

How Holy Ghost Prayers Delivered a Pentecostal Warrior's Husband in the Epic Battle of Midway

Not knowing exactly why, Verna Linzey felt a strong desperation to pray for her husband, Seaman Second Class Stanford E. Linzey Jr., who was more than 5,000 miles away on June 3, 1942.

Verna, who had taught Stanford, a radioman, about the baptism of the Holy Spirit before he went to war, knelt by the side of their bed and prayed in the Spirit for an hour. Little did she know that Stanford, aboard the USS *Yorktown* in the South Pacific, had done the same thing simultaneously. Both later said they felt a sense of fear disappear and were filled with a deep abiding peace.

Less than 18 hours later, on June 4, one of the most savage sea battles in naval history broke out, lasting six minutes. Later that day, the Japanese aircraft carrier *Hiryu* sent bombers and torpedo planes in an effort to destroy the *Yorktown*. After two torpedo hits, the *Yorktown*'s captain, Elliott Buckmaster, gave the order to abandon ship.

After many hours of treading water in several inches of oil, the destroyer *Balch* picked up many of the men including my father. Other ships picked up the remaining men. When my father climbed up the net and onto the deck of the *Balch*, a voice yelled, "There's the deacon," my father's nickname due to the Bible studies he conducted on the *Yorktown*. Seven sailors led by my father went to the stern and knelt on the steel deck as my father led them in an open-air prayer service in view of about 700 sailors.

My father had survived the battle, much to the relief of my mother.

In 1954, my father went on to become the first Assemblies of God Navy chaplain to enter Active Duty, and in 1972 was the first Assemblies of God Navy chaplain to attain the rank of Captain.

Verna Linzey later became an evangelical theologian and an ordained minister in the General Council of the Assemblies of God. She also authored many books and is the translator of the book of Proverbs for the Modern English Version of the Bible.

The U.S. naval strike forces which, included three aircraft carriers—the USS *Yorktown*, the USS *Hornet*, and the USS *Enterprise*—sailed within 200 miles northeast of Midway to protect Midway from the attack of the Japanese fleet. When the carriers sailed northwest toward their destination, an eerie sense a sense of despair filled the *Yorktown*. Many sailors felt it without saying much. This was when my father felt it and both my parents had the incredible experience of praying simultaneously. His fear then departed and he no longer feared death, and my mother's heavy burden to pray for him miraculously lifted.

The Battle of Midway was the turning point on the Pacific front in World War II. United States naval strike forces with bombers and torpedo planes dealt a decisive blow to the Imperial Japanese navy carrier task force.

The Imperial Japanese navy lost four large aircraft carriers which were among the six that attacked Pearl Harbor. The United States lost the USS *Yorktown* (CV 5) and the USS *Hammann* (DD 412).

On June 4, 2016, the USS *Midway* hosted the 74th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway. My mother and my late father were honored at the event. The Navy assigned my mother an escort—AW2 Jonathan Howland, USN. I accompanied her.

RADM John McLaughlin, USNR (Ret.) was the master of ceremonies as the president and chief executive officer of the USS Midway Museum. After he gave the welcome, the invocation was delivered by Captain Terry Corgon, USN, Chaplain, US THIRD Fleet.

The opening remarks were given by VADM Nora Tyson, Commander, US THIRD Fleet. The address was given by Ian W. Toll, award winning author of historical military books. He retold the story of how the United States won the Battle of Midway. {eoa}