

ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is Verne Tankersley.

After graduating from Assumption High School in May 1944, Verne enlisted in the Navy for the duration of World War II plus six months. Verne was sent to Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Chicago for eight weeks of boot camp. He remained at Great Lakes for an additional eight weeks of engineering training.

From Great Lakes, he was sent to Norfolk, Virginia, to train for duty on a destroyer. He was assigned to the *USS Power DD 839*, a *Gearing*-class destroyer that was built for the anticipated invasion of Japan. It was fourteen feet longer than the previous destroyers which gave it more range because of its greater fuel storage capacity. After a shakedown out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where Verne met a friend from high school, Marine Jack Corzine, the *USS Power* sailed for the Mediterranean on January 9, 1946. It was part of the escort for the *Battleship Missouri*, the site of the Japanese Surrender on September 2, 1945, which was carrying the body of the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Mehmet Munir Ertegun, back to Turkey. By sending the *Missouri*, President Truman was also sending a message to Russia to keep her hands off Turkey and Greece. While in Istanbul, Turkey, the sailors were given boxes of cigarettes with a picture of the *Missouri* printed on the side of each cigarette. Verne still has six boxes of the cigarettes. After six months in the Mediterranean, the *Power* returned to Boston. Verne was sent to Great Lakes for discharge in August of 1946.

Verne returned to Assumption. He farmed for two years and ran a Standard Oil fuel truck west of Assumption for four years. Subsequently, he joined Local 65 of the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union in Decatur where he has been a member for sixty years. He worked for 43 years as a pipe-fitter and taught welding for 16 of those years. Verne married Janet Jacobs Tankersley on September 25, 1949. They have three children: Paul, Aliese, and David, seven grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren with two more on the way.

Thank you, Fireman First Class Verne Tankersley, for what you gave for us.