

Bennie Allen

Lowe Veterans Appreciation Video – November 11, 2020

My name is Bennie Allen and I served in the United States Navy during World War II at - I enlisted in 1944. I got out in 1946, 1945, '46. I served in the South Pacific and I was on a destroyer. I was on the Little Beaver destroyer's squadron [Destroyer Squadron 23] and it was the most decorated destroyer squadron in World War II.

But I was not there all the time. I was on the part of it. We were hit by kamikazes May 20th, 1945; again in July 1945. We had the bigger share of us was either killed or wounded. And I say the bigger share of it. All of us was wounded with – I mean by, by your mind.

And we were in a typhoon in Okinawa the second time we were hit. And I was talking to one of the sailors that they had barges that went around to pick up the dead sailors. And the first night that we got hit, I got up there and I was talking to one of the fellows and he said that he had picked up 91 dead sailors that night; the first time we got hit.

And the first bomb I think that was on August 6th, 1945, on Hiroshima. And the second bomb was August 9th, 1945, and that was on Nagasaki. And August 14th, 1945, the Emperor announced the surrender of Japan.

The second time we got hit, that was when we - we were there waiting to get in dry dock to get repaired. So, the first time we got hit, I was I was on relief. I really, I was on relief on the 40 millimeter antiaircraft cannon on the port side. And as quick as I was relieved I had to go to my battle station which was the end of the ship and they had me on the 5-inch gun.

I must've, I don't know how long. It was very shortly that they hit that suicide plane. The first ship, the first one hit us mid-ship and I had to run through the end of that where that suicide plane hit to get to my battle station. And the must have been very shortly, I don't know why I got through there before [it hit?].

And then we were – then the older fellows, they had a chance to come home on leave, which they should've. So I was one of the younger ones and we stayed out there and then we were waiting to get in dry dock and got our gun supply place, that's where they kept all their guns and ammunition, got hit.

So we didn't have - the only thing we had for our protection was .45 pistols. And so I was – and I'd heard or we had heard the Japanese were – see we were pretty close to shore to weigh it to get in to this dry dock to get repaired. And they said that on the anchor chain and the aft of the ship the Japanese swam off to these places and climbed up these chains and got aboard the ship and killed people before they knew what was going on.

And so this one morning I was in the front of the ship. I was on guard duty up there and I had a .45 and I heard ping-ping-ping all around me. And I dropped right on - I got right on my face on the deck. I had a radio earphones and I called back to the officer on the quarterdeck. And I said, hell they're shooting all the way around me. I heard ping-ping-ping-ping. And he said get down on the deck, and I said I'm already there.