

WILLIAM P.  
WHALEN



U.S. Navy  
1942-47





This effort is dedicated to my late dear wife, Margaret, the mother of our nine children. As much as she loved her children, she also felt a deep love for the U.S. Navy.

Her service in the Naval Communication Service in Washington, D.C., during World War II was classified secret at the time. In her role, she plotted long-range radio paths for ships in the Pacific.

I only wish I could mail her a copy of this recollection of my career in the U.S. Naval Reserve. Love you always.





## INTRODUCTION

After much prodding from my wife and children over the past several years to put into writing an account of my service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, I have finally given in to their wishes.



Special thanks go to my youngest sister, Kathleen Andrews, CEO of Andrews McMeel Publishing, who, during a recent trip to Ireland, was the final motivator in urging me to complete this history of my Naval career for my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She provided me with journals to record my story from 1942 to 47, promised to guarantee its publication, and did everything but provide the content.

Special thanks also go to my sister Annabelle Whalen for her help in editing my text.

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**M**y service in the Navy began on December 7, 1941, when I learned the news that the Japanese had bombed the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor in a surprise attack, even as their leaders were engaged in talks with ours. I can recall that day as vividly as I can the events of September 11, 2001. At the time, I was playing bridge in the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity house at Kent State University with Bill Starn, Tom Johnson and Emmit Stopher, the university registrar. News of the attack ended our game abruptly. Anger welled up in all of us.

During the ensuing months of 1942, leaders of the military services were actively working to increase the size of the armed forces and calling into active duty those men already serving in the National Guard and Reserve Units. The draft was also initiated. The year 1942 was a difficult one for colleges

and universities, as enrollments suffered tremendously when students eighteen years old or older either volunteered or were called to active duty by their National Guard units. Those of us who remained in school were marking time, hoping for sufficient time to complete our degrees and graduate. As a member of the KSU Class of 1943, I began in earnest to look for a way to earn my degree before being called up for the draft.

Early in 1942, the Navy, Army, and Air Force initiated programs for college students to complete their degrees, provided that they qualified for the specific program offered. In the spring of 1942, I applied for one such program called the Navy V-7. Not only did you have to earn your degree to qualify for the program, you also had to qualify physically as well. I failed to qualify on my first attempt to join the program because of my flat feet. The doctor at the recruiting station, however, informed me that the condition was correctable. He advised me to roll my arches on drinking glasses while sitting at every opportunity to strengthen the muscles in my arches.

Determined as I was not to have to register for the draft, I performed those exercises diligently and returned three months later to the Navy Recruiting Office in Cleveland to enlist in the Navy. On June 22, 1942, I successfully passed all

requirements for the Navy V-7 Program, was sworn into the Navy, and then released to inactive duty until I would receive my degree in June 1943 at the age of twenty-two.

During summer break from Kent State in 1942, I looked for a job to help the war effort and was hired as a road brakeman by the Nickel Plate Railroad. After a week of intense on-the-job training, I was assigned to the division where trains ran from Conneaut, Ohio to Bellevue, Ohio, a distance of about one hundred miles. I liked the job very much except for my final trip between the two cities. In the dark of that early morning, we picked up additional railroad cars in the Cleveland Nickel Plate yards. Standing outside the train, I mistakenly had the engineer of the train back up too far to make a pick-up, and, as a result, he ran his engine through a switch and onto the ground nearby. Never in my life had I ever heard such language uttered by that engineer! After he cooled down, he ordered me to get the yardmaster and get his engine back on the track. The yardmaster, a kind old gentleman, sent the wrecker to lift the engine back onto the track. Believe me, the cab of the engine where I rode with the engineer and a fireman from Cleveland to Conneaut, a distance of seventy-five miles, was dead quiet all the way.

However, when we reached our final stop, the railroad yards in Conneaut, the engineer was nice enough to shake my hand and wish me good luck in my Navy career.

It was back to Kent State in the fall semester of 1942 with high hopes of completing my degree in June and then moving on to the V-7 Program. The atmosphere on campus was very subdued. Many of my fraternity brothers had been called up for induction, some to the Air Force and some to the Navy. In December 1942, the Navy issued a call for volunteers to fill a midshipmen's class at Northwestern University. I was fortunate to be accepted for this class on the condition that I complete a trigonometry course to fulfill a Navy requirement. After a meeting with the head of the Math Department at Kent State, I was assured that he would personally accelerate the pace of the course for me by adding additional tutoring hours at his home. In March 1943, I took the final exam in the course and passed. (I might add here that never in my entire Naval career did I have any need for trigonometry!)

In March 1943, I was ordered to report for active duty to the U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School at Northwestern University in Chicago. Tower Hall was our

headquarters. It is now part of Loyola University and faces the old Water Tower on the south side of Michigan Avenue at 800 North Michigan Avenue.

For my first thirty days there, I was rated an Apprentice Seaman; then I was elevated to Midshipman, USNR. Midshipmen's School was 120 days of intense classroom instruction and field training in seamanship, navigation, ordnance, and physical fitness. During our first company muster in Tower Hall, the instructor asked us to look left, then right. He then assured us that, "only one of you guys will still be here in August." Silently I vowed to myself, "I'm the guy. I'll be here." The Navy put the fear of God into you immediately!

I was assigned to a large room that housed eleven other guys, all recent college graduates and a few college graduates selected from the enlisted ranks. I was sitting at a large study table putting gear away in my locker when I walked Chief Petty Officer Harry Adams, a former assistant basketball coach at Kent State. He had entered the Navy five months earlier in a program designed for college coaches to run the physical fitness program for the Navy. He informed me that he wanted to become a commissioned officer through the V-7 Program rather than remain a CPO.

Life at Midshipmen's School was quite intense. The program had us scheduled every minute of the day from 7:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. Classes ran from 8:00 until 4:30, with a lunch break at noon. We had a two-hour break followed by dinner, study, and lights out at 10:00.

Physical fitness was a significant part of our training. We marched to and from the armory situated behind the Water Tower on Michigan Avenue. Calisthenics took place on the ball field. Swimming, life saving, and other fitness activities were part of the regimen. We had to pass minimum standards in these areas to complete the course. Seamanship was another course concentrated in a short period of time. We used personal yachts leased to the Navy for training, one of which was the *P. K. Wrigley* (property of Wrigley Chewing Gum Co.), as I recall. We were taught docking, flag hoisting, anchoring, rules of the road, knots, line handling, and so on.

An impressive young man taught us navigation. His teaching techniques made the subject matter clear and easy to understand. For example, he introduced our first class by having us look at a road map and asking us to picture the moon and stars as if they were points brought down to earth. We spent one day at the Chicago Planetarium observing all the stars and

learning how to use them to establish our position. From various yachts on Lake Michigan, we took star shots and sun shots.

Ordinance was another course we studied thoroughly. We were exposed to the various guns used on board ship, from small arms to eight-inch mounts. Ammo and loading procedures on all types of mounts were taught, as well as pyrotechnics and small arms. Small arms and rifle breakdown and cleaning were emphasized in great detail. We spent time on the range using our weapons and were exposed to armaments at the Navy Pier facilities.

Graduation from the Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School and the commissioning ceremony were very impressive. We were all commissioned Ensigns in the United States Naval Reserve on August 20, 1943, received our orders, and left Chicago for our different assignments. Graduation took place at the Navy Pier in Chicago. It is a Navy tradition that a newly commissioned officer gives a dollar to the person who gives him his first salute. You should have seen the mass of sailors from the Navy Pier waiting to render a salute to all of us new Ensigns that morning!

My orders instructed me to report for duty to the Commanding Officer at the Naval Amphibious Base in Little

Creek, Virginia. Here I would be involved in amphibious operations and given further assignment to such vessel as the Commander, Landing Craft, Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, Little Creek, Virginia, determined. For some reason, my reporting was delayed from August 20 to September 6, time that I spent back home in Ashtabula.

On September 5, I flew to Norfolk, Virginia on old PCL Airlines (Pennsylvania Central Airlines) and reported to the Amphibious Base the next day, where I was assigned sleeping quarters in one of those old Quonset huts with about twenty five other officers. I was initially assigned to LCVPs (landing craft, personnel) and LCMs (landing craft, mechanized). These are the two types of landing craft carried on board the large APA (assault personnel attack) transports. My small boat training lasted about a month and then I was re-assigned to training with the Fifth Beach Battalion. The battalion included several Beach Party Teams, each party composed of three officers, one of whom was a medical doctor, and forty enlisted sailors of various ranks.

Each Beach Party Team was assigned as a unit to an assault ship (APA), became part of the ship's crew, and, in the early waves of the landing, landed with the troops. The

Beach Party Team would set up the beach so that combat supplies could be landed to support the Marine or Army landing forces. We marked off channels for the landing craft, repaired damaged boats, set up communications to our ship, established an evacuation station to return the wounded to the ship, and performed various other duties. Our training for all of this took place on Chesapeake Bay, where we made practice landings, simulating actual assault landings and encountering all the functions that came within the domain of the Beach Party.

When the opportunity for a weekend pass came up, I took it and drove from Little Creek to Washington, D.C., with an officer friend. How did we get a car? Certainly not from Hertz or others! Supposedly, the car was owned by an officer who had gone to sea. Before he left, he had entrusted us with his keys. I think he bought the car for \$50.00 down and had no plans to pay the balance. We filled up the gas tank and headed for D.C. En route, we stopped at the Mine Warfare School in Yorktown, Virginia, where my brother Tom was stationed, learning about serving on a Navy minesweeper. We awakened him at 2:00 A.M. and got an okay from the officer of the day for Tom to join us for the weekend.

After little sleep and lots of bar hopping, we returned to our base on Sunday and parked the car for the next adventure.

In late November 1943, our Beach Party was assigned to the USS *Custer* APA-40 at Norfolk, Virginia. We boarded the *Custer* and finally were on the high seas headed for San Diego and ports west. However, we got only as far as Charleston, South Carolina when we had an accident at sea. We were in a zigzag mode with four other ships when our bow was hit in a collision and extensively damaged. We were ordered to the Charleston Navy Yard for repair. The entire Beach Party was detached from the USS *Custer* at Charleston and ordered to report to the CO of the USS *Sheridan* APA-51 in San Diego. We had to travel by train across the country in coach accommodations with no place to sleep. It felt like a cattle train. Only sandwiches and drinks were provided at various stops en route. Eventually, we reached San Diego with all hands present and accounted for. I never believed we could keep forty sailors packed together in a train across the country for five days!

We were very happy to finally get off that train. Awaiting us nearby was the USS *Sheridan* docked at Pier 1, Naval Repair Base, San Diego. I don't recall the exact date of

our arrival but it was probably around the 20th of December, 1943. I can recall marching the entire group of men in the Beach Party to the *Sheridan* and reporting for duty. The *Sheridan* had returned to San Diego after a very tough landing at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, our first target in the island-hopping assault to Japan. I also learned that the *Sheridan* had left four officers and 43 men of their Beach Party at Tarawa when they left on November 24, 1943.

From January 1 to January 5, 1944, we were involved in practice landings and gunnery exercises for all guns at San Clemente Island, California. For the next eight days, we made preparations for an amphibious operation and got underway to Lahaina Roads, Maui. En route, we had several days of target practice for all different guns, in addition to fire and abandon-ship drills.

On January 31, 1944, we arrived at Kwajalein Atoll and used our boats to transfer troops to landing ship tanks (LST), large amphibious ships that could carry many tanks, trucks, and other heavy equipment. They had a shallow draft and could beach and open their bow doors to discharge cargo. Our Beach Party was moved onto an LST, too, and we landed the next day on Red Beach at Roi and Namur Islands.

I was very excited to make my first combat landing. Heavy shelling of both islands by our forces the previous day did a good job of neutralizing the enemy. We encountered only scattered sniper fire on Red Beach and commenced to unloading supplies as soon as we hit the beach. When cargo began to back up on the beach, it became necessary to hold up unloading until the next morning. The landing on Roi by our troops, the Fourth Marine Division, was their first combat landing, too. All went well; the Beach Party incurred no wounded nor injuries as we moved supplies, etc., for the troops to keep the beach clear. Because we had only a narrow beach, we had to keep cargo moving inland. It was very hot, but inside the lagoon the seas were ideal for landing.

On February 8, we received orders to get underway for Pearl Harbor. Upon arrival there, we were diverted to Kahului, Maui. After we unloaded troops and supplies at Maui, we proceeded to Pearl Harbor for needed repairs. On the 28th of February, the USS *Sheridan* engaged in an intensive period of amphibious training at Maui. On May 30th, we sailed with a task force bound for the Mariana Islands. Arriving at Eniwetok, we transferred troops to assigned LSTs and sailed for Saipan on June 15, 1944. Our Beach Party was

also transferred at Eniwetok. This was a very rough landing, because when we landed in the LVTs (landing vehicles, tracked), we met with much resistance on the beach. LVTs could move on water and land. Tracks, similar to those on a tank, propelled the LVT. Its rear door would drop down for unloading personnel on the beach.

All during the day of the landing, we suffered mortar and small-arms fire. The Marines moved inland at a very slow pace due to the heavy opposition. In fact, a Marine major, with whom I became friends on board the *Sheridan* when we carried his troops to Saipan, came back to the beach. He had been shot in the rear end and was totally embarrassed. He was treated by our medics and returned to his troops. Before leaving to rejoin his troops, he asked me to give him clean carbines from our men to replace those that his Marines had, as they were all jammed with sand. We obliged and he sent the dirty weapons back to us for cleaning.

Back to our landing, which was rough because we landed beneath Mount Tapotchau. From their position on top of the mountain, the Japanese soldiers had a good view of the beach and could lay mortar shells on us at will. We had to dig foxholes and stop unloading for fear of an attack, which

would have sent us back into the water. During the night, a Navy destroyer kept Mount Tapotchau illuminated with star shells, just in case of an attack. Despite this effort, about ten Japanese light tanks came over the top of the mountain and started down our side, but they did not get far. The Navy destroyer picked off four of them with their five-inch guns, and the remaining tanks turned and returned to their base. It was quite a night in that foxhole! Sadly, I lost a very good friend, Patrick Ryan, a first-class corpsman, and had several others from the Beach Party who were wounded. The *Sheridan* continued off-loading troops and cargo the next day and embarked a large number of Marine casualties for transport to Pearl Harbor.

After unloading our casualties at Pearl Harbor, we embarked Army troops for the invasion of Guam. We arrived at Guam on July 22, 1944, and began off-loading troops and equipment on White Beach No. 2, five miles south of Orote Peninsula and Apra Harbor. The beach was miserable and the water too shallow to beach the landing craft. Men of the Army's Seventy-seventh Division had to be dropped off in the water, which was about eighteen inches deep, and had to walk to shore.

Since there was no chance we would get support cargo in, I called for ten life rafts from the ship. After we tied and secured them together, we used them as a floating dock. When the landing craft came alongside, we would transfer cargo to the rubber boats and then pull them to shore. It was a very tedious operation and hard work, too. We worked day and night and finally got some relief and help from an Army unit. The two nights I spent on the floating dock were really *tough*. Just north of us stood a derelict, an abandoned ship that had sunk close to the beach. The Japanese boarded it at night from small boats in order to have a good angle from which to fire on us as we unloaded. Naval guns finally quieted the crossfire coming at us from snipers on the derelict. On July 27, 1944, we completed off-loading all the *Sheridan's* cargo and personnel. We got underway to Eniwetok and then to Pearl Harbor on July 28, arriving on August 10. There we received repairs to the ship and embarked Army troops for the reconquest of the Philippines.

After a week of more amphibious training at Maui, we departed Pearl Harbor on September 15. After a few stops en route, we arrived at Leyte Gulf, where our troops were sent ashore in the first wave. Likewise, our Beach Party was part of

that first wave. It was a beautiful day and we were met with no opposition on the beach. We unloaded quickly and were ready to depart on September 22.

I will share an interesting anecdote about this landing. We were instructed by our superiors not to return any Filipinos to the ship, only Japanese POWs or casualties. During the first night on the beach, I heard moaning and weeping a short distance away. When I investigated, I found a young Filipino woman under a bush in labor. I told the corpsman she looked Japanese to me so I sent her back to the *Sheridan*. With help from our doctors, she delivered a five-pound, three-ounce baby boy. Our chaplain, Father Joe Keown, baptized the baby, Roberto Sheridan Cayobit. Mother and baby were showered with gifts from the crew. Roberto, his mother, and father returned to the beach two days later.

Unloading the ship was delayed numerous times by enemy aircraft flying over the transport. When we did finish, we got orders to get underway about 18:23 through Surigao Straits en route to Hollandia, New Guinea. It was after our departure that the famous sea battle of Leyte Gulf began before midnight. That was the night that the U.S. Navy broke the back of the Japanese Fleet coming up the Surigao

Straits in an attempt to trap our landing force in Leyte Gulf. Our old battleships were waiting at the cross of the T and destroyed the Japanese Fleet.

We proceeded to Hollandia and anchored at Humboldt Bay on October 27, 1944. While anchored there and in the presence of the ship's company, I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in the name of the President of the United States. The citation reads:

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in  
presenting the BRONZE STAR MEDAL to  
LIEUTENANT, JUNIOR GRADE,  
WILLIAM PERRY WHALEN  
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

For service as set forth in the following CITATION:

“For meritorious service as Assistant Beachmaster during the assault and capture of enemy Japanese-held islands in the Pacific Area, on February 1, 1944; June 15, 1944; July 22, 1944; and October 20, 1944. Skillfully guiding beach parties in handling efficiently

the unloading of supplies, Lieutenant, Junior Grade, (then Ensign) Whalen exposed himself to great danger from enemy fire and worked tirelessly to contribute to the success of the landing operations. His professional ability, courage and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”

Lieutenant, Junior Grade, Whalen is authorized  
to wear the combat “V”.

For the President,  
/s/ James Forrestal  
Secretary of the Navy

The Bronze Star Medal was awarded for my efforts during the Roi-Namor, Saipan, Guam, and Leyte Gulf landings.

Later that day we got underway for Noemfoor to embark the Fifth-eighth Fighter Group, Fifth Air Force, U.S. Army Air Force and proceeded to Leyte Gulf. We continued on to Manus Island, which is part of the Admiralty Islands. While unloading all of our troops and cargo at Leyte, several of our ships were attacked by Japanese suicide bombers. One ship sustained substantial damage to her port side. We pro-

ceeded next to Manus Island, arriving there on the 24th of November. We departed for Finschhafen on the 28th, and anchored there for further orders. Next we shipped out on the 29th for Empress Augusta Bay at Bougainville Island. We remained there until December 1st when we loaded up elements of the Thirty-seventh Army Division with combat cargo and proceeded to Manus Island to await departure for a landing at Lingayen Gulf, north of Manila in the Philippines.

On December 31, 1944, we sailed with a task force to execute a landing at Lingayen Gulf. All the ships in our landing force encountered heavy air opposition during the approach on the 8th of January, 1945, but the *Sheridan* arrived unscathed, and we landed our troops on the 9th. However, we had to load 108 Navy casualties and survivors from the escort carrier *USS Ommaney Bay*, which was sunk by Japanese planes the day before. I was unable to make the landing at Lingayen Gulf with the Beach Party, as I was hospitalized with the flu aboard the *Sheridan*.

After loading survivors from the *Ommaney Bay*, I was standing on deck and kept staring at one of the Chief Petty Officers. Curious, I checked the survivor list and found the name of Hank Rodgers, whom I had known back home in

Ashtabula, Ohio. I approached him, identified myself, and offered him any help he might need while on board. He appreciated my offer and told me he had \$5,000 with him that he had just won in a crap game before his ship was hit. Hank was a boyfriend of one of my high school teachers, Hazel Beckwith.

On March 14, 1945, the *Sheridan* loaded troops for her final assault landing at Okinawa, getting ever closer to Japan all the time. We departed the Philippines on the 27th and landed our troops on Easter Sunday morning, April 1, 1945. Instead of hearing the alleluias sung at Mass, I spent Easter on the beach at Okinawa. En route, we encountered many kamikaze suicide attacks, as did many other ships of the fleet. Moreover, we were forced to make several course changes en route to avoid submarine attacks.

Before the landing force was scheduled to hit the beaches, I was ordered to take five sailors and determine whether the enemy had installed any posts with charges attached to them in the water off the beach. We found some, swam around them, cut the wires to the charges, and were able to mark a temporary channel for the boats to get to the beach. (So much for my do-it-yourself swim lessons summers

at Walnut Beach back in Ashtabula.) Then the Beach Party proceeded to land in the early waves on Orange Beach. The landing proved to be uneventful, although the troops ran into lots of opposition further inland. We unloaded very quickly and got out of the area with orders now to sail to Pearl Harbor via Guam. It was a relief for me to leave Okinawa behind and get away from those Japanese suicide plane attacks. You were completely helpless when they dove down at your ship. Antiaircraft fire from the ship could divert some of them, but not all. We sailed into Apra Harbor at Guam and disembarked 35 Army and Marine casualties to shore hospitals.

On April 10, we departed Guam en route to Pearl Harbor. Steaming to Pearl Harbor on the 14th, we half-masted our colors in memory of our late president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. We arrived in Pearl Harbor on the 22nd. Our orders were to leave the next day for San Francisco. We arrived there on the 29th, and proceeded to Mare Island NAD to unload all ammunition from our magazines. We then proceeded to Pier 20 on the 4th of May for the ship to undergo a major overhaul by the U.S. Engineering Co., which would not be completed until the 26th of June.

Officers and crew of the USS *Sheridan* sailed for San

Diego on July 1st for some refresher amphibious training, returning to San Francisco on the 12th. Three days later, we left to deliver passengers to Samar in the Philippines, arriving on the 6th of August. Again, we loaded troops at Zamboanga in the Philippines, but because the War in the Pacific ended on the 15th, we disembarked these troops at Tacloban in Leyte Gulf, loaded other troops three days later for the occupation of Japan, and sailed for Tokyo Bay on the 25th.

It was an historic moment for all of us on the *Sheridan*, and exciting, too, when we entered Tokyo Bay just as the Japanese leaders were signing the surrender documents on board the battleship USS *Missouri* (BB-63). I was the Officer of the Deck as we entered Tokyo Bay that day and made the following entry in the deck log: "10:42 A.M. The official surrender of the Japanese Imperial Forces was signed on board the USS *Missouri* anchored to our starboard as we passed." We proceeded to Tateyama Naval Air Station to disembark our occupation troops and cargo on the station's seaplane ramp, unloading on September 4th.

Next, our orders were to get underway for Buckner Bay, Okinawa. We encountered two floating mines en route which our escort detonated. Entering Buckner Bay on September

7th, we passed through anti-sub nets and made our anchorage. Five days later, our orders were to proceed to Nago to load U.S. Marines and troops.

Warnings of a typhoon approaching Okinawa reached us on the 16th, advising us to make preparations for the worst possible weather. The *Sheridan* was designated to lead two Naval ships and three or four merchant ships to sea. Once there, we encountered very heavy rain squalls with winds up to forty knots. At midnight, the barometer reached a low reading of 29.14 inches. Several ships in the Retirement Plan (merchant ships scheduled for retirement) encountered floating mines during the night in the typhoon and sustained substantial damage. They had neither radar nor navigational equipment, so we took them out to sea rather than have them stay at anchor in port at the mercy of the storm. Shortly after noon, heavy swells made it impossible for several of our group to keep company. The *Sheridan* rolled from side to side like a pendulum. I had the mid-watch that day and rather than staying in the wheelhouse, I lashed myself to one of the polarises on the wing and guided the helm from there. (The polaris is a compass to guide our course. On both the port and starboard wings of the wheelhouse are repeater polarises. They repeat what the main

compass in the wheelhouse reads and are a navigational aid for reading bearings from known points.) Several times when the *Sheridan* pitched into deep rolls, I wondered to myself if she would ever come back. All I could do was pray for our safety. The heavy swells moderated on the 18th of September as we proceeded to our anchorage at Nagawan, Okinawa.

On September 26, 1945, the *Sheridan* got underway with a full load of Marines and cargo to transport to Tientsin, China. At sunset all of the ships in our company steamed ahead with navigation lights on full brilliancy power, which lighted up the ship for the first time since the beginning of the War in the Pacific. We passed through a Japanese minefield; seven mines were sighted. The *Sheridan* guns opened fire on a floating horn-type mine about 500 yards off starboard but were unsuccessful in an attempt to sink it. On September 30th, we arrived off Taku, China, and the landing force unloaded there. We completed unloading all of our cargo and headed to Manila in the Philippines on October 6th. We passed Corregidor Island and arrived at anchorage in Manila Bay.

Our orders next took us to Zamboanga, one of the islands in the Philippines, where the monkeys have no tails. We entered the harbor, moored to the Main Pier, and commenced

loading a U.S. Marine Air Group, both personnel and cargo. This time it was off to Okinawa via Samar. We entered Leyte Gulf on November 1st, proceeded to Samar, and later in the day went on to Okinawa. We sailed via the Mindinowa Sea and the South China Sea, as a typhoon was developing east of Leyte. After we put into Manila on the 5th for pickup of long awaited mail from home, we continued on to Okinawa, entering via Buckner Bay. On the 10th we received orders to proceed to Taku, China, arriving there on the 14th. We remained anchored there awaiting instructions to disembark Marine Air Group 12, which took four days. On November 28th, we received orders to steam to Sasebo, Japan, for "Magic Carpet Duty," which meant returning troops who had adequate points for discharge to the United States. This was certainly one of the most rewarding and satisfying assignments for the crew and officers of the *Sheridan*.

Sasebo lies near the Nagasaki area where one of our atomic bombs was dropped under orders from President Truman. After the channel was swept we were ordered to load personnel and cargo of the Fifth Marine Division. We completed loading on December 3rd, embarked on December 6th, and arrived in San Diego at "B" Street Pier on the 23rd. After

disembarking all the troops and passengers, we unloaded the cargo. On the 24th, after all hatches were unloaded, we moved to anchorage from the dock and were ordered to San Pedro, California, to unload our ammo cargo. Once that was completed on the 27th, we proceeded to San Diego and moored at the north side of Berth 34, Naval Repair Base, to commence a period of overhaul for the *Sheridan*.

While in California, I had the opportunity to visit my brother Tom, who was in Balboa Park Naval Hospital recovering from hemorrhoid surgery. His ship had just arrived in port from service in the Atlantic. I brought a doctor from the *Sheridan* with me, and we found Tom lying on his stomach, feeling mighty sore. Still it was great to see him.

On January 7, 1946, the *Sheridan* was released from "Magic Carpet Duty" and designated for disposal. All in all, she was awarded six battle stars. The ship had carried 16,228 troops, 6,563,079 tons of cargo, and 905 casualties throughout her service in the Pacific. She sailed from San Diego on the 11th of January, arrived in Mobile, Alabama, on the 1st of February for deactivation, was decommissioned on the 5th of March at Chickasaw Creek, Alabama, and delivered to the Maritime Commission on the 7th. She was struck from the

Navy list on April 12th. Eventually, the *Sheridan* was sold by the Maritime Commission to the U.S. Lines on the 24th of October, 1947. She was briefly named *Pioneer Sun* and then served as *American Scientist* from 1947 until she was damaged by an explosion in July 1969 and scrapped.

Following the decommissioning of the *Sheridan* at Chickasaw Creek, outside of Mobile, Alabama, I was detached from the *Sheridan* and ordered to the Eighth Naval District in New Orleans for further assignment. From there I was ordered to the Ninth Naval District at Great Lakes, Illinois, for transfer to inactive duty in the U.S. Naval Reserve. The day I took my physical for release to inactive duty was funny. When the examiner tested my hearing, we were about twenty feet apart in a narrow, noisy hallway. He whispered the words Mississippi, Ohio, and Oregon, and I was to repeat what I heard. There was so much noise and commotion in that area that there was no way I could hear what he said. When I replied with just lip movement, the examiner asked me what I had said. I answered, "The same words you asked me to repeat!" In less than an hour, I had passed and was on the train en route to Ashtabula to see Mom and Dad, my three brothers and three sisters, and enjoy some good home cooking. On

March 26, 1946, I was separated from active duty and had terminal leave (accrued leave) until May 7, 1946.

By my request, I was assigned to the Organized Reserve and reported to Air Squadron VF 651 at the Akron Naval Air Station. My reason for becoming active reserve was that you drilled one weekend a month and received four days' pay. The main reason for my joining the Organized Reserve was clearly for the extra money for the future. In addition to the drills one weekend a month, I had to perform fourteen days of ACDUTRA each year. The latter is active duty training for which I received full pay and allowances.

On January 1, 1947, I was hired by Frankfort Distillers as a sales representative in Akron, Ohio, for \$225 a month, plus expenses. On August 16th that year, Marge and I were married at St. Joseph's Church in Ashtabula, Ohio.

I continued in the U.S. Naval Reserve in various roles: Ordinance Officer, Administrative Officer for Fighter Squadrons, Attack Squadrons, and Transport Squadrons. I ended my career as a Commander, USNR. Finally, after all those years, I requested retirement effective the 20th of September 1963. Had I remained another four months, I think I would have been promoted to the rank of Captain.

Ultimately, I felt that it took too much effort to continue.

Thus ended my career in the U.S. Naval Reserve. For so many, many great experiences during those years, I am grateful to the Navy.

## **MILITARY AWARDS RECEIVED**

Bronze Star Medal with Combat V

Naval Reserve Medal

American Campaign Medal

Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal—five (5) Battle Stars

World War II Victory Medal

Navy Occupation Medal-Asia Clasp

China Service Medal

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation—two (2) Battle Stars

## EPILOGUE

As I reflect on my years in the Naval Reserve during World War II versus today, 2002, I have a completely different worldview. During that war patriotism was at all all-time high. All Americans—men and women, boys, and girls, industry—everyone volunteered to do whatever was necessary to achieve victory and maintain our freedoms. We were willing to sacrifice any and everything for the good of the country and to preserve our democratic way of life.

That same proud feeling does not exist today as it did back then. Perhaps, the brutal attack on a sleeping Navy Fleet in Pearl Harbor is the difference. The 9/11 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., has come close to refueling those feelings of patriotism to the same fever pitch that were present back in 1942. I guess we are a peace-loving nation until our freedoms are attacked.

As Tom Brokaw wrote in his recent best-selling book, I am immensely proud to have been a member of what he called “The Greatest Generation.”

I further reflect upon my dear family. I love you all very dearly. I thank God for giving us nine wonderful children, and

*William P. Whalen* ★ *U.S. Navy, 1942-47*

for giving us the wherewithal to educate them and prepare them for adulthood. Marge and I are very proud of each of you. I'm sure you all will give your children even more and better opportunities. Love and God bless you all.

## **WHALEN CHILDREN**

Catherine Whalen	Kevin Whalen (Suzanne)
Michael Whalen (Donna)	Mary McMickle (J.T.)
Patrick Whalen (Barbara)	Rosemary Jonson (Scott)
William Whalen (Patti)	Sean Whalen

Thomas Whalen

## **GRANDCHILDREN**

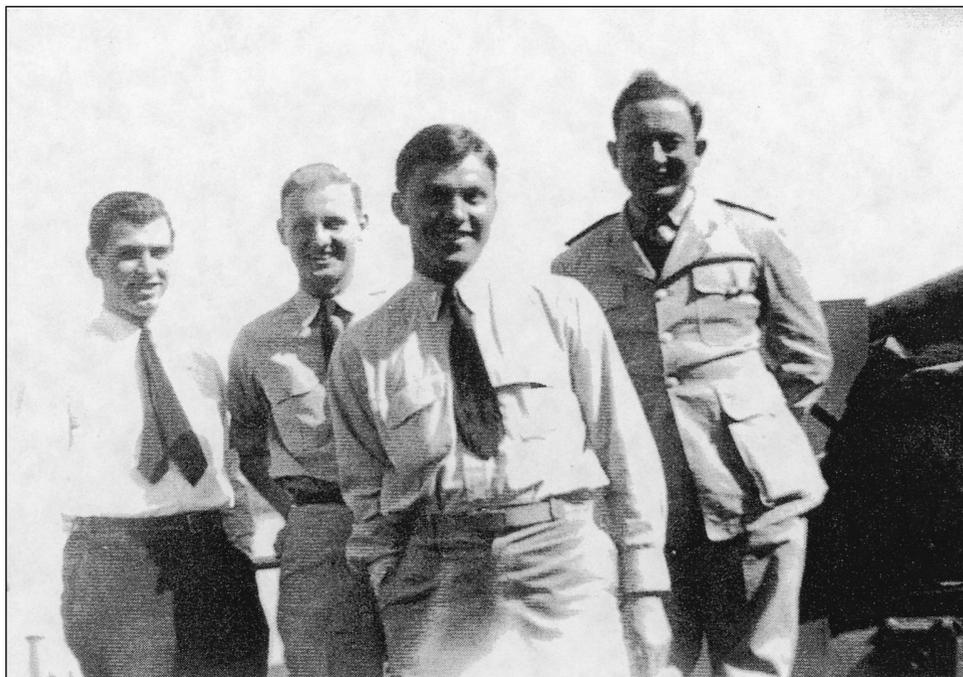
Bryan Whalen	Heidi Roth (Steve)
Kate Whalen	Mary Whalen
Karen Whalen	Kelly Whalen
Megan Whalen	Elizabeth Whalen
Eimile Whalen	Erin Whalen
Mary Whalen	Brendan Whalen
Sean Whalen	Emily Whalen
Brian Whalen	Robert McMickle
Casey Whalen	Michael McMickle
Molly Whalen	Maggie McMickle
Brady Whalen	Heidi Jonson

## **GREAT-GRANDCHILD**

Carter Roth



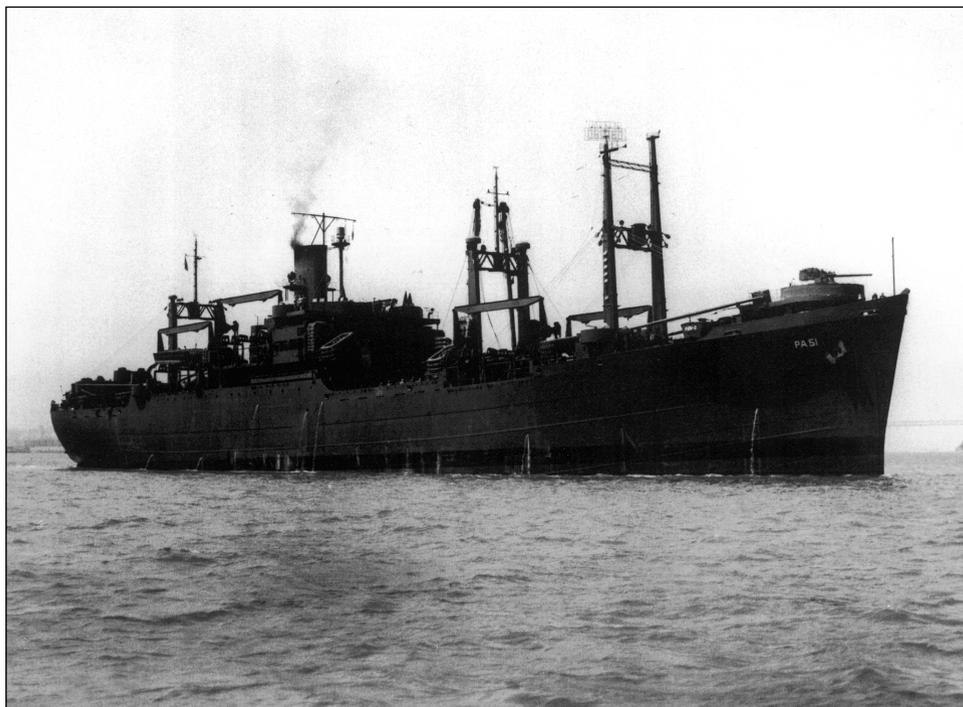
☆  
Honolulu 1945



top: Whalen 1943—on board *Sheridan*  
bottom: March 1946—on board *Sheridan*



*top: Whalen—on board Sheridan*  
*bottom: Whalen, Samberg, Abbott—on board Sheridan*



★  
top: USS Sheridan  
bottom: USS Sheridan APA-51



**The Navy Log - Use the Online Search**



**WILLIAM P. WHALEN**



NEW YORK - 1960



**Rate / Rank**

CDR

**Service Branch**

USN

**Service Dates**

4/1943 - 12/1980

**Born**

12/29/1920

ASHTABULA, OH



**SIGNIFICANT DUTY STATIONS**

- USNAS, NEW YORK, NY
- USNAS, GROSSE ISLE, MI
- USS SHERIDAN APA-51
- LITTLE CREEK AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING BASE, VA
- USNR MIDSHIPMAN'S SCHOOL, CHICAGO, IL

**SIGNIFICANT AWARDS**

- BRONZE STAR MEDAL W/COMBAT 'V'
- CHINA SERVICE MEDAL
- AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL
- ASIATIC PACIFIC CAMPAIGN MEDAL W/5 STARS
- WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL



# MARGARET RIEHL WHALEN



PATTERSON, NJ - 1945



**Rate / Rank**

SP(Q)2

**Service Branch**

USN

**Service Dates**

5/1944 - 2/1946

**Born**

12/17/1921

CLEVELAND, OH



Margaret Whalen—Navy Log Photo



★  
Margaret Whalen

★  
1956—William P. Whalen  
in uniform



UNITED STATES SHIP

SHERIDAN

Sunday 2 September 1945

00 - 04

Steaming in accordance with C. T. 143 Movement Order AL220-45 in company with Task Group 33.1 U.S.S. MOUNT OLYMPUS O.T.C. and Fleet Guide, on base course 321 True, 322 pge, making 19 rpm's to make good a speed of 9 knots which is Standard Speed. 0047 c/c to 340 True, 0100 c/s to 10 knots (55 rpm's), 0135 c/s to 9 knots (49 rpm's), 0207 c/s to 10 knots (55 rpm's), 0215 c/s to 11 knots (61 rpm's), 0216 G.R. soundings reported normal, 0220 c/s to 13 knots (75 rpm's), 0229 c/c to 330 True, 0234 c/c to 321 True, 0235 c/s to 14 knots (80 rpm's), 0245 c/c to 310 True, 0251 c/s to 15 knots (85 rpm's), 0312 c/c to 305 True, 0321 c/c to 300 True, 0348 c/s to 12 knots (68 rpm's).

*J. J. Borgeson*  
J. J. BORGESESON  
Lt (jg) (D) USNR.

Steaming as before, 0408 Changed course to 081 True, 0410 Changed speed to 09 knots, 0423 TSURUGI ZAKI sighted bearing 026 True, distant 19 miles, 0534 Changed speed to 06 knots, 0514 Lighted ship and turned off all running lights, 0540 Proceeding in column thru swept channel to enter TOKYO KAIWAN at various speeds and courses to conform to channel, 0728 Daily report of magazines received as follows; conditions normal.

*Peter C. Evans, Jr.*  
PETER C. EVANS, JR.  
Lt (jg) (D) USNR.

Steaming as before proceeding in swept channel to enter TOKYO KAIWAN, 0800 All divisions mustered on stations, no absentees, 0824 c/c to 082 True, Steaming subsequently at various courses and speeds, following column leader, conforming to channel, 0950 Passed ASHKA JIMA Light abeam to port on course 010 True, distance 1600 yards, 1017 Fort #3 abeam to port on course 000 True, distance 142 miles, c/c to 307 True, 1041 c/c to 347 True, 1042 The official surrender of the Japanese Imperial Forces was signed on board the U.S.S. MISSOURI anchored nearby, Proceeding to anchorage BAKER off YOKOHAMA breakerwater, 1145 Let go port anchor in Berth 11 in 10 fathoms of water with 75 fathoms of chain at water's edge, Anchor bearings as follows: Red Breakwater Tower - 283 True, L.T. of HONMOKI HANA - 225 True; North Breakwater Light - 345 True.

*W. F. Whalen*  
W. F. WHALEN  
Lt (jg) (D) USNR.

12 - 16

Anchored as before, 1310 Commenced testing telemotor system, 1328 Completed testing telemotor system.

*M. A. Sumberg*  
M. A. SUMBERG  
Lt (jg) (D) USNR.

16 - 20

Anchored as before, No remarks.

*P. M. Aubry*  
P. M. AUBRY  
Lieut. (D) USNR.

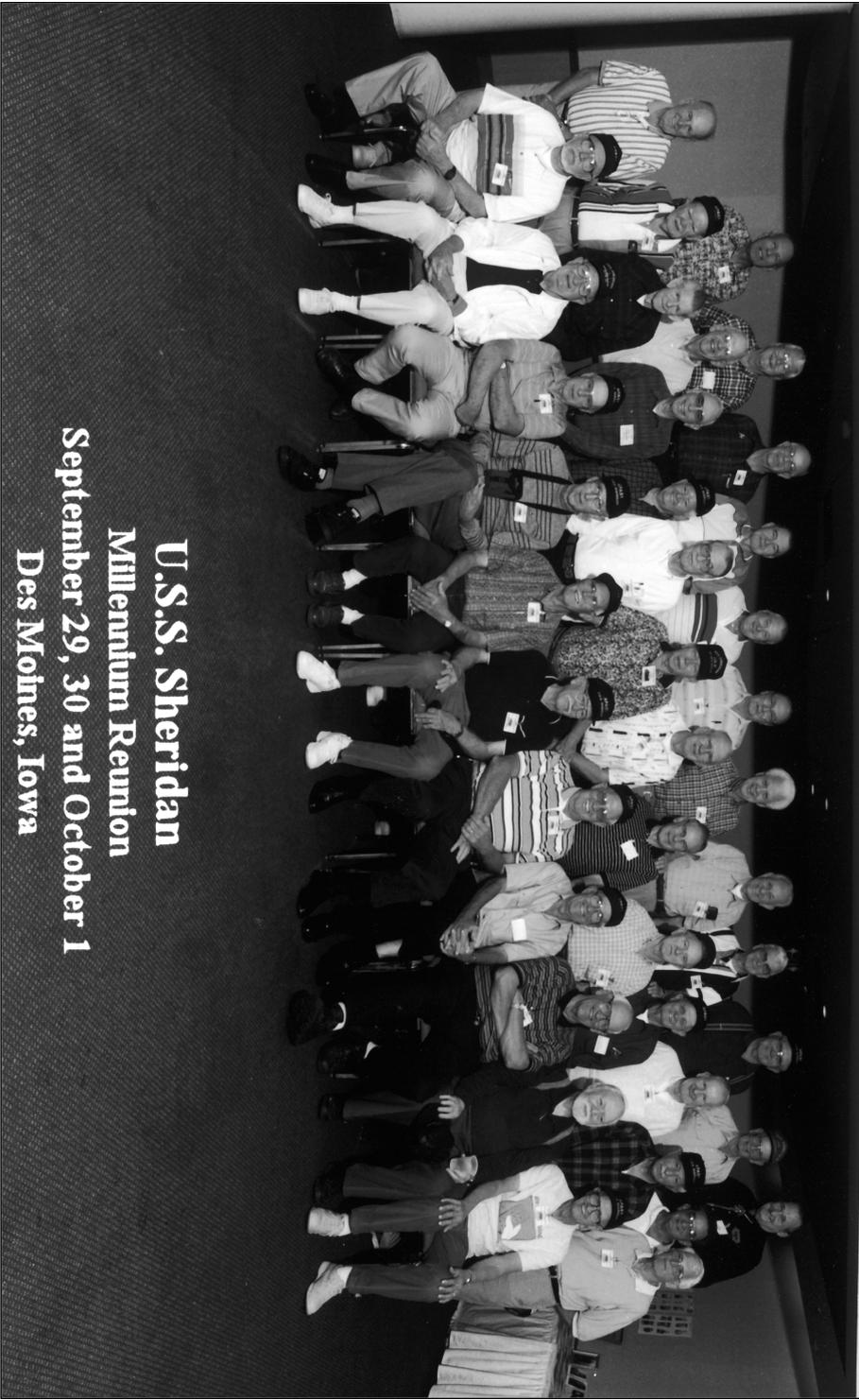
20 - 24

Anchored as before, No remarks.

*Elliot Fenton*  
ELLIOT FENTON  
Lt (jg) (D) USNR.

APPROVED: *R. H. Wiedorn* R. H. WIEDORN, Capt., U.S.N. COMMANDING OFFICER  
EXAMINED: *J. H. F. Anderson* J. H. F. ANDERSON, Lieutenant, U.S.N. NAVIGATOR

TO BE FORWARDED DIRECT TO THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL AT THE END OF EACH MONTH  
U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1944 O - 51193



**U.S.S. Sheridan  
Millennium Reunion  
September 29, 30 and October 1  
Des Moines, Iowa**



*left: USS Sheridan Reunion photo  
above: Sheridan Reunion; 2001 Mobile, Alabama; Whalen, Perez*

## WILLIAM PERRY AND MARGARET RIEHL WHALEN FAMILY TREE

