

NOT A HERO, MERELY PATRIOTIC

By A. Edward Pierce, A/56

In early 1942 while gainfully employed by the New York Shipbuilding Corporation in Camden, NJ, a teenaged friend named Earl Fisher and I journeyed to Philadelphia where it was our plan to enlist in the United States Navy. The navy at the time was not a participant in the draft system. All navy recruits were volunteers.

Earl and I arrived at the downtown recruiting facility where we were immediately subjected to some paperwork followed by the customary physical examination. Earl passed with flying colors and within a few days after was headed for Great Lakes Naval Training Station. As for me, I didn't fare quite so well with the physical examination. I was born with the less serious type of heart murmur, so when the doctor examined me, he picked up on this. He had me hop on each leg twenty times after which he used his stethoscope. He then had me sit on a nearby bench for a few minutes and shortly thereafter, the same procedure was duplicated. The doctor then said to me, "I am sorry son, but your heart is not good enough for the U.S. Navy." While I felt horrible with the doctor's statement, I knew full well that I had given it my best shot. There was some solace in that I believed when my draft notice was received, a similar litany would follow and that the army would reject me or select me for limited service.

About five or six months later when the first twenty year old draft had its beginning, I received my draft notice. A brief time later, I had my pre-induction physical and subsequently my induction physical examination. I passed both and was happily passed for

general military service. I spent forty months in the military having served in combat in France and Germany as a combat infantryman with the 12th Armored Division.

To make a long story a bit more brief, after 97 years of inhabiting the earth, I am still in possession of the heart murmur and in all of those years, it never has been a problem of major concern or presented any problems for me. This is proof positive, once again, that the ever living and true God is indeed exceedingly gracious. May it ever be thus.