

James Mallory “Jim” Derryberry, T-42

23 May 1922 – 13 March 2016

(aged 93)



“Our ‘Copy Boy’ Returns Home with a Flock of Battle Stars”

The Commercial Appeal’s ‘copy boy’ came back yesterday, but he wasn’t a boy any longer—he’s a man now.



Seven gold combat stars, denoting as many Pacific engagement in which he participated glinted on the brightly-colored service ribbons of Aviation Machinist’s Mate 1-C James Derryberry, now 22 and already a veteran of nearly three years in Uncle Sam’s Navy. And he was a full 25 pounds heavier than the youngster who used to run errands around The Commercial Appeal office at nights while he attended Tech High School in the daytime.

Story, Behind Stars –

Pelau --- Mindanao --- Fleet Action (Leyte) --- Luzon --- Formosa --- China and Indo-China --- Nansei Shoto --- the story behind those seven gold stars was the story of the airplane carrier on which Derryberry served and also

the story of Admiral "Bull" Halsey's daring Third Fleet of which the carrier was a part for seven busy months.

At Nansei Shoto, Derryberry and his shipmates almost knocked right on the door of Japan itself, for Nansei Shoto is an island off the southern Japanese air fields on the island.

But the hottest moments, Derryberry related, came when the carrier and its escorting vessels were dive-bombed by the japs off Formosa. That engagement lasted two days, and during that time Derryberry's carrier was hit by a Jap torpedo which, fortunately, proved to be a dud and a Jap plane was shot down in flames 30 yards in the carrier's wake.

Trained at Millington – Derryberry who helped keep the carriers' planes in repair and patch up Jap bullet holes in them, enlisted in the Navy in September 1942, and received his training at the Naval Air Technical Training Center, Millington. He went overseas in June 1944 and spent seven of the following nine months in combat.

Home on furlough, he was visiting his mother, Mrs. Emma Derryberry of Forest Hill, and his sister, Mrs. R. B. McDonald, 756 Maury. He is due to return to a West Coast port soon.

Information from The Commercial Appeal, Thursday, March 15, 1945.