



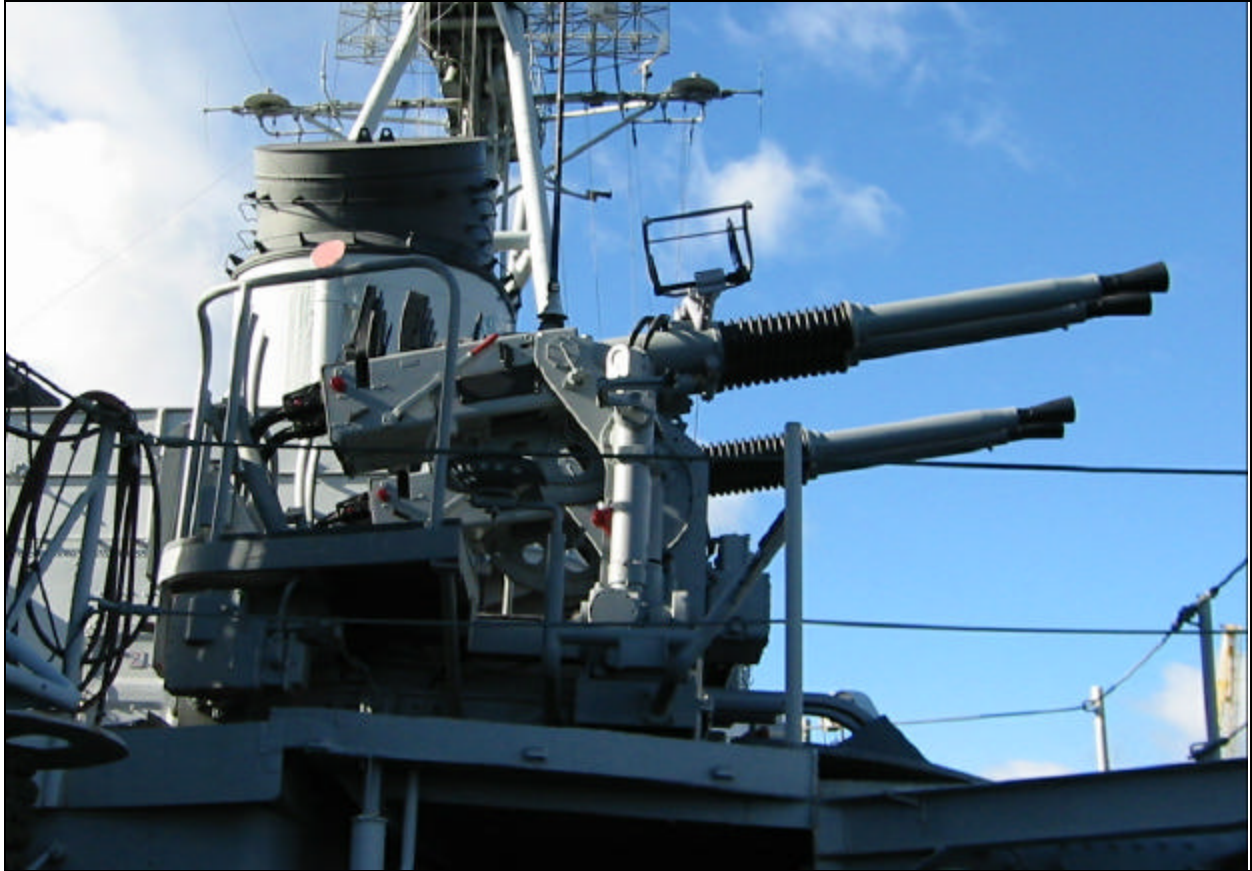
Safe and Sound by JACKSON SELLERS

It was like returning home to the ship of my youth. Everything was familiar as I toured the *USS Cassin Young DD793* at Boston's Charlestown Navy Yard on a chilly

day in October 2005. My ship, the *USS Colahan DD658*, was sunk as a target ship in 1966, and lies at the bottom of the Pacific about 40 miles southwest of San Diego. The *Cassin*

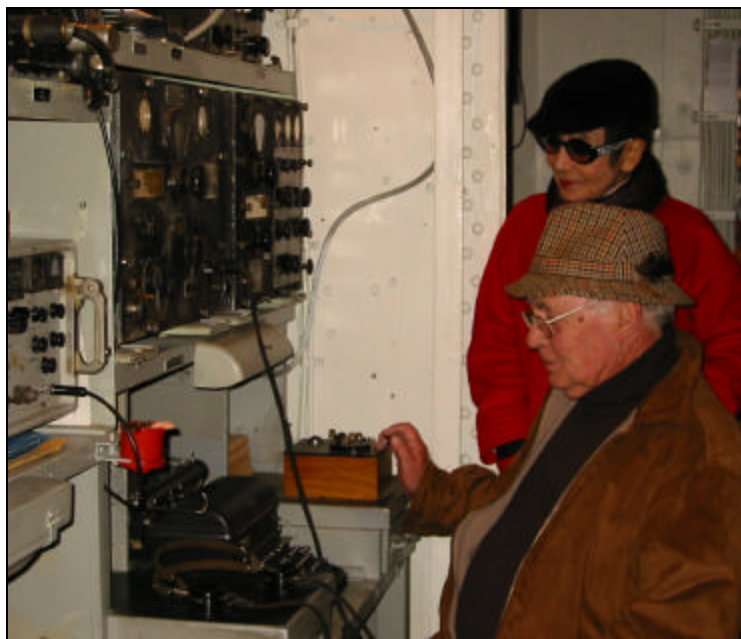
Young, a cookie-cutter image of the *Colahan*, wound up as a memorial ship berthed just across the pier from the famed *USS Constitution*. My photo of "Old Ironsides," at lower left, was taken from the bridge of the *Cassin Young*. The *Fletcher*-class destroyer, like the *Colahan*, fought the Japanese in World War II, winning four battle stars compared to the *Colahan's* eight. Unlike my ship, which the Japanese never even dented, the *Cassin Young* was hit twice by kamikazes at Okinawa, suffering terrible damage with a total of 23 crewmen killed and 104 injured. But she shot down six kamikazes before they could reach her.





Guns and Pilot House

I couldn't believe it. The 62-year-old warship is in marvelous shape. She looked ready to go to sea. The National Park Service has been doing a good job since 1978. The main guns are five-inchers in five mounts, two forward and three aft, but the 40-millimeter quad, above, could destroy enemy aircraft, too. Torpedoes and three different kinds of antisubmarine depth charges complete her armaments. A target nine miles away, or five miles high, or several hundred feet under the waves, was not out of her reach. With that kind of firepower, the *USS Constitution* could have destroyed the entire 584-ship Royal Navy fleet in the War of 1812, while staying well out of the range of British cannon. At left is the *Cassin Young's* pilot house, where speed and steering are controlled. Speed can be as high as 38 knots. As warships go nowadays, she is small, but not as small as you might think. She is 76 feet longer than a football field.



Radio Shack and Stateroom



As a young Navy officer 50 years ago, I didn't spend much time in the *Colahan's* radio room — mostly I was on the bridge or in the Combat Information Center — but I was responsible for communications aboard the ship, so a National Park Service ranger unlocked the *Cassin Young's* radio shack for me. Surprisingly, all equipment was in working order, although vacuum tubes are hard to obtain nowadays. If the radios had been turned on, the tapping I was doing on a telegraph key would have sent out signals from the antenna at the top of the mast. At left, Yoshi stands in *my* stateroom, the middle one on the starboard side of so-called "officers country." Yoshi said, "It's awfully small." My actual stateroom on the *Colahan* was a little nicer. Once, while the other officers took comfortable accommodations elsewhere, I was left aboard, alone, in stone-cold dry dock near San Francisco. I was effectively in charge of the ship. So I ordered the ship yard to remove the upper bunk and replace the lower one with a bed suitable for a ship's captain.

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