

March 20, 1998
Re: Harold E. Gallagher
DOB: April 16, 1926

SUMMARY OF HAROLD EUGENE GALLAGHERS MILITARY SERVICE

APRIL 16, 1944 - JUNE 28, 1946

HEG NAVY REMEMBRANCES

I was fifteen years old when the Japanese attacked the US Navy at Pearl Harbor, HI. at 7:55 AM on Sunday, December 7, 1941. The next day the US Congress declared war against the Japanese. At the same time war was also declared against Germany and Italy who had been at war with England, France and a few other European countries since 1939. These wars are known as World War II (WWII).

I was in the tenth grade on December 7th, 1941. Many high school students volunteered to serve in the armed forces and on your eighteenth birthday all young men were required to register for possible drafting into the Army. The Navy offered a choice. If you enlisted for Navy service on your eighteenth birthday you were allowed to graduate from high school. I enlisted and was sworn into the Navy on my 18th birthday, April 16, 1944. I graduated from Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles, on Thursday, June 22nd. The next Monday morning I entered the United States Naval Training Center for basic training (boot camp) in San Diego, CA as a part of Company 44-401 (the 401st company formed in 1944).

Before being sworn in I had to pass a rigid physical examination. In that exam the man who weighed me recorded my weight without saying a word. He only shook his head in a negative way. He had good reason. I was six feet tall and only weighed 117 pounds. Before I graduated from boot camp my mother came to visit me. She did not recognize me as our company filed into the visitor's assembly room because my head was shaved, I had lost weight and I was very sunburned.

After four months of boot camp I was sent by railroad train to a Signal School at Bainbridge Naval Training Center not far from the town of Havre de Grace, MD. The train trip lasted about a week and I was so sick and constipated that I was unable to eat, my skin color was greenish and I was so weak I could hardly lift my belongings stuffed into a canvas seabag that was wrapped in a canvas hammock that we could use if no bunk or rack were available. These were carried on your shoulder.

I arrived a Bainbridge in October and all the fall season leaves were beautiful! The training was interesting and I learned to transmit messages by hand held semaphore flags, yardarm signal flags, and Morse code by signal light lamps. Bainbridge was close enough to Baltimore, Philadelphia, NYC and Washington, D.C. that I had frequent weekend liberties to them. I have a special memory of Washington, D.C.: A friend of my mother took me to the Lincoln Memorial about 11:00 PM on a snowy Christmas Eve, 1944. He stayed in his car while I walked alone up the steps to the statue of the seated Abraham

Lincoln. Alone in the Memorial I read quotes from his life engraved in marble, studied his engraved face and remembered his life. I was so touched and so thankful my driver friend said he would wait in the car so I could be alone in the Memorial.

I graduated from Signal School with the rank of Signalman Third Class which was the equivalent of an Army buck sergeant. We were offered a choice of what kind of ship we would like to be assigned to. Three of my classmate friends wanted me to choose with them a heavy cruiser. That was my second choice. Because my two old brothers, Charles and Leon, were in the Army Air Corps I wanted my first choice to be an aircraft carrier. All four of us got our first choice. My three friends were assigned to the heavy cruiser, Chicago. I was assigned to an Essex Class carrier, the USS Antietam (CV36). It was a fortunate choice for me. The signal bridge of the cruiser Chicago was hit by a Japanese kamikaze pilot and plane and my friends were killed.

I boarded the newly built Antietam in Philadelphia. Our shakedown cruise into the Caribbean was to test the readiness of the ship, search for German submarines and to give us liberty parties in Cuba. Later we went through the Panama Canal into the Pacific Ocean on our way to San Diego, CA. On the way to Diego the word was passed that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died.

From San Diego we sailed to Pearl Harbor to take on stores, ammunition and for the signal bridge to receive secret equipment and training where we could receive signals at night that you could not see without the use of secret lenses on the signal lights and glasses we wore. At sea at night we knew to use the equipment and glasses when the signal "Nancy Hanks" (Lincoln's mother) twice to the radio shacks of the rest of the fleet.

The invasion of Japan was set for the fall of 1945. In preparation our carrier cruised off the coast of China so our planes could make training attacks against Japanese troops based in China. The dropping of the atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused the Japanese to surrender and the invasion did not take place.

A victory parade of warships into Tokyo Bay was arranged. Because of our Captain's outstanding was record he was chosen to lead the parade into the bay. On our way to rendezvous with the fleet for the parade, the Antietam developed some engine problem that caused us to detour to Pearl Harbor for repairs. I had the midwatch that night (midnight to 4 AM) and I watched our Captain pace his bridge for those four hours and probably before and after. Our Captain's great disappointment proved to be a real blessing for the crew because those in the victory parade anchored in Tokyo Bay for several boring months while the Antietam offered us liberty in ports like Manila, P. I., Yokosuka, Japan, Tsingtao, China, Hong Kong, and a week's leave in Shanghai.

During WWII one stayed at sea (or foreign naval station) until severely wounded or his ship had to return to the US

teacher, mostly on the Civil War.

While at Division Headquarters Marilyn Monroe toured Korea entertaining the troops. She had just married Joe Dimaggio, the New York Yankee hero. He was in Japan on a baseball tour. Needless to say I got to be here driver for about two days.
TOUGH DUTY!

That winter, 1953-54 General Oaks, wonderful and brilliant man, was assigned to Eighth Army Headquarters as Chief of Staff under General Maxwell Taylor. I moved back to Seoul with the general and his aide, Lt. Hadad, who had been a Forward Observer during the fighting. I had not seen white sheets, indoor showers, solid walls, and wood floors in over a year. I didn't really sleep for about a week-Cultural shock.

The tour of duty was sixteen months. I rotated and was honorably discharged from Fort Ord, August 24, 1954. Prior to leaving, the "old man" gave me a second rocker sending me home as a Sergeant First Class. There was one Master Sergeant and one Sgt. 1st class on the troop ship of 3000 men who were two year draftees. We were afforded numerous privileges. And the rank made a huge difference in the mustering out pay.

Within ten days I was back at LACC on my way to a teaching job in LA two and a half years later. I earned my BA at California State college- Los Angeles. Later after Louann and I were married, I earned my Masters Degree at San Jose State College.