



Trial and Triumph: The Accounts of Ernie Plantz as WWII Submariner and Japanese P.O.W.

Stephen Leal Jackson

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Ernie Plantz responded to his country's call, accepted duty in the American Submarine Service, developed a place of worth and comradeship, and found himself a prisoner of the enemy for three and a half grueling years; 1297 days. This is his story. A farm boy from rural West Virginia, Plantz served on the USS Perch during the opening days of World War II and was stationed in the Philippines. Anchored in Manila Bay, Plantz and the Perch had a ring-side seat to the opening round of Japan's attack on the United States. Perch, while battling a vastly superior enemy force, was severely damaged; unable to submerge she was scuttled and her crew became prisoners of the Japanese. Taken to a P.O.W. camp in Makassar on the island of Sulawesi, Plantz and his shipmates experienced the trials of torture, privation, and disease but triumphed over this long night of brutal captivity.

A veteran of the United States Navy, Stephen Leal Jackson spent eight years in the submarine force serving on the USS Los Angeles (SSN 688) and the USS Florida (SSBN 728). Jackson's service included several Western Pacific cruises in same waters described in Trial and Triumph. A lifelong student of American history, Jackson's ongoing research concentrates primarily on undersea warfare during the First and Second World Wars. Jackson received a Master of Arts in American History from Providence College and a Ph. D. in Humanities from Salve Regina University. His doctoral dissertation examined the inclusion, status, and prominence of African-American characters in the submarine-themed filmography from 1933 to 2008. His unique perspective as a one-time navy enlisted submariner, trained historian, and skilled communicator allows Jackson to provide clear and easy access to the fascinating experiences of the men who fought the undersea battles of World War II.

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