

War Era Story Project 2012

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Current home town: London

Age: Not given

I had just finished my boot camp at Great Lakes, Illinois, and reported to Fort Pierce, Florida. It was out on an island with only one bridge to get to it; there were guards all around it. Our quarters were tents, eight men in a tent. We trained with scouts, rangers and demolitions. We took this training for about three months, when one morning the Captain told us we were moving out. Fifty of us were going to Seneca, Illinois, to pick up an amphibious repair ship and bring it down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

We boarded a troop train and headed up the line to Illinois. We stopped in Columbus, Ohio, my home town being Lilly Chapel, but everyone was restricted to the train – nobody on, nobody off. There was a little girl selling ice cream and I slipped her a note to call my mother and tell her I was just fine. She did, I found out later.

We arrived in Seneca, and our ship was ready: The *U.S.S. Pandeamus*. With a river pilot and crew, we headed down the Mississippi. We went down the river, dragging bottom several times, but had a pleasant trip. We pulled into New Orleans and put everything that was strapped to the deck back in place. We then headed for the Panama Canal and got through the Canal OK.

Heading for the Island of Samar, we got into a violent hurricane. We rode it out for six days and nights. Early the next morning, we arrived and I went topside and was talking to the chief. He said he saw the *U.S.S. Albacore*, a destroyer, pull in. What a coincidence; my brother served on that ship. I had not seen him in four years. I was going to ask the Exec Officer if I could go over to his ship, when I got a call to report to the gangway. When I got there, there was my brother coming up the gangway. I was cleared to go to his ship and got to spend the day with him.

When I returned to the *Pandeamus*, we were ready to get underway. We got underway and set off for the Island of Tinnin (sp?). When we got there, we saw a beautiful heavy cruiser called the *Indianapolis* anchored there. We all wondered what a heavy cruiser would be doing there? Later we found out they were carrying atomic bombs to be delivered there, good runways, to the Enola Gay and Boxcar.

When we heard they had been torpedoed and sunk, we were sent out there, but when we got there, all that was left was an empty raft. They had been picked up already.

As I reflect on this, I feel sad and proud to be a small part of what would be the end of a great war.