

Raylie Dinterman
Jacob Golob
Period 3

Jerry Chrysong
U.S. Navy
1942-1945



Jerry Chrysong

Jerry Chrysong was born on October 30, 1925 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He grew up with his two sisters in a small two bedroom home, which didn't include a bathroom, bathtub, running water, or electronics. Jerry joined the Navy at age 17 because he knew he would be drafted in a year. He decided to join the Navy, rather than the Army because he had been working on a farm all his life and didn't want to spend any more years in the dirt. He attended boot camp at the Naval Training Station in San Diego, California.

Jerry was schooled on the use and maintenance of 40 millimeter guns with hydraulic drive systems. Unfortunately, the first ship he was on had electronically controlled, Amplidyne generators. Chief Ed Merkey showed Jerry around and spent time teaching him about the new electronic system. Jerry was assigned to the USS Mt. Olympus Flag Ship of the 5th Amphibious Fleet, which sailed out of the Boston Navy Yard to Hawaii and picked up men and supplies and sailed on to the South Pacific. Jerry's battle job was firing the 40 millimeter gun at enemy air planes. The second ship he was assigned to was called the USS Amphion, where he was in charge of the fire control shop.

When going into combat, Jerry never truly felt pressure or nervousness. He only stayed at the gun and did what he had to do. Once the Japanese ran out of bombs, they came closer to shoot. When that didn't help either, the Kamikaze pilots began committing suicide and crashed into the naval ships. To avoid the kamikaze crashing into them, ships would move in a zig-zag-like motion. His ship performed this motion and the plane barely missed it and hit the ship ahead

of them instead. When Jerry looked back, there were a dozen of men in the water. Once President Truman made the executive decision to drop the atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, the war took a closing turn. “No matter what, everyone was in that war together,” said Jerry.

Even through all the stress of the war, the soldiers still kept themselves entertained. Being on a ship, there wasn't much to do but play card games. The soldiers would play poker but instead of betting money, they would bet matches. Many of the soldiers also played pranks on each other, especially in the head, which consisted of a long trough with water running down it. Some of the soldiers would light a newspaper on fire and throw it down the trough and make all of the men jump away in fear of getting burned!

When the war was over, the soldiers were treated very kindly by the population. Unfortunately, the soldiers also came home to a jobless country. “Anything you could do, you did.” Jerry tried really hard to get any type of job. He couldn't collect GI Bill money because he was unable to attend school full time. As a kid, he made 50 cents a day out in the cornfields and often gave his earnings to his sisters because women, above all, couldn't get jobs. Even 'til this day, his sisters never forgot that kind gesture.

Coming back home from the war was a big adjustment. The world was far different from when he left and his family even moved to Inglewood, California with his new baby brother. There in Inglewood, Jerry met his wife. At the time, he didn't have much money so she told him she would marry him if he saved \$1,000. In those times, that was very hard to live up to. After many dates, she had asked him how much money he had saved in order for her to marry him. He had told her \$20, to which she replied, “Close enough.”

After Jerry's retirement, he asserted his friend Gary Lendenme in starting two newspapers; Lake Mathews Sentinel and The Perris City New.. At first, it was only these two men writing the stories and soon it prospered. The newspapers are still sold today. Jerry also got involved with all kinds of photography, often with weddings and anything to do with horses. Currently, Jerry is very much involved with his church and he even won best comedian. He is also involved with his horses and property today. Amazingly, he still keeps in touch with many of his old friends. He also attends reunions for the USS Mt. Olympus and the USS Amphion. We were very honored to listen to this man's stories and advice. We will never forget this amazing experience with Jerry Chrysong.