

RICHARD K. WATSON <sup>1</sup> SOM <sup>2</sup>/<sub>C</sub> - OKINAWA INVASION

APRIL 22, 1945 - THE ISHERWOOD, DD 520  
HAD JUST RETURNED FROM RADAR PICKET DUTY, TO  
KERAMA RETTO FOR FUEL AND AMMO, AND WAS  
ORDERED ON ANTI-SUB PATROL OUTSIDE THE HARBOR.  
I WAS IN THE MESS HALL AT SUPPER WHEN THE  
GENERAL QUARTERS ALARM RANG. I RAN DOWN THE  
PORT SIDE MAIN DECK TOWARD MY STATION AS HOT  
SHELLMAN IN MOUNT # 4-5". AS I PASSED BELOW  
MOUNT # 3-5," MEN FROM THE FANTAIL CAME  
RUNNING AND YELLING THAT WE WERE ABOUT TO BE HIT.  
I LEANED AGAINST THE BULKHEAD WITH MAYO HICKS,  
SHIPFITTER <sup>1</sup>/<sub>C</sub>, AND IMMEDIATELY THE PLANE CAME  
FROM THE STARBOARD BOW AND HIT MOUNT # 3-5",  
SHOWERING HICKS AND I WITH GASOLINE AND DEBRIS.  
MY HIGHTOP SHOES WERE KNOCKED OFF AND I WAS  
IN THE MIDDLE OF A RAGING FIRE. I CRAWLED AND  
FELT MY WAY TOWARD THE FANTAIL, AND FINALLY  
RAN OUT OF THE FIRE, MY HAIR AND CLOTHES BURNING  
AND SKIN DRIPPING OFF MY HANDS AND FACE.  
SOMEONE HELPED EXTINGUISH MY CLOTHES, SAT ME  
ON A BOX AT THE STERN, AND A CORPSMAN GAVE  
ME A SHOT OF MORPHINE. SOON I WAS TOO DIZZY  
TO SIT ON THE BOX, AND TWO MEN ROLLED ME  
ONTO A STRETCHER AND STARTED FORWARD TOWARD  
THE WARDROOM. <sup>1<sup>ST</sup> AID STATION</sup> WE HAD GONE ABOUT FIFTY FEET  
WHEN A DEPTH CHARGE BLEW UP AMIDSHIPS.  
I JUMPED OFF THE STRETCHER AND RAN BACK TO