



THE COLLECTION

The Heart Shield

A steel-covered Bible, a message from the President, and the second chapter of Mark.

CHRIS VALLETTA

Heart-Shield Bible of Joseph H. Heiney
U.S. Navy, World War II

THIS ONE IS DIFFERENT THE SECOND YOU PICK IT UP. It is heavy. The cover is steel, plated in gold, and stamped with four words: “May this comfort and protect you.”

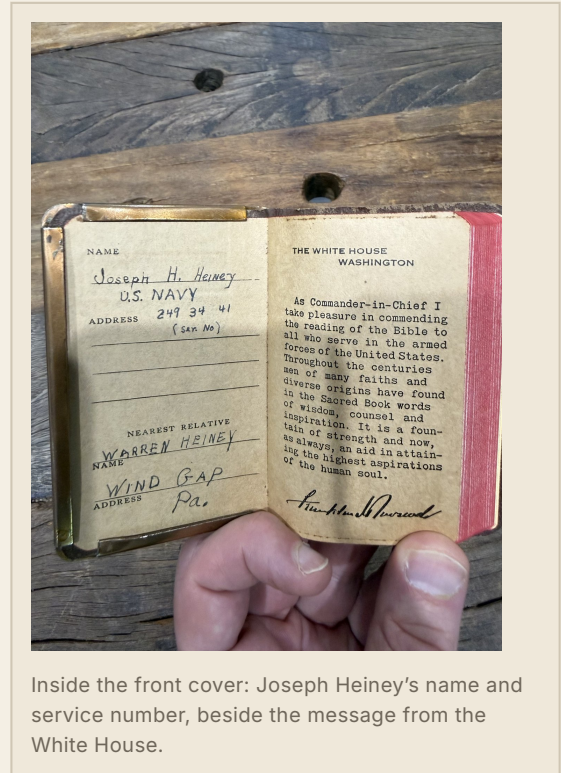
They called them Heart-Shield Bibles. In World War II they were sold to families sending men off to fight, advertised plainly as protection from bullets, and made to ride in the chest pocket, flat over the heart. Part symbol, part literal shield.

Open the front cover of this one and you find him. Joseph H. Heiney, U.S. Navy, his service number written in by hand, and the name of the person the Navy would notify if he did not come home: Warren Heiney, of Wind Gap, Pennsylvania. Across from his name is a message printed for every man who carried one, signed by the Commander-in-Chief:

“As Commander-in-Chief I take pleasure in commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the armed forces of the United States... It is a fountain of strength and now, as always, an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul.”

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, THE WHITE HOUSE

The promise on the cover was not only symbolic. I have read the account of a soldier named Larry Dupree, whose steel Bible stopped a Nazi bullet in France in 1944. The bullet drove in and came to rest at the second chapter of Mark. Of all the places to stop. That is the chapter where Jesus sits down to eat with the people everyone else had written off, and says:



Inside the front cover: Joseph Heiney's name and service number, beside the message from the White House.

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

MARK 2:17

A bullet meant to end a man’s life was stopped by the exact page where Christ says he came for the ones the world had given up on.

Joseph Heiney carried the Word over his heart into a war. Not as decoration. As the thing that protected him and pointed him. A leader carries what protects the people beside him. That is service, and service is the job.

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