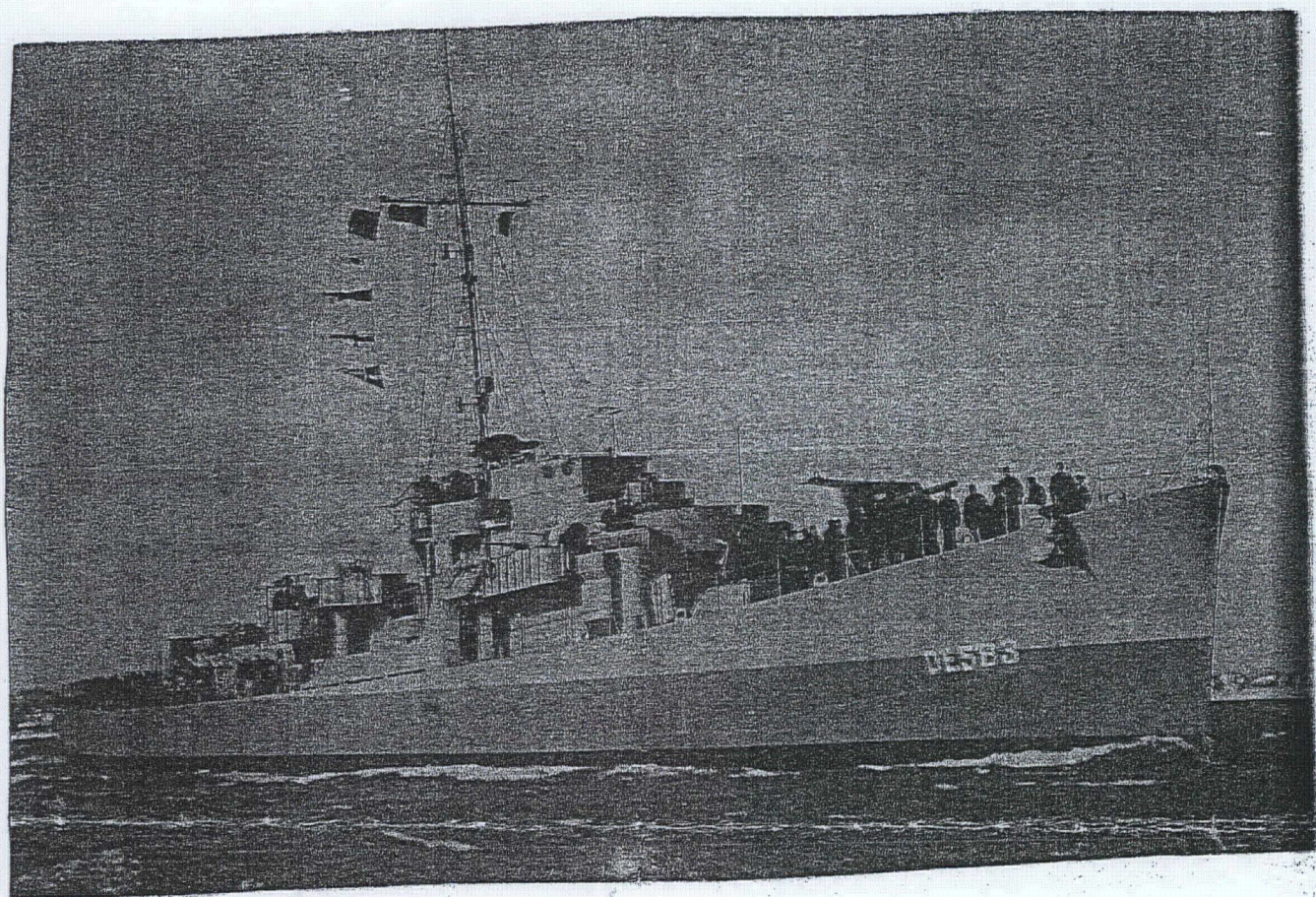


## STEPHEN MILLIKIN PERSONAL SUMMARY

Born February 20, 1926 in Richmond, Virginia. Grew up in Halifax, N.C. Graduated from Weldon High School in 1943. Spent summer and fall of 1943 at N.C. State. Order of St. Patrick. Active duty U.S. Navy 1944-46 in Pacific Theatre, primarily around the Philippines and Okinawa, at Seventh Fleet Headquarters and aboard the USS George A. Johnson, DE583. Awarded seven wartime service medals. Entered UNC-CH September 1946. B.S. in Commerce 1949. Zeta Psi Fraternity. Honor Council. Student Legislature. Budget Committee. University Safety Committee. Order of the Grail. J.D. with Honors 1952. Associate Editor N.C. Law Review. Order of the Coif. Phi Delta Phi. Trial attorney with Smith Moore LLP and predecessor law firms in Greensboro since 1952. Admitted to practice in all North Carolina courts, in the United States District Court for the Middle District, the Eastern District, and the Western District of North Carolina, in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in the United States Tax Court, and in the United States Supreme Court. Member Greensboro, North Carolina, and American Bar Associations; N.C. Courts Commission; N.C. Association of Defense Attorneys; International Association of Defense Counsel; Defense Research Institute; Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers. Advocate, American Board of Trial Advocates. Permanent member of Federal Judicial Conference for the Fourth Circuit. Past president UNC Law Alumni Association. Past President Eighteenth District Bar Association. Active with West Market Street United Methodist Church; Greensboro Civitan; American Heart Association; Celestial Cotillion; Greensboro Country Club; Veterans of Foreign Wars; American Legion; The National Society, Sons of the American Revolution; Board of Visitors, Greensboro College; and Board of Visitors, Oak Ridge Military Academy. Happily married to Sally Kittles Millikin since March 30, 1974. Three children, Leslie, Steve, Jr., and John; two stepchildren: Lynne Daniel and Marty Blackmon; one grandchild and four step-grandchildren.







## I. LOOKING BACK

### FROM THE CHART OF "THE WAR CRUISE OF THE USS GEORGE A. JOHNSON (DE 583)" (Legend and Statistics)

#### Legend

Attack by German Dive Bombers 7/8/44  
Attack by Japanese Kamikaze Planes 1/10/45  
Participated in Lingayan Gulf Invasion 1/9/45  
Participated in San Antonio Landing 1/29/45  
Became Admiral Kincaid's Personal Escort 8/27/45  
First DE in History to Enter Yangtze to Shanghai 9/15/45  
Hunter Killer Group sank 3 subs 8/7/45  
Crossed Equator - Initiated Pollywogs to Shellbacks 9/13/44

#### Statistics

Commissioned 15 April 1944. Total miles steamed 115,000.  
Ship named after Pvt. George Alfred Johnson, Marine hero killed  
on Tulagi, Soloman Islands  
Received commendation from Com. Phil Seafron for outstanding  
work done in escorting LOK Convoy #8 through dangerous  
enemy waters while under severe battering from perilous typhoon

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The USS George A. Johnson was a destroyer escort (DE) of the WGT type, naval nomenclature for DE's having a geared turbine drive and 5-inch guns. This type of DE was 306 feet long, 36 feet 8 inches wide and had a mean draft of 9-1/2 feet. It was manned by 10 officers and 200 crewmen. From the book "Little Ships, Big War," by Cmdr. Edward P. Stafford, USN (Ret.), the story of DE 343, the Abercrombie, a DE identical to the George A. Johnson DE 583 comes this description:

"A destroyer escort . . . in effect was a 'poor man's destroyer,' capable of relieving the faster, more heavily armed, far more expensive destroyers of such chores as convoying slow transports, merchant ships or landing craft, screening the smaller and slower escort carriers, and performing anti-submarine patrols and searches. The destroyers thus relieved would then be available to join the growing first-line task forces of new attack carriers, cruisers and battleships.

To perform such a wide variety of missions (the USS Abercrombie, the USS Johnson, and other DEs of this same type were) fitted with twin oil-fired boilers and steam turbines capable of driving (the DEs) through the



oceans of the world at twenty-four knots. The main battery (was) two power-operated five-inch guns in enclosed mounts, one forward and one aft, both capable of engaging either air or surface targets. The five-inchers (were) backed up by two rapid-firing forty-millimeter twin mounts, also positioned fore and aft and also able to fire at anything on the sea or in the air. For close-in work there (were) ten 20-millimeter guns, designed primarily for anti-aircraft defense but also capable of being depressed to counter surface threats.

To locate enemy submarines (the DEs had) the latest sonar equipment, and to kill them there (were) a "hedge hog" forward, which could throw a circle of rocket-propelled, fast-sinking, contact-firing explosive charges far out over (the) bow, and aft there (were) four K-guns on each side to hurl conventional depth charges and racks to roll more over (the) stern. At (the) masthead, the most advanced radars (were) able to scan the sea and the sky in any weather, day or night. The latest communications gear (kept the DEs) in touch with fleet and force commanders, shore stations and the other men-of-war with which the (DEs) would be operating."

The back cover of the book referred to above contains this summary statement:

"Destroyer Escort 343. Named after a heroic pilot who lost his life at the Battle of Midway, the USS Abercrombie and her sister ships did the dirty work of the Pacific war. Armed with two five-inch guns, two twin 40-millimeter mounts, a sprinkling of 20mms, and a triple torpedo tube, the destroyer escorts were among the smallest combat vessels in the U.S. Navy. But size never held these fighting ships back as they escorted convoys, chased submarines, picked up downed pilots, lead the landing craft to the invasion beaches . . ."

Stephen Perry Millikin, AS, S 2/C, S 1/C, GM 3/C, Lt.j.g., Lt., USN, active duty 1944-46. 7th Fleet Headquarters, Leyte Gulf and DE 583, Philippines, Okinawa, Korea and China. Authorized service medals—Ribbons WWII. (1) American Campaign (2) Asiatic-Pacific Campaign (3) Navy Occupation Service (4) World War II Victory Medal (5) Philippine Liberation (6) Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (7) China Service



## II. LOOKING BACK TO WWII

After joining the Navy in early 1944 at age 17, and after training at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida, and at Great Lakes Naval Training Station near Chicago, I headed west from San Francisco to the unknown, touching down at Milne Bay, New Guinea; Brisbane, Australia; and Hollandia, New Guinea. I then moved on to the new 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Headquarters which was being established on Leyte Gulf near Tacloban on the island of Leyte in the Philippines, at a place recently taken from the Japanese. There I was assigned to the Beachmaster who had control and jurisdiction from the water's edge for some distance both seaward and inland. Leyte Gulf at that time was a primary staging area for the Navy. Ships of all types anchored there at one time or another, including battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and destroyer escorts. The 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet was under the command of Admiral Kincaid. In addition to Kincaid, other leaders of WWII fame were in and out, including Admirals Halsey, McCain, Spruance, and Mitscher.

A primary concern was transportation, from the ships at anchor miles out, to the shore, for officers going to Admiral Kincaid's headquarters or to the officers' club. There were no piers, only a sandy beach. Therefore, transportation to the beach from small craft hundreds of yards out was by either LCVP, a landing craft, or by an amphibious craft called a DUKW (pronounced duck), which operated on both land and water. Small boats would come to within several hundred yards of the beach and then the gap was bridged by either a DUKW or LCVP. For a time I operated LCVPs and DUKWs to provide this essential water transportation.

I am leading up to what is now an amusing incident. I was on duty with the amphibious DUKW one afternoon when a jeep approached rapidly and screeched to a halt in the sand about 3 feet from me. Out jumped a lieutenant who requested that I quickly transport Kincaid, a 4-star admiral, to an aviation crash boat which could be seen approaching in the distance. I complied promptly. After the two officers climbed aboard, I headed into the water to meet the oncoming boat. As the DUKW approached the moving crash boat, the steering cable on the DUKW broke. This adversely affected the maneuverability of this craft in the water. Rather than being able to approach the moving crash boat side by side, so that the admiral and his flag lieutenant could easily climb aboard the crash boat, the best that could be done was to put the bow of the DUKW up to the stern of the moving crash boat. This required the lieutenant and the admiral to climb over the seats and on to the hood of the DUKW. The water was rather choppy. It was difficult to keep the two craft one against the other. The deck of the crash boat was several feet higher than the surface of the DUKW on which the two officers were standing. Two seamen aboard the crash boat took the admiral by the arms to assist him onto the crash boat. Just as they did this, a huge swell parted the two craft by about 6 feet. This left the admiral without any footing. Before the two seamen could pull the admiral aboard, the admiral was kicking his feet in the water in frantic movements. He certainly thought that he was going to be dunked. If you can picture a 4-star admiral being held by the arms over Leyte Gulf, where the water is 50 to 60 feet deep, 300 or 400 yards from shore, you can imagine how absolutely frozen everyone was at that time. After kicking the water for what seemed like a long time, the admiral was pulled aboard on his stomach, which was a most undignified maneuver and position for an officer of his rank. I was petrified and thought that there would be repercussions in some form or manner. But notwithstanding what might have seemed at the time to be poor seamanship and poor treatment



of a 4-star admiral, my stuttering explanation of a broken steering cable seemed to satisfy the flag lieutenant and the admiral. Thereafter, the only repercussion was a severe kidding from the ensign and the crew members of the crash boat who I saw frequently. I never received any further word from Admiral Kincaid or his flag lieutenant so I assume that they understood the problem. Even so, it was a very tense few minutes and a most embarrassing episode for me at the time. There are not many Navy men, and perhaps none other, who can say that they almost dunked a 4-star admiral into Leyte Gulf.

A short time thereafter I was transferred to a destroyer escort, the George A. Johnson, DE-583, which immediately headed to Okinawa. I was aboard this ship in the waters around Okinawa when the war ended in mid-August 1945. Out of many exciting and tense moments in the Pacific, the episode involving Admiral Kincaid still stands out in my memory as one of the more tense moments of my Naval career.

Stephen P. Millikin, successively, A.S.,  
S2C, S1C, GM3C, Lt.j.g., and Lt., USN



### III. LOOKING BACK TO WWII

As a sequel to my memo involving the incident with Admiral Kincaid, when WWII ended in mid-August, 1945, the George A. Johnson (DE-583), on which I was stationed, went from Okinawa to Manila, and there joined a convoy which included the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Communications Flagship and several transports carrying parts of either the 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Armies from the Philippines to Korea. Thereafter, the George A. Johnson traveled behind a fleet of mine sweepers down the China coast to the mouth of the Yangtze River. The minesweepers were clearing this route of mines sown by our Air Force. The George A. Johnson then entered the Yangtze River and traveled to the Yangtze tributary, the Huangpu River, to Shanghai, China. There, the Johnson tied up abreast five other destroyers and destroyer escorts in the middle of the river. Other ships were tied up abreast both fore and aft of the Johnson. I recall the Johnson to be the third ship inboard of the six tied up abreast, looking up river.

Transportation was needed from the ships to the shore. The city was still occupied in part by Japanese troops but the Japanese had been ordered to remain in one part of the city while the Americans were allowed ashore in the unrestricted areas of Shanghai. Destroyers and destroyer escorts do not carry boats on board sufficiently large for the purpose needed. Therefore, an LCVF was requested from one of the transports that were present. The call went out for someone to operate the LCVF that was to be used by the six ships abreast. Apparently I was the only one with LCVF experience, so when I stepped forward I was assigned this duty.

The first trip that I made from the six DDs and DEs tied up abreast was after dark. When going from the six ships to the pier which was downstream, the current seemed to be running downstream toward the ocean in the normal manner. No one had advised me and I was not aware that the ocean tide affected the running of the river current. Therefore, when I started the return trip some time later, and after the tide had changed from going out to coming in, I was not aware in the dark that the current was running upstream rather than downstream as would be expected. If you have never heard of water running uphill, this is one place where it does. The tide not only causes the river to run upstream, the tide is of such magnitude that the upstream current becomes very strong and swift. So, upon leaving the pier with a load of Navy personnel, both officers and enlisted men, and heading toward the six ships tied abreast upstream, in the dark I thought that I was running against the current when actually I was running with the current. This almost doubled the speed of the LCVF. Oblivious of its actual speed and of the strength and speed of the tide going upstream, and thinking that I was running against the current, I had the LCVF wide open and running at top speed, which with the effect of the current, caused the craft to be going much, much faster than I knew. Therefore, when I was approaching the gangway of the outward destroyer, I cut toward the gangway in an acceptable manner and threw it in reverse. This had no effect at all in slowing the speed of the LCVF, and the front of the LCVF hit the steel gangway with great force, and with a very loud noise. The officer of the deck at the top of the gangway took cover. He obviously thought that the ship had been hit by a torpedo. The men aboard the LCVF were thrown down, but fortunately no one was injured. I was able to regain control of the craft quickly and swung it around in a circle and came up to the gangway from the opposite direction, which placed the LCVF against the current and allowed me to keep the boat under control. But there had been very little control when approaching with the upstream current because the tide was running so strong.



On many trips thereafter, there were no problems because I had learned what a 40-50 foot tide could do in causing water to run uphill. It was a real phenomenon to me to see the current of the river running toward the ocean at one time and then reversing direction and running upstream at another time. I would put the collision with the steel ladder of the destroyer as being almost as embarrassing an event as the incident with Admiral Kincaid.

Stephen P. Millikin, successively, A.S.,  
S2C, S1C, GM3C, Lt.j.g., and Lt., USN



#### IV. LOOKING BACK TO WWII

The chart of "The War Cruise of the USS George A. Johnson, DE 583," prepared by a quartermaster first class aboard the Johnson, contains this statement, among others:

Received commendation from Com. Phil Seafron for outstanding work done in escorting LOK convoy #8 through dangerous enemy waters while under severe battering from Perilous Typhoon.

I recall the Perilous Typhoon very vividly. It was the most frightening experience that I had during WWII in the Pacific, far surpassing any concerns that I had for an occasional kamikaze seen at a distance or from the not infrequent suspected submarine contacts by sonar. Rather than to attempt to describe the several days of typhoon weather and seas, I would here adopt the description of a typhoon that appears in the book *Little Ship, Big War - The Saga of DE 343*, by Cmdr. Edward P. Stafford, USN, Ret., which description I believe to be entirely accurate for the typhoon that was experienced by DE 583, the same class and type DE as the Abercrombie on which Cmdr. Stafford was stationed. Stafford's description is as follows:

In the early days of August *Abercrombie* hit the heaviest weather of her life when a typhoon sideswiped the striking force in the China Sea. It began on the midwatch of the first when the wind picked up to forty knots from the northeast and the cloud cover began to increase. By that afternoon the wind had backed around into the northwest, the sky was totally obscured by heavy, dark cumulostratus clouds at around four thousand feet, and the seas had built up to thirty to forty feet from trough to crest. The task group slowed to ten knots, spread out in cruising deposition, and headed into wind and sea, the ships rearing and plunging violently, the battleships and cruisers repeatedly burying their heavy bows and sending Niagras of solid water sluicing down their decks. The escorts bobbed and thrashed with a quicker, sharper motion, exposing yards of red bottom paint, their propellers occasionally racing, clear of the water. It got worse the next day with the wind over fifty knots and the seas ten or twenty feet higher, jumbled and confused so that it was no longer possible to take them consistently on the bow. Now the little ships began to roll as well as pitch and plunge. Men were catapulted from their bunks, and those on watch slammed into assorted unyielding metal structures all over the ship. *Abercrombie's* mess hall was secured. It was hard even to make a sandwich, and just as hard to eat it, given the necessity for constant bracing and hanging on with at least one hand. In the wardroom on the first day, the stewards had loyally rigged fiddle boards with holes for plates, glasses and silver; but at the first meal the filled plates leaped from their holes like prairie dogs and undulated down the long athwartship table, easily clearing the low partitions and distributing their loads along the way. The officers went on sandwiches along with the crew.



The watcher during those days was continually drenched with salt water, eyes smarting, binoculars useless. Most men below were sick in varying degrees, and all were miserably tired and uncomfortable. But it was toughest on the engineers. In the engine rooms they held tight and watched the clinometers as the ship rolled—40 degrees, then 45, then 50. On the midwatch of the third, she rolled down to starboard 54 degrees, paused ominously, then snapped back across the vertical and down to 50 degrees to port. In the engineering spaces, temperatures rose to over 120 degrees because the ventilators had to be closed to keep out the sea. Down there if a man lost his grip he could be thrown into solid steel machinery, which was not only hard but also hot enough to sear the skin. Nor was it comforting to remember that in the typhoon of mid-December in 1944, three destroyers had been capsized and sunk with very heavy loss of life; on the *Monaghan*, only six of the crew survived. On all three destroyers, the entire watch below was lost. Of more comfort was the knowledge the *Tabberer*, a DE of *Abercrombie*'s class, although dismantled, had not only survived but had been able to rescue most of the destroyermen who made it into the sea.

On one of the worst days I had the morning watch. I was holding tightly to the cluster of voice tubes at the center of the open bridge, keeping an eye on the lubber's line as the helmsman tried to stay within about 20 degrees of the ordered course, and could feel the toss and heave of the ship and the periodic rumbles as the propellers raced out of the water. The watch was tiring but tolerable. Then as the first light began to spread from the cloudy east, I felt a massive, moving presence high above my left shoulder, on the port quarter as I was facing forward. I turned to look and . . . my God, it was a wave! A great, black mountain of a wave, with white caps along its crest and towering twenty feet above the bridge, bearing down on the little ship. I braced both feet, circled the voice tubes with a full-arm grip that should have bent the brass, and yelled to Rice and Shiel to take cover. Just when it seemed certain that the whole huge hill of water would come crashing down to drive us to the bottom, *Abercrombie* rose like an express elevator and the thing slid harmlessly away below her keel. At that point I felt very foolish because I realized that similar mountainous seas had been coming up from astern all night; they had just not been visible in the Stygian darkness of the overcast night sea.

It was not until the afternoon of the fourth that the storm moved off to the northward, wind and sea began at last to abate and the sky to clear.

Whether the *Abercrombie* and the *Johnson* were in the same typhoon but at different locations, I do not know, but the experiences of the *Abercrombie* and the *Johnson* and the experiences of the officers and the crew on each were the very same. On the *Johnson*, when the ship rolled to starboard or to port more than 50 degrees, the betting was about even on whether it would or would not right itself. There were times when the



ship hung for what seemed a very long time before beginning the tortuous roll back to the other side. The strain on the ship was so great that its steel members screamed and shrieked with a distressingly loud sound.

It was either at the very beginning or at the very end of the typhoon that Japanese submarines were encountered. I cannot recall which, but I do recall that the efforts of five DEs working together to locate specifically and to depth charge the subs were in extremely rough weather when visibility was somewhere between very poor and nil and when no one went on the open deck without a life jacket and a line tied around his middle so that he could be hauled back on board if he were washed over the side.

Stephen P. Millikin, successively, A.S.,  
S2C, S1C, GM3C, Lt.j.g., and Lt., USN



## LOOKING BACK NO. V

### *GET YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE 66 (Steve Millikin did in 1945)*

The shooting war with Japan ended about mid-August, 1945, at which time I was aboard the USS George A. Johnson, DE583, in the waters around Okinawa. There was a high degree of uncertainty for about two weeks as to what might happen after Japan supposedly surrendered. Wartime precautions remained in effect for some time in the event that outlying units and outlying commanders refused to go along with the surrender message from Tokyo. During this time, the USS George A. Johnson was ordered back to Manila to join an escort force to convoy a number of troopships transporting U.S. Army units to Korea. I recall that the troops were either elements of the Sixth Army under the command of General Kruger or elements of the Eighth Army under the command of General Eichelberger. The convoy included the USS Rocky Mount, a communications flagship, which at that time was serving as headquarters for Admiral Kincaid, Seventh Fleet Commander. The Johnson drew the assignment and had the honor of being Admiral Kincaid's personal escort.

The trip from Manila to Korea was relatively uneventful, except for the uncertainty as to whether or not all submarine captains had received the surrender word from Tokyo, and except for the fact that some of the waters through which we traveled had been heavily mined. After seeing the troopships safely harbored at Jinson, Korea, the Johnson, still escorting the USS Rocky Mount, moved down the China coast with other DEs and destroyers, behind a fleet of minesweepers, which were clearing the route of mines. The mines that floated and that were not exploded by the minesweepers were exploded by 20mm rounds from the Johnson and other DEs and destroyers. We entered the Yangtze River and went into Shanghai by way of its tributary, the Huangpu River, where we tied up for two or three weeks. Japanese troops occupied the



entire city when we first arrived. They were ordered to withdraw to a restricted area to avoid trouble. Even so, there was some intermixing of American and Japanese military but with relatively few incidents. But one incident came close to home. A crew member on the open deck of the Johnson was struck by a Japanese bullet fired from shore but the wound was not fatal. He was taken to a nearby hospital ship and never returned to the Johnson. As a plus, the incident probably got him home more quickly. Shore leave in Shanghai was an exciting event. That's another story and its details need not be discussed here. But I will footnote a few comments about Shanghai at the end of this paper<sup>1</sup>.

The Johnson next headed back to the United States, arriving at Pearl Harbor about mid-October, 1945, and arriving in San Diego in early November, 1945. All hands were anxious to have leave to go home. Some of the old-timers were discharged. Most had some time yet to serve. I recall that only one-third of the ship's company could be absent from the ship at one time. By this count, one-third of the ship's company had leave from about mid-November to mid-December, the second one-third from mid-December to mid-January, and the last third thereafter. I was lucky and drew the time that included Christmas, and spent the better part of a 30-day leave with my family in Halifax. The travel from San Diego to Halifax was by train. I had a round-trip ticket and when the time to return to the ship arrived. I took the train on the way back to California.

There was a change of trains in Chicago and I recall that the train terminal there was overloaded with service people coming and going. Before I boarded another train in Chicago for California, I was approached by a man in a paratrooper's uniform with about 6 or 7 rows of ribbons on his shirt, indicating substantial time in combat in Europe. He was a tough-looking individual, but not much more so than most of the others milling around. Two other servicemen



were close by and the paratrooper sergeant said loudly in my direction that he was heading out by car for California and would welcome riders at no cost other than paying for the gasoline. I seized upon this as an opportunity to cash in the train ticket, pay for the gasoline, and come out ahead financially. I accepted the invitation to be the fourth in the car, two in the front seat and two in the back, with the paratrooper sergeant being the driver.

I was caused to wonder several times thereafter whether or not this decision would be a fatal mistake. The sergeant declared that he would take Highway 66 all the way and this he did. We traveled non-stop, except for brief, screeching stops, with dust flying, at numerous night spots and taverns along Route 66 to resupply the beer and at gas stations to refuel with gas. The sergeant drove the old car as fast as it would go. At times, the speed topped 100 miles per hour. How much more I do not know, as above 100, I closed my eyes and prayed. It was really a "white knuckle" trip. I suggested to the sergeant several times that he might want to slow down for some of the curves, but he let it be known that if I wanted to get out that he would slow down to about 50 for me to jump, but that he would not stop for this purpose. I chose not to bail out at that speed without a parachute, and chose also not to be left at any of the all-night taverns that the sergeant patronized on the way. He seemed to be familiar with Route 66, as he knew just exactly how to gauge the runs between places where he could refill the beer supply. The sergeant regaled us with stories of his exploits in Europe. It was his attitude that since he had survived the fighting in Europe that he surely would survive any automobile accident that might occur on the way to California. I was not so sure that any of us would survive the trip. It was white-knuckle all the way.

Thinking back over my nearly two and one-half years on active duty with the Navy, a substantial part of which was in the wartime Pacific, notwithstanding contacts with Japanese