

William A. Murphy

William Murphy served in the US Navy as a Radioman 2n Class. He enlisted January 6, 1942 and was discharged December 4, 1945. While in the Caribbean and the North Atlantic he was assigned to the USS Greer DD145. This ship was originally a four stack coal burning vessel used during WWI (very rough riding with limited range). It was later converted to a three stack oil burning vessel.

The USS Greer was part of a convoy escort service. It was used as well in hunting German submarines between Spain, France and the Azores. In 1943 the Germans had organized their "Wolfpacks". This was a system for attacking convoys with their submarines. At this time the Germans had taken over the French coast. They used this area for their submarine pens. This was closer then operating out of Bremerhaven, Germany. Initially in January, 1943 the US took a beating from the German Wolfpacks.

At the time there was not enough air support cover during the winter. In one incident a German submarine was captured. It surfaced and surrendered. Some of the crew on deck put up a white flag while other crew members started toward the guns and fired at the USS Greer. The US convoy opened fire, shot the conning tower and rendered the sub unable to re-submerge.

Radioman 2nd Class Murphy was later sent to England to study direction finders for submarine hunting. The USS Greer was the first ship to be equipped with a direction finder. In addition Mr. Murphy was trained in German, Italian and Japanese codes which entailed the structure of enemy messages.

While in a convoy the ships would triangulate, thus determining the direction from which the signal was coming and the approximate distance. They were able to bomb a submarine in three minutes, not allowing sufficient time for the German subs to dive for evasive purposes.

Mr. Murphy also served on the Sonnicant (a yard tug boat) in the capacity of Radioman and Quartermaster. He served on the LCI 1167 (Landing Craft Infantry). This ship would position between land and the main fleet offshore as a relay station for communications. "Picket Duty" was another naval assignment for Bill Murphy. Three destroyers would escort a smaller baby flat top (air craft carrier). They would act as a screen to protect the carrier from German subs. During the escort the pilots would practice landings and take-offs. If a pilot crashed, the escort provided rescue. They had to work quickly before the plane's bombs would explode. The ships were well supplied for the most part. Supplies would run short when hunting German subs during the six week duty intervals. The ships cooks did an excellent job considering their limitations and shortages. Coffee in the navy was called "Joe" and was available 24 hours a day. The sailors' bunks were called "racks".

Each man would initially worry about how well they held up under the pressure and stress of war. They referred to this as the "Baptism of Fire". Bill Murphy felt that war was a great experience if you didn't get killed. He felt that it was good luck just to wake up each morning. It was standard procedure to swap ships with the permission of a superior officer. Men serving on a

ship which had been shot out from under them were able to trade ships and duty with someone in a less stressful duty.

Bill's last assignment was to a group with the objective of invading Japan. He was sent to Okinawa and then the war ended. He was converted to a port director unit. This duty entailed opening up harbors, clearing mines, providing communications and berthing of troop and supply ships for the Japanese occupation.

Mr. Murphy was discharged on December 4, 1945.