



# St. Johns High School

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Home of the Redwings!

## Carroll Ramsay

Interviewed by Karolynn Eiseler

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Today in this day and age many people do not recognize the importance of our World War II heroes, the bravery and courage they gave to our nation. This is a story of a single hero, a hero that changed the outcome of the war in his own way. At the age of eighteen last of December 1942 Carroll Ramsay tried to enlist in the Marine Corps many times, but he could not. So after Christmas he tried again. By then they had started draft so he volunteered to be drafted and, finally he was involved in the U.S. Navy. Carroll's dad was in World War I and he was the only child.

In the early part of the war his home was the USS Bridge, a refrigerator ship that would take food down to neighboring fleet in the South Pacific. Soon after, Ramsay returned to the states where he was enrolled in boot camp. He then went to gunners mate school. After only a while he was sent to San Diego to advanced gunner's mate school. Then he was sent to Newport Road Island and he was apart of company for a brand new ship called USS San Marcus, which was a Landing Ship Dock (LSD). The U.S. Navy put this ship in to order April 15, 1945 2 two or three days after Franklin D. Roosevelt died. Following that he stayed in Philadelphia where he was put in commission on shake down crews on the brand new ship. Then he went down to the Panama Canal headed towards Pearl Harbor but unfortunately it broke down so San Diego was the next stop. After a while later they headed to Pearl Harbor. From there he went to Guam, and other areas close to there. When he left Guam he traveled to Okinawa. While leaving Guam, Ramsay's ship soon passed a familiar sight. The USS Indianapolis a neighboring ship that was headed towards Guam descended to reach the Philippines. Soon after Ramsay heard an awful story that the Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese sub. Most of the men aboard the Indianapolis went down with the ship, but some of the few that didn't wore soon killed by a group of viscous tiger sharks before they could be rescued by others. On the way to Okinawa they passed a Japanese submarine but it did not get them. Then from there he went to Buckner bay and the war ended.

The day the war ended a Japanese ship close to them surrendered. The treaty had not been signed though the Japanese sneaked in down threw the hill and bombed the ship and killed 21 men, then the war had ended. From Buckner Bay all the Como cozies were hitting ships and they would repair

all the smaller crafts. When they were at Okinawa to go to the Philippines and practice the attack on the Japanese but Japan surrendered and they were in Tokyo Bay when they signed the treaty. They stayed there from September to January in 1946 and a lot of guys left and they went back to Pearl Harbor and then came back to the states on an aircraft carrier and was honorably discharged. This was a very big Journey for Carroll to take. Carroll quotes " I Would not miss it for the world but would never want to do it again", "He also quotes that it was a lot of fun but not a lot of fun. The worst was the heat in the South Pacific. A lot of things were different from that time to now. People were more patriotic and more loyal. A normal day for him was to get up at sunrise and stayed at general quarters to sun down. He had to stay on watch for four hours then off eight hours and if you were off that time you worked. His job was to take care of the weapons and make sure they work in working order.

Some personal experiences he had after his first ship was he was headed home for a little bit he stopped and made a phone call in Las Angeles in a P. E station. He stopped and put his bag down with all his important information and somebody had taken it. He got on the train and he got as far as Kansas City and the Short Patrol put him in jail in Kansas City for 2 weeks for not having identification. They wrote a letter to the ship and they had to wait for them to get back to the ship and send a letter that it was ok to let him go and explain that he was Carroll Ramsey. When Carroll was in the war he got 50 dollars a month. When he was out of the service he was making 96 dollars a month and that was middle class.

Carroll also says your priorities should be God, Family and Country. Carroll got married in 1951 and just had a 50th anniversary in February. He has a stepson that was in Vietnam and his son is in the navy and he was a Vietnam veteran. Carroll has lived in St. Johns for a lot of his life. He will always be remembered as a great hero that helped out in World War II. That we will not ever forget.