

ENS ELDON EDWIN KIEHLER 1946



1994

I left the ship in San Francisco, shortly after our arrival in 1946.

I have thought about USS FRANK E EVANS DD 754 and the deck watches I stood with LTJG Jerome (Jerry) Fien. He introduced me to her, which I appreciated. I still remember some of the things that occurred when EVANS was sailing out of the port of Tsingtao, China. I guess they had the 7th fleet spread all over by then.

I still remember just how cold it could be when we were standing watch on the flying bridge, WOW, with a heavy parka over a sweater we were freezing, especially on those night watches.

I remember the two runs to Korea, when the Captain had to make the run up the river and watch the tides, etc. Shot up a floating mine on one of those trips. Then the run to Shanghai, for a few days. I recall the poor people who lived on the "Bum Boats" and how they even washed their small children from the river water and snatched everything that floated by.

I still remember the targets that appeared on our radar scopes on the bridge when we were underway, and they normally turned out to be small fishing boats in the darkness. Also, the stars were brilliant when out at sea and we could recognize the constellations.

There was a rickshaw race one night that started just as we were leaving the Officer's Club, and it was to return to the ship. That

was an exciting one and when we returned to the Wardroom for much needed coffee, I recalled that it was my 21st birthday, and then I could legally have a drink.

I learned how to play cribbage from Carl Annexstad, Dave Schreiber and Fred Atkins. A neat pass time and they were tough players with a lot of laughs.

The return to the states has a lot of memories for me as it was anything but routine. As I recall, and please help me if I have left anything out, we were to return with our squadron consisting of our six destroyers. (USS HARRY E HUBBARD DD 748, USS ALFRED A. CUNNINGHAM DD 752, USS JOHN R PIERCE DD 753, USS FRANK E. EVANS DD 754, USS JOHN A. BOLE DD 755, and USS LOFBERG DD 759) I remember the deployment of the ships in two columns, 400 yards apart, and 400 yards between ships in each column. That meant we were taking Stadiometer readings every other minute and then advising the engine room to adjust the turns of the screws. Thought I would go blind during those watches!

Also, I remember just how rough it would get at times. We were taking green water over the bridge and you could see part of the keels of the Cans in the adjacent column when their bows pitched out of the water. As I recall, spacing between ships opened up to 600 yards when the weather was that bad.

Then there was an accident during a simulated refueling operation aboard CUNNINGHAM when a cleat or fitting broke and a steel line snapped, which injured an officer. CUNNINGHAM left the formation at flank speed for port to seek emergency assistance for the patient.

We did get a few days in Honolulu, which was neat for relaxing. I purchased a visor hat as I had given or sold mine to Fred Atkins when he left the ship to return home earlier as his had blown off when he was in the motor whaleboat. Of course, we tried out all the drinks in the Officer's Club, and enjoyed all the fresh vegetables and steaks that we could find.

Then there was the experience with the LCM ("M" boat) which was dead in the water with engine problems. Since apparently we had the most fuel aboard, the squadron commander detached our ship from the group and we were assigned to try and tow the LCM until a sea going tug could arrive. It seems that we parted the tow line a few times and were making only a few knots. We spent a couple of days trying to assist the ship. Finally the tug arrived and we were again, off to San Francisco.

It was exciting to arrive under the Golden Gate Bridge with our long colorful red, white, and blue homecoming pennant streaming, a most colorful sight against the background of the neat orange/gold bridge. I had nice memories of times here prior to shipping out.



U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS, (DD-754), 1946, OUTER HARBOR,
TSINGTAO, CHINA

Submitted by: Eldon E. Kiehler, Ensign
Assistant Gunnery Officer

Shortly thereafter, I received orders as my earlier regular navy commission application had been approved. I was assigned to advanced gunnery school, but I declined. I went out to sea again aboard USS RUTLAND (APA 192) for a magic carpet run to Japan. We returned to Norfolk, Virginia via the Panama Canal. I was OOD while approaching and going through the first portion of the canal. It was very interesting, however, raining so hard there was little to see.

Post Navy, I spent many years traveling the entire West Coast as Regional Manger for the Package Machinery Company which produced food packaging systems for many industries.

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Lived most of the time in condominiums since arrival in California. Had at least three in Newport Beach. Currently, 2001, live in a ten story high rise on Newport Bay with a pool, Jacuzzi, doorman, security guard and a staff of eleven people. Both Mary Lou and I have served on the Boards of the Association, and for many functions.