

FC3 EUGENE W. GARRITY 19 September 1950 - 21 December 1951



I Eugene W. Garrity went to boot camp during WWII at Newport, Rhode Island. I was an Activated Reservist called to service at Boston, Massachusetts 9 September 1950.

It all happened fast. When Korea broke out on 25 June 1950, I, a WWII vet, was still reestablishing a civilian life with a new family and serving in the local naval reserve unit. I received the call mid-summer. I was immediately on a train to San Diego. Reporting to the Destroyer Base, I then received orders to the moth balled USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754) and was aboard when she was recommissioned on 15 September 1950. In the three months that followed, the newly formed crew brought FRANK E. EVANS back to life and scrambled to get ready for the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet deployment to the Korean combat zone. FRANK E. EVANS departed San Diego 2 January 1951.

FRANK E. EVANS joined the Siege of Wonsan operation, only a week in progress, on 25 February 1951. She immediately assumed her role in shore bombardment, and taking under fire enemy shore battery emplacements hidden in mountain caves. Wonsan was the strategic port on the east coast of North Korea.

As a Fire Controlman third class, I was expected to utilize, and often shift between, the newer lock-on fire control radar technology and older tried and true equipment used in WWII, like the optical Range Finder. Perched high in the fire control director over the bridge, the Range Finder would provide its operator with a unique line of sight view of both the panorama and detail of

activity and targets along the shore. It could also peer farther inland, where the fire control radar beam could not penetrate. I would often "bead on" targets, such as railroad bridges, in the cross-hairs of the Range Finder and watch the results of the ensuing naval gunfire support. Often an enemy railroad bridge would be clearly destructed but soon rebuilt and became a target once again upon the return of the destroyers a few days later.

I remember the times FRANK E. EVANS would detach from the main task force in Wonsan and make the fast run north up the coast to the Songjin-Chongjin area. This was dubbed the "Midnight Express." We had to get there by mid-night. Arriving on station, the ships would line up to interdict fire on the southbound train carrying supplies from the Soviet border. It was "cat and mouse" with the train often halting in the mountain train tunnels to escape fire from the tin cans.

The evasive circular naval maneuver known as the "War Dance" was perfected during these early months of the Wonsan Siege and FRANK E. EVANS was at the dance. This was especially the case during an engagement with shore batteries on 18 June 1950, where the North Koreans had very noticeably increased the size of their artillery from the previous 75mm to 100mm shells. FRANK E. EVANS took several near misses and 30 shrapnel hits that day, with four crew wounded.

I recall hearing a loud blast outside the Mark 37 Director, my GQ station, quickly followed by the sound of a big hunk of shrapnel ricocheting around inside. Evidently it had come up into the compartment through the Director's under skirt. When I picked up the hot shell fragment, I could see the Russian alphabet lettering and markings of its manufacturer. Later the piece was collected by the Gunnery Officer because it likely had value to Naval Intelligence. After the engagement, FRANK E. EVANS made a fast run back to Sasebo, Japan for repairs.

Another FRANK E. EVANS mission during the 1951 deployment took place against the backdrop of the Red Chinese buildup for a possible invasion of Formosa (Taiwan) intelligence reported that hundreds of junks were observed massing in the ports of the Chinese mainland across from Formosa, evidently poised for potential transport of an invasion force across the Formosa Strait. A big question mark at the time was how U.S. Forces could respond if called upon to repel an "armada of junks."

FRANK E. EVANS was temporarily detached from Wonsan, back to Japan, for a special assignment to join other military units on air, land, and sea to quickly improvise and test weapon tactics for "sinking the junks" should that become necessary. Surprisingly, in early tests, the mock-up junks proved to be nearly "unsinkable" in target practice runs using a variety of weapons systems, including 5 inch guns and aerial bombardment. I took a sequence of photos showing the unconventional tactic that was finally successful, the FRANK E. EVANS' "Y-Guns", which were designed for use in anti-submarine

warfare! Fortunately, a show of force by elements of Task Force 77 through the Strait in April 1951 probably deterred the invasion, so that a battle to sink the junks was avoided.

FRANK E. EVANS finished up her 1951 combat deployment and returned to San Diego on 4 September 1951. I remained with FRANK E. EVANS during her yard overhaul at Mare Island, living in the "Quonset Hut Seaside Village" family base housing on North San Francisco Bay until my discharge on 21 December 1951.

I, with my wife Edith returned home to Weymouth, Massachusetts where we raised five children. I went on for a career and retirement from New England Telephone Company in 1985.

I fondly remember USS FRANK E. EVANS and my shipmates during the Korean War and salute all crew who ever sailed in her.

Gene and his wife Edith currently reside at 118 Prospect Hill Drive, Weymouth, Massachusetts, 02191. You can reach them through his son Mike Garrity at [compalign@aol.com](mailto:compalign@aol.com) or 781-335-4996.