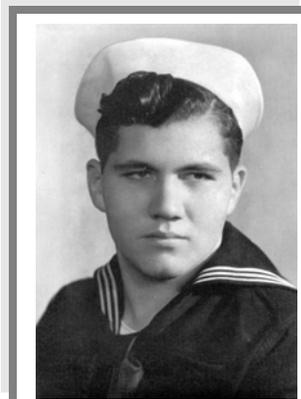




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1941 - Logan, Utah

The reason I joined the Navy was to get away from home. More specifically, I needed to get away from my mother. Not that I blame her too much for the situation. My mother, Myrtle (Pierce) Price was a product of her mother, Julia (Winn) Pierce. The Pierce family worked for every penny and pinched every penny till it squealed. All kids in the family hustled laundry,



odd-jobs, sewing, and anything else they could to earn money. All earned money was then handed over to the parents. With my mother being brought up in that environment, she expected the same participation by me. I was a dutiful son, but it was chafing. With me turning seventeen in January, war in Europe ever spreading, the military in Logan recruiting, and my senior year at Logan High School coming to an end, the time was right to make my move.

In addition to the timing, I can still remember a challenge my mother often made as disagreements would crop up in our house, "If you can find a place that will treat you better than we do then you may leave anytime."

Well, this looked like "anytime". I went by the Navy recruiting office and talked with them. I filled out the recruitment paperwork, took some tests, and applied.¹ A few weeks later I received notice that I was accepted into the Navy and was ordered to report to California for basic training. I had a ticket on the train leaving Logan the morning of April 28th. But, there was a rub. I was seventeen. To join without parental permission I had to be eighteen. So, I needed a couple of signatures.

I didn't know what to expect from Mom and Dad but I had gone this far, so I thought I might as well finish it. I took the required forms home and just before dinner, put them on the kitchen table.

"Mom," I said, "I've just received orders from the Navy to report to boot camp in California." "Received orders from who?" she queried. "Allen, what are you talking about?" "Here we go." I said under my breath.

"Mom, stop getting so upset. Look, you always told me if I could find a place that would treat me better than you, I could go. I want to join the Navy."

While Mom pondered that last statement, she sat down at the table. I remember looking at the kitchen table with the "letter of permission" lying folded on the white tablecloth. I could smell the chicken dinner cooking. The silence extended. She then said with resolution, "I won't sign!" Well, that sparked Dad who had stepped into the discussion in time to hear the "join the Navy." "Mother," Dad said, "you told him that if he could find a place, he could go. He's old enough to make his own decisions and if he thinks that the Navy is it... Well, I say let him go and you sign the permission." Dad stood there solid in his statement.

Mom finished digesting the Navy part and now with Dad's firm statement, she said, "Allen, if you really think that living by the rules of this house is so difficult that the rules of the Navy look easy, well... go." She signed the permission letter, put her hands down on the tabletop

¹ Tests scores shown on Allen's official records were: General Classification: 88; Mechanical aptitude: 83; Arithmetic: 90; English: 78; Spelling: 50. Editor's Note: Spelling is still a challenge for Allen.

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and got up. She stood for a moment looking at me and I couldn't bear to look back. Dad walked over and put his signature on the paper. They were signed! I could join the Navy!²

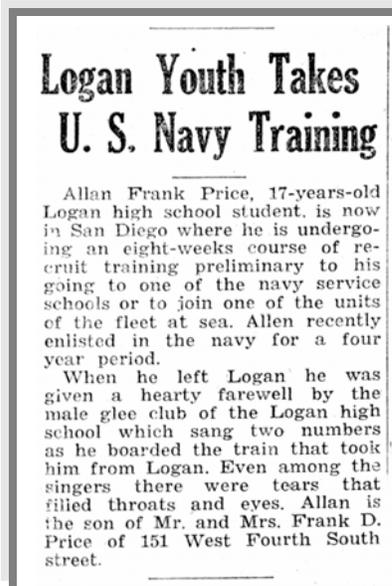
Allen took the signed permission forms to the Navy recruiting office on Main Street and then returned home, preparing for the greatest experience of his life.

Allen wasn't scheduled to graduate from Logan High School until June 1941, so he had to negotiate with each of his teachers. He was allowed to mail assignments back to them while in the Navy. That way he was told he could graduate with his Logan High Class of 1941.

While preparing for his departure, someone in the family suggested that he get a "Patriarchal blessing".³ By the time initial interviews for the blessing were done and schedules made, the blessing was given to him on Sunday, April 27, 1941, the day before he was due to leave. Joseph E. Cardon, the Stake Patriarch gave Allen the blessing. Allen's sister, Beth Price, recorded it in short hand. The typed transcript of the blessing would take some time so Allen only had his memory of what was said until he received the typed copy.

Leaving Logan

Early on the morning of Monday, April 28, 1941, Allen had to be at the station to take the train, or the "Bamburger" as it was called, to Salt Lake City. His father and mother drove him to the station in a car. Because declared war by the United States was still some months away, he was one of the first to leave Logan to serve in the military. Since it was a new event, two good friends in the Logan High male glee club surprised him by having the Glee Club along with Brother Baugh the director, show up at the station. They sang renditions of farewell songs. Also in attendance were a couple of teachers who spoke of Allen's good qualities.⁴



Allen had mixed emotions as he waved goodbye to family and friends from the slowly accelerating train. On the four-hour ride to Salt Lake City he had time to think through his decisions and actions. His conscience started bothering him as he had been somewhat disrespectful and sharp with his mother in the whole process. The more he thought about it the more he felt he needed to do something to "make restitution" for his behavior. He said a prayer asking for forgiveness and told the Lord that he would read the scriptures everyday he was gone. With that promise, he felt better as the train rolled south along the Wasatch front through Ogden and on to Salt Lake City.

Allen arrived in Salt Lake City by train and was officially sworn into the Navy to "Obligate and subject myself to serve during

² December 7th, 1941, by Alan Price, as told to Amanda Ethington, November 3rd 1998.

³ A Patriarchal Blessing is given to faithful members of the L.D.S. Church by a person holding the priesthood and called to hold the position of Patriarch. The blessing is inspired, provides the person receiving the blessing with information about their life on earth to guide them and help them direct their life. All is based on their staying faithful to the tenants of the Gospel.

⁴ Interview of Charles Price, brother of Allen. Charles was in the 7th grade in April 1941.

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minority until January 4, 1945.”⁵ “Minority” being a term meaning he was signed on until he turned 21. His service number was 368-65-37. Allen then jumped back on the train and continued on to San Diego, CA for his eight-week basic training.

At the training camp, according to his official records, he;

*“Received instruction in the nomenclature, assembly, disassembly, safety precautions and proper method of firing Lewis and Browning machine guns, .30 caliber, M2, Aircraft, fixed and flexible types. Given gas mask instruction and instruction in gas chamber. Recruit examination, A-N, Mark 372. Qualified swimmer “C” test.”*⁶

Allen commented on the above “official record.”

The training group I was in actually shot the 30.06 rifle, not the machine gun. The Marines were the range instructors. As a group we would hassle them. Each time the Gunnery Sergeant would give the order, “Fire at will!” We, in unison would say, “Poor Will.” It drove them crazy. Also, I played football and swam at Logan High School and in fact lettered in both sports. I had small medal letters with me for those achievements. So, when the swimming test came up, I had no trouble getting a high mark in swimming. Because of my promise to read the Scriptures on a daily basis I did that all though basic training.”

Allen finally received from home the typed copy of his Patriarchal blessing given to him by Patriarch Cardon. One part of the blessing that had been vaguely remembered by Allen, but now he was able to read, was a statement that was much more meaningful to him. It was,

*“This is the land Zion spoken of by all the holy prophets and blessed art thou because you art here to enjoy peace and prosperity and untold blessings. Go forth upon this new call that has come to you. Keep yourself free and unspotted from the sins of the world and your life shall be spared and you shall not have to lift up the sword against your fellow men and shall return in safety.”*⁷

Allen pondered what exactly was meant by “lift up your sword against your fellow men” in that he was training to use all kinds of weapons.

⁵ Navy Nav. 351, Enlistment Papers from Allen’s official records obtained from National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

⁶ From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

⁷ Patriarchal blessing given by Joseph Cardon to Allen Frank Price on April 27, 1941.

Leave – Then Pearl Harbor

Allen Price, son of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin D. Price of this city, is home for a short visit. Early this spring, Allen joined the U. S. Navy.

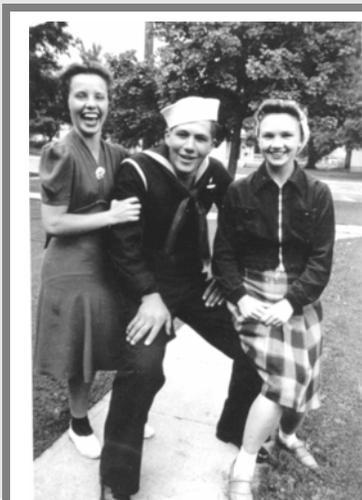
Upon completion of his basic training at the end of June Allen returned to Logan on leave with the rate of “Apprentice Seaman”. Allen arrived in Logan on leave as noted in the July 1, 1941 Harold Journal news article.

He took the occasion to visit about town, pick up his earlier-purchased Logan High School yearbook, and visit some friends so they could write comments in it. He impressed the local girls with his uniform. On the left Allen is with Ruby Everton (on his knee) and Marge Naylor (over his right shoulder) in Logan, The notice above was published in the Harold Journal, July 1, 1941.

With leave over, Allen returned to California where he “officially” completed recruit training on July 10, 1941. The next day he boarded the USS Henderson, an old but reliable troop transport ship.⁸

The Henderson arrived in Hawaii on July 17th and two days later Allen and another Apprentice Seaman were piped aboard the USS Selfridge. The ship’s log shows:

“July 19, 1941...1420 PRICE, A.F., #368-65-37, AS, USN, and PRONGUE, P.G., #337-58-24, AS, USN, reported aboard for duty in accordance with ComDesBatRon mailgram 192200 of July 1941.”⁹



Commander Leland P. Lovette, was the commander of the Selfridge which was moored along side the USS Dobin in Pearl Harbor. The Selfridge was larger in size than other destroyers and so it was also the flagship for the Commander Destroyer Squadron Four (COMDESRON 4) and his staff. COMDESRON 4 (affectionately known as “Squad Dog”) “was Navy Captain Frank Robinson Walker. Allen had no idea of the roll Captain Frank Walker would play in his life and military service as he walked up the gangplank of the Selfridge.¹⁰

With the latitude that a ship’s commander has to make assignments, Commander Lovette assigned Allen as a “Mess Cook” in the forward mess hall. Allen’s assignment was the Port (left) table. His battle station was in the same area, where he could step into the magazine for the two, 51 caliber (5-inch) guns on Mount #2. He would help place powder cartridges and projectiles into the lift that went topside to keep the 2 guns firing at the

⁸ Ships of the U.S. Navy, 1940-1945 AP – Transports. <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Ships>. The USS Henderson was so old it was designated “AP-1” meaning it was the first “Naval Transport” built in the United States Navy. The Henderson had been in the Boxer Rebellion, had wooden plank decks, and was “a pig iron firetrap” as one person put it.

⁹ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Saturday, July 19, 1941. In the writer’s file.

¹⁰ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Saturday, July 19, 1941. In the writer’s file.

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enemy. They could fire 12 rounds a minute.

Being Mess Cook seemed somewhat mundane and it was, but there was one event that was interesting. Having worked on farms and ranches all of his young life, Allen had more strength than his 5-foot 7-inches and 152-pound body made it appear.

“One day I was setting the food tureens on the long Port-side table when Rivers, a sea-hardened ship’s boiler maker, sitting at the head of the table didn’t like something I did. He reached over and slapped me in the face. I made a comment or two and Rivers stepped away from the table and we met. I picked him up around the waist and carried him a few steps and then threw him down on the metal deck. The impact knocked the wind out of him and he lay there gasping for air. Apparently Rivers was known for such shenanigans because those in the mess hall jumped to their feet and cheered. I told Rivers if he wouldn’t slap me again I wouldn’t throw him down again. He never did and I never did.”



Whether it was a promotion, demotion, or lateral move, Allen didn’t know, but he presently was assigned to washing dishes rather than tending tables. Allen

reminisces:

“I was what was lovingly called the ‘scullery maid.’ I washed dishes for 360 men, three times a day. It wasn’t that bad of a job, although I was the only one doing it. Sometimes it got a little redundant. There were several mess cooks so they and I took care of everything. It took me about one hour per meal to clean up. We had a high power electric dishwasher that would take care of all the really dirty stuff and I just made sure that everything was kept clean. I loaded all the dishes into the dishwasher and then unloaded them when they were clean.

Allen’s First Cruise

On July 29, 1941, ten days after arriving on the Selfridge, Allen departed with the Selfridge on his first patrol. The ship returned to Pearl Harbor on August 5th. On August 18, 1941, Navy Commander W. Craig, took command of USS Selfridge in place of Commander Leland P. Lovette.

Allen, keeping his promise of studying the scriptures, would either read on his bunk at the end of his shift, or at his bunk just before he went on duty. He maintained that habit throughout his time on the Selfridge. Whenever the Selfridge made Port he would look up the local ward or branch to meet the members and attend meetings. Also it gave him a chance to meet the local LDS girls. He attended church in Hawaii whenever they were there.

“I had been in and out of Pearl Harbor since arriving in July. When I was in port on a Sunday and duty allowed, I would attend church at the LDS chapel at

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1600 South Baratania. On August 19, 1941 I went to the dedication of the Chapel by David O. McKay, then one of the twelve apostles. Elder McKay held a special priesthood meeting, and although I still held the Aaronic Priesthood (he was a Priest) I was able to attend. During the meeting Elder McKay opened it up to questions. One brother who worked in the Hawaii temple said that he was aware of a number of Hawaiian members who had been baptized, held the priesthood, gone through the temple, and then, doing genealogy, determined that they had black ancestors. He asked Elder McKay, "What should we do". Elder McKay said, "If it wasn't the right thing to have done, the Lord would have let you know."

On August 26, 1941 Allen was "commended by the Commanding Officer for an outstanding S.R.P. performance on which all guns made 'E's.'" Two days later, Allen was promoted in rate to Seaman 2nd Class by Lt Cmdr W. Craig, not because of his good shooting skills, but because he passed the exam.¹¹

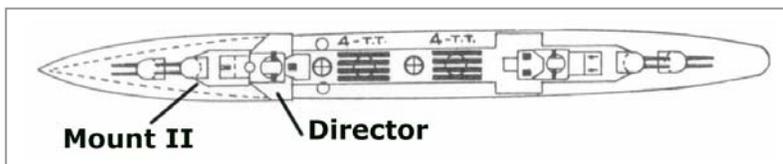
Canton Island and the Pacific Area

The ship again departed Pearl Harbor on September 1, 1941 on its way to the Canton Island to escort merchant ships. This voyage required that the ship cross the equator. Allen's records show that on September 17th he crossed the Equator in route from Pearl Harbor, T.H. to Canton Island.^{12,13}

The Selfridge did well during their training cruise. The official ship log shows on September 20th, 1941 because of the excellent shooting skills, those on Mounts I, II, III, and IV were presented \$880 of prize money. Allen was part of the crew in the handling room for Mount II and remembered receiving praise for some excellent shooting but doesn't remember it resulting in cash in his hand. Maybe the higher-ranking Seaman didn't quite get the prize passed down to the lower-ranking sailors.

The tradition was that before one crossed the equator, he was considered a "pollywog". Once he crossed the equator he was officially known as a "shellback". The Selfridge returned to Pearl Harbor on September 20th

In early November of 1941 Selfridge returned to Pearl Harbor from escorting battleships off



Lahaina Island. While in harbor, there was a Seaman 1st Class position available in Destroyer Squadron #4. To become a Seaman 1st Class, applicants had to

take a written exam. Seaman throughout the squadron took the exam on ships where it was available. Allen took the exam on the Selfridge. It took some time to have the exam sent in, scored, tabulated, and then select the sailor who would be promoted. Allen would have to wait

¹¹ From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

¹² IBID.

¹³ Selfridge Ships Log from National Archives, dated Tuesday, August 5, 1941 and Saturday, September 20, 1941. In the writer's file.

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a few months before the results were announced. Here is a top diagram of the Selfridge. Allen serviced Mount-II, second set of guns in from the bow.

On November 11th, fully provisioned and refueled, the Selfridge, with Allen aboard, departed Pearl Harbor. Commander Wyatt Craig told the crew that they were going to Canton Island for escort patrol. On the way down to the island they crossed the Equator again, with full ceremony.

They began patrol and escort duty in the area of Canton Island. On one assignment they were escorting the USS President Garfield, a freighter, when it went aground on a reef that surrounded a small island. Damage to the freighter wasn't too great and so the fix was to await high tide and float off the reef. This they did. Canton Island was also the base for Pan American Clippers commercial aircraft that were going to and from Australia.

Bowhook for the Boatswain

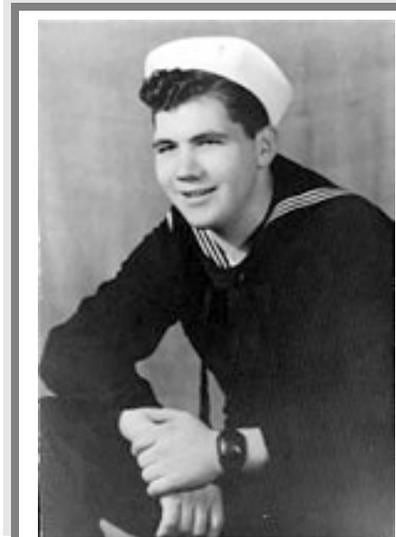
Sometime during October or November 1941, Allen was re-assigned as a "bowhook" on the port-side "Captain's Gig" used to transport the captain to ships and shore. The "boatswain" of the two-man crew was Boatswain 3rd Class Peter Paul Patton. Allen already had heard about Peter Paul Patton. His reputation preceded him. For one thing, Patton appeared to be the atypical Seaman, salty, crusty, and a lifetime sailor. A couple of month's earlier Patton's behavior got some notice in the Ships Log.

"Sept 1, 1941 P.P. Patton, #336-57-75 charged with affray, improper uniform, and no liberty card. Sep 4, 1941: P.P. Patton court martial".

September 1st 1941 was the day the Selfridge left Pearl Harbor for Canton Island. Apparently Patton was having one last celebration before the ship left. He went ashore and was picked up by the shore patrol.

I remember that Patton was in some kind of trouble but I didn't know the circumstances at the time. I do now.

Patton's real strength was gambling. He was a professional at it. Allen, working as "bowhook" for Boatswain 3rd Class Patton, became his trusted friend. Now this was an interesting relationship. Crusty Patton who partied, drank, and gambled hard, and Allen, who never missed his daily scripture study, never drank, and knew that gambling was a sin. Because of the trusting friendship, Patton used Allen as a "runner" in his gambling activities.



"Patton would send me to his locker to retrieve funds because his card game wasn't going well and he needed more money. I also remember taking money to Patton's locker because he was winning at cards. I recall seeing up to \$10,000 in cash in his locker at one time. Patton told me his secret—noticing marked

cards. Whether roughed up or nicked by fingernails or bent in normal handling during the game, after a few hands Patton would whisper to me, "that guy over there has an Ace and Queen of hearts" and when the hands were laid down he was proven right almost every time."

Pearl Harbor

As the Selfridge plied the Pacific in the fall of 1941 she challenged every ship that came over the horizon. In November she started back to Pearl Harbor. At Palmyra Island the Captain was



assigned to escort the USS Antares, which had a barge under tow. One day out of Palmyra the Army decided the Antares was towing the wrong barge, so both ships returned to the Island. On November 29, 1941 the Selfridge again departed Palmyra Island and returned to Pearl Harbor, tying up at Berth X around 4:00 p.m. December 6th, 1941. The ship tied up with the USS Case on the Starboard side, with their bow to the North/Northwest and the stern looking south at Ford Island.^{14 15}

"This was our first night in Pearl Harbor since our return. Unfortunately, the Selfridge had no fuel left. We had enough to make breakfast and get bathed in the morning and that was it. A fuel barge was supposed to have come and given us enough fuel to get to the fuel dock but it was looking like there might be a delay." And delay there was.

Japan Preparing

As early as July 1941 Naval Intelligence reports (reports founded on analysis of Japanese communications) prepared for Admiral Claude C. Bloch, COM-14, and Admiral Kimmel, CINCPACFLT located at Pearl Harbor reflected Japanese air and naval concentrations "awaiting the assumed Southern operations." In fact, from July until December 6th, summaries from Hawaii made frequent allusions to the "formation of Task Forces" and forthcoming "hostile actions" and called attention to similarities between current activities and those which preceded earlier Japanese naval and military campaigns in South China and Indochina.

Between October 4th and December 1st 1941, the Japanese Chief of Staff, Combined Fleet, CINC-1st Air Fleet (commander Strike Force), units of the Strike Force, and many Japanese navy yards exchanged messages which revealed that three of the Japanese carriers (Akagi, Soryu, Hiryu) would carry fuel oil as deck cargo and in spare fuel tanks, that additional oilers

¹⁴ U.S.S. Conyngham (DD-371), Raid December 7, 1941 – Report on Pearl Harbor, T.H., December 17, 1941.

¹⁵ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Friday, December 5, 1941 and Saturday, December 6, 1941. Copy is in the writer's file.

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had been requisitioned into the Strike Force and modified for refueling at sea, and that carriers and their escorts would conduct extensive practice of refueling while under way.¹⁶

December 7, 1941

“The day that will live in infamy”¹⁷ started early for the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor while Allen was still asleep. At 0342 hours the U.S. minesweeper Condor was on patrol less than two miles off the entrance to Pearl Harbor. The officer of the deck saw something “about fifty yards ahead off the port (left) bow.” He asked a sailor what he made of the object. “That’s a periscope, sir,” the sailor replied. “And there aren’t supposed to be any subs in the area.” The Condor then sent a blinker-light message to the destroyer USS Ward: “Sighted submerged submarine on westerly course, speed 9 knots.”

The USS Ward with the warning from the Condor fired 50 caliber machine guns and its 5-inch guns. They thought they hit the sub. The communication about the sub sighting spreads within the fleet ships in the harbor but is slow to be up-channelled to the decision makers on land.¹⁸ Will Lehner, a sailor on the USS Ward wrote:

“I was on the U.S.S. Ward patrolling off of the entrance to Pearl Harbor. We got underway Saturday morning with a new skipper aboard, W. W. Outerbridge. And we went out on our usual patrol. At 6:30, there was a periscope and a conning tower was sticking above the water. He ordered the guns to load and fire at the submarine. So, number one gun fired—just barely missed it. And we were bearing down on it, and I don’t think we were a hundred yards from it when number three gun fired at it. And I saw the submarine as it was going down. And I had no idea what kind of a submarine it was, whose it was. I knew it shouldn’t have been there. And I had read and heard about Japanese Midget Subs, so I assumed it might have been a Japanese Midget Sub. Well, I thought that this was a great moment in my life, but I did not know what it was going to turn out to be. We, in reality, had fired the first shot of World War II by sinking an unidentified submarine in restricted waters. I had no idea that an hour and twenty minutes later Japanese planes would bomb us. But it was great moment then. And it was a moment that will live in my mind forever.”¹⁹

Meanwhile, the USS Antares the ship the Selfridge had escorted just days earlier arrived at Pearl Harbor with a barge in tow. Because the tug that was supposed to receive the barge was late, the Antares maintained a circle course at slow speed. This delay probably saved the Antares from attack because the Japanese midget submarine was probably waiting for her to

¹⁶ <http://www.history.navy.mil/books/comint/ComInt-4.html#ComInt-26>; Pearl Harbor Revisited: United States Navy Communications Intelligence 1924-1941

¹⁷ Frankling D. Roosevelt speech.

¹⁸ In September 2002, an oceanographic survey ship found the two-man sub on the ocean floor in the area where the USS Ward had fired on it.

¹⁹ <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor/print.html> Timeline

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received at the Western Union office in Honolulu rather than being sent via military channels. It is also slow in getting to Admiral Kimmel.

Twenty-four minutes later, Japanese Flight Commander Fuchida radios his planes to attack with "To To To" the code for "charge". For an unknown reason, at 7:55 a.m. Commander Fuchida prematurely radios "Tora Tora Tora" code for "tiger" meaning that the surprise attack on Pearl was successful. He probably meant that the U.S. forces were surprised, not that the complete attack was successful at this point.

The Japanese were hoping to surprise the whole U.S. fleet, to include the aircraft carriers in Pearl Harbor. However, the carrier USS Lexington left Pearl Harbor for Midway during the prior week. The carrier USS Enterprise was near Wake Island and was supposed to be in Pearl Harbor but had been delayed. The carrier USS Saratoga was in San Diego, CA. That the carriers were not at Pearl Harbor had significant impact on the later outcome of the war.

Admiral Kimmel, CINCPAC sent a message on December 10th (Dispatch No. 102102 December 1941 classified "Confidential") asking that all ships in Pearl Harbor during the attack report their involvement. The Selfridge responded by message on January 15th, excerpts are shown.

"5. Approximately four minutes before morning colors the Officer of the Deck witnessed the launching of a torpedo against the U.S.S. Raleigh by a Japanese plane. Almost simultaneously came a report from the signal bridge that the Naval Air Station was on fire. The Officer of the Deck sounded the alarm for general quarters, set condition "affirm" and directed the engineering department to light off boilers and make preparations to get underway

6. At about 0758 Selfridge .50 caliber machine guns were firing on Japanese planes, shortly followed by the 1.1" machine guns. It is believed that these guns were the first to fire in this area."

The View from the Selfridge

"At a few minutes before 0800 hours, I was doing dishes in the scullery. There were muffled concussions and alarmed shouts and I dropped the three plates that I was holding and ran to the door. As I entered the dining room, I watched the last of the sailors scramble their way out the door to battle stations. I paused a minute. The piercing noise of the "general quarters" alarm was bouncing down the hatches and through the halls. I had heard these same sounds before but we were at sea, not sitting like a dead duck at a berth. I hopped over the little ledge of the hatch and went down two decks to my battle station. I saw that two of my shipmates were there and had already begun the loading of the 5-inch guns on Mount II."

"It took us a few minutes to realize that shooting the 5-inch guns in friendly territory wasn't going to happen, so we sat there in that small, cramped metal room waiting for our orders. We could hear the constant gunfire from the other ships around the harbor as they tried to fight back against the planes diving and torpedoing them. It was an eerie feeling. I was startled back into the reality of war by the phone ringing. "Yes, Captain?" Seaman George answered. "Yes, Sir."

'We'll be up in a minute, Sir.' He hung up the phone and looked over at us with a funny look on his face. 'The Captain said to come up on deck and watch the show.' 'You mean, go up and watch the fight?' one of the others asked. 'Yep, let's go.' Seaman George answered as he started out the door and up through the hatches."

"Once up on deck I couldn't believe my eyes. I was standing on the fantail of the ship with other sailors. We could look southwest and see the Japanese planes coming in towards the East and dropping their torpedoes and bombs. You could see the splash as the torpedoes hit the water and then watch and sometimes see the white wake as the torpedoes made for the ships on the west side of Ford Island."

The Selfridge in its message, wrote

7. Two enemy planes fired upon were seen to crash. One was hit by the after 1.1" while diving on the USS Curtiss. The wing was sheared off causing the plane to crash near the beach at Beckoning Point. Another plane flying low on a



A captured Japanese photo shows Battleship Row during the attack. Hickam Field burns in the distance

southerly course to westward of the Selfridge released a bomb in the North Channel opposite the USS Raleigh and crashed in flames in the vicinity of the USS Curtiss while being fired on by the forward 1.1" machine gun. A third plane, under fire by the forward 1.1", was seen to disappear behind a hedge half way up a hill at a location bearing about 045 True from the Selfridge. A fourth plane, hit in the under part of the fuselage by the port .50 caliber machine gun, started smoking and when last seen was headed toward a cane field to the northward of the Selfridge. It is now known definitely however that this plane crashed

Allen continued,

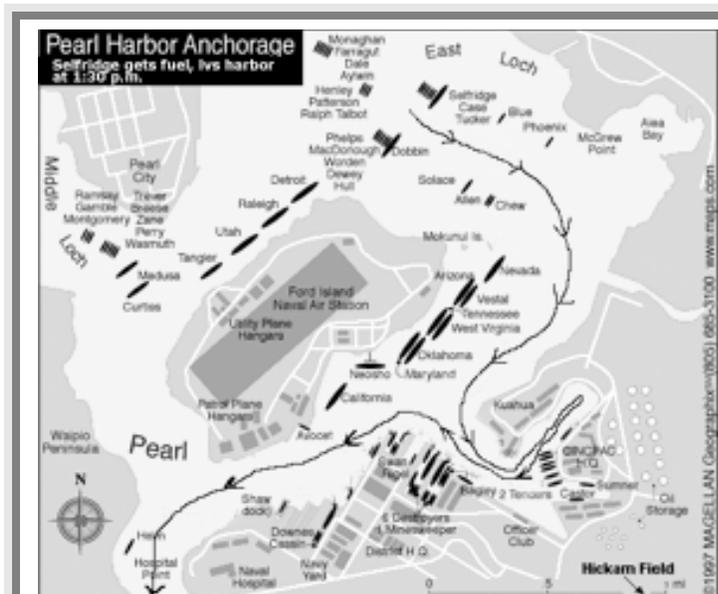
"The Utah was hit, it was tipping to one side, and I knew that it was going down. Looking towards Ford Island, I could see the utility plane hangers burning. I looked towards the west side of Ford Island and saw a Japanese plane dive-bombing the USS Curtiss. The Curtis gunners were following it with anti aircraft guns and hits deflected the plane and it crashed into the bay. The smoke was starting to turn everything a hazy brown and suddenly everything went silent. There was noise, but it felt silent compared to the barrage of a few minutes before."

The Second Wave

"The next wave of Japanese planes flew into the Harbor. On the east side of Ford Island, dive-bombers were attacking the ships lined up like ducks in a row. I watched the USS Arizona explode. It was a huge blast. The blast was like fireworks only a thousand times bigger. The Arizona also sunk in place."

The second wave of attacking planes left at around 0955 a.m.

"The fighting had stopped. Everyone on deck stood still and no one said a word. It was in that instant that everyone felt death. What could we say or do at that moment? We watched the destruction around us in silence and then everything burst into activity again. The Captain came over the loudspeaker "Men, we are now secure. We'll wait for the fuel barge and then we'll see if we can't help somewhere." He meant that we were no longer in battle and that we had nothing to do but wait. It was really a helpless feeling. I stood by the railing and watched the plumes of smoke billow over the island. During the next hour or so I watched the Utah roll over on its side."



The ship's report continued,

8. 850 rounds of 1.1" and 2340 rounds of .50 caliber were expended during the action. There were no personnel casualties. The only evidence of material casualty is a small

conical shaped dent in the starboard side of the director that appears to have been made by a small caliber machine gun bullet.

9. The performance of the ship's equipment was excellent, as was that of the crew. At no time during the raid was there a lull in firing caused by an interruption of ammunition supply. Men not engaged at the guns broke out and clipped ammunition in a most efficient and expeditious manner. The conduct of no one officer or man can be considered outstanding because the conduct, cooperation, coolness and morale of the crew as a fighting unit was superb. ²²

With prevailing quiet, around 1030 a.m. the Selfridge finally got fuel from a barge and then cast off from the USS Case and crawled through the wreckage, oil slicks, rescue boats, and

²² <http://www.navy.mil/navsource.org/Naval/logs.htm>; Chronology Of The Attack From The Deck Logs Of The Vessels Moored At Pearl Harbor December 7 1941.

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floating sailors, dead and alive, to get fuel. The ship maneuvered to Alea Bay where there was a fuel depot. Once refueled, the Selfridge moved passed the sunk, burning hulks of the US ships along the east side of Ford Island and exited the harbor at 1:30 p.m. (see photo) ²³

“We left the fueling dock and headed out to sea to help with damage control and some search and destroy missions. We went down the east channel, seeing the Arizona, Tennessee, and the other ships burning or sunk. I saw rescue attempts still going on, with sailors trying to break through hulls to get to survivors trapped in the ships. I saw bodies floating in the water, not being pulled out because live sailors needed attention, not dead ones. I could see Ford Island and the Navel Air Station hangers and planes burning. We went by the USS Nevada that made it to Hospital Point before they had to run it aground on the point, not wanting to block the sea lane.”

“After the tour of what was left of Battleship Row, we curved around to the west and exited Pearl Harbor to the South. I returned back to my assigned duties in the scullery. It felt good to be busy and soon I was back to scrubbing dishes.”

“The monotony of dish washing gave me time to reflect on what had happened that day. I couldn’t believe our luck...we could have been right in the middle of all of that carnage if our ship hadn’t run out of fuel. It was a pretty close brush with death.”

At the same time the Selfridge was trying to get out of Pearl Harbor for the safety of the sea, the Japanese were recovering their planes on their aircraft carriers 230 miles to the north. They then turned north and continued towards their home Port.²⁴

During the days immediately after the December attack on Pearl Harbor the Selfridge patrolled the seas around the island of Oahu, defending against any possible invasion of the island or islands. They would drop into the harbor, get re-supplied and re-fueled and then head back out to patrol. Allen remembers coming back into the harbor on December 10th and seeing and crawling inside one of the two, two-man Japanese submarines that had been beached.



Responding to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga immediately left the U.S. arriving in Pearl Harbor on December 15th. It’s assignment was to deliver Marine fighter planes to the beleaguered defenders of Wake Island. In less than 24 hours she was underway again as part of Task Force #4 that included the Selfridge. However, the Task

Force was delayed in its progress by the slow speed of an oilier and by a decision to refuel the destroyers before the landing.

²³ *Utahn Recalls the Blasts* by Tanna Barry, Deseret News staff writer, May 25, 2001.

²⁴ In the 44 months of war that will follow, the U.S. Navy will sink every one of the Japanese aircraft carriers, battleships, and cruisers in this strike force. And when Japan signs the surrender document on September 2, 1945, among the U.S. warships in Tokyo Bay will be a victim of the attack, the U.S.S. West Virginia <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor/print.html>

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On December 24 and 25 Task Force #4 with the Saratoga pushed on to Wake Island along with the USS Tangier which had relief troops and supplies on board. Upon the late arrival at Wake, they found the Japanese had arrived the night before and secured the island. Task Force #4 was then diverted to Midway Island.

1942 – To the U.S.

After off-loading troops and supplies at Midway the Task Force #4 went back to sea. On 11 January 1942, while heading towards a rendezvous 500 miles southwest of Oahu, a deep-running “Long Lance” torpedo²⁵ fired by a lurking Japanese submarine IJN I-16 hit the Saratoga. There was no warning given by the destroyers who were screening her. Although six men were killed and three fire-rooms flooded, the Saratoga reached Oahu under its own power. There, her 8-inch guns, useless against aircraft, were removed for installation in shore defenses.

The Selfridge with Allen aboard left the Saratoga and continued operations in the Hawaiian Island region conducting exercises and patrols in the Hawaiian area until January 20 when she assumed escort duty for a merchant ship on a Canton Island run. After arriving at Canton on the 27th, she patrolled off the island until the merchant ship completed offloading, and then started back to Hawaii. En route, on the 30th, the Selfridge dropped depth charges and maybe damaged an enemy submarine, Allen wasn’t too sure.

“I remember that the sound gear picked up some “pings” near the ship so we dropped depth charges where the sounds were coming from. I remember seeing a mattress and some fruit that came to the surface. That would seem to indicate the submarine was hit, but the Japanese learned that they could jettison some items and make the U.S. sailors think they had hit the sub, when in fact they didn’t.”

The Selfridge returned to Oahu, joined up with the Saratoga, and departed for Seattle, Washington as the Saratoga returned for repairs because of the torpedo damage and upgrading of equipment.²⁶



Allen wasn’t a very good letter writer so his family in Logan had not heard from him for quite a period of time. When the Selfridge docked in Seattle in mid-February, he knew he better check in. He found a phone in ferry station and while the music of “Chattanooga Choo Choo” and “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree” was blaring in the background, he talked with both his father and mother. During the phone call his parents told Allen they had worried about him. Allen brought them up-to-date on

²⁵ The 24", oxygen-driven, one-ton-war-headed Type 93 torpedo (called "Long Lance" in Morison's *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*), the most devastating of all Japanese weapons. This torpedo, designed to give the Japanese ships a long-range punch, reached out to almost 40,000 yards, and could go as fast as 49 knots (though not both at the same time).
http://www.microworks.net/pacific/battles/savo_island.htm

²⁶ USS Saratoga (CV-3) <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/ships/carriers/histories/cv03-saratoga/cv03-saratoga.html>

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his experiences and promised them he would write more often.

I remember that while the Saratoga and the Selfridge were in Seattle, a storm came up that knocked out electrical power in the city. The Saratoga, with its large engines and generators, hooked into the city electrical supply system and provided power to the city until repairs could be made. The Saratoga then continued on to Bremerton Navy Yard in Washington for permanent repairs and installation of a modern anti-aircraft battery.

After being re-supplied, the Selfridge moved down the west coast to Vallejo, California. Once there, Allen looked up the local L.D.S. ward in San Francisco at 1600 Hays. He also attended the Sunset Ward on 22nd and Lawton and there met Bishop Horace J. Richey. Allen attended meetings for two or three weeks, choosing which Ward he went to based on the Bus schedule. Meanwhile the Selfridge was refurbished with 20-mm and 40-mm anti-aircraft weapons and other supplies it needed.

Back to the Pacific

March 1942 was a banner month for Allen. On March 1st Allen was notified of the results of the written test for Seaman 1st Class that he took the previous November. The Selfridge held “muster” each morning when in port and the officer of the day read the “Rocks and Shoals” as they called them- the daily orders and communications. At the morning muster Allen was called out from the ranks and awarded the rate of Seaman 1st Class.²⁷ He had scored 3.62 out of possible 4.0. The next closest score was 2.82. For Allen it was a great moment and was a reward for his diligent studying. However, for other seaman on the ship it wasn’t so great. Allen took some good-natured and not so good-natured ribbing with the promotion. He remembered:

“I did pass the test with flying colors and I was promoted. This was a rate given only once and to only one person in the Squadron: it was a type of competency test and required a little maneuvering of the gray cells to pass it. My promotion did not make me very popular with the crew. You see I was now the youngest Seaman 1st Class on the nine ships that made up our Destroyer Squadron. There were some men aboard who had been Seaman 2nd Class for eight or nine years without being promoted. Needless to say, being just 18 and a higher rate than many of the enlisted men I associated with did not endear me to them.”

It was early March when the Selfridge, now refurbished, and with Allen aboard returned to the Canton Islands as part of Task Group 62.6. Allen was assigned a different battle station during this time. He moved from handling room for the Mount II 5-inch guns to setting up the Mark-14 torpedoes. The setup required using a device called the “Mark 14 Torpedo Director” that set the depth, bearing, and speed of the torpedo.

“I would set up the torpedo director that was located on the bridge as I received information from the radar operators. The information I input into the director

²⁷ See official records for Allen obtained from National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

was automatically sent to the torpedoes and then the torpedo men fired a spray of torpedoes on command. I would then get another batch of information from Radar, set it up on the director, and the torpedo men would be ready for the next spray. The general format was to fire a spray of torpedoes a few degrees apart, at the coordinates given to them by radar.”

On March 14th Allen was transferred to the staff of the Commander Destroyer Squadron 4 (CDS-4) Captain Frank Robinson Walker who by now was Allen’s “mentor”. With that transfer Allen also changed jobs to “Signalman Striker” to work in the Radio Shack. It really was a great month!

Academy Opportunity

Coincidentally with Allen’s promotion, a posting to the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory Class (NAPC) was announced and the Commander of the Destroyer Squadron could personally select the seaman for the posting. He had Allen report to him in his cabin. After determining Allen’s background and the “cut of his jib” Captain Walker offered the posting to him. Allen accepted the offer with great pride and enthusiasm.

To help Allen prepare for the exams and classes, Captain Walker made life a little easier for him. He put Allen on half-duty in the Radio Room, allowing him to study the other half of his duty time. Since Allen was bunked with other seaman in the mess hall, he had no quiet area where he could study. Captain Walker assigned then Lt. (jg) Raymond D. Fusselman as Allen’s tutor. Lt. Fusselman took a liking to Allen and allowed him to use his wardroom to study.²⁸

It had been four months since Pearl Harbor was attacked and the United States wanted to demonstrate to the Japanese in some dramatic way that they were up to the challenge. On April 18, 1942 Doolittle and his flight of B-24s took off of aircraft carriers and bombed Tokyo. Allen knew nothing of the plans, but because the radio room listened to station KSF (San Francisco) he heard of the bombing as reported to the U.S. press.

Obituary: Raymond D. Fusselman - Captain, United States Navy, Retired Navy
Captain Raymond D. Fusselman, a decorated World War II veteran, died December 10, 2000, in San Francisco at age 90. He had suffered from emphysema and cancer. Captain Fusselman, a native of West Farmington, Ohio, graduated from the Naval Academy in 1933 and served on the destroyers Selfridge and Wadsworth in World War II.



Besides the daily studying Allen was able to accomplish for the NAPC exam, he had to pass a mental and physical exam. The physical exam had to be done by doctors on a hospital ship so Allen started looking for the first opportunity to go aboard a hospital ship.

Finally, on May 7th 1942 the Selfridge arrived in a Tonga port and the USS Solace, a hospital ship was also there (see photo to left). Allen arraigned to get to the Solace and was given the physical exam. Allen remembered the dates because while they were in port,

²⁸ <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.com/rdfusselman.htm>, posted: 27 October 2001.

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the Battle of Coral Sea was being fought in the West Pacific.

Allen was pleased that he finally got the physical exam done and thought things were sailing right along when his plans hit hidden shoals. A day or so after his physical exam, President Roosevelt issued a general order to the military in the Pacific that no military person presently serving could be re-assigned out of the battle zone. That order ended his chances for the NACP posting and ultimately the U.S. Naval Academy. Allen was crushed. He had enjoyed the Navy to this point and seriously considered making it a career. While his future plans were in confusion, the Selfridge was issued orders to head South West back into the Australian theater. The Selfridge started patrolling throughout the South West Pacific, going to Brisbane, Townville, and Cairns, in Australia.

Allen decided to take advantage of the extra time he now had to learn Morse Code while the Squadron towed PT boats, three at a time, from Australia to Port Morsby in New Zealand.

The technique I used was very basic, but returned excellent results. When I was off-duty, I would go to the emergency radio shack near the after-mast and sit at the typewriter and listen to the Morris Code coming over the airwaves. The first day I knew that “dot dash” was an “A” so every time I heard a dot dash I typed an “A” with my left little, left finger. The next day I added “B” which is dash “dot dot dot.” So the second day I would type an “A” when I heard “A” and a “B” when I heard “B”. I continued through the month, adding a letter and finishing up in 26 days. At the end of my self-initiated training, I was able to listen and type the message in real time.

While the Selfridge patrolled around Australia Allen had a number of interesting things happen. One time the Selfridge escorted the Queen Elizabeth and two other ships that were bringing back Australians who had fought in the African Campaign. Another time, Artie Shaw’s Big Band came to entertain the troops. The band played on the USS Whitney and was there for a couple of days. Allen had occasion to personally talk with Artie two or three times. Also on one occasion while in port at Wellington, New Zealand Eleanor Roosevelt, the First Lady, spoke in the Majestic Theater.

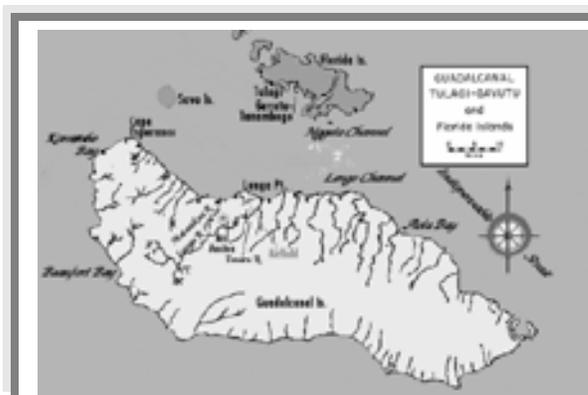
John F. Kennedy was a Lieutenant in the Navy and skipper of PT-109 at this time. His boat was patrolling in the Australian area at the same time Allen and the Selfridge were there. It is quite possible that of the numbers of PT boats the Selfridge towed (three at a time) PT-109 was one of them.

“At about this time the Selfridge left Morton Bay, heading to Sydney, Australia. It was fine sailing weather and Commander Reynolds opened the throttle on the Selfridge and got it up to 30 knots. The speed wasn’t too significant in itself, but the high swell sea conditions caused a problem. The Selfridge would climb to the top of a swell and then fall into the trough behind the wave. This occurred a few times with no effect on the ship but finally the ship climb a much larger swell and when it came down the backside of the wave, it fell bow first, slapping the sea. The concussion caused the ship to buckle at about the location of the forward mess hall and the Chief Petty Officer’s quarters. I was standing on deck at the time. When the support beams below deck bent and the deck above the CPOs lowered a foot or so, the hatch on the deck of the ship popped open and the exodus of CPOs was like “ants fleeing an ant hole”. Because of the damage, the Selfridge had to go to the Cockatoo Island by Sydney, Australia where there

was a shipyard big enough to make repairs. The bow was cut away from the ship and then rebuilt.”

Salvo Island at Guadalcanal

In June 1942, US coast watchers reported that the Japanese had occupied the northwest coast of Guadalcanal opposite Florida Island and were building an airstrip there. If they were successful in their endeavor they would be able to stage air and sea attacks on Allied bases in the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, the Fijis, and Samoa, and interfere with shipping between the US and Australia. CINCPAC determined that if Tulagi and Guadalcanal were not retaken quickly by the U.S., the Japanese would improve their stranglehold on Australia and make countermoves all that much more difficult in the future.



Resources were scraped up for the assault on Tulagi and Guadalcanal. The effort was codenamed “Operation Watchtower”. Before the end of July, Operation Watchtower consisting of US Navy Task Force 61 was under way, with 82 vessels carrying or protecting the 19,000 men of the 1st Marines. The entire amphibious force was escorted by eight cruisers, three of them Australian, and a destroyer screen. CDS-4 on the Selfridge was included in the Guadalcanal destroyer screen.²⁹

The Battle

On the night of August 6th the Marines landed on Guadalcanal by way of the western end of the island and then heading north. Early in the morning of August 8, at 0620 hours, the Selfridge opened fire on a small gasoline carrier entering Tulagi Harbor, Guadalcanal. A few hours later, the marine transports moved in toward the beaches. At 1320 hours the Japanese sent in a high-level bombing attack. The Selfridge continued to screen the transports and, after the bombing attack, picked up two Japanese airmen who had parachuted from their planes. Allen remembered the incident and added that the prisoners were transferred to the USS Hunter-Legitt, which was the Marine flagship. They probably were moved there for debriefing and intelligence gathering.

Two nights later it was oppressively hot, broken by periodic rainsqualls. Five Allied cruisers, four American, one Australian, were patrolling back and forth with their support destroyers including the Selfridge. The patrolling escorts were in two main groups—the Northern Group that consisted of the USS Vincennes, USS Quincy, USS Blue, USS Astoria, and the USS Selfridge (with Allen aboard) and the Southern Group consisting of the HMAS Canberra an Australian Cruiser, USS Chicago, the USS Ralph Talbot, and the USS Patterson. The Group’s mission—protect the small hold on Guadalcanal Island by the US marines. Troop transport and supply ships were in what is now known as the “slot”, backing up the marines. The “slot”

²⁹ Battle of Salvo Island, <http://www.vectorsite.net/tw2guad1.html#m1>

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was about 30 miles wide, between the two islands of Guadalcanal and Florida with Salvo at the northeast of Guadalcanal. The U.S. commander wanted the ships protected.

The Allied commander for the two Groups was Rear Admiral Victor A. Crutchley, VC on the Flagship HMAS Australia, a cruiser. The Australia was in the Southern Group but at the last moment Crutchley was called by the top Allied Brass to a meeting and left with his flagship. He neglected to tell Capt. Fred Riefkohl of the USS Vincennes up in the Northern Group that he (Riefkohl) was now the overall commander of both Groups. Crutchley also neglected to notify Captain Howard Bode of the USS Chicago that he was in temporary command of the Southern Group.

The Japanese "Type 93" "Long Lance" torpedo was fantastically advanced in comparison with its Western counterparts, possessing an unequalled combination of speed, range, and hitting power. This weapon, coupled with the flexible battle tactics practiced by Japan's cruisers and destroyers, led to victory after victory in the early stages of the war. Only as American radar and gunfire control became increasingly sophisticated would the Japanese advantage in night battles begin to disappear, and even then a Long Lance-armed Japanese destroyer was still a thing to be feared.

The oversight by Crutchley in not telling Riefkohl that he has the commander had some serious consequences as the night unfolded. The combined forces (U.S. and Australian) had not received any training in cooperation. The command had not been clearly informed of events and was patrolling in two separate groups. Neither Group knew who was commanding the task force.

With this pending confusion, Japan's Vice Admiral Gunichi Mikawa's striking force of five heavy and two light cruisers plowed from Rabaul undetected through the sea from the North, toward the very area the two U.S. Groups were protecting, "the Slot". His mission—attack the American transports that were supplying Guadalcanal Island marines.

I had been working at my post at the torpedo director on the bridge of the Selfridge since 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. The end of my shift was at midnight, and I was relieved of duty, went to my bunk a couple of decks down and went to sleep.

The US ships enjoyed many technical advantages such as search radar, rapid-fire guns, and intra-ship radio communication. But generally the US sailors were over-dependent on their technology. Japanese lookouts using Zeiss binoculars could see farther than the American radar. American warships were full of combustibles, ranging from lifeboats to wardroom pianos. The Japanese had one very important technological advantage, the Long Lance torpedoes that could travel below the sea's surface at 49 knots.³⁰

Allen had about forty minutes sleep when, at 12:40 a.m. in the dark of night on August 9th, Admiral Mikawa's flagship, Chokai along with the others came dashing in from the north. The Japanese lookouts saw Salvo Island to the southwest. A lookout on the Chokai also picked out a patrolling destroyer that turned out to be the USS Blue of the Northern Group. It was approaching 30 degrees to starboard (from the right) of the Chokai. Mikawa ordered his task force to slow to 22 knots to reduce the phosphorescent wakes. For unknown reasons, the USS Blue made a 180-degree turn to starboard (right), and slowly moved away, not having spotted any of the seven Japanese ships. Continuing on the southern bearing, the Japanese ships go undetected through the Northern Group that included the Selfridge. Then Chokai's lookouts

³⁰ See <http://www.combinedfleet.com/torps.htm>.

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see two other craft and the Japanese ships slip by an inter-island schooner and the destroyer USS Ralph Talbot of the Southern Group.

There apparently had been no communication between the Northern Group and the Southern Group up to this point because at 1:44 a.m. all watches on all four northern US ships note underwater explosions from the south. A minute later, they see gunfire. While the Northern Group is staring south, Mikawa swings his Japanese ships to take advantage of some surface clouds of a rainsquall and then accelerates to 30 knots to go deeper into the Southern Group's area. Those on the Selfridge had no idea of what was going on. Allen was still asleep in his bunk.

The Canberra Sinks

At 1:33 a.m. August 9, 1942, Mikawa used shaded blinkers and sends the seven Japanese ships the order, "All ships attack". Three minutes later the Chokai's lookout spots what they think are three cruisers to starboard. There are actually only two US ships. Mikawa alters to a southeasterly direction and again blinks out orders "independent firing". Simultaneously four Long Lance torpedoes enter the water at 1:38 a.m. spreading in a fan-shape towards the cruiser HMAS Canberra. Timed with the projected arrival of the Long Lance torpedoes the Chokai's 8-inch guns open up on the Australian cruiser. The Canberra is hit by two of the four torpedoes followed by the impact of the 8-inch Japanese shells. The Australian cruiser starts listing and lies dead in the water while it burns and



explosions wrack its frame. Allen is still asleep in his bunk because the action was happening south of the Selfridge. Above is a picture of the Canberra with a U.S. destroyer helping to evacuate Australian sailors.

Mikawa's seven ships race past the wreck in the rainy darkness. The destroyer USS Patterson finally determines something is amiss and radios "Warning! Warning! Strange ships entering harbor!" The USS Patterson then opens up with her 5-inch guns, shooting at the enemy light cruisers. The Japanese are better shots and knock out the Patterson's two aft 5-inch guns.

After about six minutes of pounding the southern U.S. force, Mikawa swings north to deal with the Northern Group, the cruisers Vincennes, Astoria, and Quincy, as well as the destroyers USS Selfridge and the USS Blue. In maneuvering for position, the Japanese ships are split into two formations, Mikawa's four heavy cruisers to the east and two light and one heavy cruisers to the west, all going northwest, east of Guadalcanal Island in the Slot. Between the two legs is the U.S. Northern Group including the Selfridge.

On Vincennes of the Northern Group, Riefkohl (over-all commander of both groups at this time) is summoned to the bridge. He sees the gunfire to the south but decides it is a light unit in battle with the Southern Group. He increases his ship's speed to 15 knots, but decides to let the situation develop. Four minutes later the situation does develop. The Japanese on Chokai launch a spread of four torpedoes at Vincennes from 12,000 yards.

At 0148 a.m. lookouts on the U.S. cruiser Astoria in the Southern Group see torpedoes pass by their ship, just missing them. General Quarters is finally sounded on the Astoria and the seaman try to fire back. The ship's captain is confused, at first thinking the Astoria was being fired on by allies, then deciding to fire back even if they were allies. The half-hearted defense

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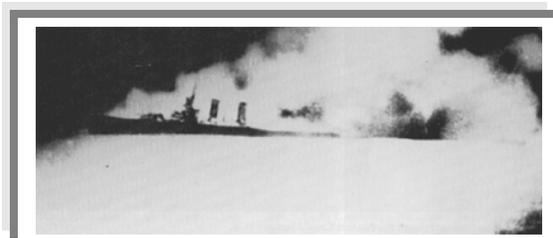
is futile as the Japanese Chokai's guns bracketed the Astoria, causing massive damage, bringing it to a halt, and setting it ablaze. Japanese heavy weapons also bracket the USS Quincy.

Two minutes later, the Japanese turn on their searchlights and fully illuminate the three northern U.S. cruisers. Commander Riefkohl thinks the Southern Group is shining the lights and radios for the lights to be extinguished, "as there might be enemy vessels around". The Japanese follow the lights with a fusillade of shells and torpedoes. Japanese 8-inch rounds rain on to three American ships. During all of this action, the Selfridge is left untouched and Allen continues to sleep in his bunk, undisturbed.

Having raced down the Slot from Salvo Island at the north end to the south end of Florida Island, and then returned, Mikawa felt he had done enough damage to the Americans. The Chokai had taken three hits and with all of the maneuvering, the Japanese strike force was disorganized. The American transports had not been attacked, but Mikawa didn't want to be around when the sun came up and American carrier-based planes would presumably arrive. Mikawa continued his mad dash north, back from where he came.

The Quincy Sinks

In the wake of the Japanese attack the Quincy, dead in the water and burning, went down shortly after Mikawa leaves. At the left is a photograph of the Quincy sinking. Soon after that loss, the Vincennes rolls over and also sinks. Allen continued to sleep through the battle because the Selfridge kept finding itself outside the area of action.



I was awakened at 4:00 a.m. so that I could return to my battle station. I heard of the happenings of the night battle from the other sailors. I went up on deck and watched some of the ships that had been hit and were burning. At this point the

Selfridge had not fired a shot to my knowledge.

At 5 a.m. Admiral Richmond K. Turner ordered Admiral Crutchley to scuttle HMAS Canberra if she cannot join the planned retreat at 6:30 a.m. With fires preventing access to engineering spaces, this order is a death warrant. The ship's commander Walsh orders, "Abandon ship" at 5:15 a.m. The able-bodied crew refuses to leave until the wounded are all off. Finally all have abandoned ship.

- "I was able to stand on the deck and watch the Selfridge torpedo crew fire four Mark-14 torpedoes at the Canberra. Since the range was so close, the torpedo men didn't use the director, but just aimed the torpedoes at the ship. Much to their chagrin, only one hit but it didn't explode. The Canberra doesn't sink."

The Selfridge tries to sink the Canberra by firing 263 rounds from the 5-inch guns. While this is happening, the passing USS Ellet mistakes Selfridge for a Japanese ship. The Ellet fires at the Selfridge, causing some angry radio exchanges. They must have really missed the Selfridge because Allen didn't recall taking any hits from the Ellet. Finally, the Ellet launches

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a torpedo at the Canberra at 8:00 a.m. that sends the flagship of the Royal Australian Navy to the bottom. With her go 84 dead.³¹

The HMAS Canberra was not the last ship to sink from the “First battle of Salvo Island.” The sailors of the USS Astoria made an unsuccessful attempt to save her but she sank shortly after noon on August 9th. The USS Chicago and USS Patterson were also badly damaged. When the sun came up, the remaining ships and transports picked up survivors and headed out to sea towards Neumeia, New Caledonia.

The results of the First Battle of Salvo Island, which lasted about two hours was that 1,077 allied sailors died and 700 were injured. It is considered the greatest defeat at sea in the history of the US Navy other than Pearl Harbor. Four US cruisers were lost, no enemy ships lost. The USS Selfridge retired with the rest of the task force. At the next port-of-call all of the older torpedoes were removed from the Selfridge and replaced with newer, more reliable versions of the Mark-14 torpedoes.

The Japanese task force returned to its homeport but not as victors. Mikawa had set forth on the attack with other Japanese military commanders critical of the effort. He also returned without actually achieving the objective of destroying the transport and supply ships supporting the marines on Guadalcanal Island.

On August 31st, the Selfridge along with the other ships of the TF-62.4 Australian Group returned to Brisbane Port.

The next nine months or so of 1942 the Selfridge continued to operate with the Australian Group in the waters of the Coral Sea. The mission was to prevent a Japanese landing at Port Moresby and to cover Allied shipping to the Papuan peninsula.

I remember one time we stopped in port. I went ashore and ended up in a dance hall. I saw a girl I thought I would like to dance with and so I asked her to dance. We were out on the floor when a big burly sailor from the Selfridge who worked in the boiler room took offense that I should ask “his girl” to dance. Words were exchanged and the fight started. I used the same technique as before, that is I picked him up off the floor and threw him to the dance-hall floor, knocking the breath out of him. He gave up the fight and didn’t bother me again.

1943 - Australia

The Selfridge continued on its way, patrolling the waters from Australia to New Guinea in the North. The ship was used to escort ships, tow PT boats, train with other task forces and show presence in and around the ‘Slot’ as the U.S. was gearing up to re-take the many islands that it had surrendered two years earlier.

³¹ Ahoy, As I Saw It, Naval Reminiscences, H.M.A.S. Canberra, <http://members.tripod.com/Tenika/mac.htm>

In August 1943, the Selfridge was in and out of Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides. It joined the USS Denver in a convoy exercise on August 18 and 19. During September the Selfridge was at times in the harbor, at times standing outside the harbor. On October 1 it left Espiritu Santo and headed for "the Slot", arriving and standing outside the Harbor of Florida Island on October 3.



During these months there was one incident that Allen recalled that

ultimately affected the Naval career of Commander C.D. Reynolds. Periodically, because of the climate, the ship had to be completely fumigated for vermin such as bugs, pests, and anything else that crawled.

From the "Household Cyclopedia of General Information" published in 1881 we read about fumigating ships. It said:

"Noxious Vapors. Smoking or fumigating ships with charcoal or sulphur, is the most effectual means of killing all kinds of vermin, and is therefore always resorted to; but it is recommended that no sailor or boy be allowed to go under the decks until the hatches, and all the other openings, have been for three hours uncovered; in that time all noxious vapors will be effectually dissipated."

So, in 1881 people knew that to fumigate properly it was necessary to seal all hatches and no humans should be in the ship until some three hours after it had been opened up.

"The ships captain, Reynolds, choose to ignore common logic. With the planned fumigation, all hands on the Selfridge were mustered on deck for roll call to insure no one was left below. It was found that 'The Deacon was not accounted for. Reynolds, in a show of rank, said in effect that if 'the Deacon' couldn't show up for muster, he deserved the consequences. They moved all personnel off the ship, closed all hatches and portholes, and fumigated the ship. After the prescribed amount of time, they opened up the ship, aired it out and went below. They found 'The Deacon' dead in his bunk." Allen continued, "Captain Reynolds was not well liked to this point, but this just made it worse. Reynolds tried to pin the fumigating incident on other officers. It took some time before the truth came out."

Apparently the death of "the Deacon" continued to plague the ships captain. Charges were finally brought against Reynolds while the ship was at Florida Island and he was relieved of command. The entry in the ships log reflects that on Saturday, October 2, 1943 there was a change of command aboard the USS Selfridge. Lt Cmdr G.E. Peckham reported aboard and took over as ship's captain.³²

³² The web reflected that Captain G.E. Peckham was commander of TRANSPHIBRON 8 in August 1957. He apparently continued his Naval career. <http://www.ussfremont.org/history.html>.

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I did not see Reynolds after he was relieved of duty and left the ship. He was not well liked by the sailors. In contrast, the new skipper that replaced him was an excellent officer.

Two days later, on Monday, October 4th, the USS Denver was anchored in Berth No. 7, Port Purvis Anchorage, Florida Island, Solomon Island Group along side the Selfridge. The Denver's log reflects

“Commander C. D. Reynolds, U. S. Navy, reported on board for passage to an Advanced Naval Base.”

With Reynolds removal from command, he was being sent back for Court Martial. The Denver got under way and proceeded to Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides Group.³³ The Denver's log again reflects that on Wednesday, October 6th,³⁴

“0930 Pursuant to the orders of C.O., Commander C. D. Reynolds detached, transportation completed.”

While the disgraced Captain of the Selfridge arrived for his court martial, the new ship's Captain was entering the worst battle situation the Selfridge would experience during the war.

The Battle of Vella Lavella

After the change of command on the Selfridge, the destroyer squadron commanded by Captain Walker continued to patrol against the Japanese around the Solomon Islands in a series of classic surface actions. In the previous two-month period, the three ships (Selfridge, O'Bannon, and Chevalier) were credited with sinking or damaging more than twenty-four barges, two submarine chasers, an armed boat, and a gunboat. Through all of this Allen's battle station was at the torpedo director on the bridge but he didn't have occasion to help in the launch of any M-14 new torpedoes

On October 3rd, 4th, and 5th the Selfridge, now commanded by Lt. Cmdr Peckham, along with the other two destroyers was assigned to destroy Japanese barges and gunboats that were moving troops from island to island within the Solomon Islands. The Japanese tried to make most movements under cover of darkness, so night battles and radar-use were the order of the day. The Selfridge sank two barges and one gunboat during these engagements.

While the Selfridge and the other two ships were patrolling the Solomon Islands, the Japanese Eighth Fleet assigned Rear Admiral Baron Matsuji Ijuin the mission of evacuating 589 troops from the Japanese base of Horaniu on Vella Lavella which was 150 miles northwest of Florida Island, the temporary home port for the Selfridge. To complete the mission the Japanese had to enter the area patrolled by CDS-4.

³³ USS Denver ships log.

³⁴ The writer attempted to find the Court Martial records of Reynolds but was unsuccessful.

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The Japanese Evacuation

Early on the evening of October 6th at 7:40 in the evening, Japanese aircraft detected Walker's three ships of CDS-4. The Japanese planes approached and marked the American ship's progress with flares and float lights. Allen had been at his battle station at the torpedo director for 31 hours straight while the ship stood at General Quarters poised for battle. The ship's new Captain, Lt Cmdr Peckham, knew that Allen had been on post for a long time and that the Selfridge was going to close with the enemy in a couple of hours. So he sent Allen to get some rest.

At 2210 hours three Japanese transport destroyers, Fumizuki, Matsukaze and Yunagi that had been escorting some Japanese troop barges, were now trying to regroup with the their Eighth Fleet. They left the troop barges to continue toward the Japanese base Horaniu on Vella Lavella.

At 2230 hours the Japanese reported the first visual sighting of the Americans destroyers. The Americans picked up radar readings on the Japanese force ten miles north-northeast, just after the Japanese made visual contact. Another group of U.S. ships, the Ralph Talbot, Taylor and LaVallette, were still some twenty miles south and Walker could not raise them on "TBS".

Allen explained that "TBS" (acronym unknown) was a high frequency line-of-sight communication used to communicate with ships in a single force that were in view. The system did not work over-the-horizon but was secure from intercept.

Although Walker knew the Japanese force consisted of nine destroyers against his three, he elected to engage the enemy rather than wait forty minutes for reinforcements. There was a quarter moon low in the sky and scattered mist and squalls made visibility uncertain.

Ten minutes later, Walker directed his three destroyers straight at the Japanese. Their respective courses would take the Japanese across the American "T", a naval battle advantage position for the Japanese. After some last minute maneuvering, the Japanese were sailing parallel in echelon with Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) Akigumo furthest ahead and most distant from the Americans, followed by Isokaze, Kazagumo and finally Yugumo. Yugumo ended up only 3,300 yards from the Selfridge, a very close situation in naval battles. As the six ships passed each other, the three American destroyers launched 14 Mark-14 torpedoes. Unknown to the American destroyers, the Japanese also launched eight Long Lance torpedoes a minute later.

The noise from the launching of the torpedoes woke me up. I jumped up from my bed on the Selfridge's deck and put on my life jacket. As I became aware of my surroundings, I heard our 5-inchers being fired and the whoosh of torpedoes and flares being launched. I looked towards the Port side of the ship to see what the Selfridge was shooting at.

When the Selfridge started firing only the Japanese ship Yugumo could fire back as she was between her comrades and the American destroyers. As she turned toward the Americans, the movement cleared IJN Kazagumo's line of fire so she opened up with her guns. Japanese Commander Ijuin ordered his ships back into column and headed south, away from the action. All but Yugumo followed.

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The combined fire of eighteen 5-inch guns from the Selfridge and others strafed Yugumo at close range. At least five hits left her drifting without rudder control. But the Yugumo obtained her revenge at 2301 hours. One of her Long Lance torpedoes struck the Chevalier and exploded the forward magazine, ripping off her bow all the way back to her bridge. Two minutes later, the O'Bannon, maneuvering through the smoke and haze of battle, collided with the Chevalier. The two ships were locked together until O'Bannon was able to back clear. The O'Bannon was fortunate that the Japanese had turned away, but the damage she sustained in the collusion was enough to remove her from the action. At 2303, just as this was happening, one of the slower American Mark-14 torpedoes struck the drifting Yugumo and finished her off. She sank seven minutes later.³⁵

“I was looking over the gunwale towards one of the Japanese ships (now identified as the Yugumo) that we had fired on. The ship had taken some hits and was burning. After a while it glowed white hot from the fires. There was no way any person could have remained on that ship and still be alive.”

The Yugumo reflected the following in her log that was obtained after the war.

“IJN Yugumo: Tabular Record of Movement Japanese ship.

6-7 October: Battle of Vella Lavella. Troop evacuation run to Vella Lavella (cover). Single-handedly charged U.S. destroyers, irreparably damaging USS CHEVALIER (DD-451) with a torpedo. (Yugumo was) Sunk: by gunfire and at least one torpedo from USS Chevalier and USS Selfridge (DD-357), 15 miles northwest of Vella Lavella (07-33 S, 156-14 E). U.S. PT-boats rescued 78 survivors and another 25 reached friendly lines in an abandoned U.S. lifeboat, but Commander Oosako killed in action.³⁶

While Yugumo was being picked off and Ijuin was tearing south, Japanese ships Shigure and Samidare, part of the Japanese Eighth Fleet, continued on their southwesterly course past the Americans until 2259 when they turned sharply to the northwest. Hara the Japanese commander was maneuvering for a good torpedo shot against what was now a one-ship task force made up of the Selfridge. The two Japanese ships were approximately 11,000 yards west of the Selfridge, who had now shifted fire towards the Shigure. Both Shigure and Samidare had already emptied their torpedo tubes in the direction of Selfridge some three minutes before the Selfridge started firing and just after they made their turn. As the Japanese torpedo men struggled to reload for a second attack, Selfridge's shells began impacting the Shigure. At 2306, before the Selfridge could damage the Shigure, the battle effectively ended when one of the Japanese torpedoes exploded against Selfridge's port side and left her dead in the water.

“I was standing on the Port side, watching the action. I remember the florescent trail of a Japanese torpedo as it angled towards the Selfridge. Upon impact and explosion it forced the bow up and back, almost to the Radio room where I had been sleeping on deck. I was knocked down and getting back up, started helping

³⁵ The Selfridge and other destroyers were now armed with the newer version of the Mark-14. It was much more accurate and reliable than earlier versions Allen had seen at Salvo Island.

³⁶ Long Lancers, Japanese ship, Tabular Record of Movement www.combinedfleet.com%2Fyugumo_t.htm

with the wounded that were around me. I remember giving a morphine surett to one sailor and then marking him so someone else wouldn't do the same. The sailor's legs were destroyed from the knee down. I remember seeing the body of Gunners Mate Bock who had been on Mount II on the bow of the ship. His body was blown over the bridge and landed on the flag bag. I continued to help with others until at 0051, October 7th, when the USS O'Bannon, though damaged from its collision with the Chevalier, came alongside and started taking off the wounded and excess personnel.³⁷ My locker was in the area mess hall on the port side where the torpedo exploded. At some point in the confusion of the evening a sailor brought me the Logan High Letters that had been in my locker.



They had my initials on them and so the sailor knew to whom they belonged. The awards were found on the aft (fantail) portion of the Selfridge. Due to the explosion, I lost all of my clothes, belongings, scriptures and my patriarchal blessing. If I had been in my bunk, I would have been killed.”

This is a picture of the Selfridge in the Florida Island harbor. This is Mount-II that Allen used to support with powder and rounds.

The bow and Mount I are gone.

Allen was evacuated from the Selfridge to the O'Bannon under the above adverse circumstances. This would be the last time he would be assigned to the Selfridge, a ship that he had served on for two years and three months. He left the Selfridge with less than he had when he arrived two years earlier, just the clothes on his back and a couple of the Logan High School track and football letters.

An interesting side note is that the IJN Samidare also took credit for torpedoing the Selfridge. The ships log, obtained after the war, reflected;

“IJN Samidare: Tabular Record of Movement Japanese ship.

“2 October: Troop evacuation run to Kolombangara (cover). Engaged U.S. destroyers. Minor damage due to three dud shell hits.

³⁷ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Thursday, October 7, 1943. In file.

6-7 October 1943: *Battle of Vella Lavella: Troop evacuation run to Vella Lavella. Has been credited with torpedoing USS Selfridge (DD-357).*³⁸

As Allen sat on the deck of the O'Bannon on his way to Florida Island, he had a moment to count his blessings and marveled that he wasn't killed or injured in the night's events.

The USS Taylor also came alongside the Selfridge and Commander Walker, shifted his flag and crew to the Taylor but Allen was already on the O'Bannon.³⁹

The Chevalier, mortally damaged from the Japanese torpedo, sank in the location it was hit. The O'Bannon, though damaged from the collision with Chevalier, was able to rescue most of the Chevalier crew (all but 51). The Chevalier crewmembers being pulled from the water were oil smeared and needed clean underwear, shirts and pants before they were taken to Florida Island. Before the O'Bannon left the area, the captain decided to leave behind two lifeboats for any possible Chevalier survivors that may have been missed. These boats ended up being used for the survivors of the Japanese ship Yugumo (note Yugumo's log) and twenty-five Yugumo survivors were picked up using the lifeboats. Seventy-eight other Japanese sailors were picked up from the water by U.S. PT boats the following day. All the Japanese were taken prisoners.⁴⁰

Florida Island – Survivors

From the O'Bannon Allen was taken to the Florida Island, which was across the channel from where the Selfridge was hit. Those wounded along with others were moved to a temporary camp. Allen, along with many others, was covered with fuel oil. The black, sticky, oily fluid was on everything and everywhere. Most men had been covered in it since the initial battle some eight or more hours before. They wanted to clean up and get some new clothes.

"I was finally able get a pair of dungarees and a T-shirt and to wash off the fuel oil. Not having shaved since two days earlier, I and a couple of other seamen approached the Red Cross for a razor and soap. They wouldn't let us have anything even though a supply was sitting right in front of us. We were told we had to contact "so-and-so" and get written approval before they could issue any of the supplies. There was no way to contact whoever it was we were to see, since everything was in chaos and disorganized. I still hold a grudge towards the Red Cross for their inhospitable lack of support to military personnel in a war zone."

The log of the Selfridge reflected that at 0800 hours, October 7th, the day after being torpedoed.

³⁸ Long Lancers, Japanese ship IJN Samidare: Tabular Record of Movement http://www.combinedfleet.com/samida_t.htm

³⁹ A Tin Can Sailors Destroyer History, USS O'Bannon <http://www.destroyers.org/nl-histories/dd450-nl.htm>

⁴⁰ The page from which this information was obtained has been removed from the web site <http://members.ols.net/>,

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“Mustered crew on stations. 85 men and 9 officers on board. Made daily inspection of magazines and smokeless powder samples. Conditions normal.”

Things weren’t exactly normal.

Two days after the battle, with things getting more organized, the paperwork could be brought up to standard. The Selfridge log, written at Florida Island showed that on October 9, 1943,

“Pursuant to verbal orders of CDS-4, following officers and men were transferred to U.S.S. Ralph Talbot for duty in staff allowance of CDS-4 and CDD-7: F.R. Walker, Captain, U.S.N. . . .A.F. Price, #368 65 37, (S1c)”.⁴¹

After being evacuated to the O’Bannon for transport to Florida Island and being there for a day and a half, Allen rejoined CDS-4 on the USS Ralph Talbot.

The damaged USS Selfridge remained at Florida Island until November 21st and then traveled at a slow three knots and dry-docked at Berth 105, Great Roads, Noumea, New Caledonia. After repairs were made to get her sea-worthy the Selfridge left on December 29th and continued on to the U.S., arriving on January 9th, 1944 at Mare Island Navy Yard, California for further repairs.

After Vella Lavella

Allen’s official navy records made note of the action he was in at Vella Lavella. It says;

“Participated in night battle off Sauka Point, Vella Lavella, New Georgia Group, Solomon Islands, night of 6-7 October, 1943.” and,

“Commended by Commander Destroyer Squadron FOUR, Captain Frank R. Walker, U.S. Navy, for loyal, faithful duty and courageous performance of duty, while attached to his flag allowance, during action with the enemy night of 6-7 October, 1943.”⁴²

On November 16, 1943 the ships log for the Selfridge reflected that the ship’s captain held a Captain’s Mast (administrative court for offenses not worthy of a Courts Martial). The log shows that for the offense of “Carelessness in performance of duty” nine enlisted seaman were punished. Apparently not all of the US sailors functioned well during and after the attack by the Japanese.⁴³

Allen was transported to Milne Bay, on the east end of New Guinea on the USS Ralph Talbot. But getting there took some time. His records reflect that he again was in battle.

⁴¹ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Thursday, October 9, 1943. There are two editions of this same log. The 2nd edition has only the list of enlisted names; the officer’s names have been removed. Both editions are in the writer’s file.

⁴² From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.

⁴³ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Tuesday, November 16, 1943. In the writer’s file.

“On November 29 and 30, 1943 Allen was on the USS Ralph Talbot and participated in naval (destroyer) bombardment of Gasmata, New Britain.”⁴⁴

On December 1, 1943 while Allen was assigned to the USS Ralph Talbot as part of the CDS-4 Flag Allowance, his rate was changed from Seaman 1st Class to the specialty of Radioman 3rd Class. To qualify he earlier had to pass an exam. The change in rating was actually authorized on August 15, 1943 but was not made until December 1st. His monthly take-home pay was \$50.00 with this promotion.

On December 4th, 1943 Captain Walker gave Allen his own personal Letter of Commendation

“...commending you for your loyal, faithful, and courageous performance of duty, while attached to my flag allowance, during action with the enemy night of 6-7 October 1943.”⁴⁵

On December 13, 1943 while still in New Caledonia, Admiral W.F. Halsey, Commander, South Pacific Forces, went aboard the Selfridge and presented Commander G.E. Peckham with a Gold Star in lieu of a second Silver Star award for his leadership when only seven days as the ship’s captain.⁴⁶ Again on December 28, 1943 Commander G.E. Peckham presented a Silver Star to Lt D.E. Henry and Letters of Commendation from Admiral Halsey to eleven officers.⁴⁷

I had lost all of my belongings to include my Scriptures when the Selfridge was torpedoed. I sent a letter back home and asked my family to mail me another set to include my patriarchal blessing. I received the books and blessing while I was on the Ralph Talbot. I sat down and re-read my patriarchal blessing again. A phrase that I had read a number of times in the past seemed to jump out and this time had real meaning for me. It was written,

“Keep yourself free and unspotted from the sins of the world and your life shall be spared and you shall not have to lift up the sword against your fellow men and shall return in safety.”⁴⁸

I knew to this point in my navy career my life had been saved and I hadn’t” lifted up the sword against my fellow man”. I could now return to my daily scripture study. I decided that I wanted to read the Book of Mormon again so I spent every spare moment doing so and finished the book in one long reading session as I returned to the United States.

⁴⁴ IBID.

⁴⁵ In Navy personnel file of Allen Price.

⁴⁶ Ships Log from National Archives, dated Monday, December 13, 1943. In the writer’s file.

⁴⁷ Point of view from the writer, a retired United States Air Force officer.

⁴⁸ Patriarchal blessing given by Joseph Cardon, to Allen Frank Price on April 27, 1941.

1944 – Back to the Pacific

Now Radioman 3rd Class Allen returned from Milan Bay, New Guinea to the United States on January 21, 1944 on a new transport. Upon arrival he was assigned to RecShip, San Francisco (a naval station) and after officially checking in, he went on leave.

While Allen was in the Pacific his parents moved from Logan to Heber, Utah. His father, Frank, had been working at Hill Field near Ogden, Utah while living in Logan. He and some other workers drove to the base on Monday and worked through Friday, returning back to Logan for the weekend. This travel and being away from home was tiresome. His father arraigned a transfer to be a Security Guard at Geneva Steel, west of Orem, Utah. That allowed the family to move to Heber where Prices, Daybell's and many other friends and families known by the Price family lived. This move that Allen had no control over changed his life.

Allen traveled to Heber on military leave. When he arrived in Heber and started getting to know people, he met Phyllis Afton Murdock, a lady who lived with her parents near the Price home on 1st East. Phyllis had been married but was now a single parent. She had a son from the previous marriage. Friendship grew to love.

On March 9th Allen returned to Oceanside, CA and transferred to Amphibious Communications School at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, CA for duty in ACORNS (acronym unknown).⁴⁹ His "barracks" and a place to call home was a tent in a celery field. While he was settling in to communications training, Phyllis decided that she wanted Allen as a husband so she jumped on the train and followed him to California. She had some friends that lived in the Los Angeles area and was able to stay with them while she saw Allen whenever he could get out of the classroom.

Allen and Phyllis dated every chance they could with Allen taking training and Phyllis staying in Los Angles. Finally, after a month, the decision was made and the big question asked. Allen married Phyllis Afton Murdock on April 9th, 1944 in Oceanside, CA in a private ceremony.

Allen was being trained in "amphibious communications" that would qualify him to provide communications support to Marines in the Pacific. During the training Allen learned a number of code words that were classified Secret at the time.

I remember that one word was "LARKSPUR" which stood for Salvo Island (Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.) Upon completing training, I was immediately assigned to the Communications Unit #16 (COMUNIT#16) much to my chagrin and disappointment. I thought I would be able to stay around California. Navy COMUNIT#16 had just received orders and was to be part of the invasion of Guam that was planned for July 1944. Being assigned to that Unit meant that I would return immediately overseas. Because of my 31 months previous overseas service, the Navy regulation stated that a seaman could not be sent back overseas for 180 days. Since I arrived in the U.S. on January 21st, by the regulation I did not have to return overseas until July 21st.

⁴⁹ From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, page 9.



In Federal Prison

Based on that regulation, on April 18th Allen officially requested not to move out with the Unit. He turned in his request (known as a “chit”) to “Lt Patterson”, his superior. Lt. Patterson called Allen in, berated him for making the request, tore the request in two and threw it in the wastebasket.

Lt Patterson dismissed me but while leaving the room, I reached into the wastebasket and retrieved my torn-up request. Then I left the room. I knew that Lt. Patterson was going against regulations but was frustrated because I didn't know how to get by to his superior officer. The longer I thought about it the madder I got so I decided the heck with the Navy and headed for the Los Angeles apartment where Phyllis was. While waiting at a bus stop that evening on my way to the apartment, the Navy Shore Patrol approached me and asked to see my papers. I didn't have any leave papers and so they picked me up for being Absent Without Leave (AWOL).

His official personnel records reflect the time of the arrest.

“4/18/44: Delivered on board this station by the Shore Patrol, Los Angeles, Calif. at 0400, 15 April 1944. PRICE states that he was apprehended by the Shore Patrol, Los Angeles, Calif. at 2015, 14 April 1944, and that he was absent without leave from the Amphib. Trg. Command, Oceanside, Calif. since 1700, 14 April 1944. Disciplinary action not to be taken by this command. To be returned to station.”⁵⁰

It took some eleven days to comply with “To be returned to station” because Allen was incarcerated in the San Pedro Federal Prison from April 15th until April 26th.

“April 26, 1944: Tran. Under guard this date to Amphib. Trg. Command, Oceanside, Calif. For disciplinary action and disposition. AUTH: Comm11 C.L. 137-43.”

Allen returned to his assigned unit, awaiting disciplinary action. In this case, he would have to report to a “Captain’s Mast” which was an administrative discipline process. Allen knew that he had reacted to an injustice by his commander who was violating a Navy regulation but still was frustrated that the Lieutenant might get away with it.

“I decided to contact my long-time mentor, Capt Frank Walker about my predicament. Captain Walker had arrived with me in the U.S. in January and I knew he was still at the Navy base where the communications school was. I hoped I could at least tell him what was happening.⁵¹ I found a telephone and

⁵⁰ From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, page 9

⁵¹ Captain Frank Walker was probably at his home at 3416 East 2nd Street, Long Beach, CA where his wife, Doris (Carpenter) Walker resided while Captain Walker was at sea (information from Selfridge Ship Logs.)

reached Captain Walker. After explaining the situation, Walker told me to go to the Mast as scheduled. He (Walker) would work things out. So I arrived at the scheduled Captain's Mast not knowing what the outcome would be. After going through the formalities of the court, the officer running the Mast said no action would be taken and I was free to go on leave for up to 6 months if I wanted. I would need to phone in periodically to determine if I was needed. I was then dismissed from the Mast."

With this unpleasant experience behind him and now free to catch up on other things, Allen did the required paperwork for married benefits. On May 9, 1944 he signed a "Beneficiary Slip" while at Oceanside, CA reflecting he was in Communications School, Amphibious Training Pacific, (PhibTraPac), and Phyllis Afton Price was in Heber City, Utah.⁵² He also officially applied for Class "A" family allowance.

At first Allen and Phyllis enjoyed all of the time together as they traveled around the southern California area but after a few weeks money started running short. In addition, Phyllis had to return to Heber and to her job. Phyllis took the train east and Allen returned to the Naval Base. On May 26, 1944 Allen was officially transferred from the Amphibious Training School to COMMUNIT#16. Since the unit had already shipped out to Guam, Allen now had to get transportation to catch up with them.

Guam

At the end of May 1944 Allen, having sent Phyllis back to Heber, Utah, was transported on an aircraft carrier from San Francisco to Hawaii. Landing in Hawaii, he temporarily was assigned to the Advance Base Reshipment Depot on the west side of Pearl Harbor known as Iroquois Point until transportation to Guam became available. Most of COMMUNIT#16 had already moved on to take part in the Marine landing scheduled for July. While waiting to ship out, Allen attended Church and found Jack Boud, a Navy Chaplain for the L.D.S. church. Boud was charged with keeping the L.D.S. Church organized in the Pacific. Finding out Allen was going to Guam, Boud set Allen apart as a Group Leader for L.D.S. members on Guam.

Guam remained under Japanese rule from December 1941 until July 21, 1944, when U.S. forces landed under the command of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. On the night of July 25-26, 5,000 Japanese, being pressed by the American forces, attacked with the Banzai charge. In this one night of Banzai charges, the Americans killed over 2,500 Japanese soldiers.



Guam is the southernmost of the Mariana Island chain. The extreme length, north to south, is about 34 miles; the width, east to west, varies from 5 to 9 miles. Tropical growth on the entire island thrives in the constant temperatures, with daily averages ranging throughout the year between 79° and 83° F and the humidity staying near 90 percent.⁵³

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Allen had remained at Iroquois Point until the first of August. While there he was promoted from Radioman 3rd Class to Radioman 2nd Class (T), again through testing. Finally he traveled by troop transport and arrived on Guam on August 3, 1944, thirteen days after the first Army and Marines waded ashore.

“I arrived on Guam on August 3rd 1944 as the tail end of COMMUNIT#16. We were trucked through the town of Agana then up the hill to the cliff that overlooked the town. We pitched tents there and lived in them a few months.”

“The weather was always hot and humid in Guam. Because of the loss of salt through sweating, the doctors ordered all the men to take salt pills. I, for some reason, could not stomach the pills. The doctors didn’t like that I was not obeying a direct order. I was able to convince them that I could put a lot of salt on my food and get the same results others got from taking the salt pills. I continue to liberally salt my food to this day.”

“COMMUNIT#16 did not have a Quonset hut set up when I arrived in Guam. While waiting for the Radio Shack to be built, I was detailed each day to various jobs. I would awake at 0600 hours and be ready for work at 0630 hours after eating breakfast in the Mess tent. I would be assigned a detail, sometimes unloading ships, sometimes digging “privies” – anything that needed done. Sometimes I was detailed at night rather than in the day. On one occasion I was detailed to off-load a ship in the evening. The job entailed carrying 90-pound bags of cement from the ship to shore. I carried two, 90-pound bags on each trip. After working all night, the officer in charge told me he would make sure that the “AWOL” I had in my official records would be removed.”

True to his word, the page titled “Absent From Duty” in Allen’s service record is blank. However, a narrative of the AWOL is found on page 9. Once the Communications Radio Shack was built, Allen was assigned to the radio room and the detail assignments ended for him.

Because the island was just recently liberated, there were still Japanese soldiers hiding in the mountains and jungle who would not surrender. Some of them would penetrate the camps at night to get food, arms, etc. Should one wake up and find a Japanese soldier in the tent, the result was usually death.

I remember seeing warnings posted all around the camp about the lurking danger of Japanese sneaking into camp. I found myself always on alert and even when sleeping I was aware of every sound or motion around me and would wake up immediately if my mind thought I was in harms way. I still sleep in that fashion today.

The L.D.S. Church on Guam

Allen sought out other members of the Church while on Guam. Here is a picture taken of

those L.D.S. who met for Church. Allen is in the front, left row kneeling down. There were other Group Leaders that had been set apart by Boud and were already conducting meetings so Allen actually never served in that position. The LDS group at Agana was not the only one on the Island. Another group was formed on Henderson Air Field on the other side of the island.



I recall some “inequities” of officer versas enlisted personnel. One such inequity was the distribution of beef as it arrived via ship and taken to the mess halls. The officers always got the steaks and the enlisted got the

hamburger. The latrines were another area where rank had its privileges. Officers had running water in their latrines and showers. The senior officer of the Navy base took over a home on the island and watered the lawn on a daily bases. Us enlisted personnel had one hat of water per day to use as we wished. That didn’t seem right. I remember that one of the enlisted men had a congressman for a friend and wrote a letter to him complaining of the injustice. A month or so later four “recruits” arrived at the base, moved into our enlisted quarters and investigated the problem. Once the allegation was substantiated, we enlisted soon had adequate water, our fair share of steaks, and the senior officer was transferred.

The Joint Communications Activity

Allen worked in COMMUNIT#16 from August until October 9th, 1944. That day he was “transferred to the Commanding Officer, Joint Communication Activities, Navy Number 926” commanded by A.E. Becker, Jr., Captain, USN.⁵⁴ The Navy call letters for the station was NPN.⁵⁵ The JCA Guam provided communication support to Fleet Admiral Chester A. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.^{56 57 58}

⁵⁴ From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, page number not shown.

⁵⁵ Information obtained from various personal interviews of Allen by the writer.

⁵⁶ NAVSECGRP History and photos.

http://www.anzwers.org/free/navyscpo/Ci_Stations_past_and_present_alphabetical_3a.html

My work schedule was four hours on and 24 hours off. If I worked from noon to four, then my next shift was four to eight, then eight to twelve, ect. Because of my telegraphic skills learned earlier in my career, I was soon assigned as the Supervisor of the Service Department for a shift. My job was to review every message that came into the JCA that had a problem with transmission or receiving. Problems included the message not arriving on time, the message wasn't delivered, or it could not be decoded. If any of these errors occurred on my watch, I would initially attempt to correct the problem so the message worked in the communication system. If I was unable to correct the problem, I would have the sending unit re-transmit the message or I would advise them of the error so they could re-transmit correctly. I used "Q" signals to communicate the problems. "Q" signals were a group of three letters that were shorthand for a much longer message.

The Quonset Hut where Allen worked was actually four huts that met together in a "X" shape. The center, shared by all, was where he and the crew of two or three he supervised worked. Each leg of the "X" had about 20 men and radio equipment in them. All four services, the Navy, Army, Marines, and Army Air Corp had men who worked in the JCA. There were about 100 men on any given shift.



J. C. A. CAMP

Although Allen worked in the JCA, his job wasn't to read any of the messages that were sent or received by his department. His job was to handle the problem messages that were still encoded, not to encode or decode them.

Once a message arrived and cleared his department, it was taken to a secure room where others, mostly officers, would decode the message. The code personnel used a "Zigtog" machine as it was called. Allen knew of them and "unofficially" used them once in a while, but was not officially assigned to use them. Restricting access to the actual information was one method the U.S. used to

maintain a secure means of transmission.

The Macarthur Message

In October 1944 while Allen was correcting messages and supervising the Service Department on Guam General Douglas Macarthur made his famous return to the Philippines. The world watched but Allen worked in the Radio Room as General Macarthur dramatically waded ashore at Leyte in the Philippines, and in the following months liberated the rest of the island. Below is the same type of area where Allen worked.

⁵⁷ In December 1941, Nimitz was designated as Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, where he served throughout the war. On 2 September 1945, Nimitz was the United States signatory to the surrender terms aboard the battleship *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

⁵⁸ The Joint Radio Analysis Group, Forward Area (RAGFOR) at the Joint Communications Activity (JCA) was established December 28, 1944 under the call sign "NIM" (and disestablished September 21, 1945) (Same time Allen was held over?) (Allen said call signs were: NPN= Guam; NPG= Manila; KSF= San Francisco; NEFG= Selfridge.



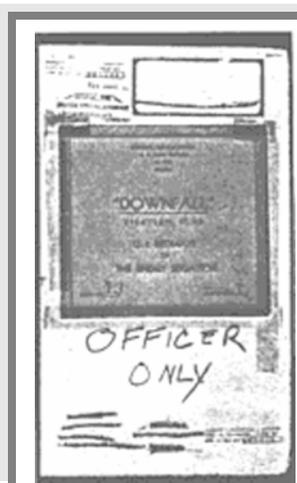
Allen had occasion to see numerous messages flowing into and out of Admiral Nimitz's headquarters as war was waged against the Japanese. Many of them came from General MacArthur as his campaign moved forward.

On one occasion there was a large battle in progress and General MacArthur was attempting to send an urgent message to Nimitz through the JCA. The decoders at the JCA could not decode the incoming message from MacArthur. The message itself carried the priority "OU" or "Operational Urgent". In first trying to correct the message and being unsuccessful, I sent a message back to MacArthur requesting a re-send. In two minutes it returned, but it was still

unreadable. On the 3rd request for a re-send, Nimitz apparently received a radio message in his quarters from MacArthur that the important OU message about reinforcements on Okinawa was at JCA and the radiomen (me) didn't know what he was doing. Nimitz came down to the radio shack where I was and asked what the problem was. I explained the problem with the message and that it was not prepared correctly on MacArthur's end and therefore did not arrive correctly in the JCA. Nimitz called MacArthur on the radiophone and told him to fix things because it was his people that were wrong, not me. The next re-send of the "Operational Urgent" message came through correctly.⁵⁹

1945 – The End of the War

In 1945 only a few Americans were aware of elaborate plans that had been prepared for the American invasion of the Japanese home islands. Even fewer are aware of how close America actually came to launching that invasion. Fewer still knew what the Japanese had in store for the U.S. had the invasion of Japan actually been launched.



"Operation Downfall" was a Top Secret plan prepared in its final form during the spring and summer of 1945. The plan called for two massive military undertakings to be carried out in succession, and aimed at the very heart of the Japanese Empire. The first phase of the plan was code-named "Operation Olympic". In the plan American combat troops would be landed by amphibious assault on Japan itself during the early morning hours of November 1, 1945. They would land 14 combat divisions of American soldiers and marines on heavily fortified and defended Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese home islands, after an unprecedented naval and aerial bombardment.

On the left is a copy of the cover of the Operation Downfall Plan, originally it was classified Top Secret. This copy was for "Officer Only."

⁵⁹ Information obtained from various personal interviews of Allen by the writer.

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Promoted

I studied a lot during my spare time. I enjoyed learning things and took advantage of what I learned in working in the JCA. I received some reward for my efforts by being promoted from the rate of Radioman 2nd Class to Radioman 1st Class (Temporary) on May 16, 1945.

Allen knew nothing of “Operation Downfall” or “Operation Olympic” even though the JCA would have processed the Top Secret messages since Japan was in Admiral Nimitz’s theater of responsibility. Only the sailors in the JCA who encoded and decoded messages would have been aware of the plans. Allen probably handled some of these encoded messages but had no idea what information they contained.

On May 25, 1945, the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington D.C., after extensive deliberation, issued to General MacArthur, to Admiral Chester Nimitz, and to Army Air Force General “Hap” Arnold, the Top Secret directive to proceed with the invasion of Kyushu, known as “Operation Olympic”.⁶⁰

By July of 1945, the Japanese assumed the Americans were planning to invade their homeland. Throughout the early summer, the Emperor and his government officials exhorted the military and civilian population to make preparations for the invasion. Japanese radios cried out to the people to “form a wall of human flesh” and when the invasion began, to push the invaders back into the sea, and back onto their ships. But the Americans had another idea.

The Atomic Bombs

The other idea was a plan also classified “Top Secret”. It was the plan to use the Atomic bomb.

On July 25, General Carl Spaatz, Commander General, US Army Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific Theater received a Top Secret message from Thomas T. Handy, General, Acting Chief of Staff in Washington D.C.. Spaatz was told about the planned use of the “special bomb” on or after August 3rd. He was told to personally deliver a copy of the message to Admiral Nimitz and not chance interception of the radio message by the Japanese.⁶¹

I was not aware of any of the plans for the dropping of the atomic bomb. I don’t remember and probably was not even aware of the couriating of the Top Secret message by General Spaatz to Admiral Nimitz when it happened. However, there were some strange things going on that made me wonder. During the first part of August 1945 I noticed that each day outside the chow hall the Army Air Force airmen were taking outrageous bets that the war in the Pacific would end within the next six weeks. They would take 10 to 1 odds or even 100 to 1 odds.

⁶⁰ http://sandysq.gcinet.net/uss_salt_lake_city_ca25/topsecre.htm by James Martin Davis, *The Story of the Invasion of Japan, Top Secret Operation Downfall*

⁶¹ U.S. National Archives, Record Group 77, TS Manhattan Project, Folder 5B.

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They were brash about it. Those that gambled couldn't turn down an offer of 100 to 1 odds on a buck bet.

Historical hindsight indicates that the airmen probably knew that an atomic weapon was going to be used against Japan since bombers would be used to deliver the weapon. Conversely, Navy sailors were privy to "Operation Downfall" since logistically it required ships to invade Japan. So, the Navy knew that "Operation Downfall" was scheduled for November 1, 1945 and assumed it would take a long time before victory was achieved, while the Army Air Force knew of the planned atomic bomb. So with both sides thinking they had the inside information, sailors were throwing money at the great odds offered by the airmen. American ingenuity for making money was alive and well in Guam.

On Tinian and Saipan those who had a "need-to-know" finished preparations for dropping the atomic bomb on August 3rd. The original plan was to carry out the operation on August 4th, but Air Force General LeMay deferred the attack because of bad weather over the target. On August 5th the forecasts were favorable and he gave the word to proceed with the mission the following day. At 0245 on August 6th, the B-29, "Enola Gay", took off from Tinian. After a six and one half hour flight, at precisely 8:16 a.m., the first atomic bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan's eighth largest city. It exploded fifty seconds later at a height of about 2,000 feet. ⁶² "Little Boy" weighed four tons and had the equivalent of 20,000 tons of TNT. Everything within four square miles was desolated, 140,000 civilians were killed, 300,000 survived but suffered short and long term effects.

On August 9, 1945, three days after the first atomic bomb, the second atomic bomb nicknamed "Fat Man" exploded at approximately 11:01 a.m. over Nagasaki, Japan, after being dropped from the B-29 "Boxcar". This bomb contained the equivalent of 21,000 tons of TNT, and destroyed everything within three square miles. 70,000 civilians were killed.

With the second atomic bomb, the Emperor took the unprecedented step of calling an Imperial Conference, which lasted until 3 o'clock a.m. the morning of August 10th, 1945. When the conference failed to produce agreement the Emperor told his minister that he wished the war brought to an end. This resolved the crisis and produced in the cabinet a formal decision to accept the earlier-proposed Potsdam Declaration. ⁶³

The Army Air Force restarted conventional bomb runs into Japan on August 13th while awaiting some decision from Japan. On the evening of August 14, 1945, Allen had a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

With the First to Hear of Japanese Surrender

I was working the 4:00 p.m. to Midnight shift in the JCA. Suddenly Radio Japan came up on the Emergency Radio Frequency, 500 kilocycles, using our call sign, "NPN". The Japanese asked "NPN" to go to a different frequency for a message. Admiral Nimitz and other officers were immediately notified and they converged on the Radio Shack. The JCA dialed up the requested frequency and connected it to the loud speakers in the radio shack. As I listened, the Japanese,

⁶² http://www.answers.org/free/navyscpo/guam_Richard_Eagen%2Ehtml

⁶³ The Decision To Use the Atomic Bomb by Louis Morton

in English and in the clear, radioed that they were ready for unconditional surrender. They said that to prove the surrender was valid, when the U.S. bombers flew over their targets that evening, the Japanese would leave all of the lights on. That would be the sign that their surrender declaration was valid.

The JCA radioed the B-29 bomber flight headed for their targets and relayed the “lights on” message from the Japanese. The bomber flight was advised they could break radio silence to report what they found. The word traveled quickly through the Navy base and all hands waited through the evening for the message from the bomber flight. I was still working in the JCA and it was close to midnight when the radio crackled. With emotion the bomber flight leader said, “The lights are on! The lights are on!” The hut erupted with cheers and soon the whole Navy base was cheering. The bombers were told to jettison their bombs at sea and return to base, which they did.

The airmen won their wager; even at the odds they were giving the sailors. The tradition of Air Force beating Navy continues to this day.

At noon, Tokyo time, August 15, 1945, the Japanese people for the first time heard the voice of the Emperor on the radio. His recorded message was hard to understand, because it was in archaic, court Japanese, but it conveyed stunning news: Japan had lost the war.⁶⁴ Most Allied ships heard about this by a simple radio message from Admiral Nimitz’s radio room. Allen did not see the message to the left that went out from Admiral Nimitz’s JCA.

There is an interesting side story about the “Divine Wind” found as an end-note to this story.

On August 15, 1945 the same day hostilities ceased, Allen’s record reflected he had earned 46.5 points per ALNAV 196. Points earned determined the priority of release from service. A sailor or soldier had to have at least 27 points. Few sailors had 46 points.

Allen signed under the point rating in his records, showing he was told.^{65 66}

Returning Home

On September 2, 1945, while Allen was trouble-shooting messages in the JCA radio shack on Guam, Fleet Admiral Nimitz presided over the Japanese surrender on board the "U.S.S. Missouri," bringing an end to the war in the Pacific. With the end of the war, those in the Pacific realized that returning home soon was a real possibility. Allen was among them.

⁶⁴ On the web at <http://www.nuclearfiles.org/docs/lastact5.html>

⁶⁵ From the records of Allen Frank Price obtained from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, page 9.

⁶⁶ From Allen’s official service record.

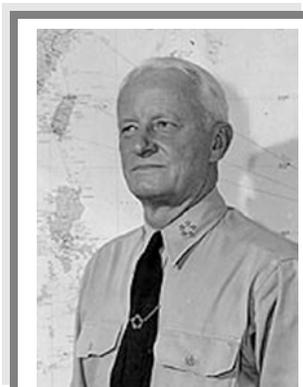


Allen was really anxious to return home. He had a wife, had been in the Pacific, mostly at Guam, for 13 continuous months and over 30 total months of wartime service, and had plenty of “points” for his quick return. He thought for sure he would be on the first ship leaving for the States. But it didn’t happen. The JCA was notified that they would be officially disestablished on September 21st 1945. Subsequently Allen and another enlisted man were asked by Captain Becker, their commander, to stay while all the others in the JCA were sent home. This didn’t sit well with Allen.

On the left is a typical desk and area for a JCA Supervisor such as Allen. The picture was taken in September 1944.

I had more than four years service in the Navy and was seriously considering a Navy career. Since I joined in April 1941 I had rapidly progressed in rate and figured that if I continued as I had been doing, I would have excellent naval career. I had considered returning to the States, taking some leave, and then remaining in the Navy. Because of this last affront of not considering my length of service in the war and letting me return to the U.S., I decided to wait out my time on Guam and exit the Navy when I got home.

Allen continued through September to work his shift in the JCA as the war wound down. One day Admiral Nimitz came to the JCA and while talking with Allen asked him why he was still in Guam? Allen told him he was ordered to remain until after the JCA was disestablished. Admiral Nimitz, knowing of Allen’s length of service, left the Radio Shack. The next day Allen received orders to return home, he believes the change in orders was due to Admiral Nimitz’s intervention. Picture on the left is of Admiral Nimitz just after receiving his fifth star, December 1944.



On September 30th, Allen was officially transferred from JCA to the continental limits of the United States for discharge – (Separation Center – TAD CEN Shoemaker California). It took Allen a full month and a few days to finally arrive at the discharge center from Guam.

At Shoemaker, California on November 6th, 1945 Allen was discharged from the Navy after four years, six months and ten days of military service. His Notice of Separation From U.S. Naval service reflected he had qualification certificates in Radio Operator, Communications Traffic Control Supervision and that he had knowledge of Semaphore (Morse code). He had been assigned to the USS Selfridge, USS Ralph Talbot, Advance Base Reshipment Depot, Iroquois Point, Pearl Harbor, Communications Unit 16, Oahu-T.H., and Joint Communications Activity, Navy #926. He earned the Asiatic Pacific Award with four bronze stars, the American Defense Medal with one bronze star, the Victory Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal. He was discharged holding the rate of Radioman 1st Class.

Home for Good

Allen traveled from California to Salt Lake City via train, with a stop in Ogden, Utah.



“I telephoned my sister, Marian (Price) Phillips, from the Ogden train station. We discussed my return and plans but due to the train schedule, I could not stay in Ogden and visit Marian, Ray and their family, Michael, Wynn and the newly arrived Diane. I was anxious to return to my wife in Salt Lake. I finished the phone call and jumped back on the train.”⁶⁷

Upon arriving in Salt Lake City where Phyllis was living, Allen found that things had changed. Phyllis had filed for divorce and was only waiting for Allen to return to Salt Lake to make it final. The divorce was finalized and Allen re-adjusted to his new life. He decided to continue his education and applied and was accepted into the University of Utah under the G.I. bill.

Postscript

Throughout Allen’s four years of war experiences in the Pacific he never forgot the patriarchal blessing he received. In recalling his war-time experiences, he realized that when his ship was at General Quarters and he was at his battle station he did not have to fire any type of weapon against the enemy. When his battle station was to help load Mount II at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, the guns were designed to fire on other ships or land targets, not at airplanes, so he wasn’t involved. He transferred to the Radio Shack as a “Signalmen Striker” that didn’t require firing a weapon. Then he was assigned to be a Director Controller for torpedoes. This position was more in line of firing at the enemy but in every instance where a torpedo was launched, either Allen was not on duty or he had just completed his tour of duty and didn’t participate in launching the torpedoes. In fact, even his co-workers noted what they thought were coincidences and when a battle was looming, they wanted to know if Allen was on duty. If he was, they knew the ship would not be involved in a firefight. Lastly, when Allen moved to Communications support and ultimately served in the JCA at Guam, he was not required to man or fire weapons. The promises made in his patriarchal blessing were fulfilled with his official discharge from the Navy. His life had been spared, he did not lift up the sword against his fellow man, and he returned safely.

Epilogue

After a year of school at the University of Utah and while living in Salt Lake City, he was called on an L.D.S. mission to Canada. He left in September 1946 and served for two years.



Upon his honorable release from the Canadian Mission, he returned back to the University of Utah and continued his studies. He met Ellen Jane Kerr while he was on his mission in Canada and asked her to marry him as soon as she returned from her mission. He was at the time working towards graduation in Salt Lake. He graduated from the University of Utah with a Bachelor of Science in Physics with a minor in mathematics. He subsequently found employment with IBM, received training paid for by IBM and then moved to California to work. He earned his Masters Degree at San Jose State College and left IBM for a teaching career. He taught for 30 years and retired from the California school system. He has six boys, David, Dan, Stephen, Joseph, Philip and Henry. He has 13 grandchildren

⁶⁷ Information obtained from various personal interviews of Allen by the writer.

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and one great-grandchild.

Allen was video taped telling of his war-time experiences by his nephew, Michael Phillips. Allen has the tape. Allen was also interviewed by Tanna Barry, Deseret News Staff writer, who subsequently published an article of his experiences at Pearl Harbor in the May 25, 2001 Deseret News.

In September 2002 Rick Lindsey of the WW II Pacific Theater Veterans Interview Project sponsored by the Library of Congress interviewed Allen at the Salt Lake Veteran's Hospital. Allen's TV-quality interview is one of over 200 that will be preserved for posterity. Copies of all interviews are available at Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ WW II Pacific Theater Veterans Interview Project, Rick Lindsey, Exec. Dir., 6850 N. Blackpowder Road, Mt. Green, UT 84050

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Guam Pictures



This is the Chow tent. The picture was taken on September 21, 1944. Allen ate in this kind of circumstances and then in a Mess Hall.



Allen bunked in such a Quonset Hut in the JCA area. Each hut would hold about 20 men. Each had a cot and a foot locker and that was about it. They would go to another Quonset hut to shower, and eat in the Mess Hall.



The JCA was the center of the "X" made by the Quonset Huts. Each leg of the "X" was manned by about 20 military with the JCA having another 20.

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Allen's Family



Allen with:
Front row: Mary, Allen, Ellen
Jane, and John.
Back Row: Jared, Dan,
Melissa, Joseph, Steven,
Emily, and Katie.



Allen with sisters Beth and
Marian, sister-in-law Jolene
and brother Charles.

Side Stories of Interest

The Divine Wind

The Japanese believed that a “Divine Wind” would save them and their emperor. During the early part of October 1945, to the southwest of Okinawa just northeast of the Marianas, the seas were growing restless and the winds began to blow. The ocean skies slowly turned black and the large swells that were developing began to turn the Pacific Ocean white with froth. In a matter of only a few days, a gigantic typhoon had somehow, out of season, sprung to life and began sweeping past Saipan and into the Philippine Sea. As the storm grew more violent, it raced northward and kicked up waves 60 feet high. However, had there been no bomb dropped or had it been simply delayed for only a matter of months, history might well have repeated itself. In the fall of 1945, in the aftermath of this typhoon, had things been different, all over Japan religious services and huge celebrations would have been held. A million Japanese voices would have been raised upward in thanksgiving. Everywhere tumultuous crowds would have gathered in delirious gratitude to pay homage to a "divine wind" which might have once again protected their country from foreign invaders, a "divine wind" they had names, centuries before, the "Kamikaze."

Ensign Brace Bennitt

The Selfridge’s log reflected, “August 18, 1943, Ensign Brace Bennitt, Jr., was suspended from duty for a period of six days for improper performance of duty.” This log entry was shown to Allen who speculated that Brace might have been the officer upon whom Reynolds tried to pin the death of “the Deacon”. The writer, using the Internet, found a “Brace Bennitt” living in Minnesota. Mr. Bennitt. Brace was contacted by telephone. Brace advised that he is presently suffering from the effects of a stroke, is somewhat slow of speech but was willing to talk. He said he was first assigned to the Selfridge in February 1943 as an Ensign. He didn’t explain why he spent six days confined to his bunk but confirmed the log was correct. He did not recall any incident with fumigating the ship. He said he was on the bridge of the Selfridge on October 6, 1943 when it was torpedoed. The ship was at General Quarters. He remained with the Selfridge after it was repaired and ended the war still serving on the Selfridge. He left active duty at the end of the war but joined the Navy Reserves. He was called up for active duty during the Korean conflict. He subsequently retired as a Navy Commander in 1976 with 20 years of active duty. He lives with his wife Susan in Minneapolis Minnesota.

Typhoon

On 18 December 1944, the ships of Task Force 38—seven fleet and six light carriers, eight battleships, 15 cruisers, and about 50 destroyers—were operating about 300 miles east of Luzon in the Philippine Sea. A small but violent typhoon overtook the Task Force while many of the ships were attempting to refuel. Many of the ships were caught near the center of the storm and buffeted by extreme seas and hurricane force winds. Three destroyers, USS Hull, USS Spence, and USS Monaghan, capsized and went down with practically all hands, while a cruiser, five aircraft carriers, and three destroyers suffered serious damage. Approximately 790 officers and men were lost or killed, with another 80 injured. Fires occurred in three carriers when planes broke loose in their hangars and some 146 planes on various ships were lost or damaged beyond economical repair by fires, impact damage, or by being swept overboard.

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CINCPAC, message

Admiral Kimmel, CINCPAC MESSAGE of December 10th (Dispatch No. 102102 December 1941 classified "Confidential").

DL357/A16-3(5) Serial #055 NY3
U.S.S. Selfridge
January 15, 1942
From: Commanding Officer.
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Subject: Action in Pearl Harbor, T.H., 7 December 1941, report of.
Reference: (a) USNR Arts., 712, 762 874(6) and 2029.

1. This vessel participated in the defense of Pearl Harbor and the ships based therein during the air raid of 7 December 1941.
2. Berth occupied was X-8 on heading approximately north-east, outboard and starboard side to U.S.S. Case, Reid, Tucker, Cummings and Whitney.
3. Service .50 caliber and 1.1" caliber ammunition was clipped and in ready boxes at all machine guns prior to the action. Guns were ready for instant use except for being manned and loaded.
4. Nine officers and ninety-nine percent of the crew were on board.
5. Approximately four minutes before morning colors the Officer of the Deck witnessed the launching of a torpedo against the U.S.S. Raleigh by a Japanese plane. Almost simultaneously came a report from the signal bridge that the Naval Air Station was on fire. The Officer of the Deck sounded the alarm for general quarters, set condition afirm and directed the engineering department to light off boilers and make preparations to get underway.
6. At about 0758 Selfridge .50 caliber machine guns were firing on Japanese planes, shortly followed by the 1.1" machine guns. It is believed that these guns were the first to fire in this area.
7. Two enemy planes fired upon were seen to crash. One was hit by the after 1.1" while diving on the USS Curtiss. The wing was sheared off causing the plane to crash near the beach at Beckoning Point. Another plane flying low on a southerly course to westward of the Selfridge released a bomb in the North Channel opposite the USS Raleigh and crashed in flames in the vicinity of the USS Curtiss while being fired on by the forward 1.1" machine gun. A third plane, under fire by the forward 1.1", was seen to disappear behind a hedge half way up a hill at a location bearing about 045 True from the Selfridge. A fourth plane, hit in the under part of the fuselage by the port .50 caliber machine gun, started smoking and when last seen was headed toward a cane field to the northward of the Selfridge. It is now known definitely however that this plane crashed.
8. 850 rounds of 1.1" and 2340 rounds of .50 caliber were expended during the action. There were no personnel casualties. The only evidence of material casualty is a small conical shaped dent in the starboard side of the director which appears to have been made by a small caliber machine gun bullet.
9. The performance of the ship's equipment was excellent, as was that of the crew. At no time during the raid was there a lull in firing caused by an interruption of ammunition supply. Men not engaged at the guns broke out and clipped ammunition in a most efficient and expeditious manner. The conduct of no one officer or man can be considered outstanding because the conduct, cooperation, coolness and morale of the crew as a fighting unit was superb.

【signed】