

The Last Hours of USS NoA  
or APD 343. by Jim NAUGHTON 5/2

Sept. 13, 1944 off the Coast of Palau, D. Day was approaching and H hours was scheduled for 8AM.

I was awoken to stand the 12:00AM to 4AM watch. 2 Hours on the Wheel at the wheel House and 2 hours Depth charge watch. I ambled up to the wheel House and took over the steering of the ship. It was quite an easy job turning a 4 ft brass wheel to what ever Compass direction I was given. By the Deck officer. He would give me the direction, I would repeat it and start turning the wheel, when the ship got near the compass point I would ease off and the ship would be on target. After my 2 hour wheel watch I was relieved and when back to the fan tail where the depth Chargers were. It was on deck and quite dark with a full sky of stars. Sitting there for quite some time, thinking of next day invasion, I suddenly looked up and saw a huge bow of a ship about ready to ram us. Then it did. I grabbed the guard rail lines and bounce back and forth like a ball. The ship ramed us and made a big hole near the center of the U.S.S. Noa. It backed off and scrapped us down the Starboard side right by me.

Abandon ship stations alert was given and I had to swim over to the ladder to go to the Bow of the ship where my life raft was. Everyone on board was doing the same thing, going to their stations. We dropped the life raft and it sunk. To many coats of paint over 25 years.

Our group was standing there when the Captain asked what we were doing. We told him our life raft sunk. The Captain then ordered us to jump into the water. Most of us had our life jackets on so we did as ordered and jump into the dark water, thank goodness it was warm.

after floating around for a while I was picked up by another group of guys on a life raft, that floated, other sailors grabbed the edge of the life raft and hung on. We gave our names. Not much talking was going on. We were scared of the unknown <sup>pipe</sup> sharks, other ships hitting us. We were about 12 miles off the coast.

When day light came, the ships sent out small boats to pick us up. I think we were taken to the ship (a destroyer) that rammed us. When all of us were rescued, a tally was taken, and we all were accounted for, about (155) men and no serious injuries. It was quite remarkable that we all were saved, because if the ship that rammed us, had hit the ammo room or boiler room both ships would have been sunk.

after muster we were feed breakfast and given hot coffee. It was the first cup of coffee I had ever tasted and it sure hit the spot.

By the time we were settled, the invasion had started and the big guns of the battleships and Cruisers were firing their 14 & 16 inch guns and the planes were bombing. Men were hitting the beaches. The officers and some petty officers made several trips back to the U.S.S. Noa, which was listing badly, and brought back logs - papers and instruments that they thought necessary. About mid morning around 10:00 A.M. the U.S.S. Noa's fantail was down, then the Prow went straight up and then the whole ship sank straight down. A few seconds later there was a large explosion and a spout of water shot up out of the ocean. After the water spout disappeared a lot of things from the ship popped up and floated around and that was the sad end of a gallant ship that had fought in two wars.

Later that day we were taken to the battleship U.S.S. Maryland and stayed on it through the invasion and later took back to Pearl Harbor. We then went back to the states

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and a 30 day survival leave.

Welma. I thought that this account might be put in the History of the USS Non. I am sure others have some stories to tell that might give the insight of what happened to them. also I will send it & my Pictures to the memories Book.

Sincerely  
Jim Houghton  
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Thanks for sending me the information about the reunion I thought I could make it but my wife can't be by herself for the amount of time I would be gone. Maybe some other time the good lord willing and the creek don't rise.