As a crew member of the USS South Dakota (BB-57), my battle station was in the upper handling room of a 5 inch mount on the port side . The evening was something to see. The sea was rather quiet and there was the most beautiful sunset and the smell of gardenias from the distant Islands. It was like God was giving a last farewell to those that would not make it. That night all hell broke loose and our 16" and 5" guns were letting loose with all they had. We didn't know what was happening except someone over the phone would tell us that there were fires and we were being hit.

The next morning after general quarters, we went out to see what had happened. About five feet from our hatch was an 8" shell (a dud) which went overboard. We were doing full speed and we were the only ship left. We were all alone. I looked up and that's when I saw the most beautiful sight. It was Old Glory flying high. I went back aft to turret three and there on deck was a row of dead shipmates. How sad it was. They wanted some men to go up on the superstructure to bring more of the bodies down. I said I would go. Most of the ladders were shot away and it was hard to get there It was something I will never forget. We got them all down below and we took them back aft for burial at sea.