

RM2 E. C. "CATO" CHRISTENSEN JR. 20 September 1951

Notes between Cato and the Campbells....

Between 19 June 1999 and 6 August 2001 Cato corresponded with the Campbells, JC and Sylvia. What pertained to Cato is chronicled below, and what pertained to others is chronicled under their respective place in this log. To see what Cato had to say, please refer to the following names:

19 June 1999 - "Enclosed is the \$20.00 check for the dues for being part of USS FRANK E EVANS. I was on that 'Boat' for a bunch of months. My wife and I plan to attend the reunion in Denver.

I was just thinking, which is probably bad, that if I ever had \$20.00 while I was on board FRANK E. EVANS, and loaned it to some friend or someone, I am sure that it would not have been spent in the way you intend to use the money. If I remember back when, I would say that it would have been spent on, 'lots and houses.'

I am going to look up some old pictures and send them to you all."

19 February 2000 - "I was on board USS FRANK E EVANS DD 754, actual ship duty, 41 months. By the way, I loved every minute of it. My wife's name is Tommie Jo, but she prefers to be called TJ. I was RM3, and when I left FRANK E. EVANS, I was RM2. Nobody liked FRANK E. EVANS as well as I did. Don't ask me why. I could have transferred several times, but would not go. FRANK E. EVANS was called the, 'Grey ghost of the Korean coast.'

Regarding the book, 'In The Wake,' I am not through yet. How many hours did I spend on the bridge with my buddy QM2 Lee Lindsey, who read the lights and flags, watching all the ships, mainly destroyers, go into formation for plane guard? I said to Lee, 'I hope all of those ships know where they are supposed to be going, and how they're going to get there.' Once our sister ship, USS ALFRED A CUNNINGHAM DD 752 made a wrong turn and nearly ran into us. Our CO's words are probably still floating around in the Pacific.

I still teach a little college, which I enjoy and my wife still works. Right now she's in Vegas and I stay at home (Weslaco, TX) and work. I am going to fly to Houston tomorrow to see my gran' baby."

2 August 2001 - "Now you all have to realize that I was aboard FRANK E. EVANS for 41 months. Enjoyed all of it! I served with a bunch of great sailors and was blessed with having three good COs (ones that liked destroyers and the men that kept them running). My first CO was Christie, the second was Olson (XO), and the last one was Salmon. He served two jaunts with FRANK E. EVANS and was a fine individual. Now also realize that I was a radioman and one who wanted to know everything that was going on. (I was nosey.) In

the radio shack we had to route the messages all during the day and some at night, which was a job for a seaman, but I loved to do it, and that way I kept in touch with everything. I was so good at it that Captain Salmon wanted to take me with him when he left FRANK E. EVANS for another duty station. I even sat down in his state room one morning and drank coffee with him!

When CUNNINGHAM did that wrong turn, Olson was our CO. The CO on CUNNINGHAM had to answer to our leader on BLUE, (USS BLUE DD 744, ComDesRon 13) as he was called to report to BLUE the next day by little boat (Captain's gig). When that CO left CUNNINGHAM his next ship was probably watching ice bergs float around Alaska or counting polar bears.

I ran around with B.J. (died '94), and one we called 'Dub,' whose real name I do not recall. B.J. had a brother on the ship at the same time, who we called 'Little Rich.' He took care of the laundry. Since I ran with his brother, I got my whites washed and pressed sometimes, so I could make an impression on the girls in California. (I needed all the help I could get.)

QM2 Lee Lindsey and I were really good friends. He came home on leave with me for two weeks. Actually Lee was the reason I married my wife, the one I still have. Lee also had a brother who served at the same time, and he too was a QM. Lee's mother and step father lived in Vallejo. The step father worked in the ship yard and helped paint FRANK E. EVANS when we were in the yard. They tell me they cannot find the Lindsey boys. I sure wish they could as I would love to talk to Lee if he is still with us. Going to close for today and I will pick up again tomorrow."

3 August 2001

"Looking at the photo album from the Ninth Reunion...

I recall RM3 William A. Bristow "Bugs" as he was a radioman and we worked watches in the shack a good many times. I see in the FRANK E. EVANS Report that he had surgery and a stroke; I do hope he is getting along alright.

I see that (GM3 Donald E.) Butler was at the reunion. He and I were real good friends. We must have gone ashore together and looked at the sights and probably visited some of the cultural centers.

SN Donald R. Cox I knew real well as he was a radioman. This gentleman probably would like to kill me, as when he came aboard, he was a seaman. I saw that every no good duty that we had to take care of, for example, make coffee, clean the shack, wash and mop the passageway outside, and help clean the mast. He was new and this beats us doing all of this mess.

In looking through the membership roster I came across QM2 James A. Brayton. We played cards together for hours on end, when we had

nothing else to do.

I also came across RM3 Irvin L. Bobo. He and I were real close. I slept in a double bunk under the mess hall about three inches apart from Irvin for at least a year. That fool took more showers than any human alive, and I am not sure that he did not set a world record. Bobo taught me to be a radioman when I first came aboard FRANK E. EVANS. He came to work and left work always singing. I could be copying code and I would hear that singing (what I don't know) and I knew Bobo was going to be with us, singing and all. I called him about a year ago and we had a great chat. He told me that he was going to write a book and include a chapter just about me!"

Sea Stories...

"One or two of these stories is true, as I was there, and one of them, which no one will believe, I was a part of and the CO told me to keep my mouth shut about it. Now remember, I spent hours on the bridge and wandering around the ship, so I could pick up on things....

The time and place was off the Korean coast. FRANK E. EVANS was patrolling not far off shore. Radar picked up something and we raced to see what it was. It was a mine, which we disposed with our 3 inch 50s. We kept on trucking down the shoreline, looking for something. I would look through the big glass in hopes of finding something pretty in a short skirt, but did not. Anyway, we ran across another mine, which we took care of, as they can do nasty things to a destroyer. Shortly thereafter, we ran upon one of these straw boats with some North Koreans in it. We knew they were putting down those mines, but looking over that thing they called a boat, (from the bridge) we did not see any more mines. On this trip, we had a South Korean officer on board to ask those idiots in that boat where they came from, and they would say nothing. Our CO told the officer to ask them again, and again, no answer. Our captain had a great temper. As we were at some sort of general quarters, with two gun mounts firing at the shore line, the captain told the OOD to lower #1 mount to point at the straw boat, and then lock and load. The Korean officer was to ask the same question again. This time he got an answer. I was on the bridge and I watched all the goings on. The North Korean men were jumping around like chickens looking at those gun barrels. Their eyes must have been bugged out like a frog's. I laughed till I was sick. Believe it or not, we let the fools go! Well, enough for today, I will pick up tomorrow."

5 August 2001

"Well, it's Sunday and I am still at this letter...

FRANK E. EVANS was somewhere, could be anywhere, I'm not sure. We were attached to BLUE, our Flag Ship. We were going to play games

with a submarine. We were to find the sub, chase it and when our sonar pinged on it, direct hit, we were to report back to BLUE. That's where the 'big wheel' was. Well, we started out beside BLUE making wide circles, which got bigger and bigger, beyond the sight of BLUE, until we finally got the sub on sonar. This accomplished, we started cat and mouse games chasing the sub all over the ocean, we trying to keep up and he trying to loose us. This game went on a long time and finally we pinged over him, which resulted in a direct hit.

The game being over, we were now to report back to BLUE. I failed to tell you that we were not in sight of any land and it was nice and sunny out. Well guess what? We did not know where we were and did not know BLUE's location, and we had no radar contact. Well, I was in the radio shack, probably drinking coffee, and I might have even supposed to be working, like copying code or something. We had this intercom system all over the ship and from the bridge, the CO, Salmon, called and asked me to report to the bridge. Off I went. Upon arriving, captain Salmon took me on the bridge, away form the other people, and asked me to do something for him. He asked if I knew a radioman on the BLUE, and could I get him to do a favor for me, to open his mouth to nobody. Capt. Salmon wanted to know BLUE's exact location, latitude and longitude so we could find BLUE and save face. I got on the radio key and talked to a radioman I knew. I asked him to go next door (as CIC was next to the radio room and CIC is where all of this information comes from) and get this information and tell NO ONE. Well he did it for me and radioed the information back to me. I copied it on a scrap sheet of paper and then hustled my body to the bridge and handed the CO the information. Shortly thereafter, we were full speed ahead and linked up with BLUE. Points, I made! Now I remember that we were in Japanese waters. This good deed for captain Salmon got QM2 Lee Lindsey and I an over-night pass in Tokyo, which was not heard of. We stayed at an American hotel and had a ball, (acted like rich folks)."

6 August 2001

"Well it's Monday and I am going to try and end this letter. I want to pass on to you a short story that I watched from the bridge.

It seems that every time we were in Hong Kong, people in those little straw boats were coming around wanting something. Brass was very high on the list. The powder, to shoot those 5" shells, was in brass casings. Well, one day three or four men came around in their boat wanting some brass. I'm sure the payback was in booze. A couple of our crew were on the main deck talking with them. It seems, after they got their heads together, that there was some and they would give it to the men. First the boat would have to be brought up forward, about where our anchor was. The men complied with this wish alright, which they should not have done. When we trained new people to work in the gun mounts (GQ) we had a mock

shell that weighed about 50 lbs for them to practice with. I think it was brass. One of the kind crew members that was talking to the people in the boat, went to one of the gun mounts and retrieved the shell. Now from the deck of FRANK E. EVANS to the people in the boat was a ways down. 50 lbs, all at once, they did not bargain for. Well as you might expect, some sailor dropped it into the straw boat. Instead of stopping, the shell, it just went right on through and left a rather large hole as it left their boat. The last I saw of those people, they were stuffing shirts or whatever into the hole and heading on back to shore as fast as possible. I think everybody had a great laugh except those in the boat.

Mary Soo...

Then there was Mary Soo (famous person) in Hong Kong. With her crew of girls, would wash the sides of the ship with soap and water, and then paint it, all for our food scraps. They did a great job and saved a bunch of work for some of our crew. At lunch time, we would get trays and fix the girls a good lunch, if you call what we ate good, and take it to the girls. They enjoyed!!!

Eggs...

We pulled alongside a British carrier once to take on fuel. It was early morning. I yelled to one of their sailors and asked if he had eggs for breakfast. His reply was that he didn't even know what an egg was, and he asked what animal they came from."

RM2 E. C. "CATO" CHRISTENSEN JR.

Cato had a terrible case of emphysema. He had to sleep with oxygen. Cato passed away in 2002. He lived at 1305 West Third #6, Weslaco, TX 78596.