

1945 thru Feb 1946

Don Stanley Anderson's experience
aboard The USS Muliphen

Don S. Anderson, from Pontiac, MI, enlisted with the US Naval Reserve at Detroit, MI November 15th, 1943. A week later, his Boot Camp training began at The Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, IL. In Feb 1944 he served at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital. A few months later, in april, he was stationed at the hospital at Grosse Isle Naval Air Station, near Detroit, MI.

In october he moved to the San Pedro Barracks, CA. He boarded the USS Drew APA-62, in november; as it made its way to Honolulu, Hawaii. During the holiday season, Don stayed at the Aiea Barracks in Aiea; 6 miles NW of Honolulu.

The USS Muliphen was tied to Pier 27 downtown Honolulu, when he boarded her for the first time, on January 21st, 1945. Shortly after "The Mule" left port, preparations for the battle at Iwo Jima began.

Marines on The Muliphen were being transported to the beach on LCVP's. Don was a Pharmacist's Mate, and was on board for one of these trips, to bring back the wounded. During that trip, the boat was taking constant fire from the enemy. When the craft reached shore, he got off and helped load wounded marines, for the trip back to The Muliphen. He survived that one trip, which was the only trip he took to the island. His job continued as he cared for the wounded. Those who needed more intensive care were then transported to a nearby hospital ship.

He remembered the moment when the flag was raised over Mt. Suribachi! All the ships in the area sounded their horns, to celebrate the sight of the stars and stripes! Though the battle wasn't quite finished, that moment would live in the hearts of all those who saw it fly that day. Kamakazi pilots attacked The Mule, but she was spared. A nearby ship did not survive, and sunk after being hit.

The Muliphen and crew crossed the equator on June 10th. As a new Shellback, he received a large Certificate, which still hangs on his bedroom wall.

The Muliphen continued on her journey in the pacific, as noted in the Ship's Logs and Diaries. After the Japanese surrendered and the treaty was signed in Sept, the Mule transported occupation troops to Japan, from the Philippines. While on liberty, Don took a train to Kamakura, to see "The Great Buddha". A photo he took of the amazing statue, can be seen in his photo collection under Crew-Photo's. He also bought a beautiful purple-flowered Kimona while in Tokyo, which is still in great condition.

The Muliphen arrived in Seattle Dec 7th, 1945. A month later in Jan 1946, The Mule proceeded to dock at Everett, WA. A large photo was taken of the crew standing on the dock in front of The Muliphen. Written at the bottom of the photo is:

THE U.S.S. MULIPHEN (AKA-61)
13 FEBRUARY 1946

The photo is also in Don's collection on this website. Sometime after the photo was taken, he transferred to Treasure Island, San Francisco, followed by his last assignment at the Chicago Navy Pier. On May 4th, 1946, he received an Honorable Discharge as a Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class.

*****Don talked occasionally about the pet Monkey he had, while on the Muliphen! He said the monkey would throw it's "shit" at him! There were several monkeys on the Mule! For years, Don kept a purple monkey (Beanie Baby size), sitting on his car's dashboard. Whenever he changed cars, the monkey would always come along! The purple monkey will remain a fixture on Don's car forever.

*****A message was posted on this website's message board on Dec 13th, 2007, by Kirk Fernald. His father, Ken Fernald, also "had a pet Monkey on the ship". He said that "the monkey would always crap on this one person's bunk. After he came back from his shift one day, the monkey was gone".

Don found The USS Muliphen Reunion Association website sometime within the last 10 years. He learned the Mule had been scuttled on Jan 20th, 1989. Having lived in FL since the early 1980's, he wished he'd known about the plans. 44 years earlier (minus one day), he boarded The USS Muliphen for the first time in Honolulu! He definitely would have been there to see her sinking, to become a reef and a dive site for scuba divers.

