

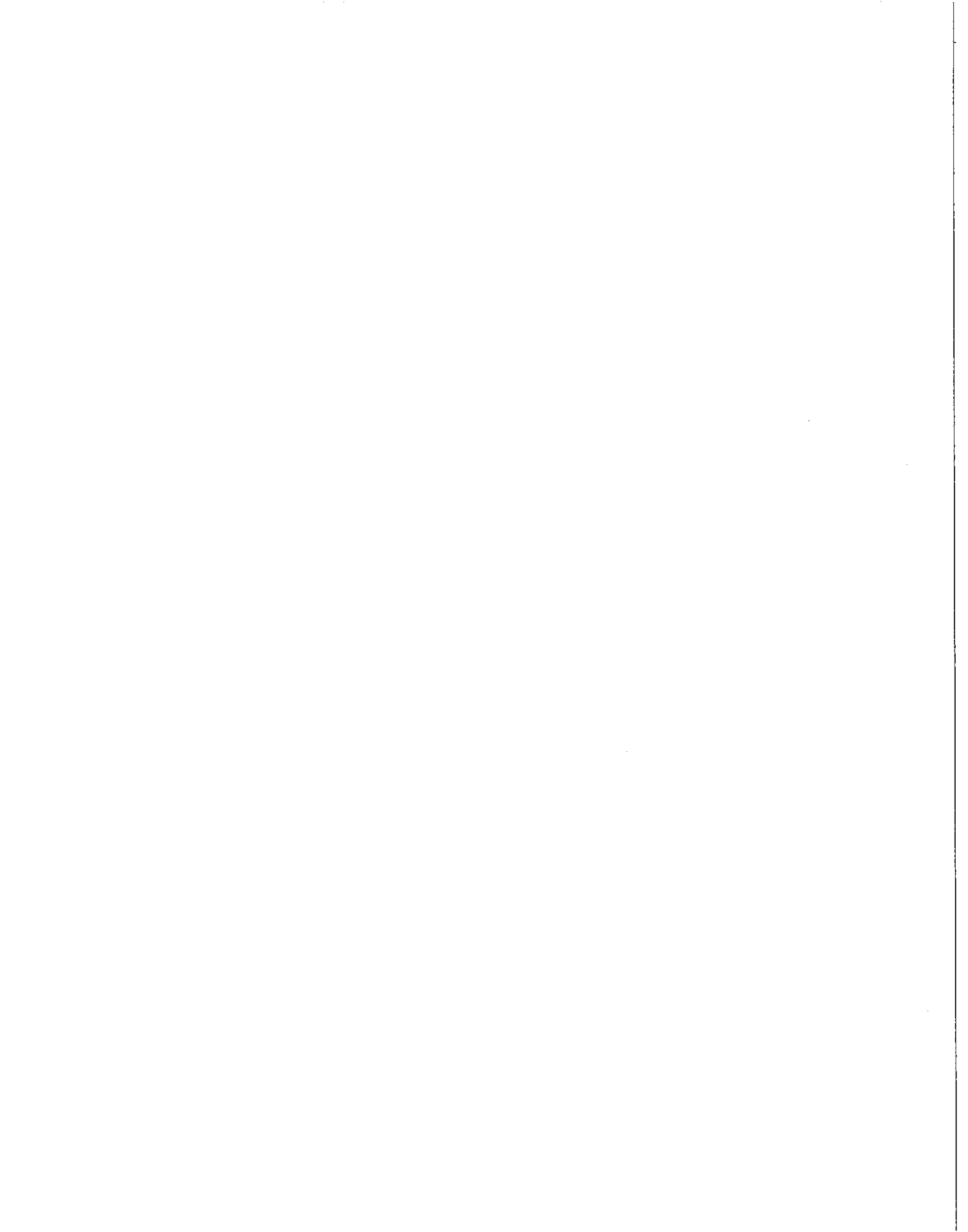
WORLD WAR II-KOREAN WAR MEMORIES PROJECT

**GIFT OF
LT. CMDR. VERNON T. ATKINSON**

Date Received: 24 September 2001

Date Acknowledged: 24 September 2001

GIFT: His World War II memoir, "Brothers In Service and Faith," detailing his military service and that of his brother in the South Pacific



BROTHERS IN SERVICE AND FAITH

Wanderlust motivated my elder brother Melvin to pressure parental consent for Navy enlistment. Fealty, patriotism and duty to country moved me to leave a comfortable "Exempt essential industry" to join the Navy. Family friend Bobby Shaw shared that unbelievable day that galvanized a nation and all who loved this country. December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor is a freeze-frame horror. Navy bandsmen were there to entertain restless waiting troops. Bobby Shaw, member of the band, by chance had an interim berth on the U.S.S. Arizona. He died that day with 1100 shipmates he did not know. My oldest brother Delbert, Mayor of Pasadena, quickly initiated the name change of 5th Street, the city's busiest, to Shaw Street in memoriam.

Snug up to the Arizona, veteran Navyman and Chief Signalman Melvin on deck of the U.S.S. West Virginia watched in fear as they were second hit and sunk. He jumped into roiling, burning water swimming toward Ford Island. 219 of his shipmates perished. 17 days later our family learned that he survived. My thoughts crystallized December 7. Rally-round-the-flag response overwhelmed recruiters. My Rice University chemical engineering degree, exempt/industry status must have conveyed that maybe I could drive a boat.

Scrupulous with training, I was dispatched to Annapolis, followed with University of California-Berkeley for diesel engineering. Seamanship experience was gained on the Reliance minesweeping the Los Angeles entrance channel. Submarine school in Connecticut was a washout. Small craft training in Miami preceded orders to 8th Naval District HQ in New Orleans. Papers there indicated proceed to Ecorse, MI to accept for the Navy P.C. 1145. My chest swelled as I saw my ship, "bucking bronco of the seas" they were called. Formalities over, I took this ship, crew, and Coast Guard river pilot down the Mississippi for further outfitting and provisions. P.C. 1145 was destined for much heavy duty; the remainder of my active service was aboard her.

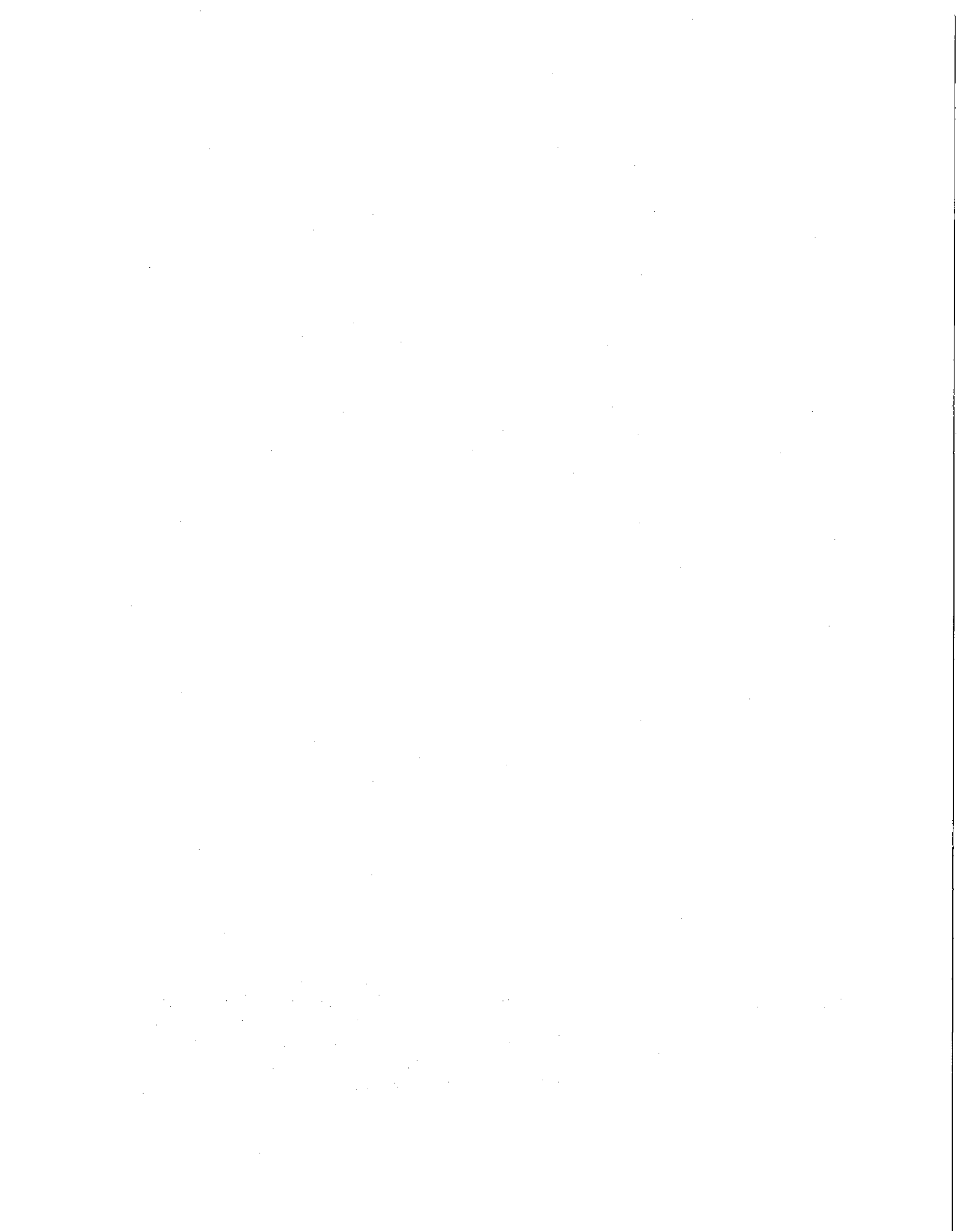
My brother and I served proudly touching exotic places never knowing each other's location or circumstances. Our wartime paths crossed but it was long after peace was declared before reunion. We could relate when reflecting on Eniwetok, Ulithi, Bikini, Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, Leyte, Okinawa, Wake or Kwajalein. We were thankful for survival and talked openly of the ultimate frightening experience. He was burned in Kamikaze attack of his aircraft carrier. I was electrified below deck when 15 feet of the bow of our ship was sheared off by a submarine we were escorting to the Panama Canal. Our ship was one of the first into devastated Tokyo Harbor. P.C. 1145 had depth charged enemy ships and weathered several hurricanes, even riding out 212 mph highest recorded intensity.

Agreeing the most frightening event in both our lives was the September 1945 typhoon, worst in history that covered most of the South Pacific. Rolling 70 degrees in waves 80 to 90 feet, Japanese mines being hurled loose from moorings my ship was mercilessly tossed. The larger ship my brother was on proved equally helpless. We compared and knew that the typhoon was pure fright. Men's wars and foibles notwithstanding, the Winds of God still prevail as on Pentecost.

Our faith served us well-if God be for you what can be against you? 1150 of us W.W. II veterans die each day, but we secured freedoms. My brother Melvin was buried in February 1999 with deserved military honors.

Lt. Cdr. Vernon T. Atkinson
U.S.N.R., Ret.

4407 Fox Meadow Lane
Pasadena TX 77504
713/946-4979



24 September 2001

Lt. Cmd. Vernon T. Atkinson
4407 Fox Meadow Lane
Pasadena, Texas 77504

Dear Commander Atkinson:

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your World War II memoir, "Brothers In Service and Faith," detailing the military service of you and your brother in the South Pacific, which will be entered into our World War II-Korean War Memories Project.

Your story is a valuable addition to our project, and we appreciate your willingness to send it to us.

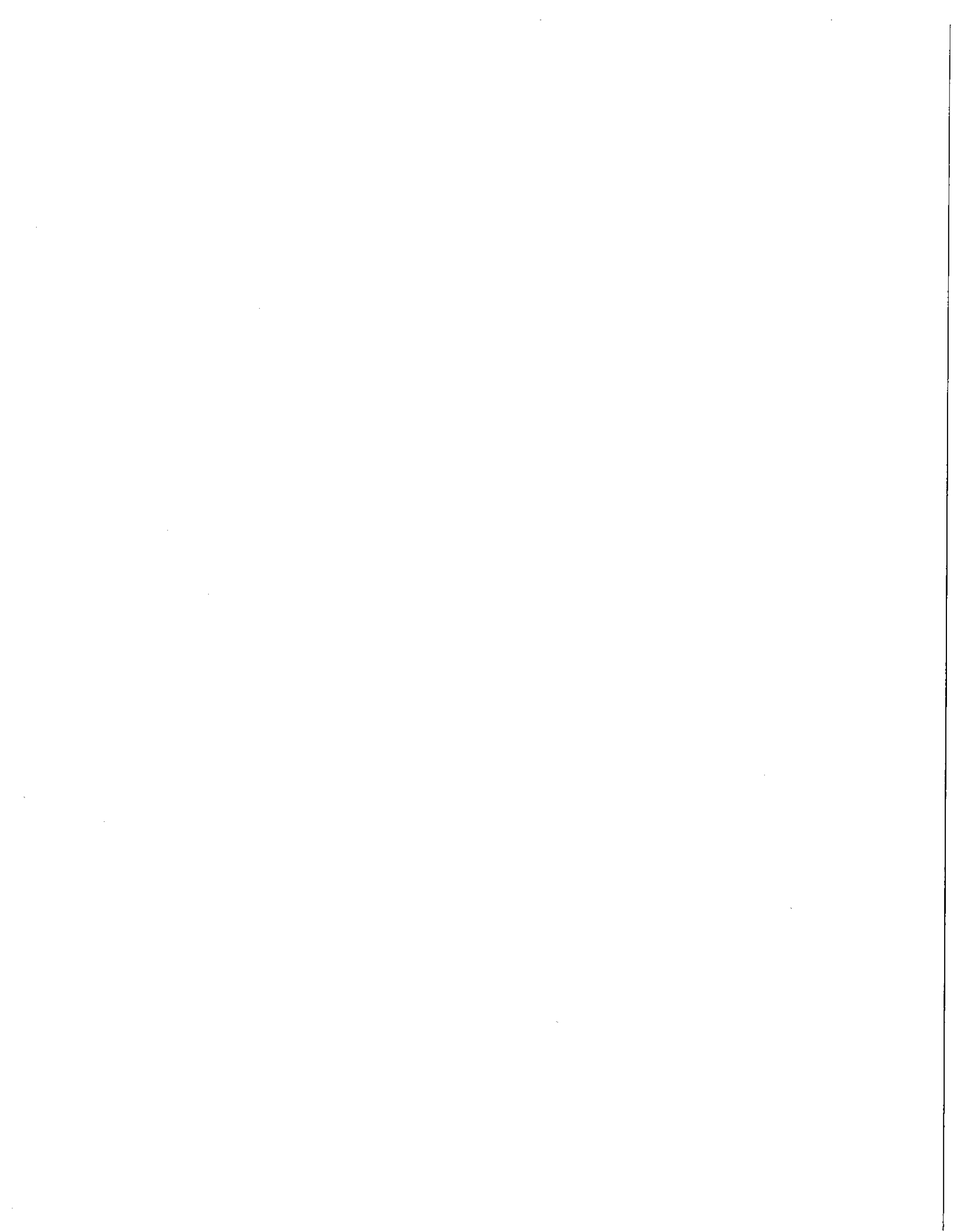
Would you please complete the enclosed forms and return them to me?

Thank you very much for sharing your wartime memories with us for the benefit of future generations through the Marshall Foundation Research Center.

Sincerely,

Joellen K. Bland (Mrs.)
Director, Memories Project
540-463-7103, Ext. 235
blandjk@vmi.edu

cc: Albert J. Beveridge, III, President



GEORGE C. MARSHALL FOUNDATION "MEMORIES PROJECT"

DONOR INFORMATION

(Please Attach to the "Memories" You Send Us)

Name Vernon T. ATKINSON Telephone 713-946-4979
Address 4407 Fox Meadows Ln E-Mail _____
Pasadena, TX 77504 Gender M
Veteran of WW II Korea _____ Civilian Service _____
Army _____ Navy Marine Corps _____ Air Corps/Force _____ Coast Guard _____
Service/Civilian Branch _____
WWII Theater(s) of Operation Pacific, American
Description of "Memories" Given: (Story, Diary, Letters, Photographs, Etc.) _____

Date and Place of Birth March 19, 1918 Pasadena, Texas
Education Level upon Service Entry College Graduate
Occupation Before Service Chemical Engineer
Service Starting Date Jan 1942 Discharge Date _____
Highest Rank Achieved LT, CDR.
Units Served With & Dates: P.C. 1145, Public Relations Commission 8-7

Decorations/Honors Reserve Medal, Victory Medal, American
Occupation After Service Chemical Engineer Pacific Theaters

Living Service Buddies, whom we might contact: (Name, Address, Telephone)
1. Deceased
2. _____
3. _____

Nearest Living Relative(s), whom we might contact: (Name, Address, Telephone) as above
1. Mildred K. Atkinson (wife) as above!
2. Cindi Harrison 1701 Zoop Pasadena 77502
Feb. 713-477-7874 WK 351187-8818 daughter

How did you learn about the Marshall Foundation's World War II-Korean War Memories Project? Reserve Officer Magazine

(See Reverse Side)

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540-463-7103

ITEM/INFORMATION RELEASE FORM

I, Lernon J. Atkinson, in view of the historical and scholarly value of the information or items discussed, knowingly and voluntarily permit the George C. Marshall Foundation to make full use of this information or item(s).

I hereby grant and assign all of my rights of whatever kind pertaining to this information or item(s) to the public.

Date 10/01/01

Contributor's Signature Lernon J. Atkinson *LJAV*
USNR

(See Reverse Side)