

Early Navigator Discipline²

The ship's normal work day was 7:30am to 3:30pm with an hour for lunch. Practically every one not on watch attended the evening movie from 7:30–9:30pm, weather and training requirements permitting.

Our discipleship routine aboard ship was as follows:

- Core team prayer three times each day, 15 minutes before each meal.
- 3:30–5:15pm: Personal needs, laundry etc.
- 5:15–5:30pm: Core Team prayer
- 5:50–7:30pm: Evangelism, or Man to Man time with new Christians.
- 7:30–10:00pm (TAPS): core team meeting (during the movie)

Mondays we studied a New Testament chapter in the ABC method:

- A. identify A title for the chapter.
- B. identify a Best verse or Basic passage
- C. identify a personal Challenge to apply
- D. identify a Difficulty, actual or potential
- E. develop a summary or outline for the passage, Etc.

Tuesdays we held evangelistic Bible Study. Core team members were only allowed upon their testimony that they had to spend at least 1½ hours personally inviting others to the meeting.

Wednesdays we studied prayer and engaged in extended prayer.

Thursdays we studied an Old Testament chapter in the ABC method.

Fridays we spent our 2½ hours studying one of the 184 doctrines found in our study Bibles.

On weekends, if at sea, we often had a mini conference, reading and discussing the sermons of Moody, Spurgeon, Billy Sunday, R. A. Torrey and others from our Moody Colportage library.

This close fellowship and battling spiritually united us like David's mighty men, in a team in which each was willing to give up their lives for our cause, our team members, and our leader.

Believing the best testimony for Christ was to be the best in our profession, we supported and helped each other toward that goal.

Inside Man for a 1935 Discipling Movement Residency

I had no intention of making a career of the Navy, but in September of 1936 I had a decision to make. Of the five disciples who preceded me in the movement, two had received early discharges and two more had completed their enlistments. The only earlier disciple left on the ship deferred to my leadership, leaving me in charge for the past year. Would I follow the others into civilian life, or re-enlist in the Navy?



As I prayed and counseled with others I felt God give me a clear answer in accordance with Proverbs 3:6: “In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path.”

The Navigator ministry depended on the presence of an inside man. Three months after giving my life to Christ, I was willing to be that man. I extended my enlistment another two years, then in 1938 for another four. In 1942 we were at war; no one was being discharged.

During those years the USS West Virginia became a residency discipleship program for those who came to believe. There were no satellites, personal radios, television, newspaper or other distractions. When we sailed over the horizon we lost contact with civilization. This was a laboratory, a furnace where the basics of discipleship were tested and refined, and became steel threads of character.

As disciples matured we transferred them to other vessels, and in ten years this discipling movement spread to 1,000 ships and 1,000 military bases.¹

¹ • *The Other Side of Infamy: My Journey Through Pearl Harbor and the World of War*, pp. 56,58,

• Dawson Trotman's “Born to Reproduce” turret2.discipleshiplibrary.com/1A.mp3 starting at 18m45s, and

• Chapter 3 of Jim's story at USSWestVirginia.org/stories/story.php?id=47

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