

Growing up in Syracuse Nebraska was nothing like the world I was introduced to at the age of 18 in the military. During the war in 1943-1946 I spent my first six months stationed at Pearl Harbor. After that I was on the USS ATTU CVE 102 Aircraft Carrier. Our job entailed transporting new planes to Iwo Jima and Okinawa. A destroyer ship accompanied us.

We saw many sights but one that a kid of 18 never would see back home in Nebraska. The one memory stands out in my mind centered on an encounter with a typhoon just miles off the coast of Japan. During the typhoon the cables that tethered the new aircraft aboard our carrier snapped. The entire crew was ordered to stand on one side of the ship to counter the offset weight of the ship. The destroyer that sailed along side of our carrier broke in half during the typhoon and sank. It was then determined that to prevent the same from happening to our ship with the added weight of the planes now free of their cables, that we must dump every plane over the side of the ship into the ocean. Remember these were all new planes on this carrier. At this point some of the crew were trying to salvage items from the new planes before dumping them overboard. One crewmember removed a clock from one of the planes and stuck it into his pocket. Of course the higher ups drilled us all and we were ordered to stay topside until the member in question finally returned the clock so that it too would be dumped overboard. As far as I know, the planes are still at the bottom of the ocean where we dumped them that day. Our ship did suffer a crack but we managed to make repairs of the ship before we fell to the same fate as the destroyer ship.

Other highlights I recall were crossing over the Equator to the Marshall Islands. It was customary to initiate the new comers by dunking their heads into a garbage can filled with waste. My personal experience included a head shaving just over the crown of my head since at the time I had the best head of hair.

There are many stories that come to mind of my time away from the States and home. I believe that each one made created the small town boy from Nebraska into the man that I am today.