ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

BIOGRAPHY

Ship Happens! A Tiger Cruise Tale
Timothy J Richards
My own photographs, illustrator
978-1-4259-9796-0
Three Stars (out of Five)

Billed as a memoir by author Timothy J. Richards *Ship Happens! A Tiger Cruise Tale: How to Spend Six Nights on a Navy Warship for 7*0* is an extended personal essay with more than two dozen full-color photographs of the brief time he spent on a navy warship with his daughter Corrin and son EN1 (SW) Timothy F. Richards. Their time on the vessel was—except for a 70 food fee—courtesy of the Tiger Cruise promotional program that the US Navy sponsors for relatives of personnel returning home from tours of duty. In this case son Timothy was returning from active duty in the Persian Gulf on board the *USS Bridge.*

An outsized softcover book that includes snapshots of family members and descriptions of activities the three enjoyed during their adventure *Ship Happens!* is clearly and entertainingly written for the most part. A few intrusive footnotes include information that could have been contained in the text or relegated to the appendices which contain specifications about the *USS Bridge* and its tour of duty the resume for the younger Richards and an impressive listing of the Richards' military ancestors. These ancestors date back to Colonel Philip Howell "a noted Indian fighter."

As much a dedication to Armed Forces personnel serving in Afghanistan and Iraq and a tribute to the Tiger Cruise program as Richards' personal memoir the book begins with a brief overview of young Timothy's upbringing in a divorced family and his search for a suitable career before a happy landing with the navy. After his tour in the Persian Gulf after doing his bit in the war against terrorism he arrived in Hawaii where Timothy J. and Corrin joined him on the *Bridge* to sail home to Seattle where he would reunite with his wife and the baby daughter born while he was at sea.

Told in a lively anecdotal style and with an occasional literary flourish Richards recollects daily activities including a visit to the *USS Arizona* memorial tours of the *Bridge* funny mishaps in its berths and bathrooms chow calls observations of high-line transfers from and to the *USS Nimitz* inspections of SeaKnight helicopters watching an air show and bombing

run and even firing “several bursts [from an M2 machine gun] over the open water.” A justifiably proud highlight concerns the medal presented to Tim for the emergency work he performed on duty in the Gulf. Corrin’s addendum of her journal enhances the enjoyment the three had during their trip and Timothy J.’s description of the homecoming scene with Tim his wife Sharon and daughter Emily is especially poignant.

Obviously a book for family members to enjoy and share with their friends *Ship Happens* could also serve as a general guide for others contemplating their own Tiger Cruise on a Navy warship for 70. For others it’s an entertaining read about a close-knit family welcoming home a son and brother from war.

M. Wayne Cunningham