



Accidental Ambassador: A Sailor's Story From The Forgotten Korean War

Leonard Rattini

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On an August night in 1955, three **U.S. naval vessels** were strung out in a line a tenth of a mile apart. They were moving smoothly down the eastern Pacific coast of Mexico. Two were landing craft vessels. Each was cable-tethered and being towed by an escort tug boat, the command ship. Their destination: ***Rodman, Panama.***

A vicious storm came up, tossing the vessels around. A sailor **badly injured** his hand while he stood midnight watch on the last craft. He was in great pain through the night and into the morning. Later in the day, the water still rough, the command ship chanced sending its whaleboat to pick him up.

On his first attempt to step aboard the boat, Mother Nature pulled the boat away from the craft, and he fell into the water. The next minute, she pulled it back with a vengeance, but the sailor was hoisted up in time to avoid being cut in half or badly maimed. Eventually, he got aboard the whaleboat, which then **fought its way back** to the command ship. Once on the ship, it was determined he needed medical attention at the Rodman Naval Hospital.

The next day, a Pakistani Navy minesweeper was approaching. Since it was heading to Panama at a faster pace, the **American captain requested that it take the injured sailor on-board.** The Pakistanis agreed, and he was transferred ship-to-ship via a breaches buoy to the minesweeper where he spent the next seven days...

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