

War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Bob Sundin

Current home town: Mason, Ohio

Age: 85

Ed Slagle: U. S. Navy World II Veteran and Musician

Ed Slagle served in the United States Navy during World War II on the Aircraft Carrier *USS Franklin*. He also spent most of ten years in the "Big Bands." Included, were three years of duty in two fine Navy bands in WWII, from Trinidad in the Atlantic to Okinawa in the Pacific. Of the two Navy bands, one was with Ray Anthony, and a second group was directed by Saxie Dowell, who wrote songs that became famous, such as, "Three Little Fishies" (that "fwam and fwam all over the dam") and "Playmates." Ed played a baritone sax in Ray's band in the Navy for five months at the Royal Hawaiian, which was a submarine crew rest stop. The ship band was assigned to Okinawa, where it was when the war ended.

During Ed's tour in the Pacific in 1944 near the Japanese mainland, his ship was hit by a Japanese kamikaze aircraft. Fortunately, the ship did not sink; however, Ed sadly lost his bass saxophone and it remains at the bottom of the Pacific. Later, his ship finally made it back to Pearl Harbor for repairs without incident.

After Ray and Ed were discharged, Ray asked Ed to join his big band and Ed played the baritone saxophone and also played the lead clarinet when they performed Glenn Miller type music. Following his discharge, Ed performed with the band that covered engagements from the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York City to Denver, Colorado.

Later, while on the road with Ray, there were several gigs at both Coney Island and Castle Farms here in Cincinnati. Upon leaving the Big Band and road travel, Ed resettled in Cleveland where he pursued a degree in engineering at Case Tech (Case Western Reserve University). Taking advantage of the booming polka craze, Ed switched to a polka band, where he appeared on television station WEWS every Sunday for more than eight years.

He still performs with his clarinet for many musical organizations in the Greater Cincinnati area, including the Mason Community Band. He is the lead clarinet with the Dixie Ramblers (members of the Mason Community Band).