

THE GALLOPING GHOST
USS ERNEST G. SMALL DD-838

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS IS A
PRODUCT OF MY PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS,
WAR DIARIES, ACTION REPORTS AND DECK LOG
OF THE DESTROYER, ERNEST G. SMALL.

DONALD A. WAYMAN



USS ERNEST G. SMALL

DD-838

10 OCTOBER 1951

INLAND SEA OF JAPAN

AS PICTURED

LIFE MAGAZINE

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Photo # 80-G-708460 USS Ernest G. Small after losing her bow off Korea, 1951



ERNEST G. SMALL (DD-838) WAS A GEARING CLASS DESTROYER LAUNCHED IN JUNE 1945, BY BATH IRON WORKS, BATH, MAINE. SPONSORED BY MRS.ERNEST G. SMALL, COMMISSIONED ON 21 AUGUST 1945, AND NAMED FOR REAR ADMIRAL SMALL, WHO WAS AWARDED THE NAVY CROSS FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN ACTION AGAINST JAPANESE SURFACE UNITS OFF SAVO ISLAND, 11-12 OCTOBER 1942.

THE DESTROYER WOULD DISTINGUISH HERSELF NINE YEARS LATER. IN OCTOBER OF 1951, SMALL WOULD GET HER FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO ACTUALLY ENGAGE THE ENEMY SINCE COMMISSIONING.

SMALL TRANSITTED THE PANAMA CANAL IN JUNE OF 1950, AS WAR BROKE OUT IN KOREA. WE WERE ORDERED TO PROCEED DIRECTLY TO HAWAII, REFUEL, AND RENDEZVOUS WITH UNITS OF THE SEVENTH FLEET IN THE SEA OF JAPAN. WE HAD NEVER HEARD OF KOREA, BUT THAT WAS WHERE WE WERE GOING. WE WERE PART OF DES DIV 72, WHICH INCLUDED, *USS MACKENZIE* (DD-836), *USS HANSON* (DD-832), AND *USS TAUSSIG* (DD-746). TAUSSIG WOULD JOIN UP WITH US AT A LATER DATE.

ON AUGUST 1 WE WERE STEAMING IN COMPANY WITH TASK GROUP 53.7, COMPOSED OF *CLYMER* (APA-27), *FORT MARION* (LSD-22), *PICKAWAY* (APA-222), *WHITESIDE* (AKA-90), *ALSHAIN* (AKA-55), *HORACE A. BASS* (APD124), *MACKENZIE* AND *HANSON*. AT 1800, *HENRICO* (APA-45) WOULD JOIN THE FORMATION.

THE NEXT DAY, THE AMPHIBIOUS GROUP, IN COLUMN, ENTERED THE PORT OF PUSAN, KOREA. THE FIRST PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE FROM SAN DIEGO, DISEMBARKED. THE MARINES WOULD REINFORCE THE EMBATTLED EIGHTH ARMY DEFENDING THE PUSAN PERIMETER. IN SEPTEMBER, THE FIRST MARINES WOULD MAKE A SUCCESSFUL AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT AT THE PORT OF INCHON, ON KOREA'S WEST COAST.

SMALL WOULD TAKE PART IN THE INCHON INVASION, THE LANDING AT WONSAN ON THE EAST COAST IN OCTOBER, AND THE EVACUATION OF TENTH CORPS AT HUNGNAM AFTER THE BATTLE AT THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR, IN DECEMBER. MARINES DID NOT USE WORDS LIKE 'RETREAT', THIS OPERATION WAS CALLED A WITHDRAWAL OR REDEPLOYMENT.

FOR MOST OF OUR FIRST TOUR OF DUTY IN KOREA, WE WERE ASSIGNED PLANE GUARD AND ASW SCREENING (ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE) DUTIES TO EVERY 'BIRD FARM' IN THE 7th FLEET. MOST OFTEN, WE REPLENISHED AT SEA. GQ (GENERAL QUARTERS) WAS SOUNDED DAY AND NIGHT AS CARRIERS CONDUCTED FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS TROOPS ASHORE. USUALLY, WE WERE CHASING *SICILY* (CVE-118) OR *BADOENG STRAIT* (CVE-116). WE SHOT UP JETTISONED WING TANKS AND INVESTIGATED FISHING BOATS THAT PROBABLY WERE ON MINELAYING MISSIONS. SONAR CONTACTS WERE PURSUED AND AT TIMES DEPTH CHARGE ATTACKS WERE MADE. AFTER THE WAR, BOTH SIDES DENIED THE USE OF SUBMARINES.

WE SELDOM RECEIVED REPORTS ON THE FIGHTING ASHORE, BUT IT WAS APPARENT THAT THINGS WERE NOT GOING VERY WELL. GREEN AND POORLY TRAINED SOLDIERS WERE 'BUGGING OUT', BREAKING RANKS WHEN UNDER ATTACK, AND HEADING SOUTH. MANY WERE CAPTURED WITHOUT WEAPONS, AND SHOT, HANDS AND FEET BOUND. THE CASUALTY RATE WAS HIGH AMONG OFFICERS AND NON-COMS, THEY STOOD THEIR GROUND AND FOUGHT. GENERAL DEAN, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE 24th DIVISION WAS CAPTURED AFTER HIDING OUT IN THE HILLS FOR A MONTH. HE WOULD REMAIN A PRISONER FOR THE DURATION OF THE WAR.

WE RETURNED TO THE NAVY BASE AT SASEBO, JAPAN, PERIODICALLY, TO TAKE ON STORES OR MAKE REPAIRS. THERE WAS BASEBALL, BEER, AND SHOPPING DOWNTOWN IN SASEBO. THE ARMY MAY HAVE HAD SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS, BUT FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE THE WAR WAS PRETTY MUCH ONE SIDED. THE SEA AND SKY BELONGED TO THE NAVY. LIFE WAS GOOD.

WHEN AT SEA WE PERFORMED MESSENGER DUTIES, DELIVERING GUARD MAIL, US MAIL, AND AN OCCASIONAL PASSENGER. GENERAL DRILLS AND GUNNERY PRACTICE WERE HELD BETWEEN G.Q. AND FLIGHT OPERATIONS.

IN SEPTEMBER WE WERE AT INCHON. CORSAIRS FROM *SICILY* AND *BADOENG STRAIT* POUNDED WOLMI-DO, A SMALL ISLAND ATTACHED BY A CAUSEWAY TO DOWNTOWN INCHON. HEAVIES OF TF 77 BOMBARDED THE INVASION SITE; THE LSMR'S ROCKETED THE CITY WITH AN UNFORGETTABLE DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS. THE MARINE AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT ON SEPTEMBER 15 WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS. FROM THE BRIDGE ON *MT.KINLEY (AGC7)* GENERAL MAC ARTHUR SIGNALLED ADMIRAL STRUBLE. "*THE NAVY AND MARINES HAVE NEVER SHONE MORE BRIGHTLY THAN THIS MORNING*". SEVERAL DAYS LATER, *SMALL* WAS MOORED ALONGSIDE THE DESTROYER TENDER *PIEDMONT (AD-17)* IN FLYING FISH CHANNEL. I GOT PERMISSION TO GO ABOARD FOR SOME DENTAL WORK, RETURNING TO THE *SMALL* WITH FOUR LESS TEETH, SOON AFTER, DENTISTS ON *PIEDMONT* FIXED ME UP WITH A TEMPORARY PARTIAL PLATE. DEAD NORTH KOREANS FLOATED IN THE HARBOR; BURIAL ASHORE WAS NOT AN OPTION WITH THE RETREATING COMMUNISTS.

THE NEXT LANDING WAS TO BE AT WONSAN ON KOREA'S EASTERN COASTLINE. MINES IN THE HARBOR CAUSED SOME SERIOUS DELAYS. THE MARINES WALLOWED OFFSHORE IN TRANSPORTS AS THE *PIRATE* AND *PLEDGE* (MINESWEEPERS) WENT DOWN, SUNK BY ENEMY MINES. ON OCTOBER 25 THE MARINES LANDED, THEY WERE MET BY UNITS OF THE SOUTH KOREAN ARMY AND NONE OTHER THAN BOB HOPE, TO THEIR PROFOUND EMBARRASSMENT.

SMALL CONTINUED OPERATING WITH *SICILY* AND *BADOENG STRAIT*, WHICH WE NOW WERE CALLING 'BING-DING', FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

SMALL OPERATED IN AND AROUND WONSAN HARBOR AND THE EAST COAST, CONDUCTING FLIGHT OPERATIONS WITH *SICILY*. IN LATE OCTOBER WE WERE DISPATCHED TO SINK A FLOATING OIL DRUM. ON ONE OCCASION WE LEFT STATION TO INVESTIGATE A POSSIBLE MINE, THE OBJECT WAS IDENTIFIED AS A BUOY, SHARPSHOOTERS IN THE GUN TUBS SANK THE BUOY, AND WE RETURNED TO OUR SCREEN STATION. THIS WOULD BE TYPICAL OF OUR ACTIVITIES MUCH OF THE TIME.

IN NOVEMBER OF 1950, *SMALL* AND *TAUSSIG* ACCOMPANIED *SICILY* TO GUAM, IN THE MARIANAS, TO CONDUCT CARRIER QUALIFICATION FLIGHT OPERATIONS. WE RETURNED TO YOKOSUKA ONE WEEK LATER AND ENTERED DRY DOCK FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE. DISCOVERING A RUDDER PROBLEM, WE RETURNED TO SASEBO, REMAINING IN DRY DOCK UNTIL DECEMBER 7.

GENERAL MAC ARTHUR HAD BEEN PREDICTING THAT THE TROOPS WOULD BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS. NORTH KOREANS WERE IN RETREAT. THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION AND 8th ARMY WERE MARCHING TO THE YALU RIVER AND TOTAL VICTORY. ON 27 NOVEMBER, 100,000 CHINESE VOLUNTEERS ENTERED THE WAR AND AMBUSHED UN FORCES AT THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR, THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT THEIR WAY SOUTH TO HUNGNAM.

WITH OUR RUDDER REPAIRED, AND A FULL LOAD OF FUEL WE REPORTED TO COM 7th FLT FOR DUTY. WE JOINED UP WITH ALL OF OUR OLD FRIENDS, *SICILY* AND 'BING DING', ENROUTE HUNGNAM FOR FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF OUR SURROUNDED TROOPS.

IT WAS BRUTALLY COLD IN KOREA IN DECEMBER, SALT SPRAY IMMEDIATELY FROZE, HEAVY ICE ACCUMULATED ON THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AND HAD TO BE CHOPPED AWAY. NO ONE WENT OUT ON DECK WHEN THEY COULD STAY IN THE INSIDE PASSAGEWAYS. WHEN WE DID VENTURE OUT YOU COULD SMELL THE COUNTRY. KOREA STUNK, AS DID THEIR GARLIC-CHEWING ARMY. THE SOUNDS OF ARTILLERY FIRE GOT LOUDER AND CLOSER EVERY DAY. OUR ARMY AND MARINES WERE RUNNING THE GAUNTLET FROM CHOSIN TO HAGARU, KOTO-RI, AND ON TO HUNGNAM WHERE TRANSPORTS WERE WAITING.

BY DECEMBER 24 EVERYTHING THAT COULD SAIL WAS LOADED WITH SURVIVORS AND CIVILIANS ENROUTE TO PUSAN. THERE WOULD BE NO DUNKIRK IN KOREA. ARMY ENGINEERS AND NAVY UNDERWATER DEMOLITION TEAMS BLEW UP THE HARBOR FACILITIES AND ANYTHING THAT COULD BE USED BY THE CHINESE, WHAT A MEMORABLE SIGHT IT WAS. CERTAINLY, THE MARINES ENJOYED THEIR SHORT STAY ABOARD SHIP, BUT ONCE IN PUSAN, THEY WOULD HAVE TO REGROUP AND TAKE THE OFFENSIVE AGAIN.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY, *SMALL* AND THE TASK GROUP REFUELED FROM *CACAPON* (AO-52) AND HEADED FOR KOREA'S WEST COAST, CONDUCTING GUNNERY PRACTICE AND GENERAL DRILLS WHEN SECURED FROM FLIGHT OPERATIONS.

THE NEW YEAR ARRIVED UNNOTICED, NO CELEBRATION, JUST OUR REGULAR DIET OF SEA DUTY. DES DIV 72 WAS NOW OPERATING OFF THE WEST COAST OF KOREA WITH *USS BATAAN* (CVL-29). THE REPLENISHMENT GROUP WAS ALWAYS AROUND WITH FRESH AND FROZEN STORES, AMMO, FUEL OIL, AND THE MEDICAL CARE FOR ANYONE WHO WAS TOO ILL FOR OUR OWN PHARMACIST TO HANDLE.

SMALL ACTED AS COMMUNICATION LINK SHIP FOR TWO FRIGATES, SENT TO KOREA BY THAILAND, *HMTS BANGPAKONG* AND *HMTS SICHANG*. WE ESCORTED THEM TO YOKOSUKA, ARRIVING ON 30 JANUARY. LATER IN THE DAY, *SMALL* AND DES DIV 72 LEFT THE HARBOR ENROUTE THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES VIA MIDWAY IS. AND PEARL HARBOR.

SMALL WOULD BE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO SHIPYARDS FOR THREE MONTHS, BEGINNING IN MARCH OF 1951. THE OVERHAUL INCLUDED UP-TO-DATE RADAR AND ENLARGEMENT OF CIC (COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER). WE WENT TO SAN DIEGO FOR TRAINING IN THE USE OF OUR NEW EQUIPMENT. A BASEBALL TEAM WAS ORGANIZED, WE PERFORMED ROUTINE MAINTENANCE DURING THE DAY. DURING OFF-HOURS WE DID WHAT SAILORS DO...ENJOYED TIME 'ON THE BEACH'.

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1951 THE WAR IN KOREA WAS STILL RAGING, PRESIDENT TRUMAN FIRED GEN. MAC ARTHUR, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF U.N. FORCES IN KOREA. WE THOUGHT THAT THE LITTLE GUY FROM INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI DID'NT HAVE A FULL SEABAG. THE PRESS REFERRED TO THE WAR AS A POLICE ACTION AND THE PUBLIC WAS OBLIVIOUS TO THE HOSTILITIES, UNLESS THEY HAD A FRIEND OR RELATIVE LIVING IN A FOXHOLE. THE 'POLICE ACTION' WOULD BECOME KNOWN AS THE FORGOTTEN WAR. STATESIDE FUN WOULD END AND IN SEPTEMBER OF 1951 THE *SMALL* BEGAN HER SECOND TOUR OF DUTY IN KOREA, THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM.

ON OCTOBER 1 WE HAD JOINED UP WITH *USS RENDOVA* (CVE-114), *USS TINGEY* (DD-539), AND TWO CANADIAN FRIGATES, *ATHABASKAN* AND *SILOUX*. OUR NEW SKIPPER WAS CDR. R.L. NEYMAN. THERE WERE TWO ROK ENSIGNS ABOARD FOR TRAINING, SAE HYUN CHO AND YONG ON PAK. CTF 95, ON OCTOBER 2, DISPATCHED *SMALL* TO TASK FORCE 77 FOR REASSIGNMENT, WE PROCEEDED INDEPENDENTLY TO THE EAST COAST OF KOREA AND JOINED TF 77 AT 1630, ON 3 OCTOBER. THE BATTLE GROUP COMPRISED *USS ESSEX* (CV-9), *USS BON HOMME RICHARD* (CV-31), *USS HELENA* (CA-75), *USS LOS ANGELES* (CA-136), DES DIV 72 AND 21, *USS MANSFIELD* (DD-728), *USS SWENSON* (DD-729), AND THE BATTLESHIP *NEW JERSEY* (BB-62). WHAT A TASK FORCE; TWO AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, A BATTLESHIP, TWO CRUISERS AND TEN 'CANS. WE RENDEZVOUSED WITH THE REPLENISHMENT GROUP THE NEXT MORNING AND REMAINED WITH THEM ALL DAY, REFUELING AND TAKING ON SUPPLIES AND AMMO. IN THE GROUP WERE TWO OIL TANKERS, *CACAPON* (AO-52) AND *CHEMUNG* (AO30) AND THE AMMUNITION SHIP, *MT. KATMAI* (AE-16). AT 2100 *SMALL* WAS DETACHED WITH *NEW JERSEY*, *HELENA*, AND *HANSON*, DESIGNATED TASK ELEMENT 77.14, BOMBARDMENT GROUP. IT APPEARED THAT OUR PLANEGUARD AND ASW DUTIES WERE OVER.

OUR MISSION
FROM
THE SEA WAR IN KOREA
BY
COMMANDERS CAGLE AND MANSON
&
UNITED STATES NAVAL OPERATIONS: KOREA
JAMES A. FIELDS, JR.

The ships of Task Force 95 were to provide fire support, patrol, bombard and besiege the cities of WONSAN and SONGJIN. Royal Marine Commandos were on a six-month mission into enemy territory. They operated from an APD, (probably HORACE A. BASS) and the submarine PERCH operating out of KURE.

According to Cagle and Manson: Task Force 77 was relieved of all front line air support and given greater interdiction freedom to destroy RR tracks as well as bridges. There had been increasing evidence of re-use by the enemy of the northeast coastal railroads.

While the carriers had been employed in giving close air support to the front lines, the REDS had taken advantage of the respite to repair the fractured rail system and to use "shuttle trains" between the broken bridges. US Reconnaissance and Naval aircraft had photographed the activities.

Rear Admiral Tomlinson (CTF-77) and Major General Frank F. Everest (Commanding General FAFIK) made the decision to alter the pattern of attacks. A list of key highway and rail bridges was prepared. They would be struck on a systematic basis; a concentrated effort would be made to cut the tracks in as wide an area as possible.

CAPTAIN NEYMAN WOULD WRITE IN HIS ACTION REPORT...

"This was the first opportunity this vessel had had since commissioning to actually engage the enemy. Morale was particularly high and all hands demonstrated a keen interest in doing their jobs to the best of their ability."

WE ARRIVED OFF HUNGNAM ON THE MORNING OF THE 5th OF OCTOBER. USS SHIELDS (DD-596) AND USS EPPERSON (DDE-719) JOINED THE FORMATION.

BY ORDER REAR ADMIRAL LIBBY, SOPA, ABOARD HELENA, THE MISSION OF THIS FORCE WAS TO HARASS NORTH KOREAN FORCES BY BOMBARDMENT, TO DISRUPT COMMUNICATIONS BY DESTRUCTION OF RAIL LINES, BRIDGES AND ROLLING STOCK, AND TO INFLICT CASUALTIES ON SUCH ENEMY TROOPS AND POSITIONS AS POSSIBLE.

THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST VISIT TO HUNGNAM BY U.N. FORCES SINCE THE NEAR ANNIHILATION OF THE 1st MARINE DIVISION AT CHOSIN, AND THE REVERSE AMPHIBIOUS OPERATION IN DECEMBER 1950. THERE QUITE POSSIBLY WAS A REVENGE FACTOR IN THE PLANNING OF THE ATTACK. SHIPS ON THE FIRING LINE BOMBARDED ALL DAY. WE LEFT THE AREA ENROUTE SONGJIN AT 2345, ARRIVING AT 0640, ON 6 OCTOBER. WE COMMENCED SHORE BOMBARDMENT AT 0838, BREAKING OFF AT 1430, TO RESCUE A DOWNED PILOT.

IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON TO RECEIVE A CALL FROM A CARRIER WITH THE NEWS THAT THEY HAD 'A BIRD IN THE WATER'. I DO NOT RECALL RECEIVING THE TRADITIONAL ICE CREAM REWARD FOR OUR HUMANITARIAN EFFORT. NEVER THE LESS, WE WERE BACK ON THE FIRING LINE AT 1515, EITHER FIRING OR SCREENING UNTIL 1800, AT WHICH TIME WE DEPARTED WITH *SHIELDS* AND *HELENA*, FOR NIGHT BOMBARDMENT AT KYOZO WAN, SOUTH OF CHONGJIN. WE ARRIVED ON STATION, IN DARKENED SHIP CONDITION AT 2345.

WE WENT TO G.Q. AND FIRED ILLUMINATION FOR THE CRUISER *HELENA*, USING AN AIRCRAFT SPOTTER. *SHIELDS* WAS SCREENING TO SEAWARD WHILE WE TOOK ON TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY. WE HAD EXPENDED 427 ROUNDS OF 5"/38 AMMUNITION BEFORE SECURING FROM GENERAL QUARTERS. REPORTS ON ENEMY DAMAGE INCLUDED AN OIL REFINERY, AMMO DUMPS, FOUR BOXCARS, A RAILROAD BRIDGE SPAN, AND SHORE BATTERIES. CASUALTIES INFLICTED COULD NOT BE DETERMINED. WE LEFT CHONGJIN AT 0200 EN-ROUTE HUNGNAM, ARRIVING AT 0930 ON 7 OCTOBER 1951.

SMALL WAS ASSIGNED SCREENING DUTIES FOR *SHIELDS* AND *HELENA* UNTIL 1300, WHEN PERMISSION WAS GRANTED TO TAKE FIRING POSITION. ENEMY SHORE BATTERIES WERE ENGAGED OFF AND ON THROUGHOUT THE AFTERNOON, WHILE THE MINESWEEPERS CONTINUED TO SWEEP BETWEEN OUR SHIPS AND THE SHORE BATTERIES. AT 1755, SHELL SPLASHES WERE REPORTED OFF OUR PORT BOW AS ENEMY GUNNERS TOOK US UNDER FIRE. THE SKIPPER TOOK THE CONN TRYING TO AVOID THE SHELLFIRE, WHILE OUR GUN MOUNTS ATTEMPTED TO LOCK ON THE ENEMY ARTILLERY.

IN THE RADAR SHACK, I HEARD *HELENA* OVER VOICE RADIO, ORDER US TO 'GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE', OBVIOUSLY, THEY HAD TRACKED US INTO THE UNSWEPT AREA OF THE HARBOR. AT 1801, AN EXPLOSION LIFTED OUR BOW OUT OF THE WATER. POWER WENT OUT. OUR KNEES BUCKLED AS THE DECK ROSE AND THREW US INTO THE OVERHEAD. IT SEEMED LIKE SLOW MOTION, THE BOW REACHED ITS APEX AND SETTLED BACK INTO THE WATER, LISTING HEAVILY TO PORT. BATTLE LANTERNS PROVIDED LIGHT AS WE WAITED FOR MORE EXPLOSIONS, THANKFULLY, THERE WERE NONE. IT WAS THEN THAT WE BECAME MORE ANGRY THAN SCARED.. 'THOSE BASTARDS ARE SHOOTING BACK'.

DAMAGE CONTROL PARTIES RESTORED POWER, WE PUT OUR HEADSETS BACK ON, C.I.C. WAS BACK IN OPERATION. A RESERVIST WHO HAD BEEN REACTIVATED FOR THE KOREAN 'POLICE ACTION' WAS TAPING HIS WALLET IN CASE WE HAD TO GO INTO THE WATER.

SO/3c BOB VON ALLMEN, AND A FEW RADIOMEN WERE OUT ON DECK WATCHING THE GUN BATTLE DEVELOP WHEN THE BLAST OCCURED. THEY SOUGHT REFUGE UNDER THE TORPEDO MOUNT AS OIL, SEA WATER, AND DEBRIS FROM THE MASTS RAINED DOWN UPON THEM. VON ALLMEN CAME INTO THE RADAR SHACK TO SEE IF WE COULD REACH HIS BUDDIES IN THE SONAR ROOM BY PHONE, HAVING NO SUCCESS, HE LEFT FOLLOWED BY SO/2c QUENTIN SAYLOR, THE CAPTAIN'S JV TALKER, STATIONED IN CIC. THEY WOULD ATTEMPT TO REACH THE SONAR CREW BELOW DECKS.

FROM CDR. NEYMAN'S BATTLE REPORT:

The repair party isolated and limited the damage immediately. Main engines continued in operation despite temporary loss of suction forward due to ruptured oil lines. Volunteers and repair party personnel removed the injured from the damaged area to the forward dressing station.

IN THE RADAR ROOM, WE WERE TRYING DESPERATELY TO REACH THE SONAR CREW BY PHONE; I HAD TAKEN OVER SAYLOR'S HEADSET. THERE WAS NO RESPONSE. THE OPERATIONS OFFICER ORDERED ME TO KEEP TRYING. THE EFFORT WAS FUTILE. WE ALREADY KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED, THE SONAR GANG WAS IN THE IMPACT AREA, THEY CERTAINLY COULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED.

AT 1835, AFTER CREW'S MUSTER, IT WAS DETERMINED THAT NINE MEN WERE MISSING AND FIFTY-ONE HAD BEEN WOUNDED. *HELENA* SENT A BOAT OVER WITH MEDICAL AID, AND EIGHT OF THE MOST SERIOUSLY WOUNDED WERE TAKEN ABOARD *HELENA* FOR TREATMENT. OF THE NINE KILLED, SIX WERE IN THE SONAR ROOM, ANOTHER WAS A SEAMAN, A MEMBER OF THE SECURED GUN CREW OF MOUNT 51 (OUT OF AMMO), AND TWO WERE IN THE MESS HALL, ON DAMAGE CONTROL STATION. ONE OF THEM WAS *ALLEN SCHLUETER*, DC/3, WHO WOULD NEVER GET TO SEE HIS DAUGHTER, BORN JUST FOUR MONTHS AFTER HIS DEATH.

THE ACTION REPORT OF 5-6-7 OCTOBER 1951 SUBMITTED BY COMMANDER NEYMAN DESCRIBES THE DAMAGE:

"Explosion opened a hole forty feet long, compartments A306-L, FO tanks A-3F and A-508F were flooded. Bulkhead 48 was rolled up and bent in. First and Second Platform Decks were blown out and upwards. Main Deck was bulged at centerline of Frame 50 and wrinkled on port side at Frame 48. All steam lines, electric cable, ventilation and Fire Mains were cut or ruptured forward of Frame 60. All compartments and equipment between Frames 33 and 60 were damaged or flooded."

CREWMEMBERS WITH SLEEPING QUARTERS FORWARD LOST EVERYTHING THAT THEY OWNED. WE WOULD BE RE-ISSUED A FULL CLOTHING ALLOTMENT AND RECEIVE PARTIAL PAYMENT FOR PERSONAL ITEMS SUCH AS CAMERAS AND SHAVING GEAR.

AT 2125 WE CLEARED THE AREA, PROCEEDING WITH *SHIELDS* AND *HITCHITI* (ATF-103) ENROUTE SASEBO. INVENTORY WAS TAKEN OF ALL AMMO IN THE MAGAZINES. THERE WERE 400 ROUNDS OF 5"/38 AND 200 CASES OF 40mm. SEVERAL OF THE 40mm HAD EXPLODED AS EVIDENCED BY THE RUPTURED BRASS CASINGS FOUND IN THE MAGAZINES. WE HAD EXPENDED 1086 ROUNDS OF 5"38 AND 2848 ROUNDS OF 40mm. DAMAGED AMMUNITION WAS JETTISONED. NO ONE ON BOARD THE *SMALL* WOULD EVER FORGET 7 OCTOBER 1951.

ON OCTOBER 8, AT 0615, *SHIELDS* LEFT THE FORMATION ON ASSIGNMENT. *USS CARMICK* (DMS-34) JOINED UP LATER IN THE DAY. OUR DESTINATION WAS CHANGED TO YOKOSUKA, WE WERE STEAMING UNDER OUR OWN POWER, MAKING 10 KNOTS. ALL HANDS NOT ON WATCH ATTENDED A BRIEF BUT MOVING MEMORIAL SERVICE ON THE FANTAIL. AT 1134, THE FLAG-DRAPED BODIES OF *ME/3 JOSEPH F. MUNIER* AND *DC/3 ALLEN F. SCHLUETER* WERE BURIED AT SEA. BURIAL WAS NECESSARY SINCE WE HAD LOST ALL REFRIGERATION. IT WAS A SAD DAY.

THE MESS DECK HAD BEEN DESTROYED, COOKS AND BAKERS SERVED MEALS TOPSIDE. CREWMEMBERS WHOSE BERTHING COMPARTMENTS WERE FLOODED SLEPT ON DECK. I HAD KEYS TO THE RADAR COUNTERMEASURES ROOM, IT WAS UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT IT WAS A PLACE TO SLEEP. THE ONE THING THAT WE COULD NOT ESCAPE, WAS THE SICKENING SMELL OF OIL.

OUR GYROCOMPASS WAS INOPERATIVE, *CARMICK* WAS DESIGNATED COURSE GUIDE, *SMALL* WAS SPEED GUIDE AND *HITCHITI* TOOK STATION 2000 YARDS ASTERN. EARLY ON OCTOBER 9th, *CARMICK* WAS DETACHED AND *HITCHITI* TOOK STATION 2000 YARDS AHEAD. WE TRANSITTED THE SHIMONOSEKI STRAITS AND THE INLAND SEA. AT 2200 WE ENTERED THE OPEN SEA, STEERING 090 AND MAKING 8 KNOTS ENROUTE YOKOSUKA.

WE HAD ENJOYED TWO DAYS OF RELATIVELY CALM SEAS, PROTECTED BY LAND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE INLAND SEA. WHEN WE CLEARED THE STRAITS INTO OPEN WATER THE SEA WAS RUNNING HIGH, KICKED UP BY AN APPROACHING TYPHOON. ON THE MORNING OF 10 OCTOBER AN UNUSUALLY LARGE SWELL LIFTED THE BOW SECTION, BREAKING THE KEEL.

GENERAL QUARTERS SOUNDED, WAKING ME FROM A SOUND SLEEP IN THE RCM ROOM. I WONDERED IF A RUSSIAN MIG-15 HAD SPOTTED US DEAD IN THE WATER. THE SKIPPER BACKED DOWN ALL ENGINES, THE BOW LIFTED, TURNED, AND BROKE LOOSE. MOUNT 51 AND NINETY-FIVE FEET OF THE *ERNEST G. SMALL*, INCLUDING OUR NUMBER 838, FLOATED AWAY. THE GUNNERS ON *HITCHITI*, AFTER MANY NEAR MISSES, LANDED A SHELL IN THE PAINT LOCKER. THE BOW EXPLODED AND WENT DOWN, NO LONGER A HAZARD TO NAVIGATION, TAKING WITH IT THE BODY OF A SHIPMATE WHO WAS WRITING A LETTER HOME WHEN THE MINE EXPLODED.

THE SHIP LOOKED AS THOUGH THE FORWARD SECTION HAD BEEN SHEARED OFF WITH A GIANT RAZOR. WE LOST OUR ANCHOR GEAR, MESSING COMPARTMENT, BOATSWAINS STORE ROOM, CHIEFS LIVING QUARTERS, OFFICERS AND CREW'S FORWARD BERTHING COMPARTMENT, NUMBER ONE MOUNT, HANDLING ROOM AND MAGAZINE. FORTUNATELY, THE FORWARD BULKHEAD WAS HOLDING. AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO REVERSE ENGINES AND STEAM BACKWARDS TO JAPAN, BUT THE BENT OUT HULL PLATES ACTED AS A RUDDER AND THE BEST WE COULD DO WAS STEER PERFECT CIRCLES.

HITCHITI STRUNG WIRE TOWING CABLE AROUND MOUNT 53, AND BY MID DAY WE WERE BEING TOWED, STERN FIRST, ENGINES IN REVERSE AND MAKING 12 KNOTS. WE HEADED TO KOBE ON THE INLAND SEA. TEMPORARY PORT AND STARBOARD RUNNING LIGHTS WERE SET UP ON THE FANTAIL. MERCHANT SHIPS THAT PASSED WERE NOT SURE WHAT THEY WERE SEEING.

ON THE 11TH OF OCTOBER, WE WERE ORDERED TO KURE, AND THE HARIMA SHIPBUILDING YARDS. HARIMA HAD BUILT JAPAN'S LARGEST BATTLESHIP (18in. GUNS) IN WORLD WAR II.

USS EVERSOLE (DD-789) JOINED THE FORMATION AND SPREAD OIL TO CALM THE ROUGH SEAS. *HITCHITI* MOORED TO PORT AND CONTINUED TO TOW. AS WE APPROACHED IYO NADA, INLAND SEA, WE SECURED ALL ENGINES WHILE A DIVER WAS SENT OVER THE SIDE TO INSPECT THE DAMAGE. WE REMAINED THERE, MOORED TO THE ANCHORED TUG, *HITCHITI*. MOVIES WERE SHOWN ON THE FANTAIL THAT NIGHT.

BY 0500, ON THE NEXT DAY, 12 OCTOBER, WE WERE UNDER TOW AGAIN, ENROUTE KURE, AND AT 1300 *HITCHITI* TURNED TOWING DUTIES OVER TO TUG #3 AND TUG #4 OUT OF HARIMA SHIPYARD. THE PAIR ASSISTED US TO OUR TEMPORARY MOORING IN KURE AT 1423. IT HAD BEEN FIVE DAYS SINCE WE LEFT HUNGNAM, 130 MILES NORTH OF THE 38th PARALLEL, THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA.

JOSEPH EDWARD BROWN, IN THE MAY 1952 ISSUE OF 'OUR NAVY' POSES THE QUESTION... 'WHICH SHIP IN THE KOREAN WAR CAN RIGHTFULLY CLAIM THE TITLE, 'GALLOPING GHOST OF THE KOREAN COAST'? AUTHOR BROWN ANSWERS HIS OWN QUERY. '. FEW OTHER SHIPS HAVE A BETTER CHANCE FOR THE NOMINATION THAN ERNEST G.SMALL, HOW MANY COULD BE SLICED NEARLY IN HALF AND YET PROCEED UNDER THEIR OWN POWER FOR 600 MILES.'

THE CREW OF *THE SMALL* WOULD AGREE WITH BROWN'S REASONING. SMALL'S SAILORS SAY THEIR SHIP IS THE REAL GALLOPING GHOST.

LESS THAN ONE HOUR AFTER OUR ARRIVAL IN KURE, REAR ADMIRAL W.B. AMMON CAME ABOARD WITH HIS STAFF. A BOARD OF INVESTIGATION CONVENED, PER ORDER COM7TH FLT.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL 2030 THAT THE REMAINING BODIES WERE REMOVED FROM THE WRECKAGE, AND TRANSFERRED BY HEARSE, IN COFFINS, TO THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH HOSPITAL, FOR POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION. ON THE 14th OF OCTOBER, RD/1c JOHNNIE LUDWIG, USNR, WAS DISPATCHED TO YOKOSUKA, TO ESCORT HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW'S BODY, HOME TO TEXAS. HE HAD BEEN KILLED IN ACTION IN KOREA. WE WERE GETTING TO KNOW HOW TERRIBLE THIS WAR COULD BE.

TYPHOON RUTH INTENSIFIED, AND ARRIVED IN FULL FORCE EARLY ON THE 15th. TOWING CABLE AND WIRES HAD BEEN ADDED TO REINFORCE OUR MOORING LINES. EMERGENCY CONDITIONS WERE SET, ENGINES WERE WARMED UP AND ON STANDBY. GETTING UNDERWAY IN A TYPHOON WITH THAT SHIP WAS THE LAST ENTRY ON MY PRIORITY LIST, ANY PORT IN A STORM WAS MY PHILOSOPHY. A TUG CAME ALONGSIDE TO PORT TO KEEP THE SHIP BREASTED TO THE DOCK AGAINST THE FORCE OF THE TYPHOON. ALL 6inch MOORING LINES PARTED, BUT TOW CABLES AND WIRES HELD. WEATHER CONDITIONS IMPROVED AND AT 0900, REAR ADMIRAL AMMON RETURNED TO RECONVENE THE BOARD OF INVESTIGATION, THEY WOULD MEET DAILY THRU THE 17th OF OCTOBER.

SMALL WAS TOWED TO DRY DOCK ON THE 16th, AND ON THE 17th ANOTHER CREWMAN'S REMAINS WERE REMOVED FROM THE DAMAGED SECTION OF THE SHIP.

THE AUSTRALIAN NAVY CONTROLLED THE PORT OF KURE. THEY PROVIDED US WITH PLENTY OF BEEF AND MUTTON WHILE WE WERE WAITING FOR SUPPLIES. WE ATE STEAK FOR BREAKFAST, DINNER, AND SUPPER, IT WAS GREAT AT FIRST BUT THE NOVELTY SOON WORE OFF. WE PATRONIZED THE AUSSIE NCO CLUB, SPENDING THE EVENING HOURS DRINKING BEER AND SAYING GOODBYE TO MANY OF OUR BUDDIES WHO WERE BEING TRANSFERRED OUT TO FILL VACANCIES ON OTHER CANS IN TASK FORCE 77. STRANGELY, NEW MEN WERE REPORTING ABOARD FOR DUTY. THEY HAD BEEN CHASING US ALL OVER THE ORIENT. BUNK SPACE WAS AT A PREMIUM AND MOST OF THEM WERE REASSIGNED. WE WERE SAD TO SEE THE GUYS LEAVING, WHO HAD BEEN THROUGH IT ALL SINCE OUR MINING AT HUNGNAM.

ONE OF THE GUYS TRANSFERRED WAS ART MARDON FROM AVERILL PARK, NY. ART LEFT THE *SMALL* WITH HIS SECOND PURPLE HEART MEDAL; HE WAS FIRST WOUNDED WHILE ON THE MINESWEEPER *PIRATE* WHEN SHE WENT DOWN AFTER STRIKING A MINE IN THE HARBOR OF WONSAN. ART CLAIMS THAT LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE TWICE IN THE SAME PLACE. MARDON'S BATTLE STATION IN THE SONAR SHACK WAS GIVEN TO FRANK GRUBB, WHO REPORTED ABOARD JUST OUT OF SONAR SCHOOL. THE TRANSFER TO A NEW BATTLE STATION SAVED MARDON'S LIFE, BUT FRANK GRUBB DIED JUST TWO MONTHS SHORT OF HIS TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

WHILE IN KURE'S DRY DOCK, THE OFFICERS WENT TO OSO KANKO FOR FIVE DAYS R AND R, (REST AND RECUPERATION). MOST OF THE ENLISTED MEN WENT TO THE SPECIAL SERVICES HOTEL, IN THE SACRED CITY OF NARA. TAME DEER FORAGED IN THE PARK, WE TOOK RICKSHAW RIDES, PADDLED CANOES ON THE LAKE, AND ENJOYED GREAT MEALS AT THE HOTEL. THE JAPANESE RESIDENTS WERE FRIENDLY, THE CHILDREN VERY CUTE AND POLITE, AND DESPITE THE LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES, WE WERE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE QUITE WELL. THEY SHOWED A GENUINE INTEREST IN OUR FAMILY LIVES, AND OF COURSE, THERE WERE ALWAYS THE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USA.

MUCH LIKE SIR GALAHAD, SEARCHING FOR THE HOLY GRAIL, SAILORS SEARCHED FOR THE 'ULTIMATE LIBERTY'. THE 'GRAIL' WAS NOT TO BE FOUND IN NARA, OR IN KURE OR YOKOSUKA, AND IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT FOUND IN SASEBO...THE SEARCH WENT ON.

ONCE IN DRY DOCK, THE HARIMA YARD WORKERS CLEARED THE DAMAGED AREA AND WASHED DOWN THE OIL COVERED DECKING AND BULKHEADS. THEY CONSTRUCTED A TEMPORARY BOW FOR OUR VOYAGE HOME. THE BOW LOOKED LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN A SNOWPLOW AND A PEKINGESE. ON THE 8th OF NOVEMBER, AN INCLINING EXPERIMENT WAS SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED. THE NEXT DAY, DRY DOCK #2 WAS FLOODED WHILE YARDWORKERS CHECKED FOR LEAKS, WITH WATERTIGHT INTEGRITY GUARANTEED, THE FLOODING CONTINUED UNTIL THE SHIP LIFTED OFF THE BLOCKS. WITH THE NEW BOW ATTACHED, WE WERE TOWED OUT OF DRY DOCK, AND AT 0800 WE WERE UNDERWAY FOR SEA TRIALS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE FLEET TUG, YUMA (ATF-94). THAT AFTERNOON WE MOORED TO A PONTOON FLOAT AND REFUELED FROM KOSIO MARU.

ON NOVEMBER 10 WE GOT UNDERWAY, POINTED THE SNUB-NOSE BOW TOWARDS YOKOSUKA, ARRIVING ON THE 12th AT 0800, WITH ATF-94 NOT TOO FAR ASTERN. WE REMAINED IN YOKOSUKA UNTIL OUR ESCORT BACK TO THE U.S. CAME ALONGSIDE. THE MEN WHO MISSED OUT ON R AND R IN NARA WERE SENT TO ATAMI FOR FIVE DAYS.

ON NOVEMBER 20 WE WERE UNDERWAY AGAIN, IN COMPANY WITH *USS TORTUGA* (LSD-26), WE WERE MAKING 7 TO 10 KNOTS AND STEERING SOUTHEAST. WE ARRIVED AT MIDWAY ISLAND ON DECEMBER 1st, DISTURBING THE RESIDENTS (GOONY BIRDS), WHO USED THE ISLAND FOR A TOILET. WE REFUELED AND RELEASED *TORTUGA*. SET THE SPECIAL SEA DETAIL AT 1723, AGAIN IT WAS DECEMBER 1st, SINCE WE CROSSED THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE. WE WERE HAPPY TO SAIL OUT OF *THE REALM OF THE GOLDEN DRAGON*. WE FORMED UP WITH *LSMR DIV 32* AT 1800, ENROUTE PEARL HARBOR, T.H. HULA GIRLS, THE TRADITIONAL WELCOME COMMITTEE, WERE ON THE DOCK WHEN WE ARRIVED ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7th, 1951, THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL NAVY ATTACK. WE HAD TWO DAYS TO ENJOY THIS PARADISE.

WE WERE UNDERWAY ON DECEMBER 9th, WITH *LSMR-409*, *LSMR-412*, AND *LSMR-525*. I WONDERED IF THEY WERE THE SHIPS THAT ROCKETED THE NORTH KOREANS AT INCHON. OUR NEXT DESTINATION WAS LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA. WE HEADED EAST MAKING NINE KNOTS, WISHING THAT THE *LSMR'S* COULD GO A LITTLE FASTER.

THERE WAS PLENTY OF TIME TO REMINISCE AFTER LEAVING THE TERRITORY OF HAWAII. I THOUGHT OF CHRISTMAS PAST, AND IN PARTICULAR, THE ONE IN 1950. OUR TROOPS WERE CAUGHT IN THE CHINESE CROSSFIRE AT THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR; THE GRUNTS WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT THEIR WAY DOWN TO HUNGNAM. MY PROBLEMS WERE LESS PRESSING.

A CHRISTMAS PACKAGE HAD ARRIVED FROM HOME. A THOUGHTFUL AND ADMIRING LADY FRIEND SENT, THROUGH THE MAIL, A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH WHISKY, PACKED IN POPCORN, WITH AN AFFECTIONATE NOTE ATTACHED. THE LIQUOR MADE THE 9000-MILE VOYAGE IN PRISTINE CONDITION.

UNLIKE OUR BRITISH COUNTERPARTS, WHO WERE ALLOWED A DAILY 'RUM RATION'; ALCOHOL ON UNITED STATES NAVY SHIPS WAS CONSIDERED A CRIMINAL OFFENSE. ONCE ABOARD, I STOWED THE GREEN JUG DEEP IN MY LOCKER, THERE IT WOULD REMAIN, UNTIL I COULD DEVISE A PLAN TO DEAL WITH THE BEVERAGE... THE DILEMMA... I CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT THE BOTTLE DISCOVERED AND PUT MY GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL IN JEOPARDY. IT WAS TOO VALUABLE TO THROW OVERBOARD, OR TURN OVER TO THE CAPTAIN. I WOULD SMUGGLE IT ASHORE THE NEXT TIME THAT I HAD LIBERTY IN SASEBO. HOPEFULLY, THE OFFICER ON DECK WOULD NOT NOTICE THE BULGE UNDER MY PEA COAT. SOON WE WOULD MOOR IN SASEBO TO TAKE ON PROVISIONS, FUEL, AND AMMO. ASHORE I WENT WITH THE CONCEALED CONTRABAND, THE ENTIRE LIBERTY PARTY CLOSE ASTERN.

A SAFE DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE FLEET LANDING AND THE SHORE PATROL, MY ANXIOUS SHIPMATES ASSISTED WITH THE 'GRAND OPENING'. SCOTCH WAS NOT MY BREW OF CHOICE, BUT I WOULD HAVE ONE DRINK FOR ALL OF MY TROUBLES. THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM EMPTYING THE FIFTH OF REMAINING HOOTCH, EVERY SAILOR WITHIN RANGE OF THE ODOR TOOK A SWIG, AND PASSED IT ALONG. THE EMPTY GREEN BOTTLE, DISCARDED LIKE ORDINARY TRASH WITHIN MINUTES. THERE WAS A GREAT SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AS WELL AS RELIEF, MUCH LIKE, I SUPPOSED, THE MARINES FELT WHEN BOARDING THE TRANSPORTS IN HUNGNAM ON CHRISTMAS EVE, RESCUED BY THE U.S. NAVY. WE WERE PROUD OF THAT. SOME THINGS WE WOULD NEVER FORGET.

THE VOYAGE BACK TO THE STATES WAS BORING AND UNEVENTFUL. OUR DECK LOG ENTRIES WERE PRIMARILY, 'STEAMING AS BEFORE'; WE WERE MAKING 7 TO 10 KNOTS AND STEERING EAST. WE HAD LEFT JAPAN, THE LAND OF THE BIG PX, ON NOVEMBER 20. WE MOORED TO BERTH 18-B, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA AT 1000, ON DECEMBER 18.

THE U.S. MARINE CORPS BAND WAS ASSEMBLED ON THE DOCK, PLAYING SOUSA MARCHES AS WE SECURED THE SPECIAL SEA DETAIL. IT WAS A RECEPTION THAT MOST KOREAN WAR VETS DID NOT RECEIVE. THE UN-BOWED DESTROYER, *ERNEST G. SMALL*, HAD RETURNED HOME. LIFE MAGAZINE WOULD FEATURE SMALL IN A LATER ISSUE, 'DESTROYER SAILS BACKWARD TO FIND A NEW BOW'.

A COMMITTEE WAS FORMED TO ORGANIZE A SHIP'S PARTY, IT WOULD BE CALLED, '*THE LAST CRUISE OF THE DIRTY ERNIE*', SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 9, 1952, IN THE MARINE BALLROOM OF THE WILTON HOTEL, IN LONG BEACH. SADLY, MANY OF US WERE TRANSFERRED PRIOR TO THE BASH.

'MAC' O'DONNELL AND I WERE GRANTED LEAVE, WE HITCHED A RIDE TO TINKER AFB, WHERE WE GOT A M.A.T.S. (MILITARY AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE) HOP IN A B-26, TO WESTOVER FIELD IN MASSACHUSETTS. MAC TOOK THE TRAIN TO BUFFALO AND I RODE THE RAILS TO WORCESTER, THEN ON TO WEBSTER, MASS.

I WAS ORDERED BACK TO LONG BEACH ON DEC. 31 FOR TRANSFER. THINGS WERE NOT THE SAME IN WEBSTER, AS WHEN I LEFT, 17 YEARS OF AGE AND FRESH OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. I WAS GLAD TO GET BACK TO THE SHIP, THE SMALL HAD BECOME MY HOME...THE CREW WAS MY FAMILY.

BY THE END OF DECEMBER THE ENTIRE CREW WAS BEING PROCESSED FOR TRANSFER TO OTHER UNITS OF THE FLEET. SMALL WAS MOORED ALONGSIDE HER IDENTICAL TWIN, SEYMOUR D. OWENS (DD-767). THE OWENS WAS NEVER COMMISSIONED AND WOULD GIVE UP HER BOW TO THE 838. SMALL WAS DESIGNATED DDR-838 IN 1952. SHE WAS REFITTED IN 1961, HAD DISTINGUISHED SERVICE IN VIETNAM AND IN 1971 SMALL BECAME FLAGSHIP OF THE TAIWAN NAVY. HER NEW NAME WOULD BECOME FU-YANG. HER NEW NUMBER, APPROPRIATELY, WOULD BE 7...SHE WAS ONE LUCKY LADY.

FROM THE ACTION REPORT OF CDR. R. L. NEYMAN 11/1/51:

"WHILE IT HAS NOT YET BEEN DEFINITELY ESTABLISHED, IT APPEARS THAT THE MAJOR FACTOR WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE OCCURRENCE OF THE UNDERWATER EXPLOSION WAS A MISINTERPRETATION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SWEEPED AREA. THIS RESULTED IN THE SHIP BEING OUTSIDE OF THE SWEEPED AREA FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD PRIOR TO AND AT THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION."

COMCRUDIV 3 (USS HELENA) R. E. LIBBY RESPONDS: *"I WOULD STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE E.G. SMALL HAD BEEN PROVIDED WITH THE LATEST AVAILABLE OFFICIAL MINESWEEPING INFORMATION; THAT IT WAS COMPLETELY INTELLIGIBLE, AND THAT IF IT WAS MISINTERPRETED BY THE PERSONNEL OF THE SMALL, THE RESPONSIBILITY MUST REST WITH THOSE PERSONNEL...THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP CONTINUES TO REST WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICER."*

IN 1962, PRESUMABLY AFTER ALL INVESTIGATIONS AND TESTIMONIES WERE CONCLUDED, JAMES A. FIELDS, JR. WRITES IN HIS BOOK, 'HISTORY OF NAVAL OPERATIONS-KOREA'...

NEW JERSEY, HELENA, AND SOME DESTROYERS BOMBARDED THE HUNGNAM AREA FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE X CORPS EVACUATION, DESTROYED AN OIL REFINERY AND SOME AMMO DUMPS. BUT ALTHOUGH THE CLEARANCE (MINES) OF HUNGNAM HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL, NOT EVERYONE HEARD THE DETAILS AND ON OCT. 7 THE DESTROYER SMALL GOT OUTSIDE THE SWEEPED AREA AND WAS MINED WITH CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE AND HEAVY CASUALTIES.

FIELDS SEEMS TO CONFIRM THE OLD ADAGE, 10% NEVER GET THE WORD.

I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED WHAT OUR LIVES AND PERSONALITIES WOULD BE LIKE HAD THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 7, 1951 NEVER OCCURRED. THE MEMORIES ARE STILL PAINFUL, EVEN AFTER NEARLY FIFTY YEARS. PARTICULARLY PAINFUL FOR EUGENE E. SAUER, QM3/C.

ON THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 7TH GENE HAD BEEN UP IN HIS BUNK READING A BOOK, 'MR. ROBERTS'. HE HAD BORROWED THE BOOK FROM FRANK GRUBB EARLIER IN THE WEEK. WHEN GQ SOUNDED GENE PUT THE BOOK DOWN AND WENT TO HIS BATTLE STATION ON THE BRIDGE, RECORDING THE ACTION THAT WAS TAKING PLACE.

SOMETIME AFTER THE MINE EXPLOSION, GENE SOMEHOW GOT DOWN INTO 'O' DIVISION QUARTERS TO GET A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, HE ALSO RETRIEVED THE BOOK, THOUGH HE DOES NOT KNOW WHY. EXCEPT PERHAPS, BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT THE EXPLOSION HAD KILLED FRANK GRUBB.

WHEN WE RETURNED TO LONG BEACH, AMONG THE SMALL CROWD THAT HAD BEEN AWAITING OUR ARRIVAL WAS A WOMAN, DRESSED IN BLACK. SHE REMAINED LONG AFTER ALL THE OTHERS HAD LEFT. GENE ASKED WHO THE WOMAN WAS, HE WAS TOLD THAT SHE WAS FRANK GRUBB'S MOTHER. GENE WENT TO GET THE BOOK, REMEMBERING THE INSCRIPTION AND FRANK'S NAME ON THE INSIDE COVER. FRANK'S MOTHER SHOULD HAVE IT, HE THOUGHT. BUT, WHEN HE RETURNED WITH THE BOOK THE WOMAN IN BLACK HAD DISAPPEARED.

GENE FOUND IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO RELATE THIS STORY TO ME. HE STILL FEELS THE REGRET ABOUT NOT HAVING SPOKEN TO FRANK'S MOTHER AND RETURNING THE BOOK THAT HE BORROWED FROM HER SON.

A REUNION OF *E.G. SMALL* CREWMEMBERS IS HELD ANNUALLY. IN 1998, THE HOST CITY WAS SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS. ATTENDEES TRAVELED TO FREDERICKSBURG, TO CONDUCT A MEMORIAL SERVICE AT THE GILLESPIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, WHERE A MONUMENT STANDS PROUDLY 'TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY.'

ALLEN SCHLUETER'S NAME IS INSCRIBED ON THE GRANITE MEMORIAL. A WREATH FROM THE CREW OF THE *USS ERNEST G. SMALL* WAS PLACED AT THE BASE OF THE MONUMENT BY JACKIE SCHLUETER HOGAN, THE DAUGHTER THAT DAMAGE CONTROLMAN SCHLUETER NEVER SAW.

END

Photo # 80-G-435673 USS Ernest G. Small with temporary bow, November 1951



POSTSCRIPT

THE INVESTIGATION IN KURE

THE APPEARANCE OF ADMIRAL AMMON AND HIS STAFF UPON OUR ARRIVAL IN KURE WAS MORE THAN A LITTLE PUZZLING. NAVAL REGULATIONS WERE THE REASON FOR THE INQUIRY THAT LASTED SIX DAYS, WE SURMISED. WHEN THE INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETED I THOUGHT NO MORE ABOUT IT, AT LEAST NOT UNTIL MANY YEARS LATER WHEN I READ 'HISTORY OF NAVAL OPERATIONS: KOREA' BY JAMES A. FIELDS.

AUTHOR FIELDS MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE *ERNEST G. SMALL* WAS OUTSIDE THE SWEEP CHANNEL WHEN SHE STRUCK A MINE ON 7 OCTOBER 1951. I THOUGHT: HAD THE SHIP NOT STRAYED OUTSIDE THE CHANNEL PROVIDED BY THE MINESWEEPERS, PERHAPS THERE WOULD BE NO EXPLOSION, INJURIES OR DEATHS. APPARENTLY THE INVESTIGATION BY THE BOARD OF INQUIRY WAS ORDERED TO DETERMINE IF ERRORS WERE MADE IN THE HANDLING OF THE SHIP PRIOR TO THE EXPLOSION.

I HAD INQUIRED OF ALL THE SHIP'S REUNION ATTENDEES IF ANYONE HAD ANY INFORMATION OF ANY ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY AGAINST THE CAPTAIN AS A RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION. ONE FORMER CREWMAN THOUGHT THAT THE CAPTAIN HAD BEEN FINED. NO ONE ELSE HAD ANY CLUE AS TO WHETHER CAPTAIN NEYMAN HAD BEEN REPRIMANDED OR DECORATED. THERE WERE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND I WAS CURIOUS.

IN JUNE OF 1999 I PETITIONED THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE FOIA (FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT) FOR THE FINDINGS OF ADMIRAL AMMON'S BOARD OF INQUIRY. THE NAVY DEPT. FORWARDED MY REQUEST TO THE OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (JAG). THE REQUEST WAS DENIED CITING THE DIFFICULTY IN LOCATING THE SPECIFIC PROCEEDINGS THAT WERE STASHED AWAY IN NUMEROUS UNCATALOGUED BOXES. AFTER MY APPEAL OF JAG'S DECISION THEY DID FIND THE DOCUMENTS I HAD REQUESTED, AND FORWARDED TO ME ABOUT 150 PAGES OF TRANSCRIPTS, MEMOS ETC. RELATING TO THE CASE. INCLUDED WERE A LIST OF CHARGES BROUGHT FORTH BY COMCRUDESPAC AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY ADMIRAL AMMON.

THOUGH THE PACKET RECEIVED FROM JAG WAS QUITE EXTENSIVE, I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO CONDENSE IT INTO A FORM THAT WILL BOTH INFORM THE READER AND DO JUSTICE TO ALL PARTIES INVOLVED.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INQUIRY

THE INVESTIGATION AS ORDERED BY COM7THFLT WAS 'CONVENED FOR THE PURPOSE OF INQUIRY INTO ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH AN UNDERWATER EXPLOSION WHICH OCCURRED TO USS *ERNEST G. SMALL* ON 7 OCTOBER 1951'

THE BOARD OF INQUIRY WAS TO 'REPORT IT'S FINDINGS, OPINIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE TYPE OF EXPLOSION, DEATHS AND INJURIES TO NAVAL PERSONNEL AND THEIR LINE OF DUTY AND MISCONDUCT STATUS, THE LOCATION OF SMALL WITH RESPECT TO SWEEP AREAS AND RESPONSIBILITY AS TO THE EXPLOSION AND ANY RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINARY ACTION.'

THE CHARGES

IT WAS THE RECOMMENDATION OF COM7THFLT THAT COMMANDER ROBERT L, NEYMAN BE BROUGHT TO GENERAL COURT MARTIAL ON THE CHARGE OF:

- 1.VIOLATION OF UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE: HAZARDING A VESSEL
- 2.VIOLATION OF UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE: DERILICTION OF DUTY

IT WAS ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT LT. OSCAR RAPELYEA BE BROUGHT TO GENERAL COURT MARTIAL ON THE CHARGE OF:

- 1.VIOLATION OF UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE:HAZARDING A VESSEL
- 2.VIOLATION OF UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE;VIOLATING A GENERAL ORDER OR REGULATION.

IT WAS THE OPINION OF CAPTAIN NEYMAN THAT COMCRUDESPAC WAS QUITE UPSET AT HAVING LOST A DESTROYER TO THE WAR EFFORT, AND THAT COMCRUDESPAC WOULD MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF HIM. IN THE VIEW OF THE CAPTAIN, THERE WERE AMBIGUITIES IN THE DELINEATION OF THE SWEEPED AREA AS PUT FORTH BY COMCRUDESPAC TO THE TASK GROUP. AND IN CAPTAIN NEYMAN'S DEFENSE, IT WAS LATER NOTED THAT ADDITIONAL DIRECTIVES HAD BEEN ISSUED IN REGARDS TO 'ACCEPTABLE RISKS'.

ADMIRAL AMMON AND HIS STAFF LISTENED TO THE TESTIMONY OF TWENTY-FIVE WITNESSES DURING THE COURSE OF THE INQUIRY. THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND NAVIGATOR WERE ALLOWED TO MAKE STATEMENTS IN THEIR BEHALF.

COMCRUDESFORCES-FAR EAST, IN JANUARY OF 1952 INFORMS CINCPACFLT THAT IN REGARDS TO CHARGE #1 "ANY FAULT OF CDR. NEYMAN AND LT. RAPELYEA WERE ERRORS IN JUDGEMENT RATHER THAN DIRECT VIOLATIONS OF INSTRUCTIONS, AND FURTHER, THERE IS SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER EVIDENCE WOULD SUPPORT A CONVICTION AT GENERAL COURT MARTIAL."

REGARDING CHARGE #2: COMCRUDESFORCES RECOMMENDS LETTERS OF REPRIMAND BE ADDRESSED TO CDR. NEYMAN FOR HIS IMPROPER ACTIONS WHICH LED TO THE SHIP LOSING HER BOW. AND TO LT. RAPELYEA FOR HIS FAILURE TO MAINTAIN RECORD BOOKS OF ALL OBSERVATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF NAVIGATING THE SHIP.

IN FEBRUARY OF 1952, CINCPACFLT (ADMIRAL RADFORD) RESPONDS, CLEARING THE CAPTAIN AND NAVIGATOR OF ALL CHARGES, STATING THAT THOUGH THERE WERE DEFECTS, HE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT "IN VIEW OF THE FACTS, SMALL WAS AGGRESSIVELY ENGAGED IN COMBAT,WELL FOUGHT FROM A GUNNERY POINT OF VIEW AND THAT ERRORS IN JUDGEMENT MADE BY THE NAVIGATOR WERE DUE NEITHER TO DISREGARD OF INSTRUCTIONS OR NEGLIGENCE.'" IN THE OPINION OF ADMIRAL RADFORD IT WAS NEITHER NECESSARY NOR DESIRABLE TO TRY NOR REPRIMAND CDR. NEYMAN OR LT. RAPELYEA.

AFTER READING MY ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS, CAPTAIN NEYMAN WRITES IN A LETTER DATED 25 SEPTEMBER 2000 " IN SPITE OF WHAT I HAVE SAID IN THESE PARAGRAPHS, I STILL THINK THAT THE STORY YOU HAVE PUT TOGETHER IS AN EXCELLENT ONE, AND I COMMEND YOUR INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM IN GATHERING THE FACTS AND KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED."

THE CAPTAIN DID TAKE ISSUE, AND RIGHTFULLY SO, WITH MY TAKING THE LIBERTY TO ASSUME THAT JAMES A. FIELDS IN HIS BOOK 'HISTORY OF NAVAL OPERATIONS: KOREA' WAS, IN MY WORDS, 'CONFIRMING THE OLD ADAGE THAT 10% NEVER GET THE WORD' CONCERNING THE DETAILS OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SWEEPED AREA AT HUNGNAM. THE CAPTAIN OBVIOUSLY 'HEARD THE DETAILS'. AND IN HIS TESTIMONY AND SUBSEQUENT EXONERATION OF ALL CHARGES DID PROVE THAT AMBIGUITIES DID EXIST IN THE DIRECTIVES UNDER WHICH HE WAS EXPECTED TO CONDUCT OPERATIONS. CAPTAIN NEYMAN DID INDEED GET THE WORD, UNFORTUNATELY THE WORD WAS NOT CLEAR.

