

Lt. Commander Dudley J. Fournier Ships Doctor USS Pine Island AV12:



Photo # K-17386 USS Benevolence in Bikini lagoon, July 1946

I was born in Canada and moved to Phoenix in 1925 at the Age of 2. This was before AC and you could say it was just Hot. In WW II I Volunteered for the Navy in 1943 (That or be Drafted in the Army).

I was at Great Lakes naval station for 6 months then off to Northwestern University Medical School (V-12 Program) and Graduated Class of 47. I was assigned to Long Beach Naval Hospital and later transferred to the USS Pine Island AV12 in January, 1950, I was just a Lt.

JG and had not got my sea legs yet. Aboard the Pine Is-

land I was told that we were leaving in a week or so for China. So I said goodbye to my local friends and said I'd see them in six months. A few days later we got the word that the plans were changed and we were to go to San Francisco to de-commission the ship.

The decommissioning was completed in May, 1950 and I was transferred to the Treasure Island dispensary. A couple of weeks later the Korean War started and the ship was re-commissioned.

My Medical Service Officer from the Pine Island, named Rayburn was transferred to the USS Benevolence, a hospital ship being re-commissioned at Mare Island in support of Korean conflict.

One day he called me and said that the Benevolence was doing a trial run out the Golden Gate that next day, and would I like to see the ship and go on the day cruise.

I responded that I had just gotten engaged and the next day another friend and his wife were having a party for us (I was married to Barbara for 56 years). The next afternoon I saw the Benevolence go out and turned toward the Golden Gate Bridge. Later that day I went on to our party. At the party they had the radio on low with music. It was suddenly interrupted by a news flash. The Benevolence had been struck by another ship outside the Gate and had sunk. All the medical personnel were to return to their duty stations. I went back to Treasure Island, but the captain advised that we were receiving no casualties and could go home.

Most of the survivors were dispatched to Letterman (Presidio). Rayburn survived by hanging on to a piece of wood for a couple of hours before being rescued.



Lt.Cdr. Fournier later retired and became the Team Physician for the San Francisco Warriors (Now the Golden State). In addition he was the Doctor for most of the Moves shot in San Francisco in the 60s,70s & early 80s such as Dirty Harry and Streets of San Francisco.

Let's just think what may have changed aboard the Pine Island and in San Francisco if Lt. JG Fournier had taken that day cruise.

