

A Salute to a World War One Veteran

In 1917 the United States declared war on Germany. 100 years ago this war was not referred to as "World War One" but as "The Great War," "The War to End All Wars" or "The World War."

THOSE LIVING AT THAT TIME HAD NO KNOWLEDGE WHAT HISTORY AND FATE HAD IN STORE IN THE YEARS TO COME.

There are no veterans still living from World War One. Our honored World War One veterans live on in the hearts and in the memories of family and friends.

Most books and media information about United States involvement in World War One focus on our "doughboys" (Army and Marine ground forces) and pilots (IE: The Lafayette Escadrille). These brave doughboys and pilots were all too often engaged in violent and mortal combat with enemy forces.

The United States Navy also saw action in The Great War. Battleship Division 9, consisting of the Battleships USS Texas, Wyoming, Delaware, Florida, New York and Arkansas, was attached to the British Royal Navy. The USS Texas (on display at San Jacinto, Texas) with U.S. Navy destroyers provided armed escort for our convoys. The U.S. Navy Mine Squadron One participated in "The North Sea Mine Barrage" that helped prevent German U-Boats from operating in the North Atlantic. Several German submarines were sunk by the Mark-6 mines "sowed" by our Navy mine layer ships. This was extremely hazardous duty. One of the 13 mine layer ships in Mine Squadron One was The USS Housatonic.

In December 1917, Bentley Myres Phillips answered his country's call to arms and joined the U.S. Navy. Bentley Phillips was born and lived in Kaufman County, Texas and was an honorable and true American patriot. Bentley Phillips was my grandfather. "Grandpa" served aboard the USS Housatonic during The North Sea mine barrage and went on to serve in the Navy until honorably discharged in 1925 at the rank of Radioman Second Class (RM2c). Some of the Navy ships Grandpa served aboard after The World War and during the early 1920s were the



USS Wyoming, Submarines S-30, S-33 and S-35, Submarine Tenders USS Hartford, USS Ortolan, USS Beaver and USS Savannah. Grandpa was awarded the Victory Medal with "Mine Laying Clasp" in recognition of his services rendered in the World War.



I once asked Grandpa what he remembered from his duty in the North Sea in The Great War. Grandpa quietly said "It was very cold." My cousin Lana relates Grandpa told

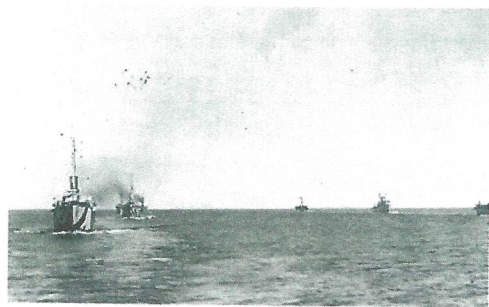
her "I was just doing my job" when asked about his service in The Great War. Grandpa went on to serve as a civilian government employee at the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, California from the 1940s until his retirement in the 1960s. While in the Navy, Grandpa met and married Alice Scaife. They made a home in Lynwood, California and had a son (Wayne), four daughters (Jean, Gwendolyn, Beverly and Mary) and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. During family gatherings Grandma would often play on her upright piano an old tune: "Mademoiselle from Armetieres" (Hinky Dinky Parlez Vous). The song, with its original lyrics and melody,

was a favorite of U.S. servicemen during and after The Great War. The lyrics to the song were considered mildly risqué and Grandma, only playing the melody, would look over at Grandpa and he would smile and laugh.

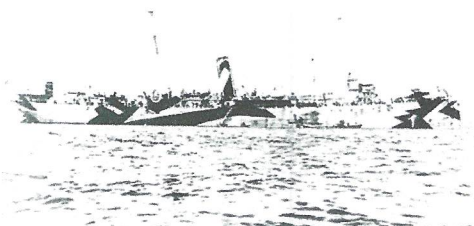
To Grandpa and his fellow World War One veterans,
Well Done and Rest in Peace; "lest we forget."

*Respectfully,
Harold "Tom" Taylor*

A special thanks to my sister Cynthia Runyen, cousins Lana Perino and Mike Godwin, and aunt Mary Osborne and uncle Tom Godwin for their input.



U.S. minelayers in the North Sea, September 1918



USS Housatonic at anchor, 1918



U.S. minelayers steaming in formation, 1918