

As the great-granddaughter of Homer Desmond Tittle, I have grown up with my grandfather telling me his stories. Of the *USS Emmons*, he would say: "she was big, and she was FAST". Homer served as a machinist's mate. He was transferred to the battleship *New Jersey* in order to teach the new recruits what he had learned - "to make a battleship move!" He said the *Emmons* could top 40 knots. My grandfather told me this was a secret during the war, as a ship her class wasn't supposed to be so fast. The stories of his everyday life as a member of her crew are also fascinating and reveal so much. He told of being offered a tasty "snack" by some children he and his crewmen had given money to, only to find it was grasshoppers! He told of a crewmember who was eating a sandwich and asked what kind of meat it was. Homer replied, "it's tongue, beef tongue" and the sailor proceeded to spit the food out into the sea saying, "I hate tongue!" to which Homer said "but we've been eating these for three days"!

When my grandfather began describing the ship herself I was amazed. She traveled 300,000 miles, and led a convoy carrying President Roosevelt to Cairo, all before sinking after valiantly fending off numerous attacks and coming to the aid of others at Okinawa. I had never heard of any of this important history apart from my grandfather's stories.

I think the legacy of the *USS Emmons* should be implemented in schools, especially in teaching of the battle of Normandy, where she fired the first Allied shot. The outcome of the war would be vastly different without her gallant efforts. Even my own life, as an avid student of German and Japanese culture, wouldn't be the same without the sacrifices of her crew. The *Emmons* did so much in her career, leading convoys, shooting down Japanese fighter jets, fighting on D-Day, and traveling around the world several times over. I think the scholarship participants could help put forward the USS Emmons Association's social media as a shared resource, letting everyone know of the sacrifices made by her crew over her long career. I would also like to work with education organizations in my state to encourage the a closer study of the oral histories of veterans in schools. I plan to engage my legislators in this process as well as the trustees of the university I will attend in the fall, Bowling Green State University in Ohio. I am

also familiar with the major statewide superintendent, teacher and school organizations in Ohio, and I believe they would be interested in the detailed collection of information that the USS Emmons Association can provide. By working with other descendents, I believe my generation can help preserve this history. Just as my great-grandfather was called to educate another ship's crew, I would like to help share these important educational resources. My great-grandfather died before I was born, so the time spent hearing his stories from my grandfather is very important to me, and these oral histories are important to everyone.

I propose a story database, in the form of a facebook page or a twitter account, to supplement the Association's current social media, so that followers like me can share the oral histories we gather from listening to our family members. The database should be dedicated to the *USS Emmons*, but also encompass other naval ships' stories, perhaps through social media interaction with other associations. I feel this is an extremely easy way to effectively share stories between people around the world about military service and how important the past is to the present and future. Homer had so many stories, and my grandfather, Jackson has shared enough of them with me to easily begin this project. With the help of the Association and others connected to the *Emmons*, this would be an exciting way for young people to get involved, share their stories, and become engaged with the past and know the legacy of the brave people who shaped the nation we live in today. The world needs to remember our history, because we are doomed to repeat the past if we should forget it.

-Alexandra Stack, Columbus, Ohio    May 25, 2017