



BILLY HARRINGTON
WORLD WAR II VETERAN
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Billy joined the Navy on February 6, 1945 when he was 17 years old.

He was first sent to Bainbridge, Maryland for boat camp, then on to Norfolk, Virginia for Destroyer School (learning about Navy aircraft in a very short time (several weeks).

Next, he was transferred to California and sent aboard the USS Wintle (DE-25) and deployed from San Francisco to San Diego and returned on a submarine back to San Francisco.

Several days later aboard the USS Wintle (DE-25) we got under way for

Hawaii (Pearl Harbor) where we refueled and supplied the ship with food, ammo, etc.

From Pearl Harbor we were sent to the Pacific (Guam, Siapan, Guadacanal, Tulagi, and many more).

Spent around two years involved in several different conflicts. SAW SKY LIGHT UP WITH FUNFIRE!!! Total time spent there was about two and one-half years. We spent Christmas in Pearl Harbor.

Then Orders to come home in late 1945. Got out after the WAR ENDED.

I spent three years on various jobs. My best friend came to visit me in September 1948. Around that time, I decided to go back into the Navy. I then drove to the recruiters office with ;my best friend and signed up with the Navy. They took my best friend but refused me back into the Navy (I was nine pounds overweight). I then lost that seven pounds in less than two weeks and got back into the Navy. I was then sent to Norfolk, VA and assigned to the Des Moines. From Norfolk we went to Fargo Building to Boston, Massachusetts and into the Navy and onto the Des Moines. Put ship into commission. I stayed until late 1951, went to the Mediterranean neighboring islands – however, we never fired any shots. From there we sailed to France, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Canary Islands, Malta, etc. sometime in 1951-1952 time frame.

Princess Elizabeth came to Malta, we piped her aboard. She became Queen of England. (Billy is the same age as Queen Elizabeth). A sad note is that Billy's younger brother came on board, was putting up awnings and broke his neck fixing the awnings. Billy was not on board when this happened, but developed a bad (sudden) headache and went back to the ship and headed to sickbay. This is when he found that his brother had the broken neck. His brother said “I just found out that I cannot fly.” He got well. As soon as I found out that my brother was ok, I headed back to the ship. I went from Second Class Seaman to First Class soon thereafter. I went from E3 to E5 quickly (in less than three years).

In the latter part of 1951, I got orders for the USS Missouri (BB63). I went to Korea for one year.

(1951-1953 time frame?) My brother was in Korea. I got permission to visit my brother and went back to the ship. We went up and down the coast knocking down (spotter helicopter) everything we needed to do. We lost one helicopter and two crew members. From there we came back to Norfolk (amphibious base) going through the channel (canal) (we did this in both directions) with six inches of leeway on each side of the boat.

Based in Virginia. Trained as fire fighting instructors. Sent to Fire Fighting School in Norfolk for one year. Had one year billet but stayed on through 1957 (five years).

Transferred to USS Monrovia APA- 31 Troop Transport. I was in charge of all landing aircraft on the ship. "I taught them everything they needed to know." I spent two years aboard the Monrovia. I was then transferred to the USS Francis Marion (APA-249) Was a plank owner on the Francis Marion. I advanced to E7 soon thereafter. I was responsible for "everything."

We went to the Mediterranean several times. Then the Lebanon crisis began. We protected the harbor for two to three days. Went through several landing procedures (beaches, bringing them in safely in waves of five to six boats at a time—I spent two years on that ship.

In 1963 I was transferred to Little Creek, Virginia for "shore duty" as a Boat Handler instructor.

Thirteen (13) chiefs (E7) were transferred. We all got orders to "ship out." My orders came through for a ship in Detroit, Michigan (taught training reserves). I met a nice lady there and we have been married 48 years.