

Jack P. Womack USN (Ret.)  
8805 Redfield Lane  
Austin, TX 78758  
(512) 836-2318

Jack P. Womack 360 17 78 USN

I was sworn into the US Navy 3 July, 1940 in Houston, TX.

Boot camp at USNTS San Diego, CA - Company 40-45.

Out of boot camp, I was assigned to USS Astoria (Heavy Cruiser). Sailed from San Diego, CA on USS Altair (Destroyer Tender) to Pearl Harbor, T.H. Reported aboard USS Astoria as a seaman 2/c and served aboard approximately six months.

I was transferred to USS Elliot DMS 4 Home Port Pearl, T.H. Served aboard approximately 2½ years. I made S 1/c. Joined the Gunnery gang as a Striker. Later I was promoted to GM 3/c and to GM 2/c. On Sunday, 7 December, 1941 USS Elliot and three other DMSs and a heavy Cruiser (USS Indianapolis) were at sea patrolling north of the Johnson Islands. During my duties aboard, USS Elliot DMS 4 performed convoy duties to Australia and New Zealand, participated in Coral Sea and Midway battles and to the Aleutian Islands for convoy patrol and mine sweeping around Kiska and Attu Islands. Home port here was Kodiak, Alaska.

When I left USS Elliot DMS.4, I was ordered to the Naval Mine Warfare School at Yorktown, VA and graduated from their six week basic course of instructions. After USNMW ordered to the Advance Mine School in Washington, D.C. for the basic six week course of instructions (Mine Disposal and Deep Sea Diving) and upon completion of this course, I was retained at the school approximately five months for more instruction and field work at Stump Neck, MD. Promoted to GM 1/c.

Ordered to USS Buttress ACM 4 (Ship designed and fitted for mine disposal, mine recovery, and diving operations). Served aboard approximately 15 months as the M.D. P.O. diver with Lt. Robert W. Lister USNR M.D.O. and diver and later with Ensign C. Gluek.

Ordered to MEIU 4 at NAD West Loch, T.H. Worked numerous diving, demolition, and other jobs. Here I was promoted to C.P.O. I was assigned to BD•MD team—TAD to Guam, Marshall Islands staging for a planned invasion of Amomoi Oshimo (Island north of Okinawa). My MDO was CWG Darrell (The Barrel) Taylor and with three BD teams formed our BD•MD squad. While waiting the "green light" for Amomoi Oshima operation our squad worked with and for the BD•MD at USN ammo depot on Guam. Gunner Taylor and I flew from Guam to Tinian for a visit with Ch. Wrnt. Bosn. McElroy and BMC "Cookie" Labanara (MD team on Tinian). We helped for about 10 days and took part in several real hairy BD•MD jobs. When we got back to Guam we got the work that the Amomoi Oshima invasion had been canceled. Our eight man BD•MD squad caught ACVE back to Pearl Harbor and to MEIU 4. The entire MEIU 4 were making preparations for the Honshu (Southern Japan) invasion, the BD•MD teams had already



been selected by the time I arrived back at MEIU 4. I tried to get on one of the teams but CMDR. Cross (C.O. MEIU 4) informed me he wanted to keep a pool of BD•MDs and assign them as future needs dictated. All MEIU 4 were kept busy checking and loading BD•MD gear onto our bomb trucks and weapons carriers for the coming "Big Show." About this time we got the word about an "atomic bomb" had been dropped on Hiroshima. We at MEIU 4 just shrugged and kept going at our jobs. Several days later we got the word of a second "atomic bomb" that had been dropped on Nagasaki and Japan was surrendering unconditionally. Work at MEIU 4 came to a sudden and abrupt halt. The BD•MD teams already loaded would be used by the already assigned teams for the occupation of Japan. All unassigned personnel were ordered to the USA for reassignment or discharge. I returned to Portland, OR on a converted LST repair ship. I took 30 days leave and reported to Rec. Sta. Washington, D.C. From there I was assigned instructor duty at USN Mine Warfare School at Yorktown, Va. I was here for only a brief time, I was ordered to BU. ORD. in Washington, D.C. to participate in "Operation Cross Roads" at Bikini Atoll, North Marshall Isles. Sailed to Bikini on the USS Wharton from San Francisco, CA. The Atomic bomb shots "Able & Baker" were to determine damage to ships and equipment and effects on our explosive ordnances. I completed this assignment in approximately four months. I returned to the USA and was ordered to BD•MD unit at NPF Indian Head, MD. Here, we were informed all BD•MD qualifications were revoked and we were assigned as student to attend and graduate from a six months course of instructions to qualify as EOD. I completed about two months of this course when an emergency EOD job on Anguar Island. in the Palau Isles required immediate action. There was no qualified EOD personnel at this time. Lt. W.R. Brooks (OIC EOD SCH.) gave Ensign John W. Reese, CMN Jack P. Womack and John J. Kubacki AO 1/c emergency qualifications. We were flown (via C.54) to Peleiu and on to Anguar (via landing craft). We defused two 1000 pound GPs and one 500 pounder in about two hours. We stayed on Anguar about ten more days collecting Japanese explosive items from several caves and SITUed several beached Japanese "B" mines. We took the defused bombs and DWD. We took all Japanese explosive items collected from caves to a remote area and countermined in a single blast. The three diesel shovels belonging to an American Mining Co. mining phosphate (fertilizer) that had dug up the three UXBs from a mountain of the phosphate previously mined by the Japanese, were now freed for their mining operations. Our job here was completed. We flew on a C-54 from Peleiu and were headed stateside and back to EODS. We made a fuel stop on Guam and another on Kwajalein. This flight on to Johnson Island was delayed a couple of hours for mechanical repair to the plane. Ensign Reese went over to the island "O" club for about an hour and came back with some good news, so he thought. Reese met a LCMDR. and during small talk over a beer or two, Ensign Reese told him of our qualifications and the Anguar job. This LCMDR. introduced Ens. Reese to the Commodore, CO of the Marshall Isles. sub area and our fate was sealed for the coming year to fifteen months. It seemed this area had a lot of hazardous and dangerous problems, and he (the Commodore) would be most grateful if we (EOD team) would look over the areas and recommend to them how they handle and remedy their problems. This would take two to three weeks delay in our flight back to EODS. They seemed grateful and treated us like VIPs. We were flown to Eniwetok in a C-46 and we were there about seven weeks, we DWD numerous barge loads of old and unserviceable bombs, A.I.R., SCAR, H.V.A.R. rockets and depth bombs and depth charges (Mk 6 & 7s). We countermined several tons of old commercial dynamite and burned several tons of machine gun, rifle and sidearms ammo. When we returned to Kwajalein our gracious host, the Commodore, informed us he no



longer had an EOD problem—Reese, Womack and Kubacki had it 100%. The VIP treatment ceased and we were no longer guests. While we were at Eniwetok he had managed to get us assigned to his command for as long as he deemed necessary—he was no longer our host but now our boss, with very little support and the meager equipment supplied to us, we stole and scrounged. We had to make do the best we could. Kwajalein, at that time, was known as the Alcatraz of the Pacific and it was! In about a full years time we accomplished the following:

1. On Majuro we DWD and SITUed 2,000 tons of old, unserviceable and obsolete U.S. explosive ordnances from 2,000-pound bombs to 45 CAL sidearms ammo.
2. On Wotje we SITUed 170 tons of Japanese 800 KG bombs in a reinforced concrete bunker. SITUed many, many U.S. UXBs, Dud projectiles, Japanese sea and land mines, Japanese torpedo war heads, and Japanese mortar ammo. Many Japanese 60 KG bombs used as land mines.
3. On Jaliut, we SITUed a stack of Japanese 260 KG bombs that I estimated to be about 30 tons, on detonation - I believe it was twice that, maybe more. Other EOD was about the same as Wotje.
4. On Milli, many US UXBs and projectiles, seven Japanese "B" mines, numerous 60 KG Japanese bombs planted as land mines. Others about the same as Wotje.
5. On Roi Namur, we burned a magazine full of air rocket motors and SITUed magazine of 5" rocket heads.
6. On Berlin Island, we SITUed approximately 5 tons of very old commercial dynamite.
7. We made a copra run to the outer and remote islands (Marshall) on an LST Copra pickup ship. On this run we SITUed numerous U.S. UXBS, six Japanese "C" mines, and two aerial depth bombs dropped on land and numerous Dud 23-pound fragmentation bombs. Upon our arrival back at Kwajalein our gracious host - the Commodore sent us on our way back to the good ole EODS Indian Head, MD — about 50 or 60 weeks later than the two weeks he had originally estimated.

On our arrival at EODS I was assigned to EODU and worked mostly at Stumpneck. During this assignment participated in the following:

1. Numerous trips up and down the entire east coast to RMS and dispose of British, German, French, and U.S. mines. I worked mostly with Lt. Brooks, Lt. Dorigan, CPOs Joos, Lane, Knudsen, Malone and P.O. I.M. Holt.
2. Diving job at pier of the naval academy to remove stainless steel screws from a German destroyer. The screws are mounted and displayed on the Academy grounds.
3. We steamed the hexanite main charge from two FX 1400 KG remote controlled German bombs and mounted them at the entrance to "O" club at NPF.
4. Off the pier at Stumpneck, Lt. Dorigan, CPOs Malone and myself and others were working a diving and blasting job testing a one third scale model (10' dia. & 60' long) of a special designed steel cylinder. The full size model (30' x 180') was to sweep our "pressure decrease magnetic" combination mines—mainly Mk 25 & 36s. We were shooting 60-pound torpex demo charges suspended 10' below the 15' 30' x 45' lengths of the cylinder. The desired results was that each full size cylinder be able to sweep 100 mines but the 1/3 scale model indicated 20 to 25



shots. The cylinder was flattened and inoperable. During this job we knocked off work about 16:00 one day and heading back to EODs we drove past the bombproof heading for the Stumpneck main entrance gate. We saw Gieske AO 1/c helping a bloody and wounded Joos CGM. We bailed out of our vehicles to render assistance and inside the bomb proof we found Joe Garner GM 3/c and John Kubacki AO 1/c sprawled on the deck. Both were bloody and hurt bad—I thought Garner was dead. With our three vehicles we formed a high speed convoy and with speeds up to 100 mph headed for the NPF dispensary. I am sure our speed record still stands. All wounded men lived and recovered. But Garner was blinded.

5. I and others disposed of 60 tons of old reworked bulk "Explosive D" by burning (200 lbs. per/burn) at the NPF burning point.
6. Lt. W.R. Brooks, Ens. Brooks and myself flew to Pearl Harbor, T.H. to participate in testing a batch of special designed shape charge bombs to be tested against the target ship the USS Nevada. Using a MK 12 demo. clock and a bank of batteries we detonated a 2000-pounder, a 1000-pounder, a 500-pounder, and a 100-pounder, mounted bombs (one blast) with different stand offs to determine the best firing stand-off distances to be set on the de-sensitized V.T. (bar type) bomb fuzes. The test called for 20 hits of each size bomb (100 thru 2000 pounders). After each series of hits we went aboard the target to check damage and for UXBs. During the entire tests only one 100-pounder was recovered and was "deep sixed."
7. Myself, Joos and others burned approximately 15 tons of German, Italian, Japanese, and French small arms ammo. (up to 20 MM) at the NPF burning tank.
8. I did a lot of U.W. blasting in the Potomac river above the Dahlgren Bridge (Hwy 301) checking and testing the MK 9 and MK 14 depth charges.
9. And numerous other EOD related jobs.

When my 2 year tour of duty at EODU was up, I was ordered to instructor duty at the Mine Warfare School, Yorktown, VA. I was here approximately six months and was ordered to Kadena AF Base on Okinawa to build and operate a mine assembly facility for the 20th Air Force. It took about a year to get this facility built and operational. I was then ordered to shore duty at the Naval Mine Depot at Yorktown, VA. I served a full two year tour. I requested and was assigned to EODS Basic 6 month course of Instructions, plus the SWD course. When I graduated, Lt. CMDR Keck (CO of EODS) got me assigned instructor duty at EODS. I taught U.W. Ordnance to refresher classes approximately 15 months, I was TAded to Eglin AFB, FL. to teach and supervise EODS graduates to put their class room knowledge into field work doing. I was here approximately 2 years. A LTJG Barbee was EODO and later was relieved by LTJG Fred Sawyer. I and Drake GMC were EODCPOs and later "Bo" Foster BMC relieved Drake. This course took place at range #7 (a very remote area) and was not a basic teaching and learning but a planning and doing process. When students left us they had probed, located, dug up (w/standard shaft timbering) RBS and disposed of two bombs. They were shown or performed requirements for field EOD billets — shape chg. techniques, H.E. burning and blasting, ordnance stripping incendiary burning and various other safe tips from us to prepare them for their EOD jobs in the future. We were the final green light to EOD billets.



When I returned to EODS I was ordered to EODU #2 in Charleston, S.C. and served here approximately 4 years. During this time, I performed scuba diving and general EOD jobs—I will list a few.

1. Navy rocket range clearance at Saddle Bunch Keys, FL. (Boca Chica Naval Air Station).
2. Bomb search and clearance from radar target range at Cedar Keys, FL. Two 6 weeks scuba job tours.
3. Body recovery at Lake Wautuga, N.C. We used shallow water dry suits in extremely cold water—35°.
4. Recovery of bodies and wreckage of three USAF F 100s off Myrtle Beach, S.C.
5. Three trips to Bermuda Island on USS Protunas for "Mile Deep" blasting. (SOFAR system check).
6. Two six weeks scuba diving job tours at Ft. Lauderdale, FL. SOFAR installation.
7. Several 6 weeks. bomb range clearance jobs at Umatilla, FL.
8. A surface probing operation trying to locate two aerial depth bombs accidentally dropped in Charleston Harbor. Lots of work with zero results.
9. Picked up dangerous war mementos and civil war cannon balls from the civilian population in Charleston, S.C. area. Demolished them at demo range.
10. I did many more EOD jobs - large and small at EODU 2. In late 1959, I left the navy and went into the fleet reserve and returned to my hometown of Brady, TX. I did not do much of anything the next year. An old friend who digs and installs utilities (water, sewer and storm drains) needed a rock blaster and talked me into giving it a try. It took about a week for me to really get the hang of it and shortly I was damn good in this rock blasting business. About a year later a big Austin utilities firm was low bidder on a big utilities installation job in Brady. I got a job with them as a rock blaster and on completion of this job they hired me to move to Austin, TX and put me on full time payroll and a guarantee of 48 hours a week plus a company pick up. I worked for this company approximately three years when I got greetings from the Secretary of the Navy—report to Charleston S.C. with a full seabag. It seems "Big Brother" found out about my rock blasting abilities. The Seabees had none or very few. Experienced rock blasters were needed and needed bad. I was assigned to a MOMAT unit in Charleston, S.C. waiting for one of six Seabee Battalions being recommissioned. It took several months and I thought they (BU. PERS) had forgotten me. I did not like the MOMAT duties so I requested and was transferred to EODU2. I briefly contemplated trying to get requalified and get back into EOD, but shortly I received orders to MCB #58 in Davisville, R.I. I loved the Seabees. The Bees like older personnel, unlike trying to get a diving physical after your 39th birthday in EOD. I deployed to Da Nang, RVN in October 1966. During this deployment I did some quarry blasting but mostly mountain road construction blasting. A year later, MCB 58 returned to Davisville, R.I. refitted and redeployed to Hoi Ann, R.V.N. This tour was all quarry blasting. MCB 58 returned to Davisville, RI in mid 1969, refitted and was waiting its third deployment - I had my 30 years in, so at this time I took retirement. I returned to my old construction company and the



next 20 years blasted numerous miles of ditch!

THE END