# A DIARY OF THE "BIG E"
## C.E. Fortson

Charles Earl Fortson left Detroit, Michigan, for the United States Navy at Great Lakes, May 20, 1943. From there aboard a troop train, he went to Bremerton, Washington, from where he shipped out on September 30, aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise heading for Pearl Harbor. This was one of the mightiest aircraft carriers in the US Fleet.

From there the "Big E" took part in attacks on the Marshalls, Solomons, Philippines, Gilberts, Wake, Midway, Guadalcanal, Leyte, Luzon, and Okinawa; every Pacific engagement but the Coral Sea. She downed 911 Japanese planes, sank 71 ships and damaged 192 ships. Fortson was aboard on all these engagements and kept a diary of the attacks and encounters with the Japanese. On May 14, 1945, the "Big E", "got it. We got a kamikaze down number one elevator," his diary reports. He was decorated with many ribbons including 11 Battle Stars and was commended for a splendid and brave performance of duty. He received an honorable discharge on November 23, 1945.

Fortson's diary covers the period September 30, 1943, until May 14, 1945, carrying vivid descriptions of the Enterprise's activities during this period.



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[Ed. note: A photocopy of the handwritten diary was provided by daughter Vicki Fortson through Prof. John Robertson. This summary comprises information in the diary. We hope a transcription can be provided us for the next issue of the *Journal*.]