



# **South Pacific at Seventeen: USS Cofer (APD-62) World War II: 0**

*James Richard Snellen*

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Finally convincing his parents to sign his papers at the age of seventeen, James Snellen enlisted in the Navy in 1944-the middle of World War II. A young farm boy from rural Kentucky, James was anxious to see some action! His boat crew was assigned to an Armed Personnel Destroyer, USS Cofer (APD-62). Being assigned the position of gunner, signalman, and radioman aboard a LCVP landing craft that would put assault troops ashore onto the enemy beaches in the South Pacific, he certainly saw more "action" than he had bargained for. His role later included sweeping for mines in between the Japanese boat docks before any other Navy ship could enter the enemy harbors.

James Snellen successfully landed troops in all eight of the United States invasions in the South Pacific that led up to the surrender of the Japanese. From Balikpapan to Bora Bora, Okinawa, Japan to Fusan, Korea, he received two bronze stars and many other medals for his bravery and for "doing his part." "Even though I was awarded two bronze stars, the things that I did were the same things being done by countless others.'

James is now the historian and coordinator representing the Cofer's association. Sixty-one years later, his remaining shipmates and families still get together yearly for a reunion to reminisce and renew old friendships.

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