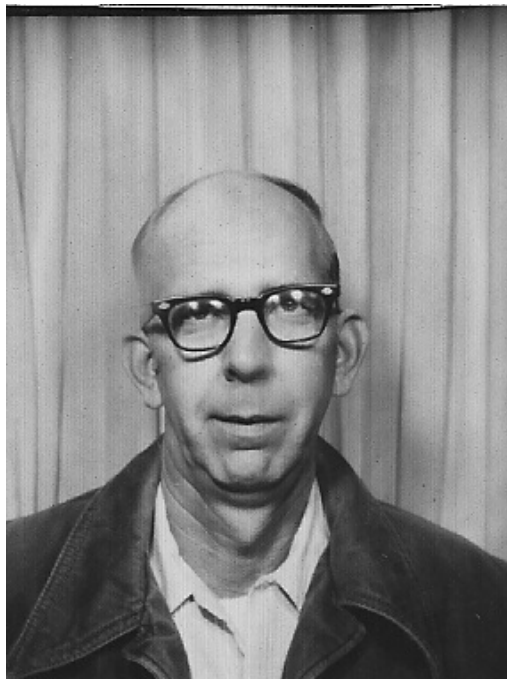


BMSN WILLIAM H. BRANUM JR. 28 August 1950



I William H. Branum Jr., "Slick," was born 19 October 1932 at Lake Alfred, Florida. Currently I have gray hair and blue eyes. I enlisted in the U. S. Navy Reserves at Little Rock, Arkansas on 9 November 1949, and in the regular U. S. Navy on 6 February 1950. I attended boot camp at San Diego, California, Company 116.

After boot camp, on 28 August 1950 I was assigned to San Diego Destroyer Base to re-commission USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754) under command of CDR Gerald Christi. After recommissioning, we were sent directly to North Korea to serve with DESRON 13.

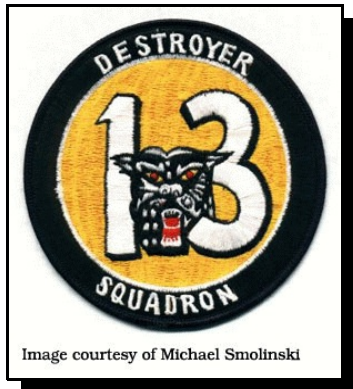


Our Flag ship was in USS BLUE (DD 744). We were part of Task Force 77. Some of our missions were to assist bombing supply lines, as well as other shore targets. During my two tours to Korea the ship and crew were awarded silver battle stars along with other decorations for our service. Some of the crew members that I recall, but only their last names, are BM Hunter, LT Stephens, Hogan, Weir, Jackson, and Nichols. In 1952 I was reassigned to two other ships until my discharge.



1950 - Shakedown cruise off Point Loma, California, ready to go. BMSN Branum is part of the crew on the fo'c'sle.

TYPHOON OF 1951



DESRON 13 was back in our home port at San Diego when we got orders to go back to join up again with Task Force 77 in the Sea of Japan for further action against North Korea. The weather and cruise were going smoothly until we got to Midway Island. I was on the bridge at the time when we departed Midway. About five hours later we got the report of a bad storm that was coming toward us. CDR Christi asked our flag ship the USS BLUE if we were going to change our course to try and get around it. Their answer came back, "Negative." We were to maintain the course which was assigned. Then all hell came upon all four ships. We pitched and rolled. At one point we were told that we took a 38 degree roll and took a little water down one of the stacks. We only had one hot meal during the storm, otherwise cold cuts. It was hard trying to sleep. Everything top side that was not secured was washed overboard.

I was sent back aft to get a tool. EVANS took a heavy roll as I was running from one compartment to another. All that saved me was the life rail. I hung on to keep from being washed overboard.

As I recall, we had very few coffee cups left. The crew members from one of our sister ships got hurt when a wave hit their number one gun mount knocking them out. EVANS was lucky we did not have any hurt, "Thank God."

We finally got to Sasebo, Japan harbor but had to be towed in to the dock as we ran out of fuel. We got a light message from fleet headquarters requesting to see DESRON 13's commander at their office. The sides of all four ships, along with the hull numbers were washed clean. We were very happy to see Japan.

BMSN Branum, 50-52

THE SECOND 4TH OF JULY OF '51

The Gray Ghost (Evans) was on patrol duty along the coast north of the 38th parallel, otherwise known as North Korea. One foggy morning during the mid-watch, I was on the helm, and the CO, CDR Christi was in his captain's chair. Everything was going normal. We had been after a supply train, however when they would see us, they would back into a tunnel and wait us out. This had gone on for several days, playing with us. This morning, we were some 20-30 miles from the target, the train. I thought the captain was asleep as he some times would, when all at once he barked out, "Come right to 030 degrees and make turns for 30 knots!" We started north like a bat out of hell. The XO asked Christi, "Where are we going, sir?" Christi replied, "to meet a train."

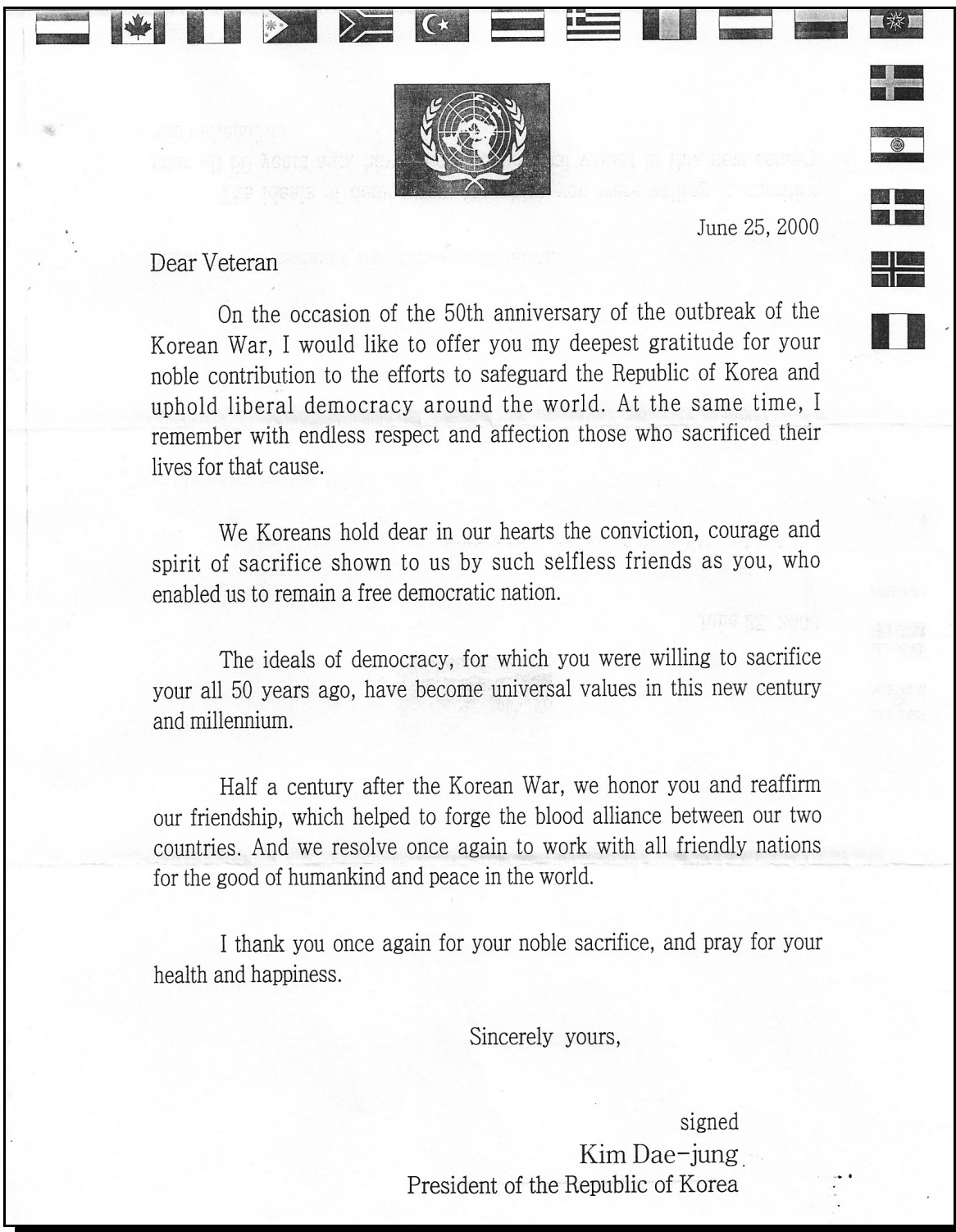
We got to the target site before the train did. As stated, it was foggy this a.m. We went in as close as we could get to the shore line and waited for them. By then it was starting to get day light and the fog was lifting. The Gray Ghost was ready. Battle stations had been called and all guns were trained starboard, when out of the tunnel the train came. When all of the train was out, orders were given to commence firing. We got the engine first with our 5 inch gun. Then all hell broke loose for the rest of the train with the 5 inch and 40mm guns working on the box cars. They were hauling ammunition to the south. It was a real fireworks like you see on the 4th of July, only better!

BMSM Branum 50-52

For 18 months I was employed as an Ordinance Inspector for the Army. I reenlisted in the U. S. Air Force and retired in 1972 with USAF Security Service. I attended several military schools. After my service, I attended Tarrent County Jr. College for 390 hours.

"Slick" currently resides in Aledo, Texas.

In June 2000, I received this letter from Kim Dae-jung, President of the Republic of Korea.



June 25, 2000

Dear Veteran

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, I would like to offer you my deepest gratitude for your noble contribution to the efforts to safeguard the Republic of Korea and uphold liberal democracy around the world. At the same time, I remember with endless respect and affection those who sacrificed their lives for that cause.

We Koreans hold dear in our hearts the conviction, courage and spirit of sacrifice shown to us by such selfless friends as you, who enabled us to remain a free democratic nation.

The ideals of democracy, for which you were willing to sacrifice your all 50 years ago, have become universal values in this new century and millennium.

Half a century after the Korean War, we honor you and reaffirm our friendship, which helped to forge the blood alliance between our two countries. And we resolve once again to work with all friendly nations for the good of humankind and peace in the world.

I thank you once again for your noble sacrifice, and pray for your health and happiness.

Sincerely yours,

signed

Kim Dae-jung
President of the Republic of Korea