



JUNE & JULY 2024

ISSUE 24-6 & 7

The Diligent

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ARP LAKE WALES, FL

“...a Christ-centered fellowship of believers devoted to glorifying God through true worship, personal evangelism, discipleship, and servanthood.”

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Leadership

DARK FORCES AMONG US?

From Pastor Mackay

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... Matthew 5:43-44

When we see ungodly events in the world around us, we may ask ourselves, "Is this the work of Satan and/or demons?" More specifically, we wonder about individual people. When we see others make decisions that contradict God's Word, we similarly wonder about a "dark force" at work behind the scenes. Yet, this raises other questions, doesn't it? If someone represents the "forces of darkness," how should Christians react to them? Are they exempt from Jesus' command to love our enemies? Let's try to untangle our thoughts by looking at what the Bible tells us about how Satan operates and how we should respond.

Let's start with this: Dark forces are real! Satan is a real being, and leads a host of demons in his wake (Matt. 12:34). Further, these forces exercise massive influence in the world. Jesus even calls him the, "ruler of this world" (John 12:31). They actively lie and tempt.

John's vision in Revelation gives us a helpful picture of how the forces of Satan are particularly marshaled in the world today. As a quick interpretive guide, Revelation does look ahead to God's ultimate victory at Christ's return, but it is also a present picture of what is true now. It is a window into the invisible workings of the spiritual realm all around us today.

Through that window, John sees an unholy trinity: a great red dragon (Satan, 12:3), and two beasts that are under the dragon's command. The first beast (13:1-10) is a picture of godless human government. The second (13:11-18) is a picture of godless religion. As each beast follows its master, Satan, they bring his lies and temptations throughout the earth. We see that each beast seems very strong! Of the first it is said among the world, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (13:4) Each beast also represents a counterfeit of the Truth, who is Jesus. The first beast is said to have a "mortal wound" that was healed, and the second, "horns like a lamb." Both of these are copies of the true Lamb (Jesus Christ),

and give to the beasts appearances of transcendence and ultimate power.

All this is to say that in this age, some of Satan's most impressive work comes through godless human government and godless religion. The so-called majesty of these forces make them look like the most powerful things on earth ("Who is like the beast?!"), and many will be caught fully under their spell.

Let's remember at this point, too, that we Christians are also vulnerable to their temptations. How often do we feel helpless in the face of corrupt government and false religions (in our context, particularly the religion of self-worship) that seem to be so powerful?

This starts to guide us towards how God would have us respond as Christians, and as the church. We freely recognize that without God's saving grace, we too are taken hook, line, and sinker with the power of Satan (WLC 191, Eph. 2:2-3). We must, then, as Jesus teaches in Matt. 5, not look upon our enemies as their Judge, but with compassion and prayer and care. Our enemy is *not* flesh and blood (Eph 6:12), but the cosmic powers over this present darkness.

This is not to say that we kowtow to the will of the evil one by submitting to Satan's plans. In the United States, for example, our representative government gives many avenues for Christians to vote, serve, and act in ways that work against Satanic plots. We should be thankful and prayerful that God would raise up capable and strong Christian people. Likewise, God powerfully uses the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bring the lost to himself, overthrowing false religion. The church of Jesus must be faithful to proclaim it.

Notice what the church is called to do in response to the work of the two beasts. The first beast is a call to the saints for "endurance and faith" (Rev. 13:10); the second a call to "wisdom" (13:18). Neither beast is a call for Christians to establish a competing political kingdom on earth. The beasts have always had some measure of success against the church (Rev. 13:7, 10; 6:9). In our response to the world, we are not to become like the world. God is less concerned that the institutions of the world be made holy, and more concerned that his holy people not become like the world!

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No, we are first to endure. The work of Satan isn't a surprise. Christians should be the last people to breathlessly lament, "Dark forces must be at work here!" Of course they are! We know what these forces are and, more importantly, we know the God who rules them. We are to press on in God's call to us, taking up our cross, fighting the temptation to feed the beasts of the world and fighting the draw to the beasts that exists in our own hearts.

In other words, we are to have wisdom and faith. While what we see are massive beasts lumbering through the earth, we believe what God has told us. Revelation draws back the curtain on what is really going on. These beasts are temporary, they are under God's authority (everything the beasts do, they are "allowed" to do), and, most importantly of all, they are beasts defeated by the work of Jesus.

Yes, our call more than anything else is to worship Revelation's great victor: the Lamb of God. At this very moment, the Lamb sits on the throne, surrounded by his saints who will, by his power,

reach the entirety of their number. (Rev. 14:1ff) He has secured the victory by his death and resurrection, and the day is coming when Satan and all his minions will be fully and finally thrown into final judgment. So, Christians, we can endure with joy and hope. We can sing songs of praise to our Victorious Savior. We can seek the lost and fearlessly fight back against the darkness which embraces them, for we know the Light of the World, who will, in the end, finally judge all who oppose him. ■

construction UPDATE

The diaconate continues to monitor and engage in a number of needed maintenance projects on our campus. Work on gutter and fascia repair continues around the memorial garden area. There is also plaster work taking place on some interior walls. The Kirkpatrick's' home will be undergoing some roof work soon.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The elders of First Presbyterian Church meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The following are highlights from the meeting on May 28, 2024.

- Prayer was given for our the needs of our congregation and the ministries of our church. Elders prayed particularly for members on their Shepherd Lists.
- The Discipleship Committee is working on plans for ROW in 2024-2025. Volunteers are needed for a Parents Night Out on August 9th, 5-8pm.
- The Evangelism Committee is working through a friend of FPCLW to provide support to prenatal caregivers in the Central African Republic. The use of the Mission House was discussed
- Bill and Leah Melvin were received into communicant membership.
- The Director of Music Ministry Search Committee reported on the on-campus from Dr. Irwin. At session meeting time there were no action items to take.
- The Stewardship and Finance committee reported (as of April 30), budgeted income is at 37% of annual budget, expenses is at 37% of annual budget. The operating account balance is \$175,390. ■

PRAYER FOCUS

JUNE 5 - Synod

JUNE 12 - Juan Carlos Bonilla, Public Worship in Madrid

JUNE 19 - Father's Day

JUNE 26 - Vince Treadway

JULY 3 - Independence Day/ USA

JULY 10 - Lake Wales Care Center/ Work Camp

JULY 17 - Music Ministry

JULY 24 - Church Administrators

JULY 31 - Elders/Deacons/Church Leadership

You're Invited to a

potluck luncheon

In Honor of
VINCE TREADWAY

Celebrating 14 years of faithful
service as Director of Music and
Congregational Care



*Make a joyful noise to
the Lord, all the earth!
Psalm 100*

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, NOON
FELLOWSHIP HALL
PLEASE, BRING A DISH TO SHARE

Discipleship

WHERE IS OUR HOPE FOUND?

From Pastor Myers

At the end of his highly publicized interview with Norah O'Donnell on "60 Minutes," Jorge Mario Bergoglio, better known as Pope Francis, was asked "What gives you hope?" It was a good question for O'Donnell to end with because it is not the kind of question which only religious leaders need to wrestle with. It is, instead, the kind of question which every honest and thinking person must face as well.

What gives you hope, reader? Assuming that you refuse to live within the foolish obfuscations and distractions of temporary pleasure and have instead faced the reality and inevitability of death, together with the fact that, from an earthly perspective, your entire legacy and memory will most likely be erased and forgotten within a generation or two after you're gone, why do you go on? Why do you continue to wake up every day? What is it that drives you to do your job, to care for your family, and to not give up?

The existentialist philosopher Albert Camus asks the same question more poignantly. "There's only one really serious philosophical problem" Camus writes, "and that is the decision of whether or not to commit suicide." Blunt? Sure. But false? Hardly.

From man's perspective, I'm not sure if there's a more important question than the question of where one's hope is found.

And so what about Pope Francis? What gives Pope Francis hope? Pope Francis answers this way, "everything gives me hope... people are fundamentally good. We are all fundamentally good. Yes, there are some rogues and sinners, but the heart itself is good."

Where is our hope found? The bishop of Rome and leader of the single largest Christian denomination has made his answer: our hope is found in the fundamental goodness of man.

But is it true? Is man fundamentally good? From the perspective of creation before the fall, yes, of course. God's creation of man is not just good but very good (Gen 1:31).

But Pope Francis was clearly not speaking exclusively about unfallen humanity. Pope

Francis seems to maintain that man is fundamentally good even after the fall, even to this day. In response to the idea that post-fall man is fundamentally good, however, Scripture clearly points us in the opposite direction.

The fall of man into sin has resulted not just in a weakening of our human nature but in the total moral corruption and enslavement of our human nature. See Gen 6:5, Jer 17:9, and Rom 3:10-12 just as a sampling of texts that points us in this direction.

The theologian John Murray summarizes the Bible's teaching on the total moral corruption of sin helpfully. This bears close reading,

"Man is totally unholy. All his functions and exercises are unholy because they lack conformity to the will of God; they come short of the perfection which his holiness demands. Man's understanding is darkened, his will enslaved, his conscience perverted, his affections depraved, his heart corrupted, his mind enmity against God."

Over and against Pope Francis' semi-Pelagian and sentimental understanding of man, John Murray helpfully points us towards an Augustinian understanding of man, a Biblical realism that faces the darkness of the fallen human heart with honesty and courage.

But the question still remains. Where, if anywhere, is hope to be found?

Hope is not to be found in the fundamental goodness of man. It is instead to be found, as the Gettys teach us, "in Christ alone." It is in Christ alone that we find hope. It is in Christ alone that our dead hearts are raised to newness of life. It is in Christ alone that our lives find meaning. It is in Christ alone that we find a definitive answer to Camus' question.

In Christ, no act of love you undertake, no sacrifice you make for someone's blessing, no good work you perform out of faith, will be forgotten or overlooked (Heb 6:10). Not even the cup of cold water you give to a brother in need will escape the attention of our good Father (Matthew 10:42)!

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Where then is our hope to be found? What is it that should drive us? We should not stake our hope in the fundamental goodness of man. Instead, we should stake our hope in the fundamental graciousness of God. We should work, pray, love and walk by a faith which gladly waits for the day in which each of us will hear our father say to us particularly, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matt 25:23) ■

**Children & Youth
Sunday School will be
on break for the
months of June & July**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Friday, August 9th

PARENTS-NIGHT-OUT

Magic show by: Mark Markham

More Information To Come

Summer Breather Series
JULY 7TH, 14TH, 21ST & 28TH



Christians are not people whose humanity is done away with by grace. Rather, Christians are people whose humanity is restored by grace. And what does it mean to be human? When God made man and woman, he told them that is good, very good, in fact, for them to be fruitful and to multiply, to exercise dominion and to subdue (Genesis 1:28, 31). In other words, God is saying, to be truly human means to build, not to destroy.

Join us this July for our combined Discipleship Hour Class on Cultural Apologetics entitled **The Songs We Sing By Babylon's Waters**. The title is taken from Psalm 137, where the psalmist wrestles with the fact that God's people live in a culture that is not their own, that they live in enemy occupied territory. The psalmist's situation mirrors our own.

What, then, should God's people do? On the one hand, the psalmist certainly agrees with the Apostle Paul that we should work towards and pray for the destruction of evil strongholds (compare Ps 137:7-9 and 2 Corinthians 10:4-6). Part of our calling is to destroy. But part of our

calling is also to continue to be human, in other words, to build. Our calling is not simply to critique but also to sing.

The psalmist poses a question in Psalm 137:4, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" Our combined discipleship class in July will seek to answer that question by building a 4-fold biblical vision for the good, a diamond with 4 facets, a song with 4 verses. The song we sing may at times feel like a cold and broken hallelujah, but it is a hallelujah built on the eternal hope of the Gospel. Join us, then, as we consider

- 1) The Goodness of Nature
- 2) The Goodness of Truth
- 3) The Goodness of Innocence and
- 4) The Goodness of Forgiveness.

These are things for which our culture cries out and they are things which God has freely given to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the worldview which arises from it. ■

Music Ministry

HUMOROUS QUOTES FROM YEARS OF MUSIC MINISTRY

From Vince Treadway

I thought it would be fun to share some interesting and funny quotes from my years in music ministry:

From 4-6 year olds. . .

-A 4 year old was sitting at the table coloring before class and stared at me for a moment and said, "Mr. Treadway, your eyebrows are gray!"

-A child mentioned that their birthday was that week, and another child turned to me and asked, "Mr. Treadway, how old are you?" and I replied, "How old do you think I am?" Several of the children thought for a while and the guesses were, 40, 80, 25, and finally I said, "I'm 68." One of the kids said, "Wow you are *really* old!"

-I have used a wolf puppet for many years with the Covenant Kids, which I named "Arnold," and the children have had many different reactions to Arnold. They love the "pretend" aspect of the puppet, but typically when they reach the age of 6 they begin saying, "Arnold's a puppet!" and my reply has usually been, "Oh, would you like Arnold not to come back?" The reply has always been, "Oh no! We want him to come back!"

-My father passed away in 2009, and I told the Covenant Kids at the time that they would not have class the next week because I was going to a funeral. They didn't say much, but when I returned and we had our first class after the funeral a 4 year-old boy raised his hand and said, "Mr. Treadway, did your daddy die?" and I replied, "Yes, he did, Joshua." Then he said, "Is he with Jesus now?" and I said, "Yes he is." And Joshua got up out of his chair and came up to me and gave me a big hug! I'll never forget that act of impulsive affection!

From adults . . .

-You're so good, you ought to be a professional!

-Did you really learn to play it like that?

-I've heard that piece played better before

-That postlude sounded like a piece for a merry-go-round! (then after I told them it was Bach) oh! Well! (walked away in a huff)

-Those were the *worst* hymns I've ever had to sing! Who picked them?! (and on the same Sunday) those were my *favorite* hymns! Thank you for selecting them!

-After a performance of Handel's Messiah, an orchestra member came up to me in tears and said, "What was that that happened! I have never experienced that before!" I replied, "THAT, was the Holy Spirit!"

-After a wonderful performance Faure's Requiem a person came up to me and said, "Well, the chorus seemed like they enjoyed it"

-You know, the church will never grow if you sing hymns! You are going to have to have a praise band if you want the church to grow!

-Before a service one time my wife came in and I gave her a little kiss, and an elder lady in the church said, "Don't you be kissin' on the girls in the church!" I replied, "She's my wife!" and the elder woman said, "I don't care! Don't you be kissin' on the girls in the church!"

-I played my first weddings when I was 10 years old, and I was to meet with the bride to go over the music. I was practicing in the sanctuary, and the bride came into the sanctuary and walked up to me and said, "I'm looking for Mr. Treadway." And I replied, "That's me!" and she said, "YOU'RE KIDDING!!"

Over all, the majority of the remarks people have made to me have been overwhelmingly kind, generous, and encouraging! But I must say, that in my career there have been remarks that span the entire gamut from intensely rude to remarkably flattering! I thought you all would enjoy reading just a few! ■

Family Ministry

WORDS FROM WALKER

From Walker Kirkpatrick

Hi Everyone!

Now the summer is officially underway! We started off running with the Cardboard Regatta & the High School Beach Trip and it's been a blast so far!

This summer is going to be packed with events, movies, trips, a baby, and camps! Please be in prayer for us this summer as we travel, learn, play, and grow.

God Bless!

Walker ■



CARDBOARD REGATTA



H.S. BEACH TRIP



2024 JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3 H i g h	4 S c h o o l	5 B e a c h	6 T r i p	7 FILM FRIDAY	8
9 YOUTH GROUP	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Q U E S T -	18 M I D D L E	19 S C H O O L	20 C O N F E R E N C E	21	22
23	24 H O R I Z O N -	25 H I G H	26 S C H O O L	27 C O N F E R E N C E	28	29
30 YOUTH GROUP	1	2	3	4	5	6

2024 JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	1	2	3	4	5 FILM FRIDAY	6
7 YOUTH GROUP	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 C A R E	22 C E N T E R	23 S T A Y -	24 A T -	25 H O M E	26 W O R K	27 C A M P
28 YOUTH GROUP	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10



MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

Church Family

BIRTHDAYS

June 4, Angie Crews
June 5, Scott Crews
June 6, Karen Montgomery
June 7, David McKeeman
June 7, Judson Seay
June 7, Judy Seymour
June 9, Susannah Rawlings
June 10, Kim Duncan
June 12, John Matteson
June 13, Charlee DuBois
June 13, Emil Jahna
June 14, Cindy Henry
June 14, Ellis Hunt Sr.
June 15, Sue Campbell
June 16, Sandra Bryan
June 16, Pearl Oliszewski
June 17, John Dubois
June 17, Tony Woods
June 18, Roberta Cain
June 19, Adam Steverson
June 20, Dee Brookes
June 20, Cindy Caldwell
June 20, Mia McCollum
June 21, Loretta Borglund
June 27, Fran Hanrahan
June 28, Daniel Hunt
June 30, Rhett Nelson
June 30, Chelsea Smith

July 1, Keaton Kohl
July 1, Kevin Kohl
July 2, Pat Frankenburger
July 5, Tami Estes
July 5, Maggie Clare Hixenbaugh
July 5, Victoria Stevenson
July 6, Whitney Brewer
July 6, Tom Galloway
July 7, Chip Carter
July 7, Caroline Swanson
July 8, Bob Brookes
July 8, Doug Pace
July 10, Becky Jahna
July 13, Bob Meeker
July 17, Cash Cockrell
July 17, Alison Freeland
July 17, Faith Treadway
July 17, Jackson Wunker
July 20, Chuck Loveless
July 21, Jack Brandies
July 21, James Ebel
July 23, Wanda Bryan
July 25, David K Nelson
July 25, June Ullman
July 26, Charlotte Nelson
July 28, Ellen Horn
July 28, David Nelson
July 29, Carol Bourdette
July 29, Charlie Henry
July 31, Dawn McCollum

ANNIVERSARIES

Gail & Pat Frankenburger, June 2
Tori & Walker Kirkpatrick, June 3
Patty & David McKeeman, June 4
Roberta & Luke Cain, June 8
Jill & Scott Smith, June 14
Susan & Ed Lamar, June 19
Becky & Keith Steverson
Dee & Bob Brookes, June 26
Debbie & Doug Pace, June 26

Maria & Jeff Herman, July 1
Diana & Jim Smith, July 13
Luciana & Tim Abele, July 22
Julia & Michael Berkau, July 24
Lynne & Bob Hulen, July 29
Joyce & Carl McCollum, July 29

*Yours is the day, yours also the night; you
have established the heavenly lights and the
sun. You have fixed all the boundaries of the
earth; you have made summer and winter.*

Psalm 74: 16-17



In honor of the 80th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, *The Diligent has been* rerunning an article series by Fox Rawlings first shared 10-15 years ago. These WWII veterans were brothers in Christ, Lake Wales citizens, and attended our church. May we remember their stories, honor their sacrifice, but mostly rejoice in their faith-made-sight as they are all with Christ in glory!

BREAKFAST WITH THE GREATEST GENERATION

From Fox Rawlings

DUANE HULL

1920-2017

Many of you know Duane Hull as a master craftsman based on his woodwork in our church. Bet you didn't know he helped build a chapel on Iwo Jima in WWII. He landed there as a member of the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) and remained on the island until the end of the war. Here's how he got from Alliance, Ohio to the site of one of the most famous Pacific battles of WWII .

First thing Duane told me was that football was mighty important in his hometown because it is only a few miles from Canton which is the birthplace of the NFL. Following high school he attended Ohio State University for two years before going to work at Alliance Machine Co in 1943 to help in production of steel products for the war effort. After two years of work at Alliance, he and his best friend Johnson decided it was time to join the fight on the front lines and both enlisted in the Navy and headed for training in Williamsburg, Virginia. After seven months of training in Williamsburg, Gulfport, Mississippi; and Port Hueneme, California, Duane and Johnson headed to Oahu, Hawaii where the 133rd worked on expanding taxi ways and improving the Naval Air Station there. Duane told me he also worked the base laundry during this time and was proud to say he earned an extra \$15 a month for doing so.

The Seabees joined up with the 4th Marine division at Maui and headed off for forty days at sea en route to Iwo Jima. He landed on the beach with the second wave of Marines on the first day of fighting and said he knew he was in a real battle when the landing craft he just stepped off of took a direct hit from mortar fire while heading back to retrieve more troops and basically disintegrated. Now terrified, he then headed inland and jumped into the first foxhole he could find. Duane shook his head a little when he told me he dug into the middle of the remains of a Marine who was just hit by mortar fire. The main focus of the Seabees was to secure the beach and to maintain supply lines to Marines in the front line. Duane was smiling when he said that every bulldozer carrying ammunition to

the Marines also always had a jerry can of hot coffee along.

Two weeks after the landing (which was still two weeks before the battle was over) the Seabees began repairing runways and built a water distillation plant for the island. Duane spoke in awe and wonder that this battalion, which suffered 25% casualties, could build a 12,500 foot runway with all supplies either shipped in containers or mined from the island. American ingenuity and work ethic was "just unbelievable" as Duane saw it when the 133rd built P51 runways in just 15 days.

His memories also included a couple of events that were special. First was watching a Catholic priest by the name of Father Kelly walk up and down the beach comforting wounded and dying troops with no regard for his safety. The fact that he was never hit by enemy fire was because he had "God's shield" protecting him according to Duane. The other event was that Duane actually helped build a chapel from plywood which was obtained by a certain truck driver that had a gift for acquisitions of impossible to find supplies. He crafted window shutters to simulate stained glass since glass was truly impossible to be found in the Pacific islands.

The War ended while Duane was in the Far East and it is not hard to imagine that he returned to Alliance Machinery as an engineer...turns out he passed the state board exams without going back to college. Dwayne eventually became Chief Engineer and Director of International Engineering for Alliance. Always interested in how these Veterans end up in Lake Wales, I found out that Duane and his wife Edwina wanted to retire in Florida, and it just so happened that Edwina's folks (the Thornburgs) lived on Thornburg road and actually owned a fish camp on Crooked Lake in the late 1940's.

As I am finding out routinely in these interviews, the main focus of the greatest generation is on others rather than themselves. Duane was genuinely amazed at what his fellow Seabees accomplished with little or no materials. In fact he had a little twinkle in his eyes when he told me that his battalion salvaged enough parts off of the beach to piece together eight jeeps which the Army was more than willing to keep using after the Seabees had headed home.

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Bill Kunkel

1927-2014

Bill Kunkel decided to leave Detroit, Michigan and join the Coast Guard with his best friend at the age of 17. They picked this branch of the service because his friend's Dad was also in the Coast Guard. He figured they would spend the war together...turns out Bill sailed in the Atlantic while his friend served in the Pacific. Not exactly what they had in mind but both did what millions of other young Americans did. They did their part to win WWII.

Radio operator school in Cocks spur Island, Georgia was Bill's first stop. This turned out to be providential in Bill's mind because he later found out that radio operators were stationed very close to the bridge and lived near the Captain's quarters. Radio operators were the first to hear and identify approaching ships or submarines so they were considered critical to survival. Bill said another important aspect was that since he was in close proximity to the ship's captain he was served food and coffee before the rest of the crew. He admitted he was spoiled in this way, but also said with a grin that he certainly did not miss having to eat in the ship's main galley with a crew of 57 and cargo of 5000 troops.

The USS Monticello was the first of two ships which Bill was a crew member on during the war. Troops were ferried from Norfolk, Virginia to Europe a total of sixteen times with Bill aboard as radio operator. During these voyages he saw many ports of call including London, England, Le Havre, France, and Venice, Italy. He said he even got to see the Pope when on shore leave in Rome. Bill also saw twenty or so German U-boats via sonar during these trips. The Monticello routinely dropped 'tin cans' on these submarines. When I asked he explained that depth charges are also called tin cans. Bill said that the radio operators could tell whether metal, or wood or ocean bottom were hit by the sound of the explosion. The Monticello sunk several U-boats during its war-time career.

Since the crew was almost exclusively teenagers, I asked if any ever got into any mischief while on shore leave. He did admit that he and some buddies 'borrowed' a cart from a French farmer in order to secure some apples from an orchard up the road on one occasion. They returned it three days later in fine shape according to Bill. It seems the definition of teenage mischief may have changed somewhat in fifty or so years.

Bill had transferred to the USS Taney and was en route from London to Virginia when the war ended. (One footnote to his last ship is the fact that I saw the USS Taney anchored in Baltimore Harbor this past June as the last surviving warship from the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941.) He received his discharge papers on 4 June, 1946 on Cocks spur Island, Georgia and immediately headed back to Detroit. He showed me a copy of his discharge orders and I noticed that his monthly rate of pay when discharged from the Coast Guard was about the price of a dinner for four these days. I have to believe that love of country rather than paychecks was what motivated this generation to protect the future freedom of America in the honorable manner they did.

While back in Detroit shortly after the war, Bill met his future wife Mary at a wedding (not theirs). He was in the wedding party and she was a guest. I asked both for particulars and they both giggled and looked at each other and said they were married 7 months later. That's all they would say except to tell me they have been married 63 years now. Must have been a really good story.

Art Ubbens

1922-2016

Art Ubbens surprised me right off the bat by telling me he was born and raised in Brooklyn. I told him I couldn't hear even a faint 'nyawk' accent to which he responded it took years of hard work to shed it. When I asked Art about the ship he served on in the Pacific he showed me a photo of it in a book about the USS San Jacinto and said with a big smile that that was his baby. The San Jacinto was an Independence class light carrier that its sailors called the San Jac. Many considered it an ugly duckling because it turned a perfectly good destroyer into a makeshift aircraft carrier, but the crews of ships that survived enemy attacks because of the "courage and dauntless spirit" of her crew called her "Little Queen".

Art was much more interested in telling me about June, his wife of nearly sixty years, than his WWII experience. Art and June's respective fathers were both members of the same Masonic lodge in New York. Turns out that June and Art were chaperones for June's brother and Art's sister on a trip to the movies. When Art called back the next day he later found out that June was horrified to hear her mother tell Art that June was hoping he would call. Art said this began a courtship that would carry him through the war until they were married the day after his separation day from the Navy in January of 1946.

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After graduation from Brooklyn Technical High School Art enlisted in the Navy on September 10, 1942 and completed basic training at Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Chicago. He said they called it Mayor Kelly's Navy because the mayor of Chicago made sure that every sailor had an opportunity to eat meals with families in the area that opened their homes for just such hospitality. After a shakedown cruise to Trinidad, 100 officers, 50 pilots and 1500 enlisted men (85% of whom had never been to sea before) headed for the Marshall Islands via Balboa, San Diego and Pearl Harbor. From this point the San Jacinto was in continual combat duty from May 3, 1944 until September 14, 1945— a total of 16 months.

Art was an Aviation Machinist Mate 1st Class and said he basically lived on the hanger deck below the wooden flight deck where he made sure the carrier's 25 fighters and 9 torpedo bombers were mechanically ready for battle at any time of day or night. The San Jacinto was involved in 7 campaign operations including the battle of the Philippine Sea, Leyte, Luzon, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Formosa and the bombing of Japan's mainland. Art shared with me that he has often wondered why God spared his life throughout his wartime naval career. He told me how two Japanese kamakazes were shot down and crashed simultaneously into the sea less than a plane's length from either side of the ship. During another battle a torpedo skimmed by the hull of his ship missing it by inches. In addition to near misses during sea battles the San Jacinto survived two typhoons during her combat duty. The most devastating battered all three carriers in the area with 140 knot winds and 70 foot waves resulting in the need to patch together one operational ship out of the three severely damaged carriers. Of course the San Jacinto was the lone survivor to remain in active duty as the other two headed back to the States for repairs that lasted through the end of the war. Amazingly the San Jacinto survived all of these close calls with a crew that had shore leave a total of 48 hours during its 16 months of continuous combat duty. When I asked Art what it was like to be on dry land at the end of the war he simply said "it felt good."

Like many of the WWII veterans I have interviewed Art shared that he remembered a few funny anecdotes while onboard ship. One of the many care packages that June sent contained a yo-yo. While Art was whistling and yo-yoing along the hanger deck the Chief loudly informed him that he wasn't going to get a discharge so quit trying. Another was a different kind of 'funny' story that took place during a Japanese torpedo attack

against the San Jacinto one morning at 5:00 AM. A sailor by the name of Bill Bailey was jumping up and down on deck during the attack. When those around him asked what he was doing he told them that the concussion from direct torpedo explosions might break their legs. He figured if he was in the air when a torpedo hit, his legs would be ok.

As to Art's question about mortality during his wartime experience, I believe his family would agree that God's plan for him included providing a stable Christian home for June and their five children. After his discharge on January 20, 1946 Art worked in an engineering capacity for several companies while taking advantage of the GI Bill and earning his degree in mechanical engineering from Brooklyn Poly Technical Institute (now a part of NYU) taking night classes for eight years. Art worked much of his career as a professional engineer for Exxon Research and Engineering performing economic studies for future power plants throughout the country. While living in Billings, Montana one of their sons excitedly pointed out to his mom that from their back window she could actually see a distance of 75 miles all the way to Bear Tooth Mountain. June shared her thoughts of the remote location of their home by responding to her son "that's because there is nothing between here and there." She was much more comfortable living on Long Island then retiring to Brodheadsville, Pennsylvania in the Pocono Mountains where Art still spends his summers a few streets away from one of his son's home.

Art shared with me that there was a close bond between aviation machinists and the pilots who had complete faith in the mechanical soundness of their aircraft each time they took off from the carrier's flight deck. Art showed me a copy of a letter he had received from one of his ship's pilots a few years back. The letterhead was on White House stationary and was from President George H. W. Bush regarding an upcoming San Jacinto reunion. President Bush commented that he remembered the "dauntless spirit of our crew. San Jacinto had no single hero – rather, she was led into battle by many heroic individuals of singular courage and patriotism." As he spoke of the great price paid by her crew who didn't make it home he implored "let us celebrate the peace and freedom this nation so enjoys. They are, in large part, a great and lasting monument to the crew of San Jacinto and to all of America's World War II veterans." Next time you see a WWII veteran remember President Bush's reflections on our freedom and thank them for what they did for us. ■



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