

Harold Robison (DD-341) remembered by his daughter: Janet Oglesby



My dad lived in the New Castle area of Pennsylvania his entire life, except when he served his country in World War II. On October 1, 1943, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, a day before his 18th birthday. He had just started his senior year of high school six weeks before, and mentioned that the draft board would come after him once he turned 18. My dad was very small in stature, and when his mother took him to the train station she had the heart wrenching thought that her “little boy” who she remembered swinging on the lamppost with his younger sisters was going to war. His dad worked on the railroad and kept a daily diary of his trips. He also wrote in it when he received letters and when family members came home. All that my dad ever mentioned about basic training at Great Lakes was that the barracks were very cold. They were built off the ground and the cold air came up through the cracks in the floor. Being a farm boy the physical training didn’t faze him. The picture taken on November 5, 1943 is of Company 1516, Jay L. Jones, C.S.P. Company Commander. My dad had some vocational training in electronics in high school. After basic training, his Class “A” Service School at Great Lakes was for Fire Controlman which he completed on April 10th 1944. In his dad’s diary on April 9th was this entry, went to Great Lakes. On April 10th this entry, Harold graduated from firecontrol. I can’t find an exact date when my dad reported aboard the USS Decatur (DD-341), his dad’s entry, April 16th, Harold was home for a few hours. I believe my dad reported to the USS Decatur in Boston of 1944. In the Decatur history I found on Wikipedia, the ship arrived in Boston on May 2nd for brief overhaul and refresher training.

Also, from Decatur history, arriving at Norfolk July 2, 1944 Decatur sailed from this port on escort and training duty in the Caribbean Sea until the last day of June 1945 when she entered Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for inactivation. With the Decatur being home ported in Norfolk, he would catch a train home whenever he had weekend liberty. His photo album has pictures of Bermuda; he probably purchased a camera after a few paychecks on the Decatur. My dad mentioned several times about being in a hurricane in the Caribbean. On Saturday, September 30th, his dad entered, Harold home, back tomorrow. This is when he started school for 10 weeks at Norfolk for Elementary Fire Control. A certificate stated that he completed Elementary Fire Control School in Norfolk, Virginia December 21st 1944. Then December 22nd his dad’s entry was Harold came home this a.m. My dad took the USS Decatur to the Philadelphia Naval Ship Yards for scrap in June 1945.

Harold Robison a DD-341er...as told by his daughter Janet Oglesby

After USS Decatur he was transferred to the USS Wyoming (AG-17). The USS Wyoming's big guns had been removed and replaced with more five-inch and smaller weapons in early 1944, reflecting an increasing emphasis on anti-aircraft requirements. In July 1945 she became an experimental gunnery ship with what soon became the Operational Development Force.

Harold was honorably discharged on April 5, 1946 at Bainbridge, MD. He had to take an English test to receive his high school diploma in May 1946. It was a difficult time finding employment. His dad's diary in 1947 showed that he worked alongside of him on the railroad, but it wasn't steady. He saw an ad in the paper for television repair school in Louisville, Kentucky. He attended school for two years on the GI Bill then found employment with RCA in 1950, retiring from RCA 36 years later. He witnessed the change in technology from vacuum tubes to transistors to the digital chip and saw become a disposable, instead of repairable.

He married in 1954 and was the father of three children. His death in August of 2012 broke a marital union of 58 years. He was a Boy Scout Master and during his tenure 13 scouts achieved the rank of Eagle. He enjoyed traveling, camping, gardening, square dancing and bowling.

Though my dad was never shot at or had to shoot at anyone, he served and he was proud to be a "Tin Can Sailor."



In Bermuda

Manning a 40MM during WWII