

CHAPTER XVII - OFFICERS CANDIDATE SCHOOL**Warrant Officer Sterling**

Being promoted to Warrant Officer had its down side. Any time an enlisted man is upgraded to officer status, regulations require that he must be transferred. I loved the Atlantic Intelligence Center and didn't want to leave, but the Bureau of Naval Personnel said I had to go. All the newly promoted Warrants were ordered to Officers Candidate School at Pensacola, Florida for a months training. The real purpose of the transfer had nothing to do with training. The Bureau wanted to avoid placing newly appointed Warrant Officers in a position of authority over enlisted men who had been senior to them. Officers Training School for Warrant Officers avoided this situation.

Officer Candidate School is routine for Naval Cadets but we were seasoned sailors and not young immature Cadets. A new cadet is just about as junior as you can get. A cadet is conditioned to salute and sir anything wearing pants, and the Navy Instructors and Marine Drill Sergeants were pretty used to being "yes sired" ad-nauseam. We weren't cadets however. We were Warrant Officers. We would Sir a superior officer, as required by naval tradition, and we expected our juniors to sir us. Everything went well until we were called out on the drill field for lessons on sword etiquette. We were all issued swords and a Marine Drill Sergeant began barking orders. One of the Warrants barked right back at the Drill Sergeant, demanding to know who gave him the authority to give commands to his seniors. Since there wasn't an officer senior to the Warrant, who was qualified to teach sword etiquette, the rest of Officer Candidate School was reduced to classroom study.

During my tour at O.C.S., Margaret Ann and the kids kept the car and stayed at my parent's house in Texas City. When I graduated I received orders for a second tour of duty with Light Photo Squadron 63 at Miramar, California. I caught a plane from Pensacola to Hobby Field, about 30 minutes northwest of Texas City. There was an hour's layover in New Orleans. While killing time at the New Orleans International Airport, I noticed a large group of Japanese tourist lollygagging about the main terminal. I approached a middle aged male out of this group and with the aid of a nearby interpreter I introduced myself to the Japanese gentleman. I told him that I had the honor of visiting his country on several occasions and that his countrymen had been extremely hospitable to me. I went on to tell him that I hoped my countrymen were making him feel just as welcome in our country. I was carrying around a stash of social calling cards that the Navy had made me purchase, and I gave one of them to the Japanese gentleman. He reciprocated by giving me one of his business cards. His card was written in both Japanese and

in English. It identified him as Ishino San. The word San, in Japanese, is a title of respect. It is sort of like Mister but different. It is used for all ages and both genders. Translated roughly Ishino San would mean The Honorable Mister Ishino. I stuck his card in my wallet and promptly forgot all about it.

Once back in Texas, we spent a few more days visiting and then headed out for California. Not being in a position to buy a new car, we had our old clunker checked and double checked to make sure it would get us to California in one piece. We had all the belts and hoses replaced and had a mechanic check everything over thoroughly. Unfortunately he must have missed something. As we were crossing the desert, our car caught on fire and we were stranded in the middle of nowhere. The very first car that stopped offered us a lift into the next town. We all crowded into his vehicle and rode to Lordsburg, New Mexico. Lordsburg just so happened to have a new car dealership that was willing to sell us a new Ford station wagon for almost twice the price we could have bought it for in Houston. We made it into San Diego without further incident.