

## FJL WWII

Following is the story of my activities immediately prior to, during and following, my term in service during World War II. I will fill this in with some of the correspondence and other documents.

Before getting into the story I want to state that I was not one of those people who entered the service to save the USA. I originally entered the service because I was high up on the draft list for being called up to active duty in the army.

Following my graduation from Union College in June 1942 I went to work for AT&T as a student engineer with the Long Lines division of the company. I was working in Virginia and West Virginia when I received word from my mother that the draft board in Herkimer was trying to locate me. I figured it was time to enlist in the Navy, in which service I could possibly get a commission. On August 7, 1942 I went to Washington, DC and enlisted in the Navy. On August 13, 1942 I received my commission. (App. 1 & 2) During the next several weeks I made preparations to go on active duty. I purchased my Navy uniforms and made preparations to leave AT&T. (Another story)

On Sept. 14, 1942 I reported to Naval headquarters in Washington, DC and commenced active duty. I was informed that I would be going to Indoctrination school at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. On Sept. 18, 1942 I reported to Dartmouth College (App 3&4).

My stay at Dartmouth was interesting, however other than Naval facts my college education was as effective as that at Dartmouth. It was interesting to see the different personnel who had been accepted into the Navy as officers. We had one Lt. Commander from West Virginia who apparently had been a legislator or held some such office. To me it was obvious he had some pull with the Navy because at times he could not respond to questions or quizzes in a manner which should be commensurate with his position.

I recall very vividly one time in a math course he had a failing average grade. When we took the final exam he received a very low failing grade. He commented that this grade brought up his failing grade to passing—he added the two together.

The irony of this story is that he was designated as an executive officer on a destroyer!!!! Heaven help the crew under his command.

On Oct. 23 I was notified of change of duty and on Oct. 28 I was graduated from Dartmouth Indoctrination school and at the same time I was detached from Dartmouth and ordered to report to Boston. On Nov. 1, 1942 I reported to the Atlantic Fleet Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet for training in Anti-Submarine Warfare. (App 5 & 6)

During my stay in Boston I roomed with John McManus who at the time was working for Stone and Webster, an engineering firm. I will never forget the number of racing magazines John had in his apartment. Some went back to the mid-eighteen hundreds. John was very devoted to his horses!!

One very interesting experience I had, or didn't really have, was a date I had with a Boston lady. We were to meet her sister and her sister's boyfriend and then proceed to the Copacabana. We waited for some time and when they didn't show up we decided we would just go out to dinner by ourselves to a local restaurant. That was the night the Copacabana burned and some 340 persons were killed in the fire. We were blessed!!

On Dec. 5, 1942 I was given orders to be detached from the Anti-Submarine Warfare school at the Boston Navy Yard on or about Dec. 10, 1942 and ordered to report to the Fleet Sound School in Key West Florida. With the same notice I was advised I would be ordered to be detached from Key West at a later date and sent to the West Coast Sound School in San Diego, Calif. Following my training at San Diego I would then report back to Boston for assignment to an escort vessel for additional training. (App 7)

On Dec. 10, 1942 I left Boston and reported to the Fleet Sound School in Key West, Florida. I arrived in Key West and reported to the Sound School on Dec. 14, 1942. (App7)

While in Key West I was ordered to perform "Temporary Duty as Junior Patrol Officer" which was noted as "Beach Patrol. The duty was only for one day as there were no ships in the area which would have required shore patrol. (Att. 8 )

My stay in Key West was interesting in that it was the first time I worked with real submarines. We were able to apply the knowledge we had learned in Boston to tracking and attacking submarines.

Other than that it was much like a vacation in that we had little to do evenings other than visit in town, which at that time was no great treat.

After the training period I was detached on Jan. 16, 1943 and was ordered to proceed to the West Coast Sound School in San Diego where I reported on Jan. 21, 1943. (App 7)

The activities in San Diego were similar to those in Key West. We worked with submarines and learned a little more about tracking them.

I happened to visit a French gun boat and got my first impression of how the French operated. There was always wine available and there were animals that were given the run of the ship. Much to my surprise one day in the wardroom I saw a chicken sitting on a sofa!!

San Diego was a very friendly city and had the most beautiful zoo in he world. It was great fun visiting the zoo from time to time. Nite life was rather good in San Diego as we did not have duty in the evenings. Needless to say we saw a great deal of San Diego!

While in San Diego I became friendly with a Lt. Harry Loeffler who was on R&R following duty in the Pacific as a dive bomber pilot. Harry was credited with having sunk a Japanese destroyer while he was attached to an air craft carrier. Harry invited me to go with him on a flight in a dive bomber, which I did. He took me up and showed me what a dive bomber could do. I swear he had me so close to some citrus groves that I could have reached out and picked some oranges.

My instructions at the West Coast Sound School were completed on April 3, 1943 and I was ordered to proceed to the Anti Submarine Warfare unit in Boston. I received a certificate of Completion of the Sound Material course. After a short visit in Herkimer I reported to the Boston Navy Yard on April 8, 1943. (App 7)

On April 14, 1943 I was ordered detached from the Boston Navy Yard and ordered to proceed to the Destroyers Atlantic Fleet at the New York Navy Yard where I reported for duty on April 15, 1943. On the April 16, 1943 I was detached and ordered to proceed to the USS Wilkes DD441 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard where I reported that same date. (App7). My duty on the Wilkes was temporary and was to be a convoy trip and to give me some practical experience in anti-submarine warfare. I also performed regular ship duties and had regular watches.

From April 16 to August 16 I served on the USS Wilkes as anti-submarine warfare officer and as a temporary officer aboard that ship. I was given orders on August 16, 1943 to report to the Norfolk Navy Yard. (App 9).

I kept a hand written diary of my stay on the Wilkes commencing on June 9, 1943, the day we set sail for North Africa from New York. The activities of the Wilkes for the weeks between April 16 and June 9, 1943 are found with my story of the Wilkes found in this folder. The Wilkes portion has pink tabs.

On Aug. 16 I was ordered detached from the Wilkes . (App 7)

On Aug. 20, 1943 I arrived at the Norfolk Navy Yard and reported to the Commander, Fleet Operational Training command and was ordered to proceed to the USS Lanning DE 159. I went out with the Lanning and returned to port on Aug, 27 to report for further duty. I reported for duty with the Destroyer Escort Shakedown Group in Norfolk (App 10)

I have no record of the short period following Aug. 27, 1943, however I must have gone out with the USS Keith DE 241 and returned on Sept. 5, 1943 . It appears that I then flew to Bermuda on Sept. 7, 1943 and reported for duty there. (App 11)

My time in Bermuda could well be split into two parts: 1) Duty in the ASW portion of the DD-DE Shakedown Group and , 2) Life off duty in Bermuda.

#### 1. Duty as the ASW officer in the Shakedown Group

Bermuda was the base for the training of ships crews in all aspects of operations. Ships constructed on the east coast, Destroyers and Destroyer Escorts, were assigned to Bermuda for their initial training. The shakedown period was for twenty-seven days after which the ships were returned to an East Coast Navy yard for overhaul and reloading for active duty.

I was assigned to the Atlantic Fleet Destroyer-Destroyer Escort Shakedown Group as the officer in charge of Anti-Submarine Warfare training of new ships. The ships were kept in Hamilton harbor and went out to sea daily for various training exercises. The duty consisted of going out early in the morning taking a ship out for ASW exercises and holding training sessions with the ship's personnel responsible for ASW duties. After the exercises we would return to the harbor, usually late in the day or early in the evening.

.In keeping with my duties I would leave the base very early in the morning and return late in the afternoon or early evening. The balance of the time was my own.

My experiences while out with the new ships were basically routine and I had little to do while on board until we arrived in the open ocean and later sailed into port. I was probably active for ten hours or so and inactive for two or three hours-coming and going

.I was originally stationed aboard the USS Hamul and remained aboard for several weeks. The old Navy infirmary center became vacated and many of us were allowed to stay there. I must tell the story of "Cockroach Castle".

Cockroach Castle consisted of several small wooden structures with many bunk rooms in which many of us slept. Every nite before going to bed it was necessary to shake out the sheets and blankets to chase out the cockroaches, of which there were many. At first it was a nightmare, but as time went on we learned to live with the cockroaches, they occupying the beds during the day and we during the nite.

One of my more memorable trips with a new ship was aboard a new French destroyer escort. The US ships kept a compartment in the forward part of a destroyer escort for ship's gear. The French kept that same compartment for wine!! It was not unusual to see cups and bottles of wine on the tables of the crews quarters.

One day I was out on a French DE and when we were returning to port I loafed around the ship. The captain of the ship invited me down to the officer's quarters to have an afternoon drink. I politely refused and went about my loafing. The next day the Commander of the DE-DD group called me and told me that I had insulted the captain of the French DE. One apparently cannot refuse a drink with a Frenchman!! Lesson learned.

Some time after the invasion of Italy the Italian navy had surrendered to the US and as a result we were fortunate in being able to utilize Italian submarines and crews for training exercises. Those submarines were not kept as neatly as our ships, however the crews were very friendly and fine to work with. There was a good relationship between the crews and ourselves.

Early in my assignment I was out to sea for most days of the week. As time went on and fewer ships were being built and sent to Bermuda there were many more days of free time, often to the point of having duty for only one day a week. This obviously led to the opportunity to enjoy the comforts and pleasures of Bermuda

An interesting experience happened while in Bermuda. The ships in training were scheduled to remain in Bermuda for 27 days. I happened to be on a Destroyer Escort on its 27<sup>th</sup> day which happened to be a day a hurricane struck. The Captain of the DE radioed the Bermuda base and asked permission to proceed to Norfolk rather than to return to Bermuda for one more day. Permission was granted and of we went to Norfolk.

While in Bermuda all officers wore shorts and short-sleeved shirts and short socks. Upon arriving in Norfolk and going ashore I was advised that I was out of uniform. Unfortunately I had no money and could not buy a regular uniform. The Admiral of the base noted my condition and invited me to his beach cavana where he proudly showed me off to his friends. It was a pleasant two day hitch in Norfolk

On Oct. 7, 1943 I was notified that I had passed all requirements for promotion to Lt(jg). At the time I was stationed aboard the USS Hamul. (App 12)

In Oct., 1943 I learned that the Navy was looking for officers to take a course in Naval Architecture at the University of Michigan. By letter of October 26, 1943 I submitted my application for this course. (App 13) At a later date ( Approx. Mid May 1944) I submitted another application for acceptance(See App 16).

By letter of March 31, 1944 I was advised that I would be expected to take a refresher course in Anti-Submarine Warfare work. This would presumably be in Boston upon my detachment from Bermuda in April or May 1944. (App 14)

## 2) Life Off-Duty in Bermuda

As I noted earlier there was a great deal of free time which allowed me to completely explore all aspects of Bermuda life.

In early April I asked Beatrice Crawford if she would marry me. She consented and told me that I would have to talk to her father to get his permission. I went to the house one afternoon and after chasing her father around the yard for sometime I finally caught up with him and he reluctantly gave his approval!! What followed was a couple of weeks of running around and making arrangements for the wedding.

In view of the fact I was Catholic I asked Beatrice if she would agree to be married in the Catholic Church. She consented and I went to the local Catholic Church and was informed by the Bishop that he could not approve of my marriage because as soon as we got to the USA Beatrice would leave me. He said she only wanted to marry me to get to the US. I immediately went to see my bride-to-be and suggested we marry in her church-The Church of England.

On April 13, 1944 I forwarded a letter to Captain Madeira, commander of the DD-DE Shakedown Task Group, for permission to marry Beatrice Crawford before I would be transferred out of Bermuda. On April 15, 1944 I submitted a report of physical fitness. By letter of April 15, 1944 I was granted permission to marry. (App 15)

After receiving approval from Captain Madeira we made preparations for a wedding to take place in St. John's church on April 24, 1943. I also asked Captain Madeira to extend my duty in Bermuda which he promised to do, but never did.

On April 24, 1944 Beatrice and I were married. Don Brockwehl was my best man and he made the arrangements for us to have a nice Navy reception outside the church. That evening we had a wonderful after-wedding celebration at Sherwood, the home of Beatrice. I have to say the rum flowed very freely that night.

Beatrice and I had our honeymoon, arranged by Beatrice's cousin, Billy Freisenbruch, at the Mid-Ocean club where we spent several delightful days loafing, playing golf and of course making love. We were the only guests at the club and ate and caroused at our leisure. In lieu of a menu we were offered anything we desired to eat!!! It was glorious to say the least!!

Unfortunately I was called back to base after several days and was told I would be detached from the DD-DE training base and would be reporting to the Boston Navy Yard for a refresher course in ASW.

Talk about short honeymoon.

Bermuda at the time of our wedding was noted for sumptuous wedding gifts. We received a great deal of china and crystal. One of Beatrice's uncles packed everything in barrels which I was able to bring aboard the destroyer.

Following the short honeymoon I left Bermuda and went by destroyer to Boston where I reported to the ASW School. BJL left Bermuda on May 1, 1944 and I assume I left on the same date.

The reason for mentioning the wedding gifts of china and crystal is that the ships on their return to the states had depth charge practice which was designed to test the ships construction. The charges were set to go off at a minimum depth thereby shaking the ships violently. Any faults in the structure and mechanical systems of the ship would be tried and if there were any they could be repaired on their return to the US.

'When I realized what was going to happen I immediately went to the area where I had the barrels stored and placed two of the barrels on my toes so that I could absorb the shocks. Fortunately when we unpacked the gifts we found only one crystal glass was broken!!!!

During the period I was taking the refresher course I was sent to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute on June 6-June 9, 1944 for training in Oceanographic technology. (App 16)

On August 2 1944 I submitted another application for the course in Naval Architecture. Receipt was acknowledged by Bupers and forwarded to Anti-submarine Warfare school in Boston. By letter of Sept. 14, 1944 I was notified of acceptance. (App17)

By letter of August 14, 1944 I was notified of a change of duty. Following the refresher course at the Boston Navy Yard I was assigned to duty as the Anti-Submarine Warfare Specialist Officer where I taught Anti-Submarine Warfare technology. (App 18)

By letter of Sept. 22, 1944 I was notified that I would be detached from The Anti-Submarine Warfare School in October, 1944 for duty in the graduate course in Naval Architecture at the University of Michigan. By letters of Sept. 30, 1944 and Oct. 18, 1944 I was released from active duty at Boston and was to report to the University of Michigan on or about Oct. 27, 1944. On Oct, 26 I reported to the Office of Naval Architecture. (App 19)

The course in Naval Architecture was interesting, however a great deal of what I learned I had already learned at Union College. There were some interesting courses such as plate design. The University of Michigan has an indoor water course used for testing various ship designs.

While at Michigan we stayed at a nice apartment near the campus and had our first child, Sandra Lee on April 22, 1943. Molly Halpin came to visit us for a short period of time. She was very helpful with Beatrice and the new baby/.

We were able to attend basketball, football and hockey while in Michigan. The stay at Ann Arbor was very enjoyable—no complaints.

By letter of June 16, 1945 a letter from Bupers notified me that I would be detached from the University of Michigan and upon further notice I would report to the New York Navy yard and report to the commandant for duty under instruction in the Industrial Department. I was officially detached from Univ of Mich. on June 23, 1945 and was given a few days leave and reported to the New York Navy Yard on July 8, 1945 (Att 20) .

Sometime shortly after June 1945 I was promoted to full Lieutenant.

On August 16, 1945 I was given orders to go to the Philadelphia Navy Yard for a special course in Damage Control. I reported there on August 17, 1945. I received a certificate of completion. (Att 21)

I remained at the New York Navy Yard until my release in December. My duties included studies in damage control. It appeared that I was being prepared to go to a base in the Pacific theater for damage control duties.

On October 15, 1945 I was in the US Naval Hospital in St. Albans, NY where I remained until November 7, 1945. (Att 22)

Our stay in New York was very enjoyable. We were able to find a very nice apartment in Queens and were able to do a little entertaining at times. Other than reporting to the Navy Yard for daily duty the rest of the time was mine.

By letter of Nov. 30, 1945 I was notified by the Commandant of the New York Navy Yard that I was to be discharged. By letter of Dec. 3, 1945 I was notified of my detachment effective as of Dec. 11, 1945 with leave until Feb. 24, 1946 at which time I was officially released from active duty. (Att 23)