

# Paul J. Verderber

U.S. Navy  
USS Laurens



**Paul J. Verderber**  
U. S. Navy  
WWII

I was born in Lincoln, Illinois on May 30, 1923 and entered the U.S. Navy in December, 1943. During World War II, I served aboard the USS Laurens APA153, an attack transport ship. On October 26, 1944, we departed Oakland, California for the southwest Pacific. We carried troops and 15,000 bags of Christmas mail arriving in Lae, New Guinea on November 12, 1944. For the next month we operated out of New Guinea and Nomea, New Caledonia training for the Lingayen Gulf operation. At Guadalcanal, we loaded 1400 troops and departed for Manus Island in January, 1945. We arrived in Lingeyen Gulf to land troops off San Fabian, Phillipines 9 days later.

We returned to New Guinea on the 27 January, 1945 and left in February on another cruise to the Phillipines transporting troops to Leyete in preparation for the Okinawa campaign, the doorstep to Japan. The first wave of troops from our ship hit

the beach on April 1 while the Laurens stayed in the transport area offshore. We continued landing troops and cargo until we sailed for Saipan on April 6, 1945.

During May, 1945, the Laurens was under repair at Pearl Harbor and San Diego before returning to Eniwetok on June 15. For the next 6 weeks the transport operated among the islands, transporting troops and supplies to various staging areas. After loading veterans at Ulithi, the Laurens sailed the same day for San Francisco arriving one day before the end of the war. Following the Japanese surrender in August, 1945, the Laurens carried occupation troops to the Japanese home islands. We joined a unit called the "Magic Carpet" fleet assigned to bringing the fighting men home. The Laurens returned to Portland, Oregon on her final run from the Far East.

The following month the Laurens sailed through the Panama Canal for the eastern seaboard. The Laurens was decommissioned on April 10, 1946 at Norfolk, Virginia. I had served aboard the Laurens from the day she was commissioned until the day she was decommissioned. One of the highlights of our first trip was crossing the Equator on November 4, 1944 and being initiated as a Pol-wog into the realm of Neptune Rex. Total mileage traveled was over 70,000 miles. After my discharge, I returned home to Lincoln, Illinois where I met and married my wife, Betty. We raised 3 sons and 4 daughters. My wife and I still reside in Lincoln, Illinois and will celebrate our 58th wedding anniversary on November 27, 2005.

I received the following awards during my service years: American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (2 Stars), World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal (with Asia Clasp) and the Phillipines Liberation Medal (1 Star).

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Lincoln, Illinois