

SHAW callback

Japanese submarine slammed two torpedoes into our side, Chief. We was comin' back... from the island of Tinian to Leyte (*say: lay-tee*), just delivered the bomb. The Hiroshima bomb. Eleven hundred men went into the water (*say: wudder*). Vessel went down in twelve minutes.

Didn't see the first shark for about a half an hour. Tiger. 13-footer. You know how you know that when you're in the water, Chief? You tell by lookin' from the dorsal to the tail. What we didn't know... was our bomb mission was so secret, no distress signal had been sent. (huh huh) They didn't even list us overdue for a week. Very first light, Chief, sharks come cruisin', so we formed ourselves into tight groups.

(SFX Indianapolis music)

(Ya know), it was kinda like old squares in a battle, like you see on a calendar, like the Battle of Waterloo, and the idea was shark comes to the nearest man, that man he start poundin', hollerin' and screamin' and sometimes that shark go away... sometimes he wouldn't go away.

Sometimes that shark he looks right into you. Right into your eyes. You know the thing about a shark he's got... lifeless eyes. Black eyes. Like a doll's eyes. When he comes at ya, doesn't (*say: dudn't*) seem to be livin'... until he bites ya, and those black eyes roll over white and then... (oh) then you hear that terrible high-pitched screamin'. The ocean turns red, in spite of all the poundin' and the hollerin' they all come in (and they)... they rip you to pieces.

You know by the end of that first dawn, lost a hundred men. I don't know how many sharks, maybe a thousand. I dunno know how many men, they averaged six an hour. On Thursday mornin', Chief, I bumped into a friend of mine, Herbie Robinson from Cleveland. Baseball player. Bosun's mate. I thought he was asleep. I reached over to wake him up...Bobbed up and down in the water, he was like a kinda top. Upended. Well, he'd been bitten in half below the waist.

Noon, the fifth day, Mr. Hooper, a Lockheed Ventura saw us, he swung in low

and he saw us, young pilot, lot younger than Mr. Hooper (here), anyway he spotted us and come in low and three hours later a big ol' fat PBY comes down and start to pick us up. You know that was the time I was most frightened. Waitin' for my turn. I'll never put on a lifejacket again. So, eleven hundred men went in the water. Three hundred and sixteen men come out, the sharks took the rest, June the 29th, 1945.

Anyway, we delivered the bomb.