

LEGER, Joseph

I went aboard the South Dakota when it was commissioned and served aboard all through to the end of the war. We were known as plank owners.

My most vivid experience is at Guadalcanal when we ran into the Japanese naval warships. Our machine guns were inoperative so a few of us machine gunners went to the house top, which is in the superstructure and brought some of our wounded down to the officers' wardroom and went back to get more wounded. I became a Gunner's Mate 3/C and was put in charge of 40 MM quad No. Nine on the starboard side of the ship. Being topside we saw many air attacks. We also saw ships like the Hornet, USS Franklin, Princeton and many more damaged or sunk. We lost some very good men aboard the South Dakota and thank these men who gave up their lives so others like us can live free.

In civilian life I worked 30 years for the post office, married and had 4 children. If you would like to reach me you can e-mail my daughter-in-law at

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