

# THE TIN CAN SAILOR

Fall 2024



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## Navy Quote

There are no extraordinary men... just extraordinary circumstances that ordinary men are forced to deal with.

William Halsey

## Tin Can Talk

**BULWARK:** Solid fence-like barrier along the edges of weather decks.

Scan the code below with the camera of your cell phone, and it will bring you to the Tin Can Sailors website.



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# AT THE HELM

Rosehn Gipe  
President

Fall has arrived in New England. The leaves are changing colors and leaf-peepers are making the pilgrimage for the beautiful foliage. It is time to slow down a bit and recall the recent

National Reunion in New Orleans.

It all began pleasant enough. Staff arrived at the Jung Hotel on Friday, September 6 and proceeded to set up the Ship's Store and Registration Table. That evening Annmarie and Hannah put together the swag bags with all the goodies provided by our generous Louisiana donors, including the Louisiana Department of Tourism, Rouse's Markets, Aunt Sally's Pralines, Elmer's Chee Wees, Tabasco, and New Orleans & Company. Everything was set for Early Registration on Saturday.

Brunch on weekends is a must in the South. Reunion Staff started the day at The Court of Two Sisters, one of the best for brunch for decades. Little did they know that this would be one of the very few times that they would be able to enjoy the delights of the French Quarter. Lots of folks began checking in Saturday evening, generally unaware of what was brewing in the Gulf of Mexico.

On Sunday, September 8, registration opened early, followed by a jambalaya luncheon and a Tin Can Sailors update. We had asked attendees to bring items for our first-ever live auction and, boy, did people deliver. Everyone had plenty of time to look over the items before, during, and after lunch. In addition to donations from members, NOLA Distillery, Tabasco, USS Kidd Veterans Museum, Patriots Point, Galveston Naval Museum, Jacksonville Naval Museum, and USS Slater provided items for the auction. Roger Novak was a great auctioneer and Tin Can Sailors realized around \$1,200 at the final tally.

The USS O'Callahan DE1051 Crew headed to St. Pat's Irish Coffeehouse, which serves more than coffee, on Sunday evening for their tradition of transferring the seal to a new Irish pub for the year. Then, the group walked over to Pat O'Brien's for dinner and those world-famous Hurricanes. Did someone say the "H" word?

On Monday, a bus load of attendees ventured into the wilds of Louisiana on a swamp tour in the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. This was no Disneyland ride. The group encountered alligators, snakes, exotic birds, and an assortment of small mammals, as well as the diverse flora of the bayous. Others took time to explore New Orleans on their own. Quite a few opted for the New Orleans School of Cooking where they learned to prepare gumbo, jambalaya, and pralines. Standards for any good cook, in my opinion.

Everyone gathered for dinner at the hotel on Monday evening. At the pre-dinner reception, we hosted a book signing with David Hornfischer, who was at the Reunion promoting his new book "Destroyer Captain" that he co-wrote with his

father, James Hornfischer. To remind you, James Hornfischer wrote "Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors" and "Neptune's Inferno," among others. Sadly, he passed away in 2021.

Following dinner, we held the drawings for the chance raffle that included donations that arrived too late for the auction, more items from the historic destroyer museums, plus some leftovers from the live auction. Late that evening we learned that Tropical Storm Francine had taken a turn to the northeast and was setting her sights on the Louisiana coast.

Tuesday morning began with two bus loads heading to the World War II Museum. This day trip was probably the most anticipated of all the optional tours. The full-day experience included admission to the museum, a showing of the movie "Beyond All Boundaries," lunch at BB's Stagedoor Canteen, plus a show by the Victory Belles. Tuesday morning also began with some people deciding to evacuate New Orleans and return home. It was expected that Tropical Storm Francine would become Hurricane Francine, strengthening, and picking up speed.

By Tuesday afternoon, the Wednesday city tour and lunch cruise had been cancelled and the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport had announced that airlines were cancelling all flights after noon on Wednesday and the airport would close. It was expected that the airport would re-open Thursday morning. More people made the decision to leave.

Unfortunately, the caterer that had been in place for the Wednesday dinner had to cancel due to standing commitments to feed utility hurricane recovery units that were coming in from around the region. Since the caterer knew that most restaurants would be closed Wednesday, they offered to prepare box lunches for us. We accepted that offer, even though Wednesday lunch was not included in the reunion registration fee. We are grateful that the Jung hotel manager, Dana Crabtree, stepped up and found us a local caterer with the capacity and generators, if needed, to prepare dinner for us and located a bartender willing to come in Wednesday evening. Also, she managed to scrounge about 100 flashlights, just in case the hotel lost power. The equipment for the Wednesday evening presentation was in place and the guest speaker had checked in. Those of us who decided to stay were ready for whatever Francine had in mind.

A few more folks left Wednesday morning. Most businesses in the area closed early. Dana had the "bottomless" coffee pot in the lobby. And we spread the word about lunch. For those not glued to the Weather Channel, the hospitality rooms were the place to be. It was great to see people just making the best of the situation, playing games, working on puzzles, and even knitting and crocheting. By noon Wednesday, it was clear that Francine would make landfall around 5 p.m. as a Category 2 hurricane headed directly for New Orleans. The good news was that her speed was increasing.

While Annmarie and Hannah were packing what remained of the Ship's Store for the return to Somerset, Jeff Richard organized a Sea Story competition for Wednesday afternoon.

*Continued on page 12 — see AT THE HELM*

# My Life Aboard Reserve Training Ship

By George J. Chambers

In January 1954, the 90 days to make up my mind to re-enlist without losing any benefits were about to expire. I decided that I wanted to make the Navy my career and went to the recruiting station in Manhattan and re-enlisted as an RD2 for six more years. After the process was completed, I was given orders to report to the Brooklyn Navy Shipyard to await orders to a ship.

The few days that I spent at the Navy yard gave me time to check out the infamous Sands Street directly outside the Navy yard where some of my ancestors lived in the 1850s. Eventually, I received orders to the USS *William T. Powell* (DER 213), a radar picket destroyer escort homeported in Philadelphia. When I reported aboard, I found out that she was a reserve training ship (NRT) and had served during World War II.

*William T. Powell* was at sea when I reported into the shipyard where I was assigned courier guard duty. This duty required me to checkout a sidearm and escort an employee from the Navy Exchange to a bank downtown. Of course, in typical Navy fashion, I had a .45-caliber automatic pistol, but no ammunition! Fortunately, no untoward incidents occurred.

While waiting for my ship, another sailor and I drove to Baltimore to look up an old shipmate of his. When we got to Baltimore, we stopped at a pub to ask directions and to have a beer. Within minutes, the bartender set a second round in front of us. When we asked about it, he told us that “the guy down at the end of the bar bought it.” We thanked him and continued our conversation when another round was set in front of us. The bartender told us that “these are on that guy over there,” pointing to the other end of the bar. It turned out that these two men were friendly rivals who worked in a local electronics plant. One was an expert in forming radar wave



The U.S. Navy destroyer escort USS *William T. Powell* (DE 213) underway in the Atlantic Ocean on 9 July 1944. Photographed by an aircraft from Blimp Squadron 24 (ZP-24), based at Naval Air Station Weeksville, North Carolina. U.S. Navy photo.

guide and was retiring. The second man was his relief. After the first guy bought us a drink, the other was not going to let him get the better of him. Eventually we left, leaving several full bottles on the bar.

*William T. Powell* returned to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard (PNSY) on 11 February, and I reported aboard. At that time, our commanding officers were CDR A.G. Hamilton, Jr., and the XO was LT Ernest King, Jr., son of retired Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, who was CNO during World War II. The operations officer was LT H.G. Garand and the CIC officer was LTJG R.W. Brotherson. I also found out that I was the second regular Navy radarman aboard. My job was to teach any reserve radarman or officers on their two weeks active duty. During my time aboard there were never any enlisted radarmen aboard on a cruise. However, the leading petty officers from other departments did have me give their reserves a brief introduction to what a radar picket ship does. We did have officers of different ranks, some of whom had limited experience in CIC (Combat Information Center) during World War II. *William T. Powell's* task in addition to training reservists in their rates or job, was to acclimate them to life aboard a ship at sea and to provide experience in visiting foreign ports. At that time, there were only two regular Navy radarman aboard, me and another second class radarman (RD2).

The task of *William T. Powell* and that of her sister ship, USS *Earl K. Olsen* (DE 765) was to take naval reservists from the Fourth Naval District out for their annual two-week training cruises to enable them to complete their active-duty training requirements. Normally we would leave Philadelphia on a Monday, spend the weekend in ports such as Miami,



USS *Earl K. Olsen* (DDE 765), the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard 1953. Photo courtesy of Len Banning.

Continued on page 5 — see TRAINING

Boston, Nassau, BWI, Havana, Cuba, or Kingston, Jamaica. The second week would be devoted to providing the reservists with additional training before she returned to Philadelphia on Friday.

Unfortunately for the reservists, their first couple of days would be lost for training as they were usually seasick. This was fortunate for the regular crew, as our commissary man was able to save on his food rations' budget to be spent during our in-port periods in Philadelphia when there were no reservists aboard. After the ship had been at sea for a few days and the reservists started getting their "sea legs", training could begin. Other reservists would be sent to the paint locker with orders to get a "bucket of dial tone." Another favorite trick was to send a "boot" out looking for a bucket of "relative bearing grease." Later, a reservist would be stationed in the bow to keep a sharp watch for the "mail buoy." He would be informed that passing ships would drop off mail for us and we had to pick it up. There were other similar shenanigans.

Many reservists also lost training time due to the physical condition of the ship and its equipment. Most of the equipment in the ship was of World War II vintage. This included the electronics equipment as well as engineering equipment. As a result, we had frequent breakdowns. Those reservists whose ratings involved repairing the various types of equipment did get a great deal of experience; however, the others would lose training time at sea.

Although I relate the humorous aspects of our reserve training task, at the time we all considered it serious business. We knew that in time of a national emergency, these would be the sailors who would augment the regular navy crews aboard ships. To my knowledge, no one had his qualifications checked off unless he demonstrated the requisite skills or knowledge. For the most part, reservists stood watches, repaired equipment, chipped paint, and performed all the other tasks required on a ship at sea.

My first reserve training cruise was to Kingston, Jamaica. We left the PNSY on 1 March and on the way down the Delaware River and through the Chesapeake Bay, we had to anchor for several hours in the Newcastle Range due to high winds and low visibility. This was a routine situation for most



USS Hickox (DD 673), underway at sea, when she was placed in commission. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval History and Heritage Command. Courtesy of Robert Hurst.

ships in the winter. When we arrived in Kingston on the 5<sup>th</sup>, we moored at the Princess Street Pier. I was assigned shore patrol with a Jamaican detective unit. This evening provided me an opportunity to see what life was really like "beyond the waterfront." The people who lived there were dirt poor and lived in falling-down shacks. Drugs, alcohol use, and fighting were rampant.

On another day, four of us hired a driver with an old Cadillac touring car to show us the island. We asked him to wait while we went into a store to buy some rum, but he insisted on buying it where the locals shopped. It was much cheaper and not a "rip-off."

Our first stop was a rain forest and then to an outlying resort hotel where our driver "arranged" for us to use the pool. Who should we see sitting poolside? None other than a well-known Hollywood leading man with a thin mustache (we swore that he was Clark Gable) who was with his "daughter" or was she his "niece?" That evening, our driver took us further out into the countryside. When we asked where we were going, he just said, "You'll see." Eventually, we could hear calypso music coming from ahead of us up the dark road. Finally, the driver stopped and told us to wait in the car. We saw him duck into what appeared to be an entrance to a hut. In a few minutes, he came back and escorted us inside the hut where native Jamaicans were enjoying their night out. We were made welcome and eventually a few of us even tried to do the limbo in our white uniforms!

During this visit, we had an opportunity to see an English regiment relieving a Scottish one. The ceremony and the parade were exciting to watch with all the troops in full dress uniforms and the pomp and circumstances as only the Commonwealth can do it; precision marching, bagpipes, and regimental colors waving in the breeze. Jamaica had been an English colony for 307 years until the Union Jack came down for the last time on 6 August 1962, and Jamaicans had their independence. We left Kingston on the 7<sup>th</sup> enroute to Guantanamo Bay (Gitmo) naval training base off the southeastern coast of Cuba.

It was normal for us to stop in Gitmo as frequently as possible. My first visit came on 8 March, when we were visiting in company with *Earl K. Olsen*. In order to get from the pier area to the exchange area, we had to ride in huge, open-sided "cattle cars." There were only two things for us to do once off the ship. We could either go to the Navy Exchange and shop or go to the enlisted club. The drink of choice was the local Cuban beer Hatuey, named after a legendary Cuban Indian Chief, who was the symbol of Cuban independence. On the label was a profile of Chief Hatuey. It was said that one had enough to drink when they could see Hatuey's two eyes. Sailors have been known to say something like, "Not only can I see two eyes, but he's also smiling at me!" On the return trips on the cattle cars, there would frequently be fights as sailors stood up for the honor of their ship.

Whenever the ship stopped at Gitmo, the ship's officers would bring back supplies of tax-free liquor for the officer's club in Philadelphia in violation of Naval and Federal regulations. The ship's company would also bring back liquor

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and tax-free cigarettes.

Once, we were returning from a trip when we held a depth charge demonstration. During this demonstration, depth charges would be released from the stern racks. They would be set to go off at sufficient depth so that the ship would be well clear of the explosion. However, one must have been defective, as it went off about twenty feet abaft the fantail. The explosion lifted the ship up out of the water, and she shook like a dog. The captain ordered the XO to make a tour of the ship and to report any damage. Although the ship smelled like a distillery, the XO reported “No damage” and we continued on our way.

While we were operating out of Gitmo, an unfortunate event occurred aboard one of our sister ships. A first-class fire controlman was working on the fire control radar while wearing a T-shirt. He was standing on a chair to gain access to the top of the set and behind him was an open power panel. The ship had rolled, and he fell backwards into the live 440-volt circuits and was electrocuted.

After we returned to Philadelphia from Gitmo, we had to go into the Keystone Ship Engineering Shipyard in Chester, south of Philadelphia, for dry docking. One of my shipmates found a shop that was selling steak hoagies (submarine sandwiches) for only thirty-five cents! That was cheap even at that time. Even after we returned to Philadelphia, someone would make a nightly run down to Chester to pick up orders of these hoagies. It was not until later in the year that we learned that they were selling horsemeat!

While we were in the shipyard in Chester, some of the crew began dating ladies who worked at the local Scott Paper Company plant. It was not unheard of for a sailor to drop his lady at the gate at the start of her shift and then pick up another lady coming off shift. We were to spend time in Keystone again in April, September, and December.

On Thursday night, 30 March, *William T. Powell* was transiting the Delaware River enroute to Nassau, BWI, when she collided with the 7,607-ton Moore-McCormack freighter *Mornacspruce* in Delaware Bay. Two sailors were injured and there was a 10-foot square gash in her starboard side, aft. A propeller shaft was also extensively damaged. After a diver inspected our underwater hull and made minor repairs, *William T. Powell* and our sister ship, *Earl K. Olsen*, continued on to Nassau where we moored at Prince George Wharf.

One evening, several of us went to a fancy hotel where we were playing darts. One of the darts went out a window and while looking for it in the bushes, the dart punctured my finger. The puncture was gushing and getting blood all over my white uniform, so I went back to the ship and hung the uniform on my rack. Our berthing compartment was right outside sick bay and when the corpsman saw my bloody uniform the next morning, he was sure that someone was seriously hurt. I was not, but a stuck finger sure does bleed a lot!

All the electronic equipment *William T. Powell* had in CIC was World War II-vintage and we did not have any trained electronics technicians (ET) aboard. We did have a sailor who had taken a TV course and had taken and passed the exam



USS Skeller (DE 419), circa early 1950's, at Portsmouth, England. Photo submitted by David Wright, Geneva, N.Y.; Manager, Nav-source Destroyer Archive Yard / District Craft Archive.

for 3rd class Electronics Technician (ET). One afternoon, several of us were sitting around in CIC when our ET came in and walked around a corner into an alcove. After a while, our CIC officer, a reserve officer, came in and asked what the ET was doing sleeping in the corner. He had been working on a scope and unknown to us, electrocuted himself and lost consciousness. Base medical was quickly summoned and in a matter of minutes our ET was revived – much to everyone's relief.

From 13 through 16 April, we were again in dry dock at Keystone. Then on the 20th, *William T. Powell*, *Earl K. Olsen*, *USS Cogswell* (DD 651), and *USS Rizzi* (DE 537) conducted exercises in the Narragansett Bay Op Area. After these combined exercises, we returned to the PNSY on the 22nd. Next, along with *Earl K. Olsen*, we paid a visit to Havana where we moored at the United Fruit Pier on the 30th. On several occasions, our visits to Havana were punctuated by local residents warning us to get off the streets to avoid Castro's rebels who were coming into town firing guns. This was during the early stages of their efforts to overthrow Fulgencio Batista's extreme right-wing dictatorship. There would be a few tense minutes, sometimes with sporadic gunfire outside before we would be told, “All clear.”

What I enjoyed most during our visit to Havana was going to the National Capitol Building located off the *Peso del Prado* in the heart of the city. This was a beautiful limestone building with granite steps. Inside it was lavishly decorated with marble, mahogany, and bronze. Embedded in the center of the lobby floor was a huge gemstone. A velvet rope to keep people away surrounded this stone. There must have been other security, but none of us ever saw any. In a side galley, to the left, was a portrait of President Roosevelt. He was sitting in a chair and his eyes gave you the sensation of following you wherever you moved. I had never seen anything like it.

Sometime during the spring, our second radarman was transferred, leaving me alone.

One day, several of us were at the beach engaged in water sports with some female tourists when I dove into an incoming wave. I missed the crest and slid over the coral cutting my face, chest, arms, and legs. When I got back to the ship, our hospital corpsman slathered me in salve and

Continued on page 7 — see TRAINING

wrapped me in bandages. That afternoon, the OOD, who was a young ensign, paged me to the quarterdeck to discuss a non-related problem. When he saw me wrapped up like a mummy, he almost fainted. We left Havana on 2 May and returned to the PNSY where we stayed until the 25th.

The last weekend in May found *William T. Powell* and *Earl K. Olsen* once again moored at Prince George Wharf, Nassau. A shipmate, I'll call him Mike, decided that I had to learn to drink martinis and he was going to buy them until I did. We went to a place that had a table on a small second floor balcony overlooking an alleyway. Mike ordered drinks and I raised mine toward my mouth, but instead of drinking it, I tossed it over my right shoulder into the alleyway. Mike was impressed that I "drank" mine, so he ordered another. The same thing happened with that one. I eventually did learn to appreciate a good martini, but not until much later. We left Nassau on the 31st and returned to the PNSY.

The second weekend in June was again spent at the United Fruit Pier in Havana along with *Earl K. Olsen*. On the way home, they conducted ASW exercises with *USS Pompon* (SSR 267). The ships returned to PNSY on the 25th.

During July and August, *William T. Powell* and *Earl K. Olsen* spent time in the PNSY and the Narragansett OPArea, Boston and Provincetown, MA. The first time in Boston was the weekend of 16-19 July. On 2 August, while in the PNSY, we held an open house for visitors. This was in connection with the release of the movie, *Winds of War*, based on Herman Wouk's novel of the same name. Some of the publicity stills were shot onboard *William T. Powell*.

One night my shipmate, Mike, took me over to New Jersey to visit some of the local night clubs. At some point in the evening, he came over to me, handed me his car keys, and told me that he and a lady that he met were going to another club. He asked me to follow him in his car. This was all right except that his car had some sort of hybrid fluid drive transmission that I did not know how to operate. Besides, I did not have a license! With many starts and stalls, I finally made it safely to the other club, which was about a mile away.

On the 10th and 11th of August, *William T. Powell* conducted ASW exercises with *USS Rooks* (DD 804), *USS Hickox* (DD 673), *USS Miller* (DD 535), *USS Gatling* (DD 671), *USS Dortch* (DD 670), and *USS Corsair* (SS 435) before visiting Boston from 13 – 16 August. On 31 August, *William T. Powell* and her sister ship again left Philadelphia bound for Boston. There had been reports of a hurricane developing in the Caribbean, but its track was predicted to take it inland, over North Carolina. However, like most hurricanes, this one was unpredictable and that evening the ships found themselves right in the path of Hurricane Carol, the most destructive hurricane to strike southern New England since the Great New England Hurricane of 1938. Carol was packing sustained winds of 80-100 mph and was generating waves in the 50-to-70-foot range! Between 0800 and 0937 the barometer rose from 28.32 inches to 28.76 inches. During these conditions, all personnel who were not absolutely necessary for the safe operation of the ship would retire to their bunks and tighten the straps around themselves. The most terrifying storm-



*USS Rockwall (APA 230) at anchor, 24 April 1954. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photo. Courtesy of William H. Davis.*

related incident occurred was when *Earl K. Olsen*, who was in front of *William T. Powell*, broached down in front of us in the trough of a heavy wave. As we reached the crest of a following wave, we saw *Earl K. Olsen* broached and without steerageway. A collision was avoided and eventually *Earl K. Olsen* was able to regain steerageway. When the storm abated, both ships spent the night anchored in Delaware Bay, then returned to Philadelphia the next day.

On 9 September, *William T. Powell* was once again in Keystone where on the 30th, LT Ernest J. King, Jr. relieved CDR Hamilton as commanding officer. Captain King was then frocked as Lt. Commander. She then returned to Philadelphia on 14 October. During that period, the other radarman aboard was transferred, leaving me the only radarman aboard.

During the third week of October, *William T. Powell* was ordered to participate in a fleet training operation in the Virginia Capes OPArea. This required her to act in coordination with other destroyers on screening stations for fleet amphibious ships and supply transport ships. During this period, we made brief stops in Norfolk and Morehead City, North Carolina. On the 19th and 20th, she operated with *USS Skeller* (DE 419), conducting ASW searches in support of the sortie forces. During the majority of the time, she operated with *USS Rizzi*. Other ships involved included *USS Rockwell* (APA 230), *USS Libra* (AKA 12) and *USS Sandborn* (APA 193).

*William T. Powell* had two problems while participating in these exercises: (1) she didn't have the speed required to move from station to station expeditiously, and (2) nobody in CIC except myself knew the procedures for re-aligning the screen and changing stations as the formation changed course. It was CIC's responsibility to recommend a new course and speed to the OOD every time the Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) issued new maneuver orders. This change of course recommendation had to come in a timely manner that did not leave time for "What do we do now?" As I was the only one in CIC with any recent experience, Capt. King ordered that I would be in CIC anytime we were operating with an aircraft carrier. We also had onboard a World War II-vintage height finding radar that never worked and our air search radar frequently operated in less-than-optimal conditions

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# USS *TURNER JOY* (DD 951)

## Battle of Brandon Bay

### The Last Surface Pitched Gun Battle, 12 JAN 73

From the Vault  
April 2013

By LCDR Jim Chester USN (Ret.)

Part II of II

*Editor's Note: Please see Mr. Chester's update of his article Battle of Brandon Bay, in the Summer 2024 issue on page 11.*

At 12,000 yards from the beach, the *Turner Joy* turned to her final, zigzag, approach before paralleling the beach for Mount 51 to fire at the primary target. After firing about 15 to 20 rounds, MT 51 suffered a material casualty. The captain and the weapons officer sent the great GMGCM Blaney forward to fix the gun mount, traveling along the skin of the ship with shrapnel flying all over the place. He soon fixed the mount and we resumed firing. After running seven miles under fire, it had seemed to us in CIC like an eternity before we resumed fire. We finished firing at the primary target just as we were getting ready to do a high speed turn to starboard to form a loose column. I don't think anybody had done greater than 30 knots divisional tactics in battle since WWII. We used about 15–20 degrees of rudder and heeled quite a bit.

As soon as we steadied, we checked the indirect fire-control solution, found that we were on target, and resumed fire on our secondary target. By then, we were under extremely heavy fire at point blank range from enemy shore batteries 9,500–10,000 yards from the beach. The bridge reported being awash from shell splashes and often blinded by the bright orange air bursts of enemy Able Able Common (AAC) airbursts.

Over the sound-powered phones, I heard "Oooui, Eeee, Aaah, Wow Man!"

It was QM3 Ginsburg (now CWO4 Ginsburg, U.S. Coast Guard), who quickly clarified his outburst, announcing that the ship had just taken about 15 air bursts all at once over the forward part of the ship. Everyone topside could hear the woosh of flying shrapnel. At that point, none of us, including me, thought we'd see the morning dawn.

As my Dad always told me, there are no atheists in combat. He was so right. I remember OSSA, atheist Larry Bota yell out "God get me out of this!"

After the battle, we reminded him of what he said. He was shocked and probably changed forever. After checking our fire control solution for our preplanned third target, we started firing at about 9,600–9,800 yards from the beach. Shortly after firing, the fire control director slewed around the horizon and from CIC, we saw 40-plus enemy



*The Charles F. Adams-class guided missile destroyer USS Cochrane (DDG 21) was somewhat unique for having commanding officers who rose to flag rank. Of her 15 COs, seven later became rear admirals, one was a vice admiral, and one was an admiral. The ship was built at Seattle, Washington, by the Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging Company and commissioned on 21 March 1964. During her 26-year career, the Cochrane was a Pacific Fleet destroyer with home ports in Hawaii and Japan. During Operation Linebacker the ship was flagship for COMDESRON25. The Cochrane was decommissioned on 1 October 1990 after the navy decided that it was not cost effective to convert the ship to gas-turbine propulsion. The era of steam-powered destroyers was over and the Cochrane was too old to make the change. She was broken up for scrap in 1992.*

guns firing at us from the remote monitor for the Forward-looking Infrared Radar (FLIR) in CIC. As I watched the enemy guns firing at us, I counted as many as I could. I recall counting 44 guns, probably 130-mm 5-inch or larger. The latest intelligence, less than 48 hours old, was right on the money.

We next received another burst of enemy shells close aboard, and I heard the electronic warfare (EW) specialists yell out, "B240Z...J-band!". After a second pattern of shells landed close aboard, the XO in CIC used remote controls to fire off a round of stack, or erroneous target, chaff pneumatically. The enemy's B240Z trajectory-adjusting radar locked on to the chaff cloud and fell away. If we hadn't been going 32-plus knots, we would have been hit for sure. The chaff cloud showed up on the AN/SPS-10 radar screen with enemy shell impacts all around it.

By that time, all ships had fired on their tactical targets. Then, suddenly, the ship shook violently. We thought we'd sustained a direct hit. After checking all key control stations,

*Continued on page 9 — see DD 951*



DD 951 — continued from page 8

we discovered that it wasn't a direct enemy hit, but the overpressure shock wave from the enormous blast of some 900 tons of bombs from the B-52s. They'd been dropped all at once and, as near as I can remember, we were 11,000 to 12,000 yards from the drop area. The blast overpressure shook us like we were a violently-shaken kid's rattle.

The surface strike commander ordered the USS *Cochrane* (DDG 21) and USS *Mccaffery* (DD/DDE 860) to retire at high speed, and we were to stay behind to cover them with our vastly superior conventional firepower. For us, it was turning into a classic World War II-style pitched surface gunnery battle. Over the next 10–12 minutes, or probably longer, we engaged numerous enemy batteries, often shifting to direct fire to take advantage of the laser beam for instantaneous range-of-fire control solutions.

We definitely knocked out several enemy shore batteries to the north and west, then, shifted back to indirect fire control and took out three or four more enemy sites. I saw many secondary explosions at the enemy battery sites as nearby ammo went up. Somewhere between direct and indirect fire, the ship did a high speed, 180-degree turn to run parallel to the VINH, NVN beach going south. Once we steadied, I looked at the ship's speed indicator, or pit log as we called it. We were doing 33 knots. Incredible!

## Side Bar

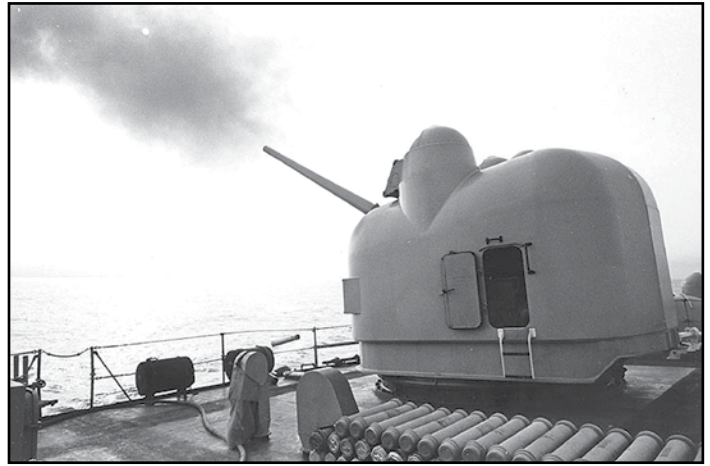
20 JUNE 1973

FROM: COMMANDER CRUISER DESTROYER FORCE  
PACIFIC

TO: USS TURNER JOY  
BT

WELCOME HOME.

1. AS YOU RETURN TO LONG BEACH FOLLOWING A SIX AND ONE HALF MONTH DEPLOYMENT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, YOU MAY REFLECT WITH PRIDE ON THE PART YOU PLAYED IN SUPPORT OF SEVENTHFLT MISSIONS. NOT ONLY DID YOUR NAVAL GUNFIRE MISSIONS AND INTERDICTION EFFORTS SUBSTANTIALLY HASTEN THE END OF HOSTILITIES, BUT YOU ALSO BEAR THE DISTINCTION OF CONDUCTING THE FINAL RAID, FIRING THE FINAL ROUND, AND RECEIVING THE FINAL HOSTILE ACTION FROM THE ENEMY. YOUR PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION ENDSWEEP ALSO DISPLAYED THE SUPERB PROFESSIONALISM WHICH HAS BECOME THE HALLMARK OF SHIPS OF THE FORCE. WELCOME HOME TO A WELL-EARNED REUNION WITH FAMILIES AND FRIENDS. WELL DONE.  
REAR ADMIRAL WOODS.  
BT



*The MK42 5-inch/54-caliber gun was installed on the Forrest Sherman, Hull, Farragut (Coontz), Belknap (DLG/later CG), Charles F. Adams, and Mitscher-class destroyers as a significant improvement over the 5-inch/38-cal. guns from the World War II ships. Faster and with better accuracy, the guns were able to train effective fire on even the fast, highly maneuverable surface threats built since the war and were better able to track aircraft for AA defense. At 40 rounds per minute, the single barrel 54s outmatched twin 38s in output. Their the heavier projectile and higher muzzle velocity meant improved lethality in AA use and greater damage to surface targets.*

Suddenly I heard the captain shout over the 21MC and other key command and control internal circuits. "Get TJ the hell out of here!" We did about a 90-degree high-speed port turn to the east, but soon were under heavy and accurate fire from the enemy batteries. As the TV lit up the enemy's B240Z...J-band radar, she began rapid evasive maneuvers. After another pattern of enemy shells landed very close aboard, the XO fired another slug of stack chaff. Again the enemy fire fell off as the B240Z radar acquired the chaff cloud. As we began our retirement, we engaged enemy counterbattery sites with our after gun mounts, MT 52 and MT 53. Our return fire seemed uncharacteristically accurate for a destroyer retiring at a speed in excess of 30 knots on violently evasive zigzag courses. At some point during the action, I believe we took a hit very close aboard that put a hole in a freshwater tank, but I'm not 100 percent sure. I believe that was the cause because we later lost a lot of freshwater from a large, otherwise unexplainable, leak.

During our high-speed retirement, the throttleman nearly dragged the boilers and the generators off the line when the after mounts were firing or the ship was making the violent evasive zigzag maneuvers. The customary whine of the engineering plant started to wane with the loss of its load. I distinctly heard the captain yell down over the 21MC to Main Control just two words. "Not now!" Right after that, you could hear the whine of the turbines and generators come back to their customary pitch. Believe me when I say

*Continued on page 12 — see DD 951*

**Many ship associations or members choose to make donations in the names of deceased members or others whom the members wish to honor. You may specify that the donation go directly to a specific ship or to the Tin Can Sailor Association.**

# Tributes

Laura Goad in memory of James William Siler, Jr.

Harley Fields in memory of his brother, Nathan L. Rich, proud husband, father, son, brother and sailor

Holly Brookes in memory of John J. Medeiros

Tin Can Sailors of Goose Creek, SC in memory of their shipmate, Joe McGrorty,  
Bosun Mate Master Chief, USN Ret.

Jack & Joan Batten in memory of James "Bill" William Siler

Ryan Hutchins in memory of John J. Medeiros

Kenneth MacLeod in memory of Arthur Coughenour, USS Stormes (DD 780), 1958-1961

Fay McGrath in memory of her husband, Joseph McGrath, USS Robert H. McCard (DD 822) and  
USS Joseph Hewes (FF 1078)

Joseph Zisa in memory of BM3 O'Reilly, USS Warrington (DD 843)

Matt and Joanne Flournoy in memory of Jim Madrid, Supply Officer, USS John Rodgers (DD 983) 1979

Ken and Lou Smith in memory of James Dusenbury

Jackie Webb in memory of Bill Siler

USS Miller (DD 535) Assn. in memory of Wilfred Proulx

USS Miller (DD 535) Assn. in memory of John Glenn

USS Miller (DD 535) Assn. in memory of Herb Phelan

USS Compton (DD 705) Assn. in memory of Edward Brimo

USS Compton (DD 705) Assn. in memory of Richard Cole

Jim Chester in memory of CDR Robert H. Pidgeon USN (Ret)., Distinguished CO  
USS Turner Joy (DD 951) 13 Dec 1971 – 25 Apr 1973

John Ripley, USS Alfred A. Cunningham (DD 752) in memory of his sister, Joanne Ripley

John & Pam Lyons in memory of his father, Albert Jay Lyons MM3, USS Navarro (APA 215) &  
USS O'Brien (DD 725), May the seas always be calm

W. Gairy Nichols in memory of James Dusenbury

preventing us from supporting the carrier's operations. After a week of apparent frustration on the part of the Task Force commander, *William T. Powell* was relieved and returned to Philadelphia on 29 October.

During football season that year, *William T. Powell* steamed to Annapolis for the weekend and moored at Santee Pier on Friday, 5 November. Unfortunately, on that particular weekend, most of the brigade of midshipmen were at Durham, North Carolina for the Navy-Duke game (Navy won 40-7). Our liberty time was curtailed, as we had to be aboard to indoctrinate the plebes who were left behind. They had been given lists of questions to which they had to obtain answers. Not all the questions were legitimate, and the bogus ones really made the crew think creatively in order to come up with plausible answers the plebes could give to the upperclassmen.

On Saturday, retired Fleet Admiral King, the captain's father, visited the ship and full honors were presented to him. When his car arrived on the pier, his Marine orderly got out, marched to the right, rear seat and opened the door. Admiral King got out, walked up the brow, saluted the colors and OOD and requested permission to come aboard. It was not until later that we realized that all this time his orderly was supporting him, for Admiral King was very ill. On Sunday, the ship was open to general visiting, and we had to act as tour guides. *William T. Powell* again returned to the PNSY on the 12th after conducting training exercises in Chesapeake Bay. On 14 November, I was advanced to Radarman 1st Class (RD1).

Just before Thanksgiving, we provided escort services for USS *Bang* (SS 385) while she was undergoing sea trials out of Norfolk. On Thanksgiving Day, we had guests aboard for dinner consisting of the traditional fare.

One of my collateral duties was Master of Arms. One evening shortly after 11 PM, I was summoned to the quarterdeck and as MAA, was directed to deal with some sort of rowdiness in the wardroom. This created quite a dilemma – I was not sure that my responsibilities included the wardroom. I decided that it did and entered the wardroom. What I found were several young reserve officers with a young lady. The wardroom table on a destroyer does double duty as an operating table when needed and is equipped with operating room lights. These officers were performing “surgery” – they had the young lady on the table with the operating lights on, and they were shaving her legs. When I asked what was going on, they realized they were out of order and broke up the party without any further action on my part. I remained on the quarterdeck until all participants left the ship.

On 15 November 1954, I had been advanced to first class petty officer. One day, I was cleaning under a plotting table in CIC when I felt someone kick my foot. When I crawled out, I saw that it was Captain King. He asked me what I thought I was doing and when I told him, he informed me that he had advanced me to first class and that if he wanted me to be doing seaman's work, he would make me a seaman. I thanked him and left the bucket of water and cleaning gear right where they were. They were still there when I left the ship in

February 1955.

In December, after conducting ASW exercises with USS *Cushing* (DD 797), *William T. Powell* stopped in Miami where she moored to the east end of the MacArthur Causeway. During this visit, several shipmates decided to visit a Serpentarium, south of town. A young lady was demonstrating a black snake that she had around her neck. At one point, she was explaining that snakes were not slimy and slipped a loop of the snake over my head. I froze. Unfortunately, I happened to have a pint in my waistband that went down through my pant leg and smashed on the ground. Everyone had a good laugh as the snake handler removed the snake from around my neck.

After leaving Miami, *William T. Powell* headed home to Philadelphia. On the way back, a serious casualty occurred in the forward fire room when a soot blower failed. When this happened, it allowed live superheated steam to fill the fire room and personnel had to evacuate before anyone got scalded. Fortunately, no one was injured. But, once again, we had to go into Keystone to get repaired.

One of my most memorable shipmates was the boiler tender (BT1) in charge of the forward fire room. He was inordinately insistent on cleanliness and safety; so much so that he insisted that the fire room personnel change out of their oily shoes and dungarees before leaving the fire room. Down in the fire room he had installed large metal boxes containing such items as a coffee pot and a 45-rpm record player. These boxes would normally be unlocked. Each morning, he would go down into the fire room and walk around. If the state of cleanliness was not up to his standards, he would not say a word. He would just snap locks on the boxes and leave the fire room. Later, he would return and find the fire room looking as clean as an operating room. If it did, he would unlock the boxes. One of my most exciting experiences was when he insisted that I had to learn how to light off a boiler!

After leaving Keystone on the 11th, *William T. Powell* returned to the PNSY and on the 29th, she left for Miami. That Sunday, in Miami, several shipmates and I decided to rent a convertible. We had a great time until the driver decided to watch the sights and not the car in front. It stopped for a red light, and he did not, at least not in time to avoid hitting him. The front end of our car got a little banged up, but his was undamaged. We took the car back to the rental place, which, luckily for us, was closed.

We left a note explaining that we were leaving the following morning. I never did find out the outcome of this incident, but undoubtedly, we were not the first sailors to enjoy liberty at the rental agency's expense! The ship left Miami on the 31st and returned to the PNSY.

Earlier in the year, I had submitted a request to winter over in Antarctica, but that was denied. When I submitted my request, I knew that I did not have a chance of having it approved. However, the Antarctica assignment did sound exciting. Shortly after being turned down for Antarctica, I applied to change my rating from radarman (RD) to fire controlman (FT). My desire was still to learn the technical aspects of radar, not just the operational uses. In February 1955, I received orders to report to Fire Control School at Anacostia, Virginia, just south of Washington, D.C. ↘

that if we had dropped the load that night, we surely would have been sunk by the enemy battery directed by those B240Z radars.

At about 28,000 yards from the beach, the heavy volume of enemy battery fire finally fell off, and in another minute, it had stopped. At about 35,000 yards from the beach, we secured from GQ battle stations. I remember that Chuck Hall and I were so relieved to be alive that we shook hands vigorously with huge smiles on our faces. I did the same thing all over again with the XO, Bob Dunham, and Steve Champeau. Then, I lit up a well-deserved cigarette. To this day it seems miraculous that we survived the amount of enemy counter fire brought to bear on our ship. We worked as a well-trained and veteran combat team, lived through it, and we all survived. By the grace of God, we were very lucky. That was the last fully-engaged, totally-pitched surface-gunnery battle in U.S. Navy history.

We had been outgunned 5 to 1 in sheer numbers of gun barrels. We had fought the entire action at speeds of more than 30 knots, had inflicted maximum damage on the enemy, and emerged nearly unscathed. The next morning, I was out on the weather decks and looked up to see that part of the AN/SPS-29 radar's bedspring antenna had been shot away. Even so, the 29 radar performed great despite damage from enemy shell fire to its antenna and wave guides. A lot of shrapnel was strewn all over the weather decks.

Somewhere around 2130, we began preparing for that night's next two surface strikes, but none were like the Battle of Brandon Bay. Every surviving crewmember in those ships, especially the USS *Turner Joy* remembers the Battle of Brandon Bay. Just as it's forever etched in my memory. 🍷



*The USS McCaffery (DD/DDR 860) is seen here moored outboard of the USS Jonas Ingram (DD 938) and another Forrest Sherman-class destroyer. The McCaffery was a Gearing-class ship built by Bethlehem Steel Corporation's San Pedro, California, plant and commissioned on 26 July 1945, three weeks before hostilities ceased in World War II. In her 28 years of service, the McCaffery saw action in the Korean War, Vietnam, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and spent time in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. She was decommissioned and stricken on 30 September 1973 and sold for scrapping the following year.*

## Tin Can Centenarians

Howard Baroudi served as a Bosun's Mate on the destroyer USS *Edwards* (DD 619). This destroyer had 13 battle stars from 13 major engagements from Guadalcanal to the Aleutians. He was selected and sent back to Fort Emory, California to train in underwater demolition



with the amphibious group for the invasion of Okinawa.

He was assigned to the USS *McCracken* (APA 198) and went in with the first wave on Brown Beach, Okinawa. He felt he learned a lot in the Navy and is proud to wear his Tin Can Sailor hat every day. He is still active, regularly playing golf, going

to the gym, playing bridge and even recently played basketball with his great-grandchildren.

In recognition of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, Howard was presented a certificate at the Tin Can Sailors' 2023 National Reunion in Baltimore, Maryland by Vice President, Roger Novak at the Farewell Banquet.

## AT THE HELM — continued from page 3

This is familiar to those who meet in Somerset, but something new for the Reunion attendees. There is a three-minute time limit per story and only one story per contestant. The audience votes for the best. There were thirteen entrants, all with interesting stories. Bob Sheetz from the USS *Newman K. Perry* was declared the winner.

Everyone came back together for the final dinner, along with the guest speaker, Parks Stephenson. Parks is the Executive Director of the USS *Kidd* Veterans Museum in Baton Rouge. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and is a deep-ocean explorer, having been on the team that discovered the wrecks of the USS *Johnston* and USS *Samuel B. Roberts*. Parks spoke about his experiences and how he felt compelled to take on the leadership of USS *Kidd* as his "final professional goal."

By 10 p.m. Wednesday night, Francine had come and gone. The flooded street at the hotel's entrance had drained and we still had power. Even though the winds were still gusting, the storm was well on its way to the Mississippi border. The airport re-opened Thursday and airlines resumed operations mid-morning. Those who stayed felt a sense of accomplishment, a bit triumphant, and maybe some defiance. Let it be known that I do not condone sheltering in place when the authorities have an evacuation order in effect. However, we had no such order, and we chose to stay and roll with it. Thank you all.

# NAMESAKE

## Charles Ausburne

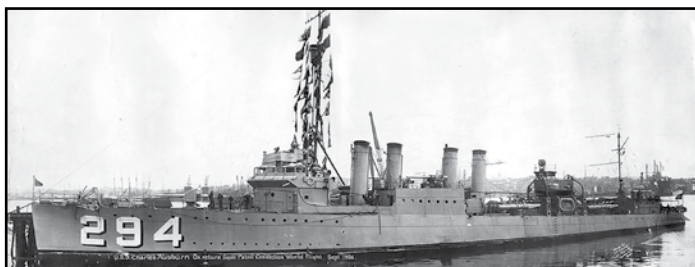
Charles Lawrence Ausburne was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on 26 July 1889. He lived in Iowa and New York City before enlisting in the Navy 25 February 1908. He spelled his last name Ausburne while other family members spelled it Ausburn. This confusion led to the *Clemson*-class destroyer, USS *Charles Ausburn* (DD 294), being spelled as his family had done. When it was learned that he himself signed as Ausburne, the second ship, (DD 590), added the “E” at the end.

He became a Third Class Quartermaster but later changed to Electrician’s Mate, rising to the rank of First Class on 29 April 1917 while assigned to the *Maine*-class battleship USS *Missouri*. Previously he had served as a Second Class Electrician’s Mate on the *Nevada*-class battleship USS *Oklahoma*.

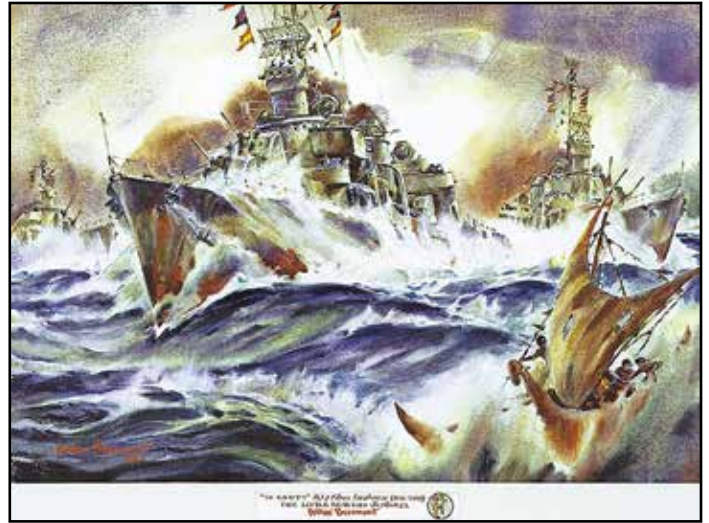
On 4 June 1917, Ausburne was assigned to the Armed Draft Detail at New York City, similar to the Naval Armed Guards of later years where active duty sailors were detailed to army transports ships during wartime. He was sent to the USAT Antilles on 5 June.

On 17 October 1917, the Antilles was torpedoed by a German U-boat. Rather than saving his own life, Ausburne remained at his station on the emergency radio, sending out distress signals and warnings to other ships. He died when the ship sank. He was awarded the Navy Cross (posthumously) for his heroism. The Citation read:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Electrician First Class Charles Laurence Ausburne, United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty while serving on the Army Transport Antilles when that vessel was torpedoed on 17 October 1917. At the emergency wireless stations, Electrician First Class Ausburne sent out distress signals until the vessel went down, thereby losing his life.



USS Charles Ausburn (DD 294) At Boston, Massachusetts, after returning from supporting the Army round-the-World flight, September 1924. Panoramic photograph by J.C. Crosby, 46 Main St., Somerville, Mass. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.



Painting by Arthur Beaumont, 1961, depicting USS Charles Ausburne (DD 570) leading Destroyer Squadron 23 (The Little Beavers) during World War II. Courtesy of the U.S. Navy Art Collection, Washington, D.C. Collection of Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, USN. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

(DD 294) was a *Clemson*-class destroyer, laid down at Bethlehem Shipbuilding, Squantum, Massachusetts on 11 September 1919 and commissioned on 23 March 1920. Subject to the London Naval Treaty of 1930, she was decommissioned on 1 May 1930 and sold for scrapping.

(DD 570) was a *Fletcher*-class ship, laid down at Consolidated Steel Corporation in Orange, Texas on 14 May 1941 and commissioned on 24 November 1942. After U.S. Navy service until decommissioned on 18 April 1946. She served as flagship for Destroyer Squadron 23, the Little Beavers. Commodore Arleigh A. Burke commanding. It was on this ship that the Navy realized the importance of destroyers as offensive weapons and not just screening vessels for larger ships, thanks to Burke’s ingenuity.

In April of 1960, the ship was transferred to West Germany where she served as Z-6 (D 180) until sold for scrap in October 1968. ♪



USS Charles Ausburne (DD 570), off Boston, Massachusetts, 6 March 1943. Photograph from the Bureau of Ships Collection in the U.S. National Archives.

# Strong Christmas Letter

Submitted by Jim Lanza

Dear Strong Family,

Season's greetings from the land of sun and sand. While most of you were getting ready to enjoy the warmth of the yule log, we spent our days under awnings or in air-conditioned spaces. The nights were comfortable, but it was a far cry from a "White Christmas." Nevertheless, we trimmed the traditional tree and roast turkey with all the trimmings reminded us of home.

Since leaving our homeport in October, *Strong* has steamed over 15,000 miles and more than half of that has been logged since we passed through the Suez Canal. For many of our crew, this was the first Red Sea Cruise, and the navigation of the canal will probably be included in many of the sea stories which result.

On 31 October, we arrived at Port Said and dropped anchor well out in the channel which marks the approaches to the northern terminal of the canal. Twisting and veering chain, we secured our stern to the quay so that we were at right angles to the channel in what is known as a "Mediterranean Moor", so-called because it has long been used in that part of the world to conserve scarce dockside space. There we awaited the exit of the northbound convoy, our signal to begin the transit south.

The Suez Canal, a dream of the great mercantile nations for many years, became a reality when the British completed the construction in the 1860s. Its one-hundred-mile length is now completely controlled by the United Arab Republic. Convoys departing simultaneously from Port Said in the north and Port Suez in the south pass each other midway in the Great Bitter Sea. At a maximum speed of nine knots, the transit was completed in about twelve hours.

The *Strong*, leading a twenty-two-ship convoy including two American submarines, the USS *Sirago* (SS 485) and the USS *Piper* (SS 409), arrived at Port Suez on 1 November and met her squadron mate, the USS *Cone* (DD 866). After a brief exchange of news with *Cone's* skipper, CDR Ricke, and our other friends from home, we officially relived *Cone* and accepted the coveted "Red C" plaque, the DesRon 4 traveling trophy awarded to the ship standing Mid-East Force duty.

As a member of Naval Forces, Middle East, *Strong* continued in a role similar to that in which she served in the Sixth Fleet. With a far greater expanse of ocean to cover and fewer forces, it became even more important to maintain a high state of readiness and exercise every opportunity to impress upon our friends our nation's interest in the preservation of their freedoms and our readiness to back up that interest in support of national policy.

Our first stop was at the British Crown Colony of Aden



USS Strong (DD 758). Photo courtesy of Marc Piché.

far down the Red Sea at the southwestern tip of the Saudi Arabian Peninsula. Historically, an important trading center with a fine natural harbor, it was dominated by the Romans, Persians, Turks, and the Imams of Yoman until the British captured the city in 1839 as a retaliatory measure for mistreatment of the crew of a British steamer shipwrecked on the Arabian Coast. Aden, a free port, offers excellent bargains on cameras, watches, typewriters, electronics, and other consumer items. We spent a day and a half in Aden refueling and window shopping in anticipation of a later visit.

Proceeding to Karachi, Pakistan, we were able to conduct anti-submarine exercises almost daily with the *Sirago* and *Piper* as well as providing target services to sharpen their attack procedures. Many of our officers and men exchanged underway visits with theirs for mutual indoctrination and we provided movie, laundry, and disbursing services to prove that a destroyer can be friend to a submarine.

The friendship ended once we arrived at Karachi and commenced "Midlink VI", a Cento exercise with combined forces of the U.S., U.K, Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey. We became part of the hunter-killer forces charged with protecting convoys from submarines. The U.S. and British submarines became our opponents and the age-old battle between destroyers and submarines was resumed. The exercise was quite exhaustive and proved to be a very good test of our ASW capability. Rear Admiral Gay, Commander Carrier Division 18, aboard the USS *Essex* (CV 9) was our senior national commander. Long hours of practice and hard work by all hands enabled *Strong* to quickly take her place with the ships of DesRon 24 and 16.

In a message following the exercise, Admiral Gay said in part: "The performance manifested during Midlink Six has been observed with much satisfaction on my part. As part of the HUK Group, *Strong* was under my direct observance.

*Continued on page 15 — see CHRISTMAS*

The ease with which she worked with an entirely new group of ships is an indication of her high state of ASW readiness and the professional abilities of her captain, her officers, and crew.”

On one occasion while acting as rescue destroyer, *Strong* had just taken station about three-quarters of a mile astern of the *Essex*. Routine flight operations had been going smoothly when suddenly a helicopter attempting to land, crashed into the water ahead of us. Months of training for such an emergency paid off as the crew moved into action to rescue three survivors of the crash from the shark and snake-infested waters. Two of the survivors were very seriously injured and a few minutes’ delay could have cost their lives.

Luckily, we had our Squadron Medical Officer, Dr. Mike Pollane, aboard to administer first aid and bring them out of shock. A night highline transfer and the surgical facilities of the *Essex* assured their eventual recovery. A search by all ships present failed to find the co-pilot and a second passenger who apparently had been unable to escape from the chopper which struck the water with tremendous force and sank immediately.

Admiral Gay sent the following message to *Strong*: “I want to express my sincere appreciation to you for the outstanding rescue work you did last night. Only a destroyer plane guard is suitably equipped to rescue injured men at night. You handled your ship superbly and your crew performed with professional skill. The rapidity of your action saved priceless lives. Thank you and well done.” We have received a Christmas card from the pilot who is recuperating at a hospital in Germany. He expressed his gratitude and said he was convinced that without *Strong’s* fast action, he would not be around to enjoy this holiday season. A second card has since been received from the family of Major Chamberlain, the injured passenger, which expressed gratitude in a similar vein.



USS Essex (CV 9)

The tragic news of our president’s death added a further sobering note to Midlink VI and *Strong* departed Karachi in the state of shocked disbelief which must have characterized the initial reaction of all the free world. Our Cento allies were most considerate and were quick to offer their condolences.

The popularity of our president abroad was brought home to all of us by the emotional and sincere expressions of grief we received both at Karachi and later as we participated in the USN/IIN Civic Action Program.

Southern Iran has staggered under the burden of five successive drought years and the consequent wheat crop failures. It is estimated that in the last six months, over fifty percent of all livestock in this coastal area have died of starvation. In September, the need for medical aid in Southern Iran was recognized and *Strong* was selected to participate in company with Imperial Iranian Navy frigate *Babr* in the joint U.S. Navy/Imperial Iranian Navy Civic Action Project. While still in Charleston, *Strong* embarked LT Michael D. Pollane MC, DesRon 4, Medical Officer and several tons of medical supplies provided by Navy’s Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, World Medical Relief, Inc., and Operation Handclasp. On 23 November, in Karachi, we embarked the second member of our medical team, LCDR Stephen J. Kendre, from Preventive Medicine Unit 7 in Naples.

On 24 November, *Strong* joined the IIS *Babr* at Chah Bahar, Iran, and embarked the remaining members of the medical team, Dr. Sydney Thomas, Assistant Professor of Radiology at the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Bruce Jessup, M.D., a pediatrician formerly on the faculty at Stanford University. Both are currently working with US Aid at Shiraz Medical Center. A conference aboard *Strong* set the tone and general procedure for the project. The four American doctors, their Iranian counterparts, and our corpsmen, N.L. Kucinski, HM1, D.A. Davis, HN, and G.C. Franklin, SN, were organized into three teams employing maximum medical diversity in order to make an initial survey of population centers, determine medical needs and establish clinics to administer aid, and distribute medical supplies. While the doctors and our corpsmen treated over 1,200 grateful patients that day, another *Strong* sailor brought joy to the hearts of several dozen young Iranians. Chief Sonarman Frank Cordesco, was an unequalled success as he passed out dolls to 36 little schoolgirls who clapped spontaneously as each one was handed out.

We departed Cha Bahar on the evening of 25 November and arrived at Jask at first light on 26 November. Because of the shallowness of the water and the absence of a pier, the medical teams were carried ashore from native dhows on the shoulders of porters while supplies were landed by rubber life rafts. Using the newly constructed but unmanned and unequipped hospital building, they set up pediatric, internal

Continued on page 16 — see CHRISTMAS

medicine, surgical and EENT clinics while others visited the nearby villages of Old Jask, Yokda, Yokbuni, and Bahar.

Departing Jask on the evening of 27 November, we arrived at Bandar Abbas, a city of approximately 10,000, on the morning of 28 November. The city, originally a Portuguese trading center, is named in honor of Shah Abbas, a vigorously militant Persian general who drove the Portuguese from the city about 400 years ago. Medical teams were assisted in their work by five local physicians and the use of the limited medical facilities available. Our doctors also visited the isolated, off-shore islands of Larak, Qeshm, and Hormuz, the last being the most memorable because of its 400-year-old Portuguese fort standing red and decayed on the crown of the island and the fine red iron oxide which gives the land a beautiful red hue and is a principal source of a pigment-producing mineral. While in Bandar Abbas, the *Strong's* spirited but inexperienced soccer team combined with *Babr's*, romped and stomped against the local champions until a last-minute outburst turned the tide and put us under.

The doctors were joined in their beneficial work in Bandar Abbas by a group of *Strong* sailors who pitched in and repaired an inoperative x-ray machine and three air conditioners at the local hospital and by another group of volunteers who, with much hard work and technical skill, replaced window screens, repaired electrical wiring, and repainted the local girls' high school (during a school holiday).

On the morning of 1 December, we said goodbye to Iran, and steamed into the Persian Gulf enroute to the island sheikdom of Bahrain. Under treaties of 1818 and 1692, Bahrain enjoys British protection in exchange for certain commercial and diplomatic rights. Because of its importance as a trading center, the island, whose natives are primarily Arab, is sprinkled with nationals from countries throughout the Mid-East and Africa in addition to about



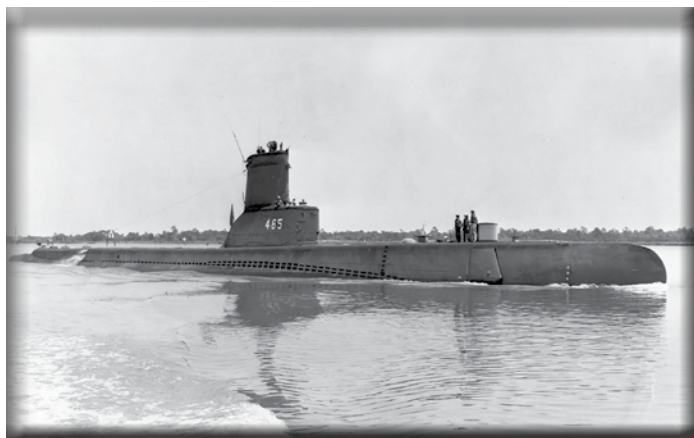
USS Cone (DD 866)

3,500 Westerners. After several weeks of hard work and no liberty while in Iran, *Strong* sailors welcomed this return to civilization. The finals of the ship's softball tournament found Operations Department triumphant of LTjg Bob Leaf's Weapons team. In handing down a defeat to Roger Johnstone of Weapons, Operations pitcher Earl Glover threw a no-hit ball game. *Strong* sailors put the finishing touch on their visit by throwing two ship picnics on consecutive nights for each duty section. The beer was cold and Frank Kessler's spread was delicious, just the thing to make the Persian Gulf a little more like home.

Bingo! The favorite word on board the *Strong* every Saturday night has helped to resolve the boredom on steaming long distances between ports with limited recreational facilities. In addition, a smoker on the fantail was very entertaining with a lot of real musical talent and some very clever comedy skits ribbing all the ship's "characters", including yours truly.

Our two licensed ham radio operations, LTjg Tim Hankins and Joe Newman, RM1, have been up to their black magic lately and many are the families in the States that have been surprised by a phone call from the Arabian Sea. The phone patch is made by contacting a stateside ham operator who has the proper equipment and is willing to make the connections for us. Fortunately, ham operators soon to be a particularly amiable brood, do not mind devoting several hours of their time to a stranger, and we have been able to complete over two dozen patches. Of course, we can make no promises, but if you should be surprised some evening, remember those simple rules. The patch is good for a one-way conversation, while you talk, we listen. When you are through, say "over", so that the operator can switch his transmitter and we can answer. Of course, long sentences are more suitable and allow the ham time to ensure proper operation of his equipment. The average conversation should last about five minutes, don't be surprised if you're next. The calls are collect from the location of the ham station, but the first 8,000 miles are free.

From Bahrain, *Strong* proceeded around the Arabian Peninsula to Djibouti, French Somaliland, on the east coast



USS Sirago (SS 485), underway, circa 1950's. Courtesy of John Hummel, USN (Retired).

Continued on page 17 — see CHRISTMAS



of Africa. Our basketball team was held to a tie by the local athletes then edged out in the overtime period. Good sportsmanship in losing a close one probably did more to cement friendship than a more professional performance, and Ensign Stanford was a little one-sided in his refereeing. Shopping was fairly good, but most of us saved our money for the free port of Aden.

During our four-day stay in Aden, we got around to some serious shopping. The most popular items seemed to be tape recorders, radios, and binoculars.

Arriving in Massawa on 21 December, we anxiously awaited the arrival of Santa Claus. We hosted two children's parties on board and decorated the ship with the traditional friendship lights, plus a colorful display of special Christmas lighting. Two bus loads of *Strong* men made two-day trips to Asmara, about 60 miles southwest of Massawa, 10,000 feet higher in altitude and 60° cooler. They have returned with wild tales of good food, shopping, and near-freezing nights.

We have received many Christmas messages from our operational commanders. While it is not feasible to pass all of them along to you the following are representative. Since any sacrifice we make by the personal inconvenience of being away from home is shared by you, I think it is appropriate that you share these messages.

**From Admiral C.D. Griffin, Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe**

“The Christmas season again unites mankind everywhere in homage to him who we honor as the Prince of Peace. In teaching us the dignity of the individual and our bond as children of a common creator, He gave meaning to the concept of the brotherhood of all men. We of the Navy and Marine Corps in some respects like the Shepherds at Bethlehem, stand our watches to insure a readiness which will preserve the Peace on Earth to men of good will.

To each of you, and to your families, I extend sincere wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Bright New Year filled with a renewed dedication to the cause of freedom and lasting peace.”

**From Admiral H.P. Smith, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet**

“As the celebration of the birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace, draws near, it brings with it once again the message of hope of peace on earth, good will toward men. At this time of spiritual significance, the members of the Navy and Marine Corps Team in the Atlantic can take pride in the valuable contribution they had made toward the preservation of peace. Because the enemies of peace take no holiday many

of you must serve your country on troubled waters and at distant points of the world. For some of you it will mean separation from home and loved ones during this holiday season. It is a tribute to your loyalty and devotion to duty that we have the peace we now enjoy. I wish each of you, the officers and men of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, a very Merry Christmas and a full and prosperous New Year.”

We look forward to the New Year which will see us with the Sixth Fleet and shortly thereafter on our way to our homeport. Until then – keep those letters coming. Mail call can be an awful lonely sound or a joyful occasion. It all depends on you.

Sincerely,

W.O. McDaniel  
Commander, U.S. Navy 🇺🇸

Dear Members of the Tin Can Sailors, Inc.,

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park, I want to extend our appreciation to the Tin Can Sailors, Inc. for their generous donation of \$2,000 in June 2024.

Your donation will be used to purchase historically appropriate tiling, insulation, and materials to complete the renovation of the Memorial Wardroom which is dedicated to the five Sullivan brothers.

Let me give you a brief update on the *USS The Sullivans*. As you are aware, we are laser focused on getting the *USS The Sullivans* to drydock as soon as possible. Our target date is October 2025. We are diligently working on the plan and hope that our efforts to secure funding will be successful. We are anticipating three to four months of work once the ship arrives in drydock.

At this point, we still have two options for drydocks – Erie, PA and Toledo, OH. Our preference is the closer of the two – Erie, PA (100 miles to Erie vs. 300 miles to Toledo); however, there are many details still to work out before a final decision is made.

For more updates, please visit our website at [buffalonaivalpark.org](http://buffalonaivalpark.org) and make sure you sign up for our monthly e-newsletter entitled “Saving Our Ships.”

As always, we appreciate your support in our efforts to preserve this historically important ship.

Fair winds and following seas,

Paul J. Marzello, Sr.  
President and CEO

# THE ANCHOR

By Jack Cowan

Our daily business and personal lives are gifts paid for by those that have gone before us. Were it not for the millions of Americans who went off to war and fought gallantly for our freedom, the “problems” of today would be far worse. The graybeards know how close we came to defeat at the hands of the Japanese and Hitler’s Nazi Germany.

It is always time to pause and reflect on those that gave us the greatest gift of all, America. In this regard, I share with you a story based on material found within the pages of the book, *Brave Ship, Brave Men\**, about a young sailor and his father whose lives were forever changed. Take a moment, go to a quiet place and read it carefully, then bow your head and say thank you.

Excerpt from the log of the USS *Aaron Ward* (DM 34) 3 May 1945. Second Dog Watch:

18-20 {6-8:00PM} Steaming as before, 1822, bogies {unidentified aircraft radar contacts} reported bearing 090 degrees true, distance 27 miles. Sounded general quarters. 1828, all stations manned and ready, condition ABLE set. Bogies closing. 1830, enemy plane making run from starboard, low on the water. Commencing firing. From 1830 until 1921, the ship and formation was under constant air attack. This vessel took at least five direct hits from Japanese suicide planes, at least two of which were carrying bombs, and shot down four others. . . (USS) Little {another destroyer} took two suicide planes amidships and went down at approximately 1900. LSMR 195 took one plane and went down. 1922, dead in the water, weather deck and superstructure deck aft of number one stack complete shambles. . . Our casualties are heavy. . . LSC 83 tied up to our port quarter and commenced fighting our fires. . .

T.L. Wallace, Lt., U.S. Naval Reserve



USS *Aaron Ward* begin life as a *Sumner*-class destroyer, hull number 773, 12 December 1943 during World War II. Destroyers were convoy and battle group escorts, designed to protect bigger ships from air and submarine attacks. The *Aaron Ward* was fitted with mine-laying capabilities, for the coming invasion of Japan, and the anticipated mining of Tokyo Harbor. She was given the designation of DM 34 for this new duty. *Aaron Ward* was commissioned 28 October 1944 and died several months later.

*Aaron Ward* departed Long Beach, California, 9 February 1945, for the vastness of the Pacific and the war with Japan. Making her way west, she joined the invasion fleet near Okinawa. On 3 May 1945, *Aaron Ward* was on duty at Radar Picket Station Number 10, coordinates on the blue Pacific, that put her between the invasion fleet and Japan. She was there to report to the fleet the approach of the kamikaze (Divine Wind) suicide planes, the suicide planes launched from Japan’s southernmost islands by the hundreds, to dive into our ships and kill as many of us as they could, and to sink as many of our ships as quickly as they could. *Aaron Ward*, and her little task group of “small boys” (landing craft and small assault vessels pressed into radar picket duty) were targets of opportunity for the kamikaze pilots. It was here, on Radar Picket Station 10 that she was mortally wounded.

For the officers and men of *Aaron Ward*, the battle of 3 May 1945, lasted just 52 minutes. She took six direct hits from the kamikazes. Forty-two crew men were killed. One of the dead was a 19-year-old sailor from Elgin, Illinois, who died at his battle station.

Seaman Second Class LaVerne Schroeder would never again see the green fields of the Illinois prairie. His mother and his father, Harry, would read together a telegram that began, “I deeply regret to inform you. . .”

On 14 August 1945, Japan surrendered unconditionally, too late for the lad from the heartland of America.

On 11 October 1945 USS *Aaron Ward* was stricken from the Navy’s records as unfit for repair. She was sold for scrap on 1 July 1946.

World War II was over for most, but not for the Schroeder family and certainly not for Harry Schroeder, the young, dead sailor’s father. Mr. Schroeder could not let go. There was a string attaching his heart to the memory of his son. Radar Picket Station 10 had no substance. LaVerne had died fighting a just war, but it was not enough. Mr. Schroeder had to do something for himself, his family, and his son. Something that he could see, feel, and touch.

Mr. Schroeder read of the plans to scrap his son’s ship. . . the ship on which LaVerne had seen his last day of sun and

*Continued on page 19 — see ANCHOR*

felt the softness of a Pacific breeze on his young face, before the kamikaze ended his life. He wrote the Navy asking for a piece of *Aaron Ward* – a gun, a bell, anything – before his son’s last home ended up as a toaster or a washing machine, a tangible piece of the United States Ship *Aaron Ward* (DM-34), for his broken heart. Something to touch. A last link in the father-son chain.

A letter was sent to the Navy, routed for required endorsement. They wrote back offering one of *Aaron Ward*’s anchors. It was heavy, they explained and first the anchor would have to be declared surplus. Was his son’s life surplus? “I want the anchor,” he declared. Mr. Schroeder persisted. The United States Navy sold him the 4,000-pound anchor for ½ cent a pound. He sent off a check for twenty dollars.

On 17 July 1946, the railroad stationmaster called Mr. Schroeder to tell him there was a flatcar with an anchor down on the siding. The freight was \$35.43. Mr. Schroeder went down and settled. His receipt said, “Paid. Thanks. We hope to serve you again.” He made arrangements to have *Aaron Ward*’s anchor taken home and leaned it against an

elm tree on the family farm.

LaVerne Schroeder returned home in 1949 and was buried in the Rock Island Arsenal (IL) National Cemetery, *Aaron Ward*’s anchor is close by. Mr. Schroeder has since left us to be with his son.

“Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy, forget in time that men have died to win them.”

Franklin Roosevelt

God Save America

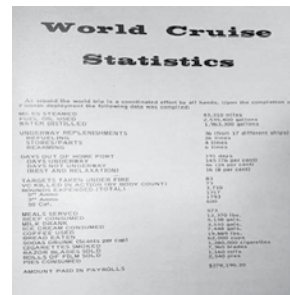
\*Reference: *Brave Ship, Brave Men*, by LCDR Arnold Lott (USNR) deceased. Publisher: United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, MD. ♡

# MAIL CALL



Dear Editor,

I was reading a mail call article in the Spring issue of *The Tin Can Sailor*. On page 40 of that issue, HTCM Richard L’Abbe submitted an article referring to one written in the Winter 2024 edition by Edmund Houlihan on page 42/43 *Experiences of a Destroyer Veteran*.



In response to his recollection of *USS Bache* (DD 470) being part of the Task Force, he is correct. My father, YN1 Victor J. Totoris, sailed aboard *Bache* on his final cruise before retiring upon her return in April 1966. *Bache* and *USS Harold J. Ellison* (DD 864)

circumnavigated the globe during this deployment. I recently had my brother send me Dad’s cruise book from that time and copied as much as I could. I am submitting some attachments and statistics relating to the 65/66 deployment.



Sincerely,

ENCM (SW) Tom Totoris  
USN Ret. 71/97



Photo of *USS Aaron Ward* (DM 34) as she lies at anchor at advance base Kerama Retto, 4 May 1945, the day after her fierce battle with Kamikaze aircraft from mainland Japan. After temporary repairs, *Aaron Ward* began an incredible voyage of 12,000 miles to the Navy yard in New York City where she was surveyed, decommissioned and scrapped. Body bags can be seen lying on main deck by aft 5”3/8 dual gun turret.

# Yes. . . She's a Fletcher

By Hugh Doyle

But wait! You're a *Fletcher* sailor – or you fancy yourself a full-fledged *Fletcher* expert and you're asking yourself, “. . .but where is the after torpedo mount, and where is Mount 53?”

Ahh. . . settle back with a cup or glass of your favorite! This is a great story, and it is illustrated by the remarkable 3-foot-long model of USS *Halford* (DD 480) that is proudly displayed in the Tin Can Sailor Library/Museum in Somerset, Massachusetts.

It all began nearly 85 years ago when the Navy General Board approved a proposal by the Bureau of Construction and Repair (C&R) to launch and recover scouting and observation floatplanes from destroyers. After all, our Navy had been operating those versatile seaplanes from battleships and cruisers for many years with great success. Why not destroyers?



So, in early 1940, USS *Noa* (DD 343), an aging *Clemson*-class four piper, was

assigned the experimental task of launching and recovering the Curtiss XSOC-1 Seagull floatplane. To conduct the experiment, USS *Noa* was fitted with just a boom mounted to her mainmast. The boom was used to hoist the seaplane from the ship into the water for takeoff, and then to pluck the aircraft from the sea after landing. USS *Noa* was not equipped with the catapult that was standard then on many battleships and cruisers,



yet the Navy General Board deemed the experiment a success.

As a result of the USS *Noa* experiment, the Secretary of the Navy approved modifying the construction plans of six *Fletcher*-class destroyers, soon to be laid down in three different Navy shipyards (Boston Navy Yard, Charleston Navy Yard, and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard): USS *Hutchins* (DD 746), USS *Pringle* (DD 477), USS *Stanly* (DD 478), USS *Stevens* (DD 479), USS *Halford* (DD 480), and USS *Leutze* (DD 481).

The modification involved the removal of the after torpedo mount, one 40mm gun mount, and the 5"/38 Mount 53; then the installation of a launching catapult on the starboard side, and a recovery boom to port, just aft of the after stack. In addition, a large aviation fuel tank and an engine lube oil tank were installed on the main deck to service the aircraft. The Aviation Detachment consisted of one naval aviator pilot and one enlisted radioman/observer/gunner, plus one enlisted maintenance technician. The aircraft in the experiment was the successor of the XSOC-1, the Vought OS2U “Kingfisher.”



Despite the optimistic expectations of the Navy General Board and the Secretary of the Navy, the program was soon cancelled. Within a year, three of the six modified *Fletchers* were back in the shipyard, having the catapults and booms removed, and the torpedo mount, the 40mm gun mount, and the 5"/38 Mount 53 reinstalled, returned the ships to standard *Fletcher* configuration. One of the six ships, USS *Leutze* (DD 481), had been delayed in the building yard, so she never received the intended modifications. By early 1944, all the experimental tin cans had been converted back to standard *Fletchers*.

Only three of the modified *Fletchers* went into harm's way with their floatplanes installed and operational. USS *Pringle*, while escorting a North Atlantic convoy to Halifax in heavy weather, launched her Kingfisher to prosecute a Nazi submarine contact. The seas were deemed too rough to safely land the seaplane, so the pilot diverted ashore, and landed in Halifax. In the Pacific, USS *Stevens* and USS *Halford* both successfully deployed their Kingfishers in combat against the Japanese during the Marcus Island raid, and the *Halford* also took part in the Wake Island raid.

So, what went wrong? Why was this program so quickly abandoned? The simple – and predictable – answer is that the concept failed miserably in the face of the realities of life at sea aboard a tin can! In anything other than the calmest of seas,  
*Continued on page 21 — see YES*

with the ship rolling (as tin cans do!), timing of the catapult launch was critical; too early or too late meant that the Kingfisher was launched either straight into a swell, or high into the air at too great an angle-of-attack to successfully fly. “Pulling the trigger” on the catapult at exactly the right moment was literally a life-or-death decision for the pilot and his radioman/gunner/observer!



On recovery, the ship had to maneuver with full rudder to create a calmer patch of sea on the lee side to port, so that the pilot had a relatively smooth expanse of water to land and taxi on. After successfully landing, the pilot had to taxi quickly alongside the ship, and with the hook on his float, snag a cocoa mat sled being towed alongside by the ship. The ship’s crew then manhandled the Kingfisher directly beneath the pick-up boom projecting to port. With the engine finally shut down, both the pilot and his gunner climbed out onto the fuselage and rigged the lifting harness.

Once hooked up and hoisted, the aircraft would invariably begin to swing with the wind, restrained only by tending lines controlled by line handlers on the ship. This was the “Achilles heel” of the task of retrieving the

floatplane; nearly three tons of swinging dead weight was suspended from the boom, out on the beam of the destroyer. With the narrow-beamed destroyer nearly dead in the water, and at the mercy of the wind, waves, and swells, the Kingfisher was in for a wild, precarious ride on its way back to its perch on the catapult rails.

Your Tin Can Sailors Museum/Library is extraordinarily fortunate to have an extensive collection of personal memoirs, diaries, and journals donated by many of our shipmates. More than thirty years ago, our Tin Can Sailor Librarian, George F. Joseph, Jr., asked our TCS shipmates from those World War II “aviation” *Fletchers* to tell their personal Kingfisher sea stories. Here is a sampling of these first-hand accounts:



Edard Budzeleski, USS *Pringle* (DD 477): “We launched the plane a few times, but it was more of a problem picking it up.”

Frederick Engler, USS *Stanly* (DD 478): “. . . it was an awful mess bringing the plane back onboard. . . When the sea was rough, it was quite an effort to bring the plane back on the ship. Getting off the ship wasn’t a big problem. But it took off just as a big wave hit, wasn’t too good. A tin can is too low in the water.”

Edward L. Sibert, USS *Pringle* (DD 477): “After commissioning, we made four or five successful launches of our OS2U aircraft. The recovery process was more difficult. On the fourth or fifth attempt, the aircraft capsized. Fortunately, the pilot and radioman were recovered unharmed.”

Harold G. Hoagland, USS *Stevens* (DD 479): “I was a plankowner. . . I was seventeen years old. . . an aircraft aboard a tin can was not a good idea. (We had) difficulty retrieving it aboard after its flight. . . we were ready to hoist the Kingfisher aboard and encountered rough seas and ground swells. The ship was rolling and tossing and made it difficult for the hoisting detail to get it aboard. All of a sudden, the plane turned on its side and we lost a crew member of the Kingfisher into the sea. . . he was picked up in less than 15 minutes. It was not long after that Rear Admiral Rowcliff came aboard . . . and ordered the end to our Kingfisher.”

Matthew A. Dymek, USS *Pringle* (DD 477): “. . . it was quite funny to try to bring back the plane on board in the Atlantic due to the fact that when the tin can was bobbing up, the Kingfisher was bobbing down. It was obvious to me that this was a risky operation, particularly in the North Atlantic. . . it took an endless amount of time to get the Kingfisher aboard; at one time, the plane. . . I could not imagine whose brilliant idea this was. . . the fact our ship had to go alongside the Kingfisher. . . made (us) a sitting duck for any submarines.

Robert G. Bonshire, USS *Stanly* (DD 478): “. . . I was a Plank Owner. I remember that we had no difficulty in catapulting the plane, however, we had a tremendous amount of trouble on recovery. The pilot. . . used a lot of profanity once back aboard; I for one could not blame him. Ha ha!”

Richard A. Johnson, USS *Stevens* (DD 479): “It was very exciting when that big catapult was swung out at right angles to the ship and the pilot would have the plane all warmed up and ready for takeoff. The off-watch crew stood as close as possible, watching as the ship rolled and the catapult aimed up, then down several times as we waited for the big moment. The pilot sat waiting anxiously I’m sure, but the catapult crew always did well and sent him off just as he was aimed slightly above center on the upward roll. We cheered when he was safely airborne. . . That Kingfisher looked sort of lonely flying out there when

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we realized that she still had a relatively rough water landing and retrieval ahead. After the plane landed on the water, it taxied along side to the crane. . . control lines were attached to tail and wing. . . As the plane was lifted from the water. . . these lines attempted to dampen the swing caused by the rocking of the ship. As it was difficult to control both lines equally, the plane would rotate and often either the wing or tail would be crunched against the body of the crane and repairs would be required.”

And so ended the noble “aviation destroyer” experiment, much to the relief of the ships’ “hoisting crews”! But it was clear by late 1943 and early 1944 that there was much more of a need for brute firepower from these six experimental *Fletchers*. So, the catapults were removed, and the guns and torpedoes reinstalled. Unfortunately, USS *Pringle* fell victim to a Japanese kamikaze attack on 30 December 1944. She survived, but with the loss of 11 of her crew. *Pringle’s* luck finally ran out, however, on 16 April 1945, while on picket duty during the Okinawa invasion. She was once again hit by a kamikaze aircraft whose 1,000-pound bomb exploded deep down in the ship, breaking her keel and splitting the ship in two. USS *Pringle* quickly sank, with the loss of 60 more of her crew. But 258 battle-hardened sailors survived the sinking of their beloved and gallant tin can.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of those good men. 🐦



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## The USS *Vesole* and the Cuban Crisis

By Jack Roberts 59-62

In about 30 days, chow lines will be a memory. How I made it for four years, I’ll never be able to figure out. Inspections, watches, duty this, duty that. . . all of it is coming to an end for me. My enlistment is about over. Gangway! Make a hole! I’m gettin’ outta here!

It is Sunday afternoon, 21 October 1962. The USS *Vesole* (DD 878) is tied up to a pier in the Charleston Navy Yard and I’m sitting in the mess decks playing a game of four-handed hearts with some buddies. Without warning, my partner explodes from his seat. He raises his fist and bangs the “bitch” down on the table. We did it! We could barely contain ourselves. We finally beat these turkeys.

Suddenly, our game is interrupted by an announcement from the 1MC. . . “Make all preparations for getting underway!” The four of us look at each other in amazement. The *Vesole* is not scheduled to leave port for weeks! Before long, another announcement, this time from the captain, informing us that we will head for Cuba immediately. It seems that a U2 spy plane has taken photographs of operational nuclear ballistic missiles and launchers in Fidel’s backyard. This condition threatens the continental United States. We are stunned and speechless. What the hell is going on now? Finally, the captain concludes his announcement with this chilling advice, “Boys, keep your powder dry.” It felt as if the bottom dropped out of my stomach.

The crew is rounded up and called back to the ship. Liberty is cancelled and leaves are postponed. I suppose discharges are postponed, too! Everyone hustles in a frenzied scramble to prepare the ship for sea. In a short time, the special sea detail is set, and we are at sea heading south. We depart from Charleston in such a rush that we are unable to provision the

ship. Consequently, arrangements are being made to pick up stores at Key West.

I wasn’t prepared for the shock of what I saw as we docked in Key West. It was an armed camp! I can’t believe what I am seeing! There are actually manned gun emplacements on some of the beaches! On the pier, a detachment of stone-faced Marines weaves its way through stacks of crates and boxes which are waiting to be loaded onto ships. My discharge papers must be in one of those boxes. This isn’t the same quiet town where I spent six months attending Sonar School. The enormity of it is almost too much to comprehend.

**Washington, D.C.:** President Kennedy charges that the missiles constitute a threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere nations. He demands that the missiles be withdrawn and announces that the U.S. will impose a quarantine on the ships carrying offensive arms to Cuba. Kennedy warns that an aggressive act from Cuba will be regarded as an attack by the Soviet Union and that the U.S. will retaliate with nuclear force.

The provisions are loaded quickly, and, in a short time, we depart Key West to head south again. Looming 90 miles away is the island of Cuba and all of its uncertainties. It doesn’t take long before general quarters is called. After all the battle station drills we had, this one seems to be much more urgent. And it isn’t a drill. The crew doesn’t know it, but we will stay at GQ for much, if not all, of what would be known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

So, the stage is set for the showdown, and the U.S. Navy vessels patrol the sea lanes and shipping routes around Cuba. The *Vesole* assumes her station for the quarantine of Cuba and the inevitable wait is on. Hurry up and wait! Rumor has it

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that the *Vesole* is the first ship on station. It almost seems as if waiting was invented by the Navy to drive us bonkers. And to wait at our GQ stations get us all a bit antsy. Many of our GQ stations are cramped and uncomfortable, and my station in the main battery is no exception.

We've been settled in at our quarantine station for a few days when we received reports of Russian subs in the area. The *Vesole* is alerted, and she increases speed and changes course to intercept a Russian sub, which has been detected nearby. Great! That's all we need now, Red subs! In seconds our emotions run from utter boredom to wide-eyed alertness. The *Vesole* links up with another destroyer and locates the sub which, by now has resurfaced. For hours we tailed this sub, then the hours turned to days. What are we waiting for? When will something happen? It's funny how events unfold when we're not privy to the workings of Navy brass. For some strange reason, the sub lost its importance. Without warning, we abandon the Russian sub and set out on another course. Something new is brewing.

**Washington, D.C.:** Soviet ships carrying missiles to Cuba are ordered not to test the U.S.'s determination and quarantine limits. On October 26th, President Kennedy receives a letter from Soviet Premier Khrushchev that indicates his willingness to remove the missiles from Cuba. Khrushchev also asks Kennedy to promise that the U.S. would not invade Cuba. Kennedy accepts the terms, and on October 28th, Khrushchev orders the missiles withdrawn.

It will take some time to dismantle the missile sites and load the missiles onto Russian freighters for the exodus from Cuba. So, we wait, again. While we wait, we receive word that the freighters will be intercepted by Navy ships and inspected for compliance. There are many ships participating in the quarantine and frankly, the latest scuttlebutt has it that we won't be involved in the inspection. But in minutes, it all changes as new rumors start spreading like wildfire aboard the *Vesole*. The first one has the Navy boarding the freighters to inspect the missiles. That rumor vaporizers, and the next one has the Coast Guard doing the boarding. There is even a rumor that a destroyer has already boarded and inspected a



USS *Vesole* (DD 878) alongside the Soviet freighter *Polzunov*.  
Photo by R. G. Grant.

freighter. By this time, our imaginations are working overtime. Can it be possible that boarding is an option, after all?

Where the freighters will head after leaving Cuba is anybody's guess. The ultimate destination must be Russia, but we'll never know. Just as long as they're not in Cuba, everyone's happy. It isn't long before the *Vesole* has its marching orders and learns that she will be involved in the inspections. Well, it looks like we'll really get a chance to stick out our necks. And this time, we don't have long to wait. The word spreads rapidly when a Russian freighter is sighted. The *Vesole* swings around and positions herself to overtake the freighter from the rear. As we close, the name on the stern of the freighter becomes clearer; it's the USSR *Volgoles*.

I have a bird's eye view of the whole thing. My GQ station in the main battery director is the best seat in the house, since it's the highest manned station on the ship. As we pull alongside the *Volgoles*, I'm surprised to see most of her crew wearing t-shirts and shorts, which isn't that unusual in the Caribbean, but this is November and it's cold and windy. And this sailor from Connecticut is wearing his long johns.

We've been steaming alongside the freighter for about a half-hour with no action from either ship. We're just eyeballing each other waiting for some unknown trigger to start the inspection. The wind starts picking up, so I lower myself through the main battery director hatch to get some shelter. It isn't long before I hear a voice coming from outside the main battery director and I poke my head up through the hatch. On the deck, about fifteen feet from me, is a sailor in dress blues and a peacoat. In one of his hands is a clipboard and, in the other, a megaphone. I've never seen this sailor before. He is not a crewmember of the *Vesole*. How he got on board, I don't know.

Surprisingly, the sailor hails the freighter in Russian with his megaphone, and a dialogue soon starts with the freighter's captain. Why is an enlisted man negotiating such a high stakes game? Can't the Navy find some Fleet admiral to do this job? Then it becomes apparent that the sailor is going to read from a prepared script on the clipboard. In Russian, the sailor dictates the terms of the inspection. It is short and sweet and takes about twenty seconds to say. Ten minutes later, I notice some activity with a few crewmen on the main deck of the freighter. They approach some long canvas-covered objects lashed to the main deck. In all, there are seven of these shrouded shapes. One by one, they are uncovered until all seven missiles are revealed. At about this time, a four-engine Navy patrol plane appears and makes a few low passes over the freighter. This is part of the verification, an aerial photographic record. Eventually, the inspection is completed. Then, as the *Vesole* moves away from the *Volgoles*, the freighter's captain picks up his megaphone and in English says, "Good luck, Americans."

The *Volgoles* was the first freighter that the *Vesole* inspected; the second was the USSR *Polzonov*, and she transported

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five missiles from Cuba. All told, forty-two missiles on eight Russian freighters were inspected and verified by six destroyers and one cruiser. The *Vesole* had the highest count of inspected missiles, twelve in all, and she was one of two destroyers to inspect two freighters.

The inspections were completed, and President Kennedy lifted the quarantine on 20 November 1962. Ironically, this is the exact date when I was originally due to be discharged from the Navy. I couldn't help thinking that we truly have a lot to be thankful for on this Thanksgiving. I was finally discharged on 1 December 1962.

When I arrived home, my family showed me the following clipping from the *New York Daily Mirror*.

*U.S. Lists Red Ships Returning Missiles*

Washington, Nov. 12 (AP) — The Defense Department released a list today of eight Russian ships it said had been observed by the Navy, carrying a total of 42 missiles from Cuba.

**THE BREAKDOWN:**

Komsomol:	8 missiles – inspected by the USS Norfolk
Anosov:	8 missiles – inspected by the USS Barry
Volgoles:	7 missiles – inspected by the USS Vesole
Kurchatov:	6 missiles – inspected by the USS Blandy



USS Vesole, the picture is unofficially titled “Washdown ‘56”. The purpose was to decontaminate the ship after a nuclear attack. Photo courtesy of Art Pratt.

Polzonov:	5 missiles – inspected by the USS Vesole
Bratsk:	2 missiles – inspected by the USS Owens
Dvinogorsk:	4 missiles – inspected by the USS Blandy
Labinsk:	2 missiles – inspected by the USS Leary and the USS Newport News

This account is my recollection of the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis. I've tried to be as accurate as memory allows. I would enjoy hearing memories of other shipmates about this interesting incident. 🙏

## Spotlight on the Historic Fleet

### *Gainard* (DD 706)

#### Naval History and Heritage Command

The USS *Gainard* (DD 706) was laid down on 29 March 1944 at Kearney, N.J., by the Federal Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co.; launched on 17 September 1944; sponsored by Mrs. Joseph A. Gainard, widow of the late Capt. Gainard; and commissioned at New York on 23 November 1944, Cmdr. Francis J. Foley in command.

After shakedown training off Bermuda, *Gainard* departed New York on 1 February 1945 for operations out of San Diego and Pearl Harbor. She departed Pearl Harbor on 12 March and staged at Saipan for the forthcoming invasion of Okinawa, acting as a part of a decoy task force that made feints against the southeastern coast between 1 and 2 April while the landings were effected on the western beaches.

*Gainard* operated as radar picket and fighter director ship throughout the Okinawa Campaign, detecting enemy air raids, providing early and continuous information to friendly forces, and initiating interception with a Combat Air Patrol unit that found her controlling an average of 10

planes from dawn to dusk with the assistance of a fighter director team on board. In 39 days on picket stations she was instrumental in the destruction of at least 28 suicide planes, four of which were shot down by her gunners.

On 27 occasions enemy aerial strikes of 50 or more planes attacked *Gainard* and ships in her immediate vicinity. Seventeen of these attacks were close aboard the destroyer, and four nearby ships were hit by suicide planes. She manned the fighter director unit for initial landings at Iheya Shima, Aguni Shima, and Kume Shima. *Gainard* also rescued the crew of a Navy patrol bomber which had run out of fuel and landed in the sea, and she directed two other damaged patrol planes back to their base. Though several times narrowly missed by determined runs of suicide planes, her skillful gunners and effective maneuvering prevented damage. She remained on station until 1 July 1945 when Okinawa was officially declared secured.

After patrol and convoy escort duty in approaches to Okinawa, she sailed on 21 July 1945 to the Philippines for

*Continued on page 25 — see DD 706*



logistics and upkeep. The destroyer arrived off Honshu, Japan, on 17 September and served as air-sea rescue ship until 21 February 1946 when she sailed for the United States. *Gainard* reached San Pedro, Calif., on 15 March, then steamed via the Panama Canal to Casco Bay, Maine, arriving on 16 April.

Based out of Newport, R.I., her operations over the next 20 years have included nine deployments as an antisubmarine warfare specialist with the 6th Fleet; several cruises to northern Europe for the training of midshipmen; amphibious warfare exercises along the coasts of Virginia and North Carolina; plane guard duty for aircraft carriers off Mayport, Fla.; and combined Second Fleet exercises and antisubmarine tactics along the Atlantic seaboard and in the Caribbean.

As one of 150 warships from six NATO nations, in September 1957 *Gainard* participated in Exercise *Strikeback*, large-scale combined fleet maneuvers that ranged over the North Atlantic to waters adjacent to the British Isles, between Iceland and the Faeroes, and into the Norwegian Sea and portions of the North Sea. This was only one of many operations in which *Gainard* made important contributions to improve the overall combat readiness of forces earmarked for the Allied command in defense of the free world.

*Gainard's* eighth tour with the Sixth Fleet (August 1960-February 1961) was interrupted by six weeks of combat readiness operations with the Middle East forces in the Indian Ocean. During her ninth Mediterranean tour (February-August 1962), she transited the Suez Canal for five days of battle rehearsals with units of the British and Iranian Navies and many days of realistic training in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Other vital tasks included school ship duties for the Fleet Sonar School at Key West, Fla.; participation



USS *Gainard* (DD 706), an Allen M. Sumner-class destroyer.



A bow on aerial view of USS *Shangri-La* (CVA 38) underway off Culebra Island, Puerto Rico, June 13, 1961. Photo from the ship's photo lab by PH1 R.A. Moulder.

in Operation *Mercy* with carriers *Shangri La* (CVA 38) and *Antietam* (CVS 36) in rendering assistance to thousands of flood-stricken victims of Hurricane Carla off the Texas coast during September-October 1961; gunnery schoolship duties for the Fleet at Norfolk; and service as a unit of the Cuban Contingency Task Groups during the Cuban Missile Crisis of November-December 1962.

In May 1963, *Gainard* served as support ship on recovery station during the successful launching of *Faith 7*, the ninth and final Project *Mercury* manned space flight, piloted by Astronaut L. Gordon Cooper. In addition, between 1963 and 1967 *Gainard* has continued schoolship and support services in the Caribbean and along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from Newport to New Orleans.

*Gainard* received the Navy Unit Commendation for her extraordinary heroism in action off Okinawa (20 April-30 June 1945), and one battle star for her World War II service.

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Tin Can Sailors and the Thomas J. Peltin Destroyer Museum Grant Program has received the following generous donations from reunion groups, and organizations since the publication of our last magazine (listed below in chronological order).

SOMERSET DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE	\$100
USS MILLER ASSOC. II (DD 535)	\$100

# Vesole (DDR 878) Operations During Cuban Missile Crisis

By Capt. Richard S. White III  
Commanding Officer USS *Vesole* (DDR 878)

In 1962, a Russian attempt to convert Cuba into a communist fortress brought the world within a hairsbreadth of war. For several days in October peace hung in the balance as the United States and Russia each readied its armed forces for action. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the U.S. bluntly demanded that Russia remove its ballistic missiles and destroy its missile sites on Cuban soil. On October 28<sup>th</sup>, Premier Khrushchev broke the tension when he announced that he would comply with the U.S. demand.

The missile crisis actually began on October 4th when a U.S. U-2 reconnaissance plane took photographs which revealed Soviet ballistic missiles in place near San Cristobal, 100 miles west of Havana. On October 15th, the reconnaissance findings were forwarded to Washington. The following day, they were presented to President John F. Kennedy as irrefutable evidence that the Soviet arms buildup in Cuba was an offensive measure rather than a defensive one.

The buildup had been underway, in reality since mid-July. Throughout August more than 30 Russian ships had unloaded 2,000 technicians and instructors, and war materiel, including surface-to-air missiles, missile-armed patrol boats, and Mig-21 fighter planes. But secret U.S. photographic reconnaissance had not yet revealed anything clearly offensive in character. Russia had also denied that it had any intention of transforming Cuba into an offensive base. The equipment, it said, was exclusively for Cuban defense.

On October 14th, when the U-2 reconnaissance plane took the photographs which revealed the offensive missiles in Cuba, *Vesole* was in port in Charleston and was scheduled to participate in an exercise the following week. But a tropical storm was approaching the exercise area with the result that getting underway for the exercise was postponed until further notice.

President Kennedy had previously declared that the United States would use whatever means necessary to prevent aggression by Cuba against any part of the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. Congress had endorsed the use of force, if necessary, to prevent any communist aggression based in Cuba.

Fidel Castro had been a thorn in Uncle Sam's side ever since he seized power in 1959. In April 1961, the failed Cuban exile invasion at the Bay of Pigs further heightened tensions. Throughout 1961 and 1962, the U.S. Navy patrolled Cuban waters. In September 1962, in response to the Soviet arms buildup, President Kennedy mobilized 150,000 reservists.



*USS Vesole (DD 878) alongside the Soviet freighter Polzunov as it carries its cargo of ballistic missiles away from Cuba, on 9 November 1962. Photo from "Battle at Sea: 3,000 Years of Naval Warfare" by R G Grant.*

Then on Tuesday, 16 October 1962, the photographs which positively confirmed a Soviet nuclear missile site in Cuba, were reviewed by the President.

Now the President took decisive action. A series of high-level meetings began immediately in the White House. The same group that met that first morning in the Cabinet Room, met almost continuously through the next twelve days and almost daily for some six weeks thereafter. Robert Kennedy, acting in the role of the President's closest advisor, was almost always present. The President, who was trying to carry out as much of his normal schedule as possible, participated whenever possible. Others in the group, which was later to be called the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, included Secretary of State Dean Ruse, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Director of the CIA John McCone, Secretary of the Treasury, Douglas Dillon, President Kennedy's advisor of national security affairs McGeorge Bundy, Presidential Counsel Ted Sorensen, Under Secretary of State George Ball, Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell Taylor, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Edward Martin, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze, Advisor on Russian Affairs Chip Bohlen, who after the first day left to become Ambassador to France and was succeeded by Llewellyn Thompson, and intermittently at various meetings, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson, Special Assistant to the President Ken O'Donnell, and Deputy Director of the United States Information Agency Don Wilson. This was the group that met, talked, argued, and fought together during that crucial

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period of time. From this group came the recommendations from which President Kennedy was ultimately to select his course of action.

By October 20th, firm decisions had been made. U.S. reconnaissance flights over Cuba were stepped up. All U.S. armed forces were put on alert. The Strategic Air Command was placed in a state of readiness and all leaves were cancelled. Also, on Saturday, October 20th, *Vesole* was ordered to get underway and head south with further instructions to follow.

On Monday, October 22nd, a grim President announced to the Nation that the Soviet Union was installing in Cuba nuclear missiles with ranges of 1,200 and 2,500 miles. He demanded not only that the flow of offensive armaments cease but that Russia also dismantle its missile sites and withdraw its offensive weapons. He also warned that the launching of a nuclear missile from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere would be regarded as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States. It would be met, he said, with a full retaliatory response against Russia. The President further declared that an arms quarantine, to become effective 24 October, would be imposed on Cuba. All Cuban-bound ships were to be intercepted and, if necessary, forcibly searched for offensive weapons.

Shortly after the President's speech on 22 October, while steaming south, *Vesole* received further instructions. In the event of an air strike against the missile sites in Cuba, *Vesole* would occupy a station about 10 miles off the entrance to Havana harbor and would perform the function of primary air control ship. In the meantime, the ship would proceed to an area within 50 miles of its assigned station and remain ready to proceed to the assigned station and perform the assigned duties. For the next several days, I think our feelings could be best described by that old Navy poetic slogan – When in danger, when in doubt, steam in circle, scream and shout, relieve the watch.

The following day, Tuesday 23 October, an emergency meeting of the 11 member UN Security Council was called to consider a formal U.S. charge that Russia was threatening the peace. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, bluntly dared the Russians to deny the U.S. charges that it had installed offensive weapons in Cuba. On that same day, a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) was hurriedly convened. By a vote of 19 to 0, with Uruguay abstaining, the OAS backed the United States, authorizing the use of armed force to carry out the Cuban quarantine. It was the greatest display of hemispheric solidarity since World War II.

The United States began to beef up troop strength at its naval base at Guantanamo Bay, on the southeastern tip of Cuba. The normal contingent of about 3,300 men was doubled. Some 1,700 dependents were evacuated to the mainland. Elements of the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions



*The USS Vesole (DDR 878) underway.*

patrolled a 7-foot wire fence stretching 24 miles around the base and another 10 miles of seacoast. The U.S. national reserves were activated, and thousands of paratroopers, infantrymen, and tank corpsmen were shifted to Florida for a possible invasion of Cuba. The Department of Defense called up 24 troop carrier squadrons, more than 14,000 men.

On 24 October, the quarantine went into effect. Task Force 136, consisting of the anti-submarine carrier USS *Essex* (CV 9), three heavy cruisers, sixteen destroyers, and six support ships, screened Atlantic approaches to Cuba by disposing ships in an arc extending from Jacksonville, Florida, to beyond San Juan, Puerto Rico. In addition, a picket line of ships based around the nuclear-powered carrier, USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) formed an inner patrol ringing Cuba. Task Force 135, as it was designated, was reinforced by aircraft carrier patrols, and was intended to defend Guantanamo Naval Base. The USS *Independence* (CV 62) was also on call. An international fleet, called Task Force 137, comprised of one U.S. ship and six ships from member-countries of the Organization of American States, was deployed south of Puerto Rico, a relatively secure zone. Sixty-three U.S. ships surrounded Cuba. Some 30,000 sailors and aviators were directly involved in locating ships headed for Cuba. Counting craft preparing for a possible invasion, the number totaled 183.

Meanwhile, Florida was becoming an armed camp. Hundreds of thousands of troops were readied for invasion. The Army's 1st Armored Division moved east from Texas and was soon joined by four other Army divisions. Plans were in place. The 101st Airborne was to take Mariel Bay, defended by a Cuban division led by Che Guevara. Approximately 20,000 Russian troops, four units of 5,000 men each, guarded missile sites.

When the quarantine went into effect on 24 October, twenty-five Russian ships were known to be enroute to Cuba. On the second day, the U.S. destroyer, USS *Gearing* (DD 710) intercepted the Russian tanker *Bucharest*. Since it was unlikely that the *Bucharest* carried any missiles or any of the kinds of armament covered by the quarantine, it was allowed to pass.

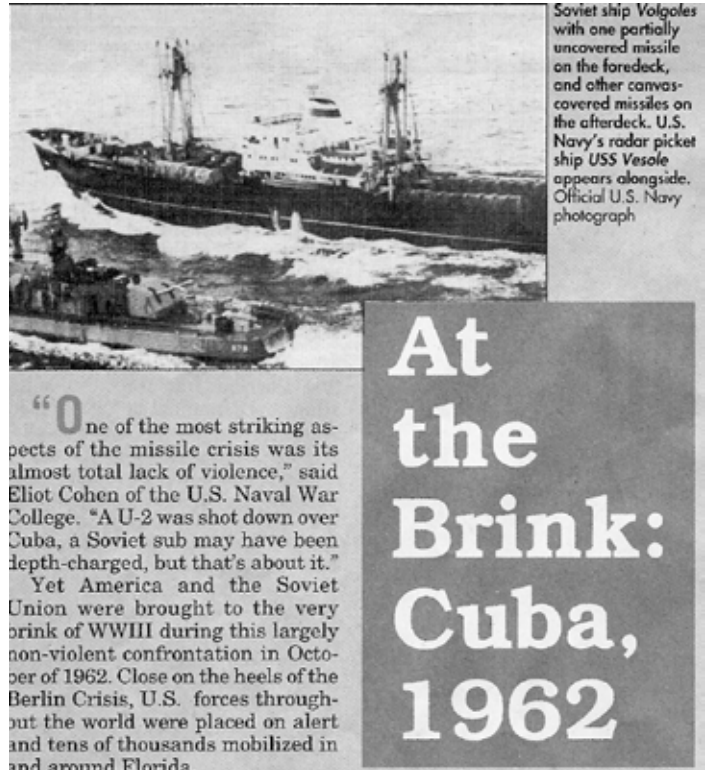
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At 7:00 Friday morning, 26 October, the first vessel was stopped and boarded. She was surely an international ship. It was the *Marucla*, an American-built Liberty ship, Panamanian-owned, registered from Lebanon, and bound for Cuba under a Soviet charter from the Baltic port of Riga. The *Marucla* had been sighted the night before by two destroyers, the USS *John R. Pierce* (DD 753) and – a surprise to President Kennedy – the USS *Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.* (DD 850), the destroyer named after the President’s brother, a Navy pilot who was killed during World War II. The *Marucla* had been carefully and personally selected by President Kennedy to be the first ship stopped and boarded. He was demonstrating to Khrushchev that the U.S. was going to enforce the quarantine and yet, because it was not a Soviet-owned vessel, it did not represent a direct affront to the Soviets, requiring a response from them. It gave them more time, but simultaneously demonstrated that the U.S. meant business.

At 7:24AM, an armed boarding party from both destroyers went alongside the *Marucla* and by 8:00, was aboard and had started the inspection. There were no incidents. The vessel was found to contain no weapons and was allowed to sail on.

By the time the *Marucla* was boarded and inspected, at least a dozen Soviet ships headed for Cuba had halted or changed course to avoid contact with the U.S. Navy. The fact that this inspection had been successfully accomplished, however, did not decrease the tension. The Soviet Union had been adamant in its refusal to recognize the quarantine. At the same time, it was obviously preparing its missiles in Cuba for possible use. The President, in response, ordered a gradual increase in pressure, still attempting to avoid the alternative of direct military action. He increased the number of low-level flights over Cuba from twice a day to once every two hours. Preparations went ahead for night flights, which would take pictures of the missile sites with bright flares that would be dropped across the island. The State Department and the Defense Department were asked to prepare to add petroleum oil and lubricants to the embargo list. President Kennedy ordered the State Department to proceed with preparations for a crash program on civil government in Cuba, to be established after the invasion and occupation of that country. Secretary McNamara reported the conclusion of the military that very heavy casualties should be expected in an invasion.

At 6:00 PM on Friday, 26 October, the first message from the Soviets arrived. A great deal has been written about this message, including the allegation that at the time Khrushchev wrote it he must have been so unstable or emotional that he had become incoherent. There was no question that the letter had been written by him personally. It was very long and emotional, but it was not incoherent, and the emotion was directed at the death, destruction, and anarchy that nuclear war would bring to his people and all mankind. That, he



Soviet ship *Volgodes* with one partially uncovered missile on the foredeck, and other canvas-covered missiles on the afterdeck. U.S. Navy's radar picket ship *USS Vesole* appears alongside. Official U.S. Navy photograph

## At the Brink: Cuba, 1962

“One of the most striking aspects of the missile crisis was its almost total lack of violence,” said Eliot Cohen of the U.S. Naval War College. “A U-2 was shot down over Cuba, a Soviet sub may have been depth-charged, but that’s about it.” Yet America and the Soviet Union were brought to the very brink of WWII during this largely non-violent confrontation in October of 1962. Close on the heels of the Berlin Crisis, U.S. forces throughout the world were placed on alert and tens of thousands mobilized in and around Florida.

said again and again and in many different ways, must be avoided. But then he went on: “If assurances were given that the President of the United States would not participate in an attack on Cuba and the blockade lifted, then the question of the removal or the destruction of the missile sites in Cuba would be an entirely different question.”

This first message was examined and re-examined by the Executive Committee at a meeting held late Friday night. As the hours went on into the morning, it was finally decided that the State Department would come forward with an analysis and some recommendations on how it should be answered, and that the Committee would meet again early Saturday morning 27 October.

When the Executive Committee reconvened Saturday morning, a new, this time very formal, letter had arrived from Khrushchev to President Kennedy. It was obviously no longer Mr. Khrushchev personally who was writing, but the Foreign Office of the Kremlin. This letter was quite different from the letter received just 12 hours before. It said: “We will remove our missiles from Cuba, you will remove yours from Turkey. . . The Soviet Union will pledge not to invade or interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey; the U.S. to make the same pledge regarding Cuba.”

President Kennedy was angry. He obviously did not wish to order the withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey under threat from the Soviet Union. On the other hand, he did not want to involve the U.S. and mankind in a catastrophic war over missile sites in Turkey that were antiquated and useless.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff joined the meeting and

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recommended their solution. It had the attraction of being a very simple next step – an air strike on Monday followed shortly afterward by an invasion. They pointed out to the President that they had always felt the blockade to be far too weak a course and that military steps were the only ones the Soviet Union would understand. They were not at all surprised that nothing had been achieved by limited force, for this was exactly what they had predicted.

In the midst of these deliberations, another message came. Major Rudolf Anderson, Jr., from South Carolina, one of the two Air Force pilots who had carried out the original U-2 reconnaissance that uncovered the presence of missiles in Cuba, had since flown several photo-reconnaissance missions and was flying one that Saturday morning, 27 October. The meeting was interrupted by the report that his plane had been hit by a surface-to-air missile, that it had crashed in Cuba, and that he had been killed.

At this point, it appeared unlikely that a military confrontation could be avoided. Twenty-five thousand Marines were ready to invade. Over 100,000 Army troops in Florida were ready to follow. The carriers *Enterprise* and *Independence* had closed the island. Cruiser captains had already received their orders about where to start firing. But President Kennedy decided to try once more to reach an agreement with Khrushchev. It was decided to ignore the second and respond to the first letter, which did not include the demand that the U.S. remove its missiles from Turkey. The U.S. countered with the suggestion that if Khrushchev would agree to move his offensive weapons from Cuba, under U.N. supervision, the U.S. would remove the quarantine measures and give assurances against an invasion of Cuba.

Late Sunday morning, 28 October, a message was received indicating that Khrushchev had agreed to dismantle and withdraw the missiles. Offensive weapons, he said, would be returned to Russia. The Cuban crisis was essentially over.

The deck logs do not indicate the exact time *Vesole* was informed that the state of readiness could be relaxed at least a little. For the next several days, the ship continued to patrol between Cuba and Florida. This ship went into Key West to fuel on Sunday 28 October, Wednesday 31 October, Sunday 4 November, and Wednesday 7 November. During this time, the U.S. was negotiating with the Soviet Union about the details of the missile withdrawal and about how the U.S. would determine that all the missiles had been withdrawn. The U.S. initially thought there would be time to organize inspection teams which would go to the missile sites and witness the Russians dismantle the missiles and load them on the ships which would transport them back to Russia. But before this could be done, the Soviet Union announced that the first ships were ready to depart. It was then agreed that a U.S. ship would be allowed to steam close alongside each Russian ship and count the number of missiles, which

were so large that they had to be carried on the main deck. It was also agreed that the Russian crew would uncover at least one of the missile crates so that the U.S. ship would have reasonable assurance that it was the real thing.

When the *Vesole* went into Key West on Wednesday, 7 November, it remained overnight and returned to the patrol area on Thursday 8 November. Sometime that evening it intercepted the Russian ship, *Volgoles*. *Vesole* followed *Volgoles* until first light on 9 November, and then conducted the inspection without incident. Sometime during the evening of 9 November, *Vesole* intercepted the Russian ship *Ivan Polzenov* and commenced the same routine at first light on 10 November. However, before the inspection was completed, a message was received directing *Vesole* to break off, follow the *Ivan Polzenov*, and wait for further instructions. About 10:00 AM, a message was received indicating that authorities in Washington were planning to monitor the inspection and were sending two plane loads of media representatives to witness it. About 2:00 PM, the planes were overhead, and communications had been established with both the planes and the group in Washington.

*Vesole* approached alongside *Polzenov* and commenced the prescribed routine. Almost immediately, the media reps wanted to know how we could be sure that the shapes on the Russian ships were real missiles. The group in Washington then asked *Vesole* if anyone on the ship knew anything about missiles. Commodore Calhoun informed Washington that Captain White had had postgraduate education in a technology related to the research and development of guided missiles and had been the project officer for several guided missile programs in the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance. He made it sound as if White was indeed a world class missile expert. White was then asked if he thought the shapes on the *Polzenov* were real missiles. Attempting to choose his words very carefully, White then explained that in the U.S. Navy there were training shapes for all missiles, which were identical externally to the real ones except that they were painted a different color. It was possible that the Russians had similar training shapes. He also said that it would not be possible with 1000 % certainty to determine if the shapes on the Russian ships were real missiles without having the Russians partially disassemble all of them for a close and complete inspection. However, he added, it did not seem logical that the Russians would have gone to all the trouble to transport dummy missiles to Cuba. It also seemed unlikely that there were facilities in Cuba to fabricate dummy shapes. Also, photographic reconnaissance had confirmed that, whatever they were, they were being removed. This assessment apparently satisfied all parties, and *Polzenov* was allowed to proceed.

*Vesole* continued operating in the Key West area until 22 November and arrived back in Charleston on 23 November.

# Cuban Missile Crisis

By Mitch Culp MM  
M Division  
USS Vesole (DD 878)

Upon completion of Class "A" Machinist Mate School I was assigned duty on the USS *Vesole* (DD 878) in mid-August of 1962 and served until early February of 1964 when I was transferred to the USS *Vogelsang* (DD 862) to finish my final six months of active service.

On Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> I had a 48-hour liberty and anytime I got more than 24-hours of liberty, I was headed up Highway 52 about three and a half hours away to see my family and my future wife.

About 1100 hours there were about 5 or 6 of us standing at the JOOD duty station, hoping for an early liberty. Since sailors never grumble or complain about things, we began to speculate that there must be some young ensign who is duty officer and he is just letting us know that he is in charge.

It is now 1115 hours and nothing is happening. We were tied next to the pier and all of a sudden, a U.S. Navy staff car pulls up next to the officer's prow and three high ranking officers, all admirals with more scrambled eggs on the bill of their hats than you would see in the chow line, and they get out of the car and head directly to the captain's quarters.

They were only up there about 15 minutes; they came down and got in their car and left. Once again, we begin to speculate what was really going on here.

About five minutes later, the phone at JOOD duty station began ringing and the first-class gunner's mate, who by the way, had a loaded .45 strapped to his waist, turned to us and said, "Boys, liberty has been cancelled, report to your work stations for further instructions."

Since I was assigned to "M" Division and my work station was Number 1 engine room, or main control, I changed into my work dungarees.

About this time, the squawk box came alive with these words: "All hands report to their duty stations and prepare to get underway."

Now, I am beginning to really wonder just what the heck is going on.

We had been tied up at the pier for some time, so we were on what we called "cold iron." We were receiving water and electric power from the naval facilities. This means that all our boilers and main engines had to be brought up to proper operating temperature before we could move one inch.

Also, keep in mind that 1/3 of our entire crew was on 72-hour liberty, so this automatically put our division on what is called port and starboard duty, six hours work, six hours off, instead of four hours work, eight hours off.



USS *Vesole* (DD 878). Photo courtesy of Richard Miller BMCS USNR RET.

We were also third in line and next to the pier, so two other destroyers had to be moved before we could start moving at all.

Normally, it takes a little over an hour and a half to go from "cold iron" to "operating temperature." We were at 750 psi at 850 degrees in about one hour.

Tugboats were jockeying us out into the main channel of the Cooper River and we were moving down the Cooper River at 1/3 speed.

Charlie 2 is the last river channel buoy that indicates you are now going into the open water of the Atlantic Ocean. We now accelerated from 2/3 speed to full speed which is about 20-25 knots or somewhere around 30 mph.

I was "water king" at this time and my main responsibilities were to keep adequate amounts of boiler water and drinking water at all times. We had topped off all boiler feed bottoms and all drinking water tanks before leaving the pier in Charleston.

But to be sure how much water I had, I went outside and checked all my tanks. While I was outside of the engine room, I realized that we were heading south in a big hurry.

Since our water processing equipment only worked on sea water, I could now start trying to keep all tanks filled, boiler water first priority, drinking water second priority. This process was called evaporation or distilling sea water.

Because 1/3 of our crew was on 72-hour liberty, we were now on port and starboard duty and I was scheduled to be on duty from 12 noon until 1600 hours and from midnight until 0600. We continued our patrol to the metal run all through the remaining afternoon and did not let up for one minute. So, I began to set up my distilling equipment and started making as much water as possible.

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I was water king for over six months, and we never had to go on water hours. However, there were strict rules that were followed for the taking of showers. Get in, wet down, turn water off, soap down, turn water back on, rinse off, turn water off and get out.

When I came off duty at 0600, I walked out on deck and in a 360 panorama, I saw nothing but U.S. Navy ships. My first thought was, “I didn’t know that the Navy had that many ships.” But we were definitely in the Caribbean Ocean.

The captain left in the motor whaleboat and within an hour we were ordered to assume picket duty. Picket duty for engineering is about as eventful as watching weeds wilt on a hot summer day. It is Sunday, October 14th, and we still didn’t know exactly what was actually going on. So, this was what our assignment was to be for the remaining time that we would be there.

Because of the extreme heat in the engine rooms and boiler rooms, many of us snipes would gather on the fantail where there was usually a good cool breeze. We sat around and speculated as to what was really happening. We began to come to the conclusion that this seemed to be more than just training exercises.

On Monday, October 15th, as we snipes had gathered for our cooling off time, we were near the depth charge rack. A couple of gunner mates came and began to remove a small plate on the side of each depth charge and activated the detonator on all the depth charges. Needless to say, this was not unnoticed by us snipes. This is getting more serious as each day passed.

Sonar was picking up signals of the possibility of it being a submarine. Scuttlebutt had it that it turned out to be whale.

On the evening of Tuesday, October 16th, the squawk box came alive with an announcement from the White House explaining exactly what was going on and where we



USS Vogelgesang (DD 862), New York, July 1962. Photo courtesy of Marc Piché.

were. This is not some training exercise. This is the real deal. Now, back to the exciting routine of picket duty. Interestingly, we had cruise control on our engines. This was a small turbine that could move the ship at a steady but slower speed. This helped conserve fuel and water, but nothing much ever happens to keep you busy.

So, hour after hour, we were moving at about 10 knots and the highlight of the hour was you got to take some readings, which took all of five minutes.

About a week after we left Charleston, we pulled into Key West, Florida and picked up the other 1/3 of our crew. This was a big help in our scheduling routine.

On October 22nd, we intercepted our first Russian freighter for inspection of missiles.

This was our routine for the next thirty days. On November 22nd, we were released from all assignments and were now headed back to Charleston. By the way, this just happened to be Thanksgiving Day. It was one of the most memorable days of my life.

It has been over 60 years since this event occurred and I was only 19-years-old at the time, full of aspirations and expectations for a promising future. It wasn’t until I got to see the documentary that was put out by the Kennedy Foundation titled, *13 Days in October*, that I fully understood the magnitude of the possibility of what could have happened. Thankfully, cooler heads prevailed, and we avoided the potential of World War III.

When I see men and women who have suffered the emotional as well as the physical damage of all that has occurred in the Middle East as well as in Vietnam, my little event was a walk in the park in comparison.

Nevertheless, I am proud to be a veteran and anytime I see a veteran, regardless of when they served, I give them a grateful thank you for their service. I know how it feels to have someone thank me for my service.

I hope this article is not too detailed with the everyday life of anyone who has served in the military regardless of what branch. Military personnel are trained to carry out their duties regardless of the danger or the mundane routine.

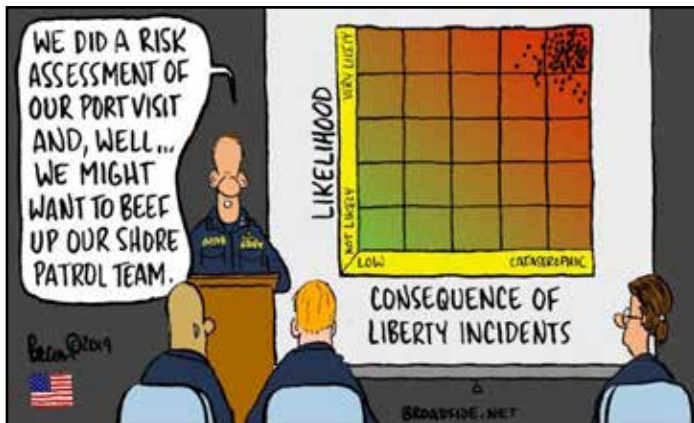
We don’t know what the future holds, but we can know who holds the future and that is a very important truth to have embedded in our lives.

Psalm 17:5 Uphold my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. 🙏

## MAGAZINE CHANGES

From the Summer issue:

Page 31 of the Summer 2024 issue, we listed the USS St. Louis as DD 20. It should have been C 20/CA 18.



Cartoon by Jeff Bacon

### How to contact the Tin Can Sailors Office

Our office hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Phone: (508) 677-0515

Fax: (508) 676-9740

E-Mail: [tcs@destroyers.org](mailto:tcs@destroyers.org)

Website: [www.destroyers.org](http://www.destroyers.org)

## MOVING? Attention Snowbirds

Our database allows us to maintain two addresses for each member. Those of you who reside in another location during the winter months please fill out the second address and include the dates that you will reside at each location. Attach the address label in the space below and we'll make sure you don't miss any issues.

Attach your address label from the current issue here

NEW ADDRESS:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

SECOND ADDRESS:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Tin Can Sailors, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 100  
 Somerset, MA 02726-0100

## The Tin Can Sailors Radio Net

### History

In April 1992, a member of Tin Can Sailors wrote an article in the TCS newspaper suggesting that it might be an idea to organize amateur radio operators who were Tin Can Sailors. Bill Plage (W4DQT) in Atlanta, GA responded to the call and contacted some known TCS hams and organized a net. The first session was held August 9, 1992 on its current operating frequency of 14.255 MHz. at 2100Z with Bill as its first Net Control Station (NCS).



### Net Schedule

The primary net meets every Sunday at 2000Z on 14.255 MHz.

There is also a Wednesday morning nets on 7.2450 MHz immediately following the Navy Club Net at 0900 Eastern time.

### Request to Join:

Any inquiries or requests to have a net number assigned can be addressed to Jerry N8YN with a SASE (Business size Number 10 and two units of postage). We would like a little bio info from the applicant such as destroyers served on and when. There are no dues of the radio net. WB4KW will provide the members with a net roster and ships served on in Microsoft Excel via E-Mail upon request

### These requests can be made to:

E-Mail: [WB4KW@aol.com](mailto:WB4KW@aol.com)

Or: Jerry L Huffman, N8YN

2057 Apel Rd.

Franklin Furnace, OH. 45629

E-Mail: [yncs\\_n8yn@yahoo.com](mailto:yncs_n8yn@yahoo.com)

Presently there is only one Net control left WB4KW Glen who runs the 20 & 40 Meter Sessions, and also maintains the Roster.

We have a Net Yeomen: N8YN Jerry E-Mail: [yncs\\_n8yn@yahoo.com](mailto:yncs_n8yn@yahoo.com) Jerry takes care of new member, and SK notifications! Jerry is the Ships office!



# Watching, Pinging, Triumph, and Tragedy

By Bill Kushnir

## Chapter Seven

### Standing watch at sea

There is never a time aboard ship when someone is not standing watch. It is limited to the officer of the deck, petty officer of the deck, and a messenger of the watch while in port. While anchored in a foreign harbor, you can throw in a couple of sentries to prevent uninvited guests from climbing aboard. But while steaming, almost everyone is in a three-section rotation. Except for the first and second dog watches (1600 to 1800 and 1800 to 2000), the watch changes every four hours in port or at sea. Without dog watches, the crew would be stuck in the same rut day after day. Mid-watchers (who are up all night) would live in a state of perpetual exhaustion, while the evening watch would never get to see a movie, a sure way to prompt someone to jump overboard from sheer desperation.

### After steering

The after-steering compartment is adjacent to the rudder. Should the hydraulics system fail, the ship shifts to manual steering. The sailor on duty would stand on the ladder in fair weather with his head protruding from the hatch like whack-a-mole. Thus perched, he can shoot the bull and see the movie in the evening. Sweet duty. But, come high winds and crashing waves, he rode out the storm with the hatch shut tight in what must have felt like a vertical coffin. Not so sweet. In general, the crew's watch assignments are based on their rating, i.e., radarmen, signalmen, radiomen, fire-control technicians, enginemen, etc.



USS Henley (DD 762)



USS Wasp (CV 18), at sea in the western Pacific, 6 August 1945. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

### Come out, come out, wherever you are

It is now time to put my seven months of training to use. A sonarman, also known as a “ping jockey”, is on a perpetual search for submarines, which as any clear-thinking sailor will agree, means we have the most critical role on the ship. If a sailor with a different rating disagrees, he can always write a book of his own!

The sonar shack is located two decks below the mess deck directly above the transducer, a device designed to transmit short bursts of high-pitched acoustical pulses. One-third of my life at sea is devoted to sitting in front of a circular screen, staring at the ever-expanding circle of light accompanying each PING as it echoes through the water. A dial allows me to move a cursor of light in a sweeping motion on either side of the ship, not unlike correctional officers manning the towers, except I'm not looking for inmates trying to break out. Instead, I am looking for subs attempting to break in.

As you might guess, it is a challenge to watch that screen hour after hour with bleary mid-watch eyes that take longer and longer to complete a blink. PING-dittle little little little. PING- dittle, little, little, little. PING - dittle, little, little. One PING after another - hour after hour after hour after hour.

If there is anything out there within a range of, say, 15,000 yards, it will appear on the screen and reflect the sound back to the ship. Whales, porpoises, beds of seaweed, or kelp will send back a mushy or scattered response, which can safely be ignored. On the other hand, an object made of wood or metal produces a solid blip on the screen and a distinct sound in my headphones and over the loudspeaker.

*Continued on page 34 — see WPTT*

Sonar contact!

Every so often, after a few thousand PINGS, and several million dittle littles, there comes the welcome sound of a solid contact! Let's call it a PONG!

Now wide awake, I slew the head of the cursor of light to intersect the blip on the screen and notify the bridge.

"Bridge, sonar. I have a contact bearing zero four zero. Range 10,000 yards."

"Sonar, bridge. Radar reports a surface vessel at that bearing and range."

To the bridge, "Sonar, aye." To myself, "Crap!" or words to that effect.

But every great once in a while, the response is:

"Sonar, bridge. Bearing and range are clear."

The doppler effect

When pinging off a sub, the doppler effect is a vital sound differential to detect. If the sound wave bounces back in the same pitch as when sent, the sub is maintaining the same bearing and range. If the pitch is higher, the sub is heading toward the ship; if it goes down, it is moving away. It's the same as the horn of a train as it rumbles down the track. The edge of the cursor is kept directly on the blip as I continue to report the bearing and range. Oh, oh, down doppler. It's moving away!

In wartime, next would come "General quarters, general quarters! All hands man your battle stations! This is not a drill! This would be followed by clanging bells and scrambling sailors. The ship would go full speed ahead while turning toward the contact! We would soon be hedge-hogging and depth-charging the bejeebers out of the enemy. Whoopee!

Of course, we are not at war, and I am glad about that, but to my increasing frustration, the ship plows steadily along without changing course or speed. The sonar contact drifts ever closer to the baffles, where the turbulence from the screws creates a disturbance in the water. The resulting cavitation begins to mask that precious little blip it took so long to discover in that vast expanse of ocean. Soon, the contact is going, going, going, gone.

"Bridge, sonar. Contact lost in the baffles."  
"Bridge, aye."

That's it? Not even a well done? Thanks a lot, bridge. I guess I can go back to sleep now!

I remind myself that naval officers train to be warriors. Nothing would bring more satisfaction than to make it clear to the submarine captain that we detected his presence and could have taken him out with ease. But you can be sure the officer conning the ship has standing orders from the captain: report submarine contacts, but never, ever create an international incident, even if it would please Bill Kushnir, whose sobs can be heard through the wooden door of the sonar shack.



USS Hobson (DD 464), Charleston Navy Yard in 1945. Official U.S. Navy Photograph.

Take heart, dear reader, we will be testing *Henley's* Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) skills in a future chapter. But, for now, it's back to business as usual.

### Getting Antsy

The excitement of leaving Norfolk fades with each setting sun, replaced with the monotony of the ship's routine. Except for the changing weather, each day is like the one before as the formation rocks along on its journey east. Scuttlebutt tells us our first liberty call is Gaeta, Italy, a port to which most of the crew has never been. Like kids in the back seat on an extended family trip, we feel like asking, "Daddy, are we there yet?" The crew may be in a hurry, but the Navy is not. I guess they figure we didn't come all this way so that sailors can go ashore to let off pent-up steam.

Some of the time, we practice anti-aircraft gunnery, shooting at a target towed by a slow and low-flying airplane. Also, we see how close we can come to hitting a skid towed by a ship. Plane or ship, coming close is the key. There is hell to pay if we hit the target!

Then there is plane guard duty. Although it rarely happens, crewmembers on aircraft carriers are subject to being blown off the deck in heavy weather. Of course, pilots always risk winding up in the water.

To facilitate rescue, destroyers keep station off the port and starboard quarters during the launch and recovery of aircraft. If for excitement you are counting on being involved in a rescue, you can't forget about it, at least most of the time.

There was a notable exception in 1958 during a cruise in the North Atlantic in company with the USS *Wasp* (CV 18). According to accounts by Richard Douglas SK3 and Ensign Mike McLaughlin, the officer in charge of the motor whaleboat, a Grumman S-2 sub tracker rolled off the deck in heavy weather. The fliers were spotted after an all-night search, triggering the motor whaleboat to be quickly manned and lowered away. Happily, all four crew members

*Continued on page 35 — see WPTT*

were pulled from the water, cold, wet, and thankful to be alive, but it was not the end of their ordeal. While hooking on to the forward falls, the sailor with the bow hook was cold-cocked by the wooden chock, nearly sucking the MWB under the port bilge keel.

*"I didn't know enough to be scared until we pulled away from the ship. But I learned fast. We were rewarded with shots of bourbon (orally!)" Ensign McLaughlin*

The *Henley* had been on plane guard duty for the *Wasp* many times before, all without incident, but when things go wrong, the crew is trained and ready to get the job done!

Because of its size, an aircraft carrier will easily survive a collision with another ship; smaller vessels are not so fortunate. Tragically, on 26 April 1952, while conducting night flying operations enroute to Gibraltar, the *Wasp* collided with the destroyer minesweeper, USS *Hobson* (DD 464), which had attempted to turn ahead of the carrier.

Tragically, she broke in two and quickly sunk, causing the most significant loss of life on a U.S. Navy ship since World War II.

Though it seldom happens, an incident like this is a grim reminder that life at sea can be hazardous even in peacetime.

### Back to the future

Drills help relieve the monotony of our dreary days at sea, and we have many nautical miles yet to steam before coming to a welcome visit at our first port of call. When we finally "hit the beach," look out, folks, there are whistles to be wet, and like overheated boilers, there is plenty of steam to be let off!

From Bill Kushnir's Book - *Henley: Life on a Destroyer from 1946 to 1973 As Told by the Tin Can Sailors Who Lived It:* 🍷

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## MAIL CALL

Dear Shipmates,

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of the USS *Slater*, I want to thank you for your generous donation of \$2,000.00 to the Slater Restoration Fund and \$100.00 to the Restoration Fund. Our volunteers have continued the work to make USS *Slater* one of the finest historic naval vessels in the nation. That effort was recognized when the U.S. Department of the Interior designated USS *Slater* as a National Historic Landmark.

Our goal is to accurately restore and preserve USS *Slater* in her 1945 configuration. To that end, we have collected, restored, and installed nearly all of the equipment the ship would have carried at that time. From the wardroom to the laundry, the *Slater* boasts many of the most authentically restored compartments to be found anywhere. Visitors to the ship can hear Morse Code in the radio room and then head to the combat information center to watch the air

search radar sweep the skies. Along the way they will see the galley stocked with pots and pans, trays on the mess tables, and even the large stacks of paperwork on the stateroom desks. This level of authenticity is a result of your generosity.

With your support *Slater* has gone from a rusted hulk to a superb example of maritime restoration. This ship looks as though her crew just left for liberty. The wardroom silver is out for the next meal and the helmets and life jackets stand ready at the battle stations. Through careful management, we are a financially stable organization and a proud addition to the Albany Waterfront.

Thank you again for your generous donation to the *Slater*. Our volunteers get a lot of well-deserved credit for what they do, but you and other generous donors like you are the backbone of our organization. With your continued support, we can make the *Slater* a lasting memorial to the Greatest Generation.

Thank you all so much for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Timothy C. Rizzuto  
Executive Director

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Dear Editor,

I was on board the USS *Willard Keith* (DD 775) in January 1952 when the SS *Flying Enterprise* went down after damage from a bad storm. We stayed with her and sent food, etc. to the captain until the ship was lost. I would like to know if any other crew members that were on board the *Keith* at that time are still alive or might I be the last one. If you are out there, please get in touch with me.

M.E. (Casey) Jones  
904 Welsh St.  
Kane, PA 16735  
[EM-casjones@verizon.net](mailto:EM-casjones@verizon.net)

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Dear Terry,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park, thank you and your members for their support. Your generous donation of \$965.00 from the Thomas J. Peltin Destroyer Museum Grant Program will be used exclusively to help repair and maintain USS *The Sullivans*.

Our mission is to honor, educate, inspire, and preserve. To elaborate, we want to honor all veterans and active military; educate the public about the sacrifices made by those that served in our Armed Forces including the families on the

*Continued on page 36 — see MAIL CALL*

home front; to inspire our citizens with a sense of patriotic pride and an appreciation for the rights and freedoms we enjoy as Americans; and, to preserve the military artifacts entrusted to our care.

As we continue to move forward with our plans to preserve USS *The Sullivans*, you can receive monthly updates by subscribing to our free newsletter entitled, "Saving our Ships." To sign up, visit our website at [buffalonaivalpark.org/newsletter](http://buffalonaivalpark.org/newsletter).

We sincerely appreciate all the support the Tin Can Sailors have shown over the years to help preserve the USS *The Sullivans*. It is greatly appreciated by all those that continue to preserve her legacy.

Thank you again for your support.

Fair winds and following seas.

Paul J. Marzello, Sr.  
President/CEO

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Dear Editor,

25 October 1944, Lt. Commander Robert Copeland, commanding officer of the USS *Samuel B. Roberts* (DE 413) keyed up the 1MC. . . "Attention all hands, this is the captain speaking. We're making a torpedo run; the outcome is doubtful, but we will do our duty. All hands – man your battle stations!"

This little destroyer escort had the odds stacked against her, but the crew would not go down without a fight. They fired torpedoes, 40 and 20 MM anti-aircraft guns and over 600 rounds from 5" 38s. The fighting was intense. The Sammy B landed some direct hits on the Japanese heavy cruisers but received devastating return fire. Two hours after the captain headed her toward destiny he had to once again key up the 1MC. . . "This is the captain speaking, all hands. . . abandon ship, abandon ship."

Three life rafts. Over a hundred men treading water, clinging to anything that would float, scared, tired, covered in oil, waiting for rescue, watching for sharks, they waited and waited. Day turned to night. Another day, another night.



Left to right - Bill Hardy, Gary Holley, Adred Lenoir, Larry Prevatte, Leon Brasington. Photo courtesy of Larry Prevatte.

Over 50 hours later. . . rescue.

On 9 November 2021, Clanton Alabama. Lunchtime. I ride with the Patriot Guard, and we had been invited to a 98<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for a tall, lanky country boy named Adred Lenoir. He was 98 years old. He was the last surviving sailor from the Sammy B. The last ten years of his life were spent in the patriotic, loving, caring family of Clint and Gianetta Jones. He needed a stable environment in his later years, and they welcomed him in to become a part of their family. I had the pleasure of sitting next to him at the dining table. His memory was sharp as he recalled those horrific hours in battle and in the waters of the Leyte Gulf.



Fate steps in.

About five months later, Adred Lenoir's watch ended. Only a few months after his passing, a search team using specialized deep-water equipment found the resting place of

his ship, the USS *Samuel B. Roberts* four and a half miles beneath the surface.

She was referred to as the Destroyer Escort that Fought Like a Battleship.

Rest in Peace Petty Officer Lenoir. To you and all your shipmates. . . stand down, we have the watch.

Larry Prevatte GMG3  
USS *Perry* (DD 844) 67-70

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Rosehn,

I speak for myself, as well as the entire USS *Kidd* crew, when I thank you for Tin Can Sailor's continued support of the USS *Kidd* Veterans Museum. I know that you personally have a special place in your heart for *Kidd*, but the Association has always shown their determination to help preserve the only "tin can" remaining in her wartime configuration. You also know that the *Kidd* crew will take that support seriously and use every dime to keep *Kidd* true to her legacy.

Your \$2,000.00 grant will be used specifically to help pay for a new air compressor motor that we will use in continued ship maintenance for years to come. The original (!) motor has been in constant use since it was first installed in 1943, but recently has been showing increasing symptoms of fatigue. We initially put Ingersoll Rand on the case to find original parts to keep the motor going, but that particular direct-drive model is so rare that the parts could not be found. Because of this, we included in the ship's overhaul contract a task line for the shipyard to make accommodation for a new motor, but we have to pay for and provide the motor itself.

Continued on page 42 — see MAIL CALL

# SHIP'S STORE



## Navy Sailor Long Sleeve T-Shirt

Destroyer Veterans printed on left sleeve. Crew neck, 90/10 cotton blend, pre-shrunk. Color: Navy

**Item: C-7TLSN**  
M, L, XL \$26.00  
XXL, XXXL \$28.00



## DesVets T-Shirt

Navy shirt  
100% cotton

**Item: C-7DVN**  
M, L \$14.00  
XXL, XXXL \$16.00



## Navy T-Shirt

100% cotton.

**Item: C-7TDN**  
M, L, XL, XXL &  
XXXL \$16.00



## TCS T-Shirt

"Tin Can Sailors U. S. Navy" along with a silhouette of a destroyer printed in navy on 50/50 Haynes crewneck white T-Shirt. Machine washable.

**White: C-7TW \$16.00** M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL  
**Navy: C-7TN \$16.00** S, L, XL, XXL



## Navy Sweatshirt

Navy blue sweatshirt. 50/50 cotton/poly. Wash inside out.

**Item: C-16SN**  
M, L, XL \$30.00  
XXL, XXXL \$32.00



## Navy Logo Blanket

Fleece Blanket Featuring The U.S Navy Logo Soft, Cozy And Super Warm 50 Inches X 60 Inches Officially Licensed By The United States Navy.

**Item: M-92B \$26.00**



## Defenders of Freedom T-Shirt

100% ring spun cotton. Machine washable. Proudly printed in the U.S.A.

**Item: C-7DF \$22.00**  
M, L



## U. S. Navy Logo T-Shirt

60% Cotton 40% Polyester. Officially licensed by United States Navy. Runs Small.

**Item: C-7NE \$22.00**  
M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL



## TCS White Golf Shirt without Pocket

**Item: C-NWG \$30.00**  
M, L, XL, XXL



## TCS Web Belt and Buckle

Steel military buckle nickel finish with laser engraved Tin Can Sailors destroyer 2" x 1 6/8" with 54" web belt included. Belt is also available in Khaki.

**Item: M-61 \$20.00** Black  
**Item: M-61k \$20.00** Khaki  
**Item: M-61B \$20.00** Navy

You can order online at [www.destroyers.org](http://www.destroyers.org)



## Navy Sailor Sport Shirt

Tin Can Sailors and American Flag are embroidered on left sleeve. Shirt is 100% cotton, resist pilling, fading, wrinkling and shrinking with ease. No pocket. Color: Navy

**Item: C-8NS**  
M, L, XL \$33.00  
XXL, XXXL \$35.00



## Women's V-Neck

V-neck t-shirt with a U.S. Navy anchor logo on the left chest. Made with 100% preshrunk cotton. Specify color: Navy or Pink

**Item: C-7VN (Navy)**  
L, XL \$16.00  
XXL, XXXL \$18.00  
**Item: C-7VP (Pink)**  
XL \$16.00  
XXL, XXXL \$18.00



## TCS Golf Towel

Large White Rally Golf Towel with Grommet and Hook, embroidered with TCS Logo. 100% Cotton, 15" x 17".

**Item: M-GT \$18.00**



## Buckle with Raised Destroyer Silhouette

Choice of gold or silver finish buckle with a raised Fletcher Class destroyer silhouette on the front. Approximate size: 3" x 1 7/8". Belt is not included but is sold separately. **Item: M-62 (Silver)** **Item: M-63 (Gold)** \$20.00

**(PLEASE NOTE: BELT NOT INCLUDED, BUT SOLD SEPARATELY)**  
**Black Belt Item: M-6D \$9.00** **Khaki Belt Item: M-6E \$9.00** **Navy Belt Item: M-6F \$9.00**

**Navy Blue Profile Caps**

TCS Charles F. Adams profile

**Item: C-CD \$25.00**

TCS Fletcher profile

**Item: C-CE \$25.00**

TCS WWII Gearing profile

**Item: C-CG \$25.00**

TCS Forrest Sherman profile

**Item: C-CF \$25.00**



**Tan Profile Ball Caps!**

Profile Ball Cap has "Tin Can Sailors" lettered in navy blue with the ship's profile in gray with black accents.

TCS Sumner FRAM II  
**Item: C-CHT \$25.00**

TCS 5-Gun Fletcher  
**Item: C-CET \$25.00**

TCS WWII Gearing  
**Item: C-CGT \$25.00**

TCS Gearing FRAM I  
**Item: C-CAT \$25.00**

TCS Arleigh Burke  
**Item: C-ABT \$25.00**



**"Freedom is Not Free" Ballcap**

**Item: C-FRE \$18.00**



**TCS Western Style Buckle**

Antique silver buckle made of cast zinc. Military style clasp on the back. Built to use with a 1 1/2" wide leather belt (not included). Approximate size: 2 1/4" x 3"

**Item: M-B60 \$28.00**



**Navy Blue with Gold Ball Cap**

**Item: C-LPC \$18.00**



**Navy Blue Ball Caps!**

Navy blue ball cap with Tin Can Sailors lettering embroidered in gold. Adjustable for size. Made in the USA

TCS Gearing FRAM I profile  
**Item: C-CA \$25.00**

TCS Spruance profile  
**Item: C-CS \$25.00**

TCS Sumner FRAM II profile  
**Item: C-CH \$25.00**

TCS Arleigh Burke profile  
**Item: C-AB \$25.00**



**White Profile Ball Caps**

Profile Ball Cap has "Tin Can Sailors" lettered in black with profile in gray with black stitching accents.

TCS 5-Gun Fletcher C-CEW  
TCS Sumner FRAM II C-CHW  
TCS Gearing FRAM I C-CAW  
TCS WWII Gearing C-CGW  
**\$25.00**



**U.S. Navy Veteran White Ball Cap**  
Made in the USA  
**Item: C-USNV \$18.00**



**Navy Veteran Ball Cap**  
Color: Olive  
**Item: C-LPCNV \$18.00**



**U.S. Navy Crest Navy Blue Ball Cap**  
**Item: C-LPNC \$18.00**



**Vietnam Veteran Cap Olive**

Washed out olive green cap made of 100% soft brushed cotton with embroidered text. Adjustable hook and loop back closure.

**Item: C-VNO \$18.00**



**U.S. Navy White Ball Cap**

100% cotton.  
**Item: C-LPCW \$18.00**



**U.S. Navy Logo Cap**

U.S. Navy logo embroidered on a navy blue 100% cotton cap with raised Navy embroidered text. Adjustable hook and loop closure on the back.

**Item: C-CN \$18.00**



**Vietnam Veteran**

Washed out khaki cap made of 100% soft brushed cotton with embroidered text. Adjustable hook and loop back closure.

**Item: C-VNK \$18.00**



**U. S. Flag and Anchor Navy Blue Velcro closure in the back.**

**Item: C-USNF \$18.00**



**My Grandpa is a Tin Can Sailor T-Shirt**

"My Grandpa is a Tin Can Sailor" printed on the front of a 50/50 cotton/polyester blend. Machine washable. Specify color: Blue or Pink  
**Item: C-9TC \$10.50**  
XS (2-4), S (6-8)  
M (10-12) L (14-16)



**My Great Grandpa is a Tin Can Sailor**

"My Great Grandpa is a Tin Can Sailor" . Specify color: Blue or Pink  
**Item: C-9TG \$10.50**  
XS (2-4), S (6-8),  
M (10-12), L (14-16)



**My Grandpa Is A Tin Can Sailor**

**Item: C-9TCY Reg. \$10.50**  
XS (2-4), S (6-8) M (10-12)  
L (14-16) Yellow  
**Sale \$8.00**

**Caps without ship profiles**

TCS Plank Owner  
**Item: C-PO \$15.00**

TCS Vietnam Veteran  
**Item: C-CV \$18.00**

TCS WWII Veteran  
**Item: C-CW \$15.00**

TCS Navy Blue Ball Cap  
**Item: C-1 \$18.00**

TCS White Ball Cap  
**Item: C-1W \$18.00**



**First Class Insignia Pin**  
Metal, approx. 1 1/8" x 3/4"  
Item: J-358 \$9.00



**Second Class Insignia Pin**  
Metal, approx. 1" x 3/4"  
Item: J-359 \$9.00



**Third Class Insignia Pin**  
Metal, approx. 7/8" x 3/4"  
Item: J-360 \$9.00



**Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club Pin**  
Metal pin with "Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club" on face. Clutch fastener back. Approx. 1" diameter.  
Item: J-344 \$6.00



**The Sea Is Ours Pin**  
1 3/8" die struc soft-enamel pin  
Item: J-351 \$8.00



**America Guardian Angel Pin**  
7/8"  
Item: J-371 \$6.00



**Support Our Troops Pin**  
1 1/8"  
Item: J-370 6.00



**Shellback Pin**  
1" die struck iron soft enamel pin with a 3D mold.  
Item: J-350 \$8.00



**U.S. Navy Pin**  
7/8"  
Item: J-367 \$7.00



**U.S. Navy Insignia Pin**  
3/4"  
Item: J-372 \$6.00



**Department of the U.S. Navy Pin**  
Metal, approx. 5/8" in diameter  
Item: J-356 \$8.00



**Replica of U.S. Navy Honorable Discharge**  
Replica 5/8 Inch diameter die struck soft enamel pin.  
Item: J-352 \$7.00



**American Flag Pin**  
Approx. 3/4" x 3/4"  
Item: J-363 \$5.00



**U.S. & Navy Flag Pin**  
Metal, approx. 1" x 3/4"  
Item: J-357 \$5.00



**White Sailor Hat Pin**  
7/8-inch die struck pin. Made in USA.  
Item: J-346 \$5.00



**U.S. Naval Reserve Honorable Discharge Pin**  
9/16"  
Item: J-369 \$6.00



**Garden Flag**  
U.S. Navy Garden Flag. 12"w x 18"h. Double sided, 3 layer, top sleeve only. (Flag stand not included)  
Item: M-109 \$18.00



**DesVets Mug**  
Enjoy your cuppa joe in this new wrap around 11 oz Coffee Mug.  
Item: M-80 \$12.00  
Set of 4 Mugs \$42.00



**DesVets Pin**  
Round color metal pin with DesVets logo and clutch fastener back. Approximate size: 1" diameter  
Item: J-361 \$6.00



**Tin Can Sailors Shot Glass**  
Clear 1.75 oz. shot glass with Salty the sailor logo on the front.  
Item: M-91C \$8.00



**Navy Proud Pin**  
Clutch fastener back. Approx. 1" diameter.  
Item: J-364 \$8.00



**"Sailor in Training" Onesie**  
Newborn, 6 Months, 12 Months, 18 Months & 24 Months  
Item: C-9W \$13.00



**Child's T-Shirt**  
Soft 100% combed ring spun cotton crewneck aqua T-Shirt with Sail-or in Training in white lettering on the front.  
Item: C-9TS  
XS-2T, S-3T, M-4T, L-5-6 \$12.00  
Sale \$10.50



**Vietnam Pin**  
Metal pin with "Vietnam" in light bronze raised letters on dark bronze background. Clutch fastener back. Approx. size: 3/8" x 1"  
Item: J-326 \$5.00



**Grandpa Infant Bib**  
"My Grandpa is a Tin Can Sailor" printed on 100% cotton. Size 7" wide.  
Specify color: Pink or Blue  
Item: C-BG \$10.00



**Great Grandpa Infant Bib**  
"My Great Grandpa is a Tin Can Sailor" printed on 100% cotton. Size 7" wide.  
Specify color: Pink or Blue  
Item: C-BGG \$10.00



**Once A Sailor  
Bumper Sticker 4"x6"**  
Item: M-68 \$5.00



**TCS Bumper Sticker**  
5" x 3 3/8"  
Item: M-14 \$4.00



**Don't Tread on Me  
Patch**

Sew on embroidered patch with 13 alternating red and white stripes in the background. On the front, an uncoiled rattlesnake with the motto "Don't Tread on Me" printed in black below it. Approximate size: 1 3/4" x 2 3/4"

**M-41 \$6.00**



**Sew-On U.S. Navy  
Veteran Patch**  
3" x 3"

Item: M-47 \$6.00



**Sew-On Vietnam  
Veteran Patch**  
3" diameter  
Item: M-57 \$6.00



**Cold War Vet  
Sticker**  
4 inch round  
Item: M-69 \$5.00



**Sew-On Vietnam  
Veteran Patch**  
3" x 1 1/2"

Item: M-56 \$6.00



**Sea Dragon Patch**  
Custom made embroidered patch 3 1/2" tall by 2 1/2" wide. Sew on backing. Tin Can Sailors Exclusive.  
Item: M-73 \$6.00



**Brothers Patch**  
Description: custom made embroidered patch 2.8 inches wide by 3 inches tall sew on backing.

Item: M-71 \$7.00



**DesVets Patch**  
3" Round  
Item: M-12 \$6.00



**DesVets Bumper Sticker**  
DesVets lettering printed on a white background. 3/4" x 7 1/2".  
Item: M-13 \$4.00



**TCS Bumper Sticker with Anchors**  
10" x 3". Item: M-79 \$5.00



**Tin Can Sailors Oval  
Magnet**

"Tin Can Sailors, National Association of Destroyer Sailors" printed in navy blue on a white background. Oval shaped. Approximate size: 6" x 4"  
Item: M-117 \$5.00



**DesVets Koozie  
Cooler**  
Navy and Grey with DesVets lettering in white.  
Item: M-99A \$15.00



**All Men are Created Equal Bumper Sticker**  
Made of durable vinyl. 3" x 11 1/2"  
Item: M-39 \$6.00



**American Flag and  
Anchor Patch**  
Item: M-130 \$6.00



**U. S. Flag Patch**  
Sew on embroidered American flag patch. Approximate size: 2" x 3 1/2"  
Item: M-44 \$5.00



**TCS Magnetic  
Ribbon**  
TCS Support Our Troops Magnet 3 1/2 x 8"  
Item: M-15 \$6.00



**Women's Cosmetic Bag**  
Description: Canvas & silver with compass rose. Approx. 8 1/2" x 6 1/4".  
Item: M-87 \$10.00



**Canvas Travel Kit**  
10"w x 5"h x 5"wide  
Item: M-88 \$18.00



**US Navy Patch**  
Approximate size: 3" diameter.  
Item: M-74 \$7.00



**Bracelet with Charm**  
Bracelet plated with imitation rhodium, with cast pewter metal charm. Charm has anchor on one side and I Love My Sailor on the other side.  
Item: J-31 \$15.00



Front



Back

**Black DesVets Challenge Coin**  
1.5" Round Item: M-C56  
Regular \$12.50 Sale \$10.00



Front



Back

**We Own The Seas Challenge Coin**  
1.5" Round Item: M-C54 \$12.50





**TCS Polystyrene License Plate**

Full-color Gearing-class profile printed on a white background.

Item: M-24C \$8.00



**Sew-On TCS Logo Embroidered Patch**

3" tall by 2 1/2" wide.

Item: M-42 \$6.00

5" tall by 4" wide

Item: M-43 \$7.00

10" tall by 7 1/2" wide Item:

M-55 \$16.00



Front



Back

**DesVets Flash Drive**

32GB

Item: M-86 \$12.00



**TCS Metal License Plate**

Full-color Gearing-class profile printed on a white background.

Item: M-24B \$10.00



**DesVets Mask**

Item: M-115

Regular Price \$14.00

Clearance: \$10.00



**TCS Duffle Bag**

Heavy weight, two-tone canvas & leather bag is perfect for traveling or the gym. Features include leather handles/accents, large main compartment, end pocket, and an adjustable & detachable shoulder strap. Tin Can Sailor Logo patch sewn onto side. Approximate size: 19"X 10"

Item: M-89 \$38.00



**TCS License Plate Frame**

White raised letters on black plastic. Approximately 12 1/4" x 6 1/4".

Item: M-3 \$9.00

**Shipping Charges**

\$10.00 or less	\$4.00
\$10.01 - \$20.00	\$6.00
\$20.01 - \$40.00	\$8.00
\$40.01 - \$60.00	\$10.00
\$60.01 - \$80.00	\$12.00
\$80.01 and over	\$14.00

**Exception:**

Patches and Bumper Stickers \$2.00 Each

**Items with shipping included:**

Photo Services

Books (unless noted otherwise)

For additional items please see our web site at [www.destroyers.org](http://www.destroyers.org)

**Tin Can Sailors 2024 Ship's Store Order Form**

Item ID	Quantity	Description	Size	Color	Item Price	Total

To order by phone call (508) 677-0515

To order by Fax: (508) 676-9740 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.



*All prices subject to change without notice.*

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

There will be an additional charge for all orders mailed outside the United States.

Subtotal

Shipping Charges (see above)

Total Amount Due

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Check or Money Order to:

Tin Can Sailors • PO Box 100 • Somerset, MA 02726

# Spotlight on the Active Fleet

## Fleet and Family Support Program Celebrates 45 Years

18 July 2024

From Tim McGough, Fleet and Family Support Program

Commander, Navy Installations Command's (CNIC) Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) celebrated 45 years of service to Sailors and their families at a ceremony held at CNIC headquarters on the Washington Navy Yard, July 16.

Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander, Navy Installations Command, Leslie Gould, director, Fleet and Family Readiness, WK Jones, deputy director, Fleet and Family Support Program, and personnel from CNIC headquarters gathered to mark the day.

The idea for the Navy Family Service Center (FSC) grew out of the Family Awareness Conference held in Norfolk in November 1978. It became evident that a greater effort was needed to meet the needs of the Navy family. A task force was set up to explore how to meet this commitment to families under the leadership of Rear Adm. Richard E. Nicholson. The concept of a centralized family location was developed, which was then quickly implemented with the opening of the Navy's first Family Service Center in July 1979.

A Navy captain, chaplain, seven active-duty personnel, 10 civilian employees and a local ombudsman chairperson staffed the first FSC. They provided 24-hour information and referral services, and assisted with casework follow-up, financial counseling, child welfare liaison, relocation information, special assistance and family enrichment. The center also worked closely with the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, American Red Cross, Ombudsmen, Navy Wives Organizations and commands.

"We set out from the beginning to provide proactive and educational programs that kept Sailors and families healthy and strong," said Dr. Ann O'Keefe in 2019. "People thought it (FSC) would be just another flash in the pan. They said, 'why should I get involved? It will just go away.'"

O'Keefe was the first program director when the first center opened its doors in Norfolk, Va. Unfortunately, Ms. O'Keefe passed away at age of 86 on 18 Aug. 2021 in Gainesville, Va.

Over the next decade, other areas of support programs were added. The staff transformed to a diverse mix of full-time appropriated funds civilian personnel, non-appropriated funds civilians and contract employees.

In 2001, the name changed from Navy Family Service Center to Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) to emphasize that the center was to support the Sailor and the



*A sailor assigned to the USS Russell (DDG 59), hugs his family July 8 following the destroyer's return to Naval Base San Diego after a six-month deployment. Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kevin C. Leitner/Navy.*

family. In 2002, FFSC incorporated a new lighthouse logo and theme line: "Meeting Your Needs, At Home, At Sea." The new logo was designed to give the centers a uniform identity at naval bases around the globe. The lighthouse logo is still a beacon to the doors of centers worldwide.

Today, the Fleet and Family Support Program continues to deliver the best services at the right time in the right place.

"I couldn't be prouder of what the Fleet and Family Support Program has accomplished in the past five years, let alone the last 45 years. Our centers continue to serve our Navy families and are staffed with the finest professionals to help strengthen the resiliency of our Sailors and their families," said Shauna Turner, director, Fleet and Family Support Program.

For more information of the Navy's Fleet and Family Support Program visit: <https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffsp>

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*MAIL CALL — continued from page 36*

The original motor will stay in place as a static historical artifact, the new motor will be installed on the deck above, in the upper handling room of Mount 53.

Thank you again for everything.

Sincerely,

Parks Stephensen  
Executive Director  
USS Kidd Veterans Museum

# Destroyer History Notebook

## The Romanian Navy in World War II

By Terry Miller, USS *George K. MacKenzie* (DD 836)

The main combatants of World War II were of course, Germany, Italy, and Japan on the Axis side and the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States for the Allies. France had a major navy but was overrun early in the opening days of the war and played no part. The Netherlands and Australia also were Allies but with smaller fleets. The Dutch, in fact, were basically out of the war in Europe before the United States entered the conflict. The Royal Australian Navy lost three cruisers and four destroyers during the war and nearly 50 smaller vessels.

Two Axis nations seldom get mentioned. Hungary and Romania were both kingdoms at the time of the start of the war but Hungary's defeat in the first World War left it landlocked and without a navy although interestingly enough, it was a political oddity, called "a kingdom without a monarch ruled by an admiral without a navy." King Károly IV gave up ruling the country in 1922 but without abdicating. Admiral Nicholas Horthy was named regent by the Hungarian Parliament and remained in that office until the German surrender.

Why did Romania join the Axis? In part because the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I had other countries chipping away portions of the nation including a third of its land mass and population. In the hope that a successful Germany would restore what it had lost was a part of the reason but mostly it was because of the country's fear and dislike of its northern neighbor, the Soviet Union and its inability to oppose Italy.

Why does this matter? Romania guarded the entrance to the Danube River which wound through Europe all the way to Germany. War supplies could be brought to the Black Sea by river and control of the mouth of the Danube meant



Regele Ferdinand at sea

control of the eastern Black Sea.

Romania's fleet consisted of two old destroyers, *Mărăști* and *Mărășești*, built in Italy and entering Romanian service in 1920, and two newer destroyers, also built in Italy and commissioned in 1930. They were the *Regele Ferdinand* and the *Regina Maria*. 🐟



War supplies could be brought to the Black Sea by river and control of the mouth of the Danube meant control of the eastern Black Sea. Google Maps.



Italian scout cruiser *Sparviero*, 1917–1920; later *Mărăști*



*Regina Maria* off Sevastopol

# My Boot Camp Days in the 60s

By Joe Edd Jones

It was June of 1961 and it was my very first plane trip, flying to Chicago to attend Navy boot camp. Thank goodness the plane ride was uneventful, but I'll never forget the steep angle taken to bring the plane into O'Hare Airport.

We were met at the airport by a bus that would take us to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. We arrived there very late at night and were hustled into a large room where all orders were turned over and recruit names were called out.

We were then taken over to some receiving barracks where we would spend the rest of the night and given bunks to sleep on with no sheets or pillowcases. It was sometime early in the morning when we finally had lights out but I could hardly sleep with the expectations that lie ahead.

The first reveille I heard in the Navy was a recording booming over the area where our receiving barracks were located. We had little time to get our civilian gear together and were mustered in a separate building where our indoctrination began.

Outside an open window, behind two petty officers who were giving instructions, were marching companies of recruits that were now weeks ahead of us in becoming sailors. One first class petty officer actually growled when he spoke to us indicating many of us would not make it, that we would have to work hard in order to obtain graduation.

We were instructed to put all our civilian gear into a box that would be shipped back to our homes and then the transition began. First things first, a haircut that was the typical buzz cut that took all of a few seconds to shear us like sheep.

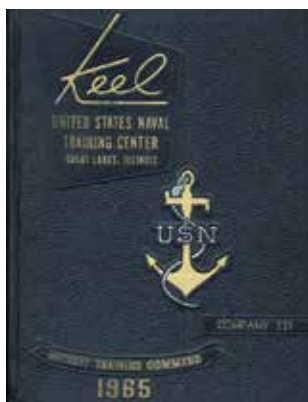
Then, on to clothing distribution where we were measured, and off-the-shelf sizes were issued to us. This clothing was designed to accommodate all of our needs while in the Navy; whites, blues, dress blues, dungarees, shoes, dixie cup hat, an

older World War II beret, and we were given the Blue Jackets Manual where we would learn what it would take to become a sailor. Additionally, a sea bag was given to us that was designed to carry all that we would ever need in the way of clothing from duty station to duty station.

These first few days, we were being herded around like sheep and all you could hear as you lined up for the next event was, "C'mon a\*\*\*\*\* to belly buttons, a\*\*\*\*\* to belly buttons, MOVE IT!"

I fought hard over the first number of weeks in boot camp trying to get over homesickness; a real problem as this was my first time away from home and it was sooooo different.

From the receiving barracks, we marched over to one of the staging camps. I think the first was Camp Moffett. We were lined up by squads and those individuals with prior exposure to military training of any kind were chosen from the ranks to be squad leaders.



Our company was designated Company 231 and we were introduced to our company commander, a career chief signalman. He had a stern look on his face and in no uncertain terms he started laying down the law to us. We would be expected to ensure our barracks were spotless, all beds were to be appropriately made up each day, clothes lockers were to be kept in precise order, we would stand at attention when he entered the barracks room, and we were to pay attention to his every order.

He had one or two other petty officers that were to assist him in our training. One was a red-haired fellow all of us learned to dislike as he was an arrogant, difficult person. We were assigned an eight-pound M-1 Garrand rifle that we were to carry just about everywhere except to the mess hall and classroom training. Drilling always meant hauling around the M-1.

We marched everywhere, always in our boon docks (a form of a work boot) and always leading off with the left foot. Our left foot was to come down with a resounding thud so we would sound as if we would all be in lock step. By the time graduation came about, we all had pretty much acquired the ability to march as one unit.

One of our first duties was to wash all the clothes that had been given to us. We all were given a stencil marker and were required to stencil every piece of clothing we had with the exception of our socks. Then we had a pail given to us to wash and rinse our clothing in, and with the next step being to hang up each piece we had washed using a small strip of

*Continued on page 45 — see 60s*



thread called a clothes stop, used to tie our clothes onto an outdoor clothesline.

One not particularly bright individual washed his whites and blues together creating a pastel blue for his whites. Not good and boy did he get reamed out for that act of stupidity. He was overweight and quickly became a target for continuous harassment throughout boot camp.

We marched, always using a cadence call. The one that sticks with me yet today went as follows:

Widly, Widly, Widely, Wo,  
What da ya say, what da know,  
Lift your head and chin up high,  
231 is passing by. . .  
Sound off, 1,2. . . . Sound off 3,4  
Cadence count 1.2.3.4 . . .3,4

As noted, our company number was 231. Calisthenics and marching drills were the order of the day. Drill, drill, drill, march, march, march. Left face! Right face! About face! Forward march! Your left, your left, your left, right, left! We marched everywhere, to the chow hall, to lecture halls, just everywhere always in cadence.

Different members of the company would be charged with being a road guard each day with the task of running ahead of the company and stopping any cross traffic as we marched through intersections. "Road Guards. . . POST!"

Right shoulder arms! Left shoulder arms! Port arms! Parade rest! I was really into it and except for the tiredness, I was feeling like I really had made the right decision and was headed toward my destiny at last.

Wake up occurred at the sound of a bugle at 0600 hours; not exactly how mom woke me up at home. At the same time, one of the company commanders assisting petty officers would generally switch on the barracks lights, rattle a wooden baton around the inside of a steel garbage can and yell, "Reveille, reveille, drop your \*\*\*\*\* and grab your socks!"

We always attended morning muster and inspection. To ensure we were washing our clothes each night and keeping up with the demand for clean clothing, we stood at parade rest with our white hat turned inside out hanging over the barrel of our M1. Additionally, we were to show the inspecting officer, generally our company commander, that our skivvies shirt was clean by turning the top of the t-shirt inside out with our thumb waiting for inspection.

On one particular occasion, I had just retrieved my dungaree shirt from the clothes line where we had hung our clothing to dry and had stuffed one of the clothes stops in my shirt pocket. Big mistake. When it came to my turn for inspection, the clothes stop was spotted as a bulge in my shirt pocket, unceremoniously retrieved by the inspector and I received a chest full of fist knocking me back into the ranks of sailors behind me accompanied by screams of "Unauthorized gear adrift!!!"

When you were gigged at inspection, as in this particular occurrence, you were required to run a specific number of

laps around the grinder (asphalt area used for marching instruction) holding your M1 rifle high above your head. Very wearying I can assure you, but I never had another mark against me at inspection. Some lessons come the hard way.

I thought my destiny of a naval career had taken a slight detour when it came to the swimming test. I could no more swim than the man in the moon and it became evident the first day in the swim hall.

All of us were instructed to strip naked, run through a disinfecting spray aimed up through our legs. Then we found ourselves in a long singular line leading up to a twenty-foot platform used for leaping into the water. It was a bizarre sight to see about one hundred young men all naked lined up to jump off this platform; not a pretty sight either.

Everyone was instructed to climb up onto the platform when it came to their turn, place their arms across their chest much as you would if having a life jacket on and jumping off the side of ship. Then you would be required to swim around to your left, cross over the Olympic-sized swimming pool, swim up the other side of the pool to the end, then exit by climbing up onto the concrete walkway surrounding the pool.

The Navy really didn't expect you to swim a great distance, especially if you were in the middle of the ocean as they said. The closest land is never more than seven miles away, but then added that would be straight down. Their intent was to have you swim a distance of 50 yards to get yourself away from a sinking ship as that would get you out of the danger area of being sucked down with your ship when it sank.

Instructors were placed up on the platform to ensure everyone leapt off, whether on their own or with a gentle shove. I had dived off four or eight-foot diving boards before this, but never something this high. With trepidation, I climbed the platform, lined up behind the sailors already on the platform, and watched them disappear over the side. Then it was my turn.

"Cross arms, jump!" Down I went and thought I would never surface. I began the struggle to get around the pool as best I could with not much success. So, I headed over to the side of the pool prematurely to get out of drowning.

As I reached up onto the concrete walkway, one of the instructors came over and stepped on my hand indicating in as loud a voice as he could muster and as close as he could get to my face, "There are no sides to that ocean, sailor." He dragged me up out of the pool, threw me down as I sputtered for air, and I had officially failed my swimming test.

This particular instructor had been in World War II, had been wounded on a destroyer, and had lost one lung. He obviously was not going to have pity on some punk kid who couldn't swim a lick.

I was to report back in two days to address my deficiency at which time I would either pass or fail again. If I were to fail, I would be set back a week or two in boot camp and would not be permitted to graduate with my Company 231.

I dreaded going back as I had heard the second swim test was more difficult and I would be required to swim underwater

*Continued on page 46 — see 60s*

for a specified length, surface, dog paddle for 25-50 yards as the instructors turned firefighting hoses on you. While I was dreading this, I was also determined to tough it through as I did not want to be set back.

Two days later, I appeared as ordered and went through the required swim test and was declared to have passed but not without a struggle. Whew!!

We sat through lecture series regarding aspects of the Navy, knot tying, signaling, and basic seamanship. All throughout boot camp, we were given weekly tests to determine our proficiency at grasping what we were being exposed to during our lecture series, but also what we were reading in our Blue Jacket Manuals which usually occurred at night. We were also lectured and shown graphic films regarding the various venereal diseases you could contract if not careful.

The dreaded HIV and herpes virus were not prevalent at that time; we only had to be concerned with gonorrhea and syphilis . . . still nothing I wanted to have anything to do with.

Early on, I studied very hard to acquire the knowledge I needed to be a good sailor. The studying paid off as I was given high marks on just about every weekly test. This ultimately led to me being singled out prior to graduation as having the highest marks for our company on the proficiency tests.

During the weekly tests, my high marks were also catching the attention of our company commander and at morning assembly one day, he approached me. He said for me to hustle over to accept the Regimental Star Flag for the company as we had established ourselves as one of the leading companies in the regiment and had earned this flag.

From that point forward, I would be the standard bearer carrying that flag through graduation. No more M1, YES! That was a very proud moment for me during the weeks of boot camp training.

Almost all of us had to stand some form of roving watch or standing guard over an entry way to the barracks. Of course, all of us had to learn by heart the general orders of sentries and be able to repeat them when requested by one of the leading petty officers in charge of the company.

Most recruits were also given kitchen patrol, KP, where you were either required to assist in the preparation of the meals, clean up the kitchen by working in the scullery or other mundane tasks to learn how to participate in such duties once you were assigned to your first duty station. My duties were somewhat different as I was part of the team creating the first (that I know of anyway) obstacle course at Great Lakes Training Center where all recruits were going to be required to go through and pass.

The obstacle course when completed, consisted primarily of a four-foot-deep water filled trench some 100-200 feet long, 40-50 feet wide with two ropes (similar to lines used to tie up ships to a dock) strung end to end where the recruits were expected to pull themselves by arms and elevated legs across, without falling into the drink.

It took a party of six or seven of us to construct this portion of the obstacle course, as well as construction of a running

path leading up to the trench, a series of logs to scurry over, and I'm certain other items that would challenge the recruit's strength and ability to conquer the obstacles.

Once we had completed the effort, under the watchful eye of a couple of chief petty officers, one of them looked at me and asked, "How deep is this?" I responded that it was about four feet deep and he said, "Show me, jump in there and let me see how deep it is."

I was wearing some summer whites at the time, and I just knew that if I jumped into that trench, the mud stains would likely not come out easily. So, in my best kid of 18 quizzical look, I asked, "You mean in there?" To which this old salty chief petty officer responded, "Yes, damn it, I said jump!"

As I started toward the trench, I got about three feet from it ready to launch myself into the muddy waters and he laughingly called me off, much to my relief and to the amusement of him and his fellow chiefs.

I eventually became a victim of my own design when my company was required to go through the obstacle course, the fellow following me on the rope figured I wasn't going fast enough and pulled my feet off the rope and watched me fall into the water. I did manage to traverse the rope the next trip through muddy whites and all.

Apparently, my voice box and our company commander's voice box were similar in nature, and I found that out by accident one day as I was coming up the stairs in the barracks. I found the whole company was at attention when I rounded the corner into the squad bay area and everyone gave me hell because they thought they had heard our company commander coming up and they had prepared to be at attention when he entered.

One day, I was joking around with a couple of the members of my company, pretending to be the chief and chewing them out for pretend mistakes when I noticed this terrible look come over the face of one of the people on the receiving end of my tirade.

It was then that I realized the company commander had walked up behind me as he, in a very stern voice said, "Jones, are you making fun of me?" The brown spots were a bit difficult to get out of my skivvies that night. As it turned out, he took it in good stride, but I never used my voice to that advantage again.

Toward the end of our boot camp, we all went through firefighting training as that was one of the most feared things that could occur out at sea. Most of us had the opportunity to be at the front of a fire hose backed up by a team of other sailors and were instructed to advance on a purposefully set oil fire.

Additionally, there was a structure similar to a ship's compartment where sailors were instructed to stand on top of the structure and fight a simulated oil fire. In this particular instance, I was a member of just a hand full of recruits who were herded into the compartment, instructed to sit down with our hands over our heads, told not to stand up or look up at any time, then the fire was started in an adjoining compartment.

*Continued on page 47 — see 60s*

It did not take long to realize why we were instructed to sit still and not raise up as the fire in the next compartment swooped into our compartment above our heads and out the open compartment door. It was such a loud roar as it passed over our heads and we were hoping the recruits up on top of the compartment were getting the fire under control in short order.

We were also instructed in how it would feel if we came under tear gas attack as we were all herded into a chamber with gas masks on, pellets of the gas were dropped into the chamber, then we were instructed to take off our masks. No one was let out of the changer until all recruits had taken their masks off. The unlucky ones were the recruits who had been first to take off their masks.

One tactic to survive in a smoke-filled compartment was to grab hold of your buddy's belt loop in front of you, as in a congo line, then be led to safety. The instructors led us into one of the densest smoke-filled compartments imaginable, the smell was terrible, both entry and exit doors were closed for a specified period of time.

Then the lead sailor was led out into the open and you had best not lose the belt loop of the fellow in front of you as you could not see anything and lose your way in that smoke-filled chamber meant you and those behind you would be lost and dangerously groping around until the instructors could locate you.

About midway through our training, all the members of our company were given a one-day pass to go into Chicago with strict instructions to be back on base no later than midnight. Well, weren't we cocky sailors on leave!

Stern warnings were given to all of us to watch out for unscrupulous people who preyed on young sailors. Don't go by yourself anywhere, always have one or two shipmates with you, and do not, repeat, DO NOT get a tattoo. Also, stay away from places that would offer to take your picture to send back home to your mom.

We had to catch the rail that would take us to downtown Chicago and as we headed out, it seemed the whole train had nothing but sailors on it. We got off right in downtown Chicago, the Windy City. Would it ever be the same after we got through with it?

In a small group of my fellow sailors, we took it all in; ate at some restaurant, ended up in a shop that would take your picture and send it back home to your mom! But, none of us as far as I know, let them take advantage of us. After walking the streets of Chicago, all too soon, it was time to catch the train back to the base.

One fellow I will never forget in our company was a friend of mine. His name was Frank from New York. Such an engaging fellow and I really liked him. Once we had all gotten back from our brief liberty, Frank called me over and said he had something to show me. On his right arm about midway up to his elbow was skin reddened with a fouled rope, anchor, and USN emblazoned over it. I couldn't believe it! Frank had gotten himself a tattoo, against orders. Oh my God, Frank

could really get in trouble for that! To this day, I envy Frank and his act of rebellion, and wish I had gotten one then too!

As graduation was nearing, our final series of tests was conducted to determine just where we could fit into the fleet or shore installations of the Navy. I felt I had done fairly well in my audiometer testing and was hoping for training on sonar which would pretty much guarantee me an assignment to a warship.

In preparation for the graduation ceremonies, my company and other companies targeted to graduate that week were assembled on the parade grounds and were required to sing at the top of our lungs the Navy Hymn. Since we didn't do well enough the first, second or third time, we found ourselves well after dark standing on the grinder practicing the hymn until we were judged worthy enough to sing it at graduation.

The day of graduation we were so excited, we had made it! The company was assembled together and conspicuously absent was the man who had negotiated us through the trials and tribulations of our weeks of boot camp, our company commander. We could not understand why he wasn't there to share in our excitement. We heard he may have had domestic issues at home. We all missed him.

Graduation day was a gloriously beautiful September day and we marched onto the parade grounds with a great flair. The band was playing, the flags were flying, and we were so close to being called a United States Navy sailor. Under instructions issued previously when we were trying to loudly sing the Navy Hymn, we had been instructed not to lock our knees as we stood at attention during the graduation ceremonies.

To do so would cut the circulation off to the brain and invariably you would faint. Well, some folks just didn't heed that advice, and on the film taken during our graduation ceremonies, you can see litter carriers carting off sailors who had passed out. Fortunately, I had heard the message and adhered to the advice. After all, I was carrying the Regimental Star Flag and could not, would not, let such a tragedy occur.

When we marched by the review stand, what a feeling. The ground was not all that level, so we found ourselves sort of stumbling along. But, once onto the paved streets going back to the barracks for the final time, we marched with such pride, left feet thumping in close cadence. . . Widly, widly, widely, wo. . . what a great feeling with our company selected as the outstanding company out of all the regiments as we had set a record for the number of awards we had received during our boot camp.

The band led us all the way back to the barracks and the feeling on the gloriously sunny day was like none other I had felt; such pride.

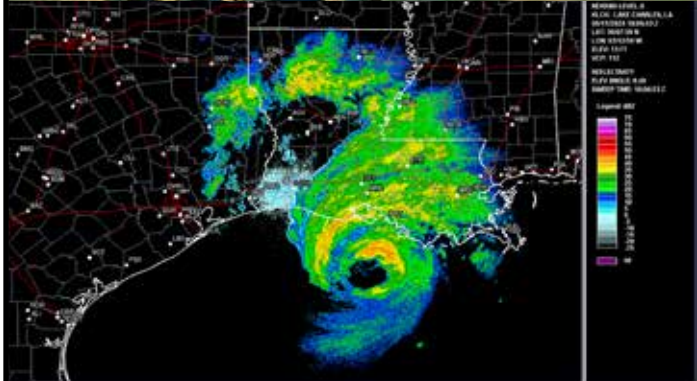
My next great adventure in the Navy was about to begin. Class "A" Fleet Sonar School in Key West, Florida. But for now, it was time to go back home for a short leave. While we may have only been seamen apprentices, we felt like we were now somewhat salty. One particular fellow I won't forget was smoking a cigar as I departed the train in my hometown. He looked every bit the old salt, at 18 years of age! 🍷

# Scenes From Our National Reunion





# 2024 National Reunion



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## MAIL CALL

Dear Editor,

In the Merchant Marines, the day watch has the mate and the helmsman in the area in case a course change is required. Then the helmsman goes from "iron mike" to hand steering. The mate is the lookout, navigator, etc.

The U.S. Navy does it a bit differently. The watch consists of the Officer of the Deck (OOD), the Junior Officer of the Deck (JOOD), the quartermaster, the sound-powered phone operator, two lookouts (one port lookout and one starboard lookout). The watches are usually four hours long and there are three groups of watch standers.

The watches are 0000-0400/1200-1600, 0400-0800/1600-2000, and 0800-1200/2000-2400. The 0000-0400 is called the midwatch, which I preferred as it was usually a quiet time at sea.

But when one is in a combat zone like Vietnam, the watches are 12-hour watches (the 0000-1200, 1200-0000). If

*Continued on page 53 — see MAIL CALL*

# Memories of a True Hero

By Dan Davies

Most of these thoughts about George P. Corrigan, Jr. and his World War II service come from my memories of a very long conversation that we had sometime in the summer of 1954. The occasion was a long drive that George and I took one afternoon when the rest of the family, i.e., Joan, Bob, and Loretto (Mom and Dad) and the children were elsewhere for some unremembered reason. At the time, I had just finished my junior year in high school, and I was definitely planning on enlisting in the Navy the following year. George gave me advice on what type of rating I should apply for in the Navy.

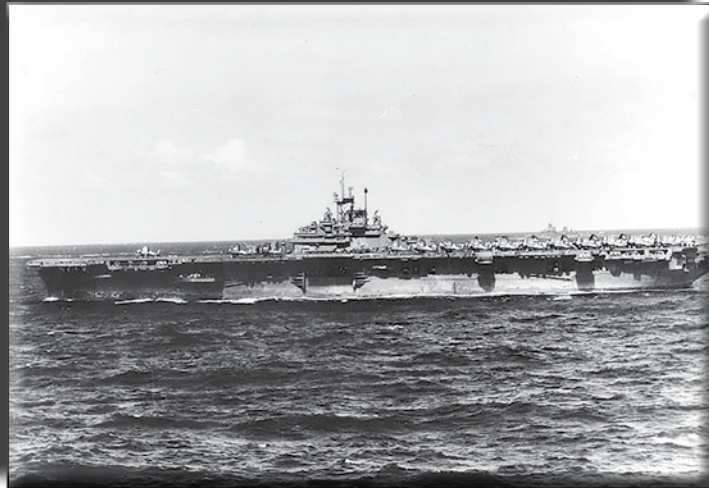
That conversation must have triggered a wellspring of memories for George of his time in the Navy in the Pacific in World War II.

As I remember this remarkable conversation, George told me he enlisted shortly after Pearl Harbor in 1941, or very early in 1942. George told me his first overseas assignment was in the South Pacific. If he told me where he was based, I don't remember. I'm guessing since I know the Navy sent him to school at Navy Pier Chicago, that it early in 1943 or late 1942. During that period, the Marines had taken Guadalcanal, and the Navy was supporting the Army's advance under General Douglas MacArthur through the rest of the Solomons and the ultimate return to the Philippines. The Navy was flying constant patrols as the advance moved through Bougainville, New Guinea, and the Bismark Archipelago.

George's rating was Aviation Metalsmith. His location would have either been aboard an aircraft carrier or on some island at an airfield repairing aircraft damaged in combat or damaged otherwise. He told me he volunteered to fly as part of a crew of a PBY Catalina patrol/scout plane. He eventually became a tail gunner in Catalina, which was an added feature that the Japanese were not aware of. They would go on patrol and search mainly for enemy picket boats patrol craft similar to our PT boats. When spotted, the Catalina would dive and let go with their nose cannons.

The Japanese strategy was to keep their crewmen below decks when the Catalina was in its dive, then come up on deck with submachine guns and other small arms, and open fire on the plane as it pulled out of the dive. That was the tail gunner's opportunity and George told me he made the most of those opportunities. He also explained that his Catalina was attacked on its first mission by enemy fighter planes. With all of the plane's guns blazing, they were driven off. George said they were never attacked again.

The overall American strategy of the war against Japan consisted of MacArthur's armies advancing through the Southwest Pacific, north through the Solomon Islands to New Guinea and Hollandia, culminating in MacArthur's planned



*At sea during strikes against targets on Kyushu, Japan, 18 March 1945. USS Bunker Hill (CV 17). Photographed from USS Essex (CV 9). Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.*

return to the Philippines. The Navy, under Admiral Nimitz, had the responsibility for a campaign across the Central Pacific, taking the Japanese held-island chains including the Gilberts (November 1943, Tarawa), the Marshalls, early 1944, and the Marianas, June 1944 (Guam, Tinian, Saipan), and on to the Japanese home islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The Navy wanted to bypass the Philippines, but MacArthur insisted it was a matter of American honor to retake them, as he had promised. FDR made the final decision: the Philippines would be taken.

I went through that to provide some background for what I believe was George's next assignment. George told me at some point he volunteered to be part of a Naval ground combat unit that consisted of Aviation Metalsmiths and mechanics. They would be part of the Navy SEABEE unit and were called the CASUs. (I'm not sure of the spelling, but I'm pretty sure it was an acronym for something.) The SEABEES would land with the Marine assault force, fight their way to the enemy airfield, capture it and repair to land Navy/Marine aircraft. The CASUs would land with the Marines and SEABEES, fight their way to capture the enemy airfield, and repair and service the U.S. aircraft landing on the captured airfield.

My best recollection tells me that George's first combat as a CASU was in the Marianas in June 1944. He was wounded at Saipan. I remember he told me he spent time in a hospital on Tinian after it was taken. At that point in time, it was decided that the Philippines would be taken in October 1944. However, there was a small Japanese-held island group that

*Continued on page 53 — see HERO*

# 2024 — ON THE HORIZON REUNIONS

**USS Bordelon (DD 881)** Oct. 12-16, 2025 in Indianapolis, IN. Contact Bob Evans, Reunion Treasurer, at 415-302-1912, bobinspects@sbcglobal.net

**USS Compton (DD 705)** April 27-29, 2025 in Norwich, CT. Contact Joe Napoli at 609-409-7678, jsnap29@outlook.com

**USS Davidson (DE/FF 1045)** April 23-27, 2025 in San Diego, CA. Contact Mike Peck at 952-222-7898, davidson1045@msn.com

**USS Dupont (DD 941)** April 13-17, 2025 in Warwick, RI. Contact Ray Perrotti at 908-310-5189, RPerrotti@PerrottiSales.com

**USS Josephus Daniels (DLG/CG 27)** Oct. 30 - Nov. 2, 2024 in Charleston, SC. Contact Orin Reams at 757-819-4432,

hazegray1092@gmail.com

**USS Keppler (DD 765)** March 2, 2025, on a 7-night cruise aboard Celebrity Ascent sailing to St. Thomas, USVI from Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact Stephen Mooney at 732-284-0134, keple-rdd765@gmail.com

**USS Rich (DD/DDE 820)** May 12-16, 2025 in Warwick, RI. Contact Dave Kinne at 978-496-0123, djkinne51@gmail.com

**USS Thomas C. Hart (DE/FF 1092)** Oct. 14-19, 2025 in Portland, ME. Contact Dave Neimeyer at 484-378-2725, dave@neimeyer.org

**USS Worden (CG 18)** Sept. 25-28, 2025 in Dallas, TX. Contact Jim Richmond at 972-978-3967, jcrichmond@sbcglobal.net

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## ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN TIN CAN SAILORS

Tin Can Sailors, the National Association of Destroyer Veterans, was founded in 1976. Most of our members are destroyer veterans but many served aboard destroyer escorts, frigates, destroyer tenders, and other types of U.S. Naval Vessels.

We also welcome relatives of destroyer veterans, historians, model builders, members of the Historic Naval Ships Association, anyone who has an interest in preserving destroyers as museums, and the public in general.

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 Contact person's address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact person's city, state, zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Mail to Reunion Editor, Tin Can Sailors, PO Box 100, Somerset, MA 02726

had an airfield just to the south of the Philippines, the Palau Islands. General MacArthur insisted they be taken before the Philippine operation as he considered it a potential threat to his flank.

So, the Palau operation was assigned to Admiral Nimitz. George told me his unit was part of that operation. The Japanese airfield was on the Island of Peleliu, and the assault commenced in August of 1944. It was supposed to be a 3–5-day operation. It lasted about 30 days and was one of the bloodiest battles in the entire war. George had experienced a lot of combat at that point and the worst had yet to come. In October 1944, the Philippine invasion and the naval battle of the Philippine Sea took place. The Navy provided support and annihilated the Japanese fleet that came out to stop the invasion. George might have been in a rest area at that time.

The next big event was the Iwo Jima invasion. George told me that as the assault commenced, his unit was climbing down a rope ladder from the LST into a landing craft, a Higgins boat. The sea was very choppy, and the Higgins boat would periodically slam into the hull of the LST. As he descended the rope ladder, the person above him stepped on both his hands, and he fell into the ocean between the LST and the Higgins boat. He removed his equipment underwater and swam to the surface. His real worry was that he would surface when the Higgins boat would slam against the hull of the LST. That did not happen, and he was pulled into the Higgins boat, refitted, and sent on to the landing at Iwo Jima.

George was in the thick of it at Iwo, as the Japanese were dug-in and planned on fighting to the death to defend one of their remote home islands which the Americans desperately needed for their bombing attacks on the home islands. Iwo was full of fortifications and interconnecting tunnels. The airport was in the center of the small island, and the Americans paid dearly for each inch of ground gained. When George's group was relieved, they were assured they were going to a rest area.

The Iwo campaign was over by 1 April 1945, which was designated as the start date of the Okinawa campaign. My best recollection tells me that George was then transferred to the USS *Bunker Hill* (CV-17), an aircraft carrier, involved in the assault on Okinawa. He told me that the transfer was due to a snafu, and sometime shortly thereafter, he was transferred from the *Bunker Hill* to a rest area. It was the day after his transfer that the *Bunker Hill* was struck by a kamikaze which destroyed the section of the ship to which he had been assigned. The Japanese had decided to launch all-out suicide attacks on American ships attacking Okinawa.

I remember when George got home in 1945. Mom got a call on Saturday afternoon. Joan was at work at Scruggs. George wanted to come to the house in East St. Louis. I was

about eight years old and that is my first real memory of George who would turn out to be my (and still is) hero. I remember I was in awe. Just so everyone really knows what kind of man he really was, George had actually arrived in St. Louis two or three days earlier. Before calling his mom and dad and our house, he checked himself in at the Fairgrounds Hotel on Grand Avenue and quietly spent those first few days at home in church, giving thanks.

*Editor's Note: Carrier Aircraft Service Units (CASU) were United States Navy units formed during World War II for the Pacific War to support naval aircraft operations. From 1942 to 1946, 69 Carrier Aircraft Service Units were formed to repair and maintain aircraft. The first unit was deployed to Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The CASU-11, was deployed on January 22, 1943 at Naval Air Station San Diego. During the war the Navy lacked enough aircraft carriers to complete all the operational requirements.*

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MAIL CALL — continued from page 50

there is an underway evaluation such as underway refueling (which destroyers do every three days because their fuel level can't get below 75% due to the motto "anytime, anywhere"). Fueling, underway ammo resupply, or stores resupply require an all hands-on deck.

In Vietnam, the usual time "on the line" was 30 days with 21 days off the line because it would take a few days to transit to Subic Bay. The crew needed the time off the line because sleep was hard to get. When one was off watch, the guns were still attacking targets along the coast.

Destroyers have three mounts; one forward MT 51; one amidships MT 52; and one aft MT 53. Mount 51 was usually used to shell the coastline when the ship was heading to go close along the shoreline, then parallel to the coastline all three mounts were firing. When leaving the coast, Mount 53 would keep firing until the ship is out of range of the coastal batteries. Off watch sleep is difficult. My quarters was just aft of Mount 51.

The time on the line for the tour was usually six months. We shot over 20,000 rounds and we went through three sets of gun barrels.

The transit to Vietnam and back was about six weeks each way as we came from Norfolk, Virginia.

Capt. Ace Trask, USN (Ret.)

## Tin Can Talk

**PRICKER:** A small marlinspike, usually fitted with a wooden handle.

# Navy, DOD Leaders Discuss Space Capabilities During Second Naval Space Summit at NPS

18 July 2024

From Lt.Cmdr. Edward Early

MONTEREY, Calif. — Recognizing the importance of a rapidly evolving space domain to U.S. national defense, key leaders from the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Department of Defense gathered at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) for the second annual Naval Space Summit, July 9-11.

The summit, sponsored by the Secretary of the Navy and organized by the office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare (N2N6), provides an essential venue for top DOD and Department of the Navy officials to discuss the state of space operations and capabilities within the services, as well as the latest issues and opportunities in the space domain.

Under Secretary of the Navy Erik Raven, who represented Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro at the summit, reminded attendees of the similarities between the maritime domain and the space domain, as well as their importance to our nation's history.

“The sea has left an indelible mark on history and character of our nation. For nearly 249 years, our nation has relied on the grit, tenacity, and courage of our Sailors and Marines,” said Raven. “Just as the oceans have shaped the last quarter-millennium of our nation, space will shape our future – for centuries to come.”

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. James Kilby, himself an NPS graduate, acknowledged NPS' crucial, longstanding role in space systems education, operations and engineering through the school's Space Systems Academic Group (SSAG).

“No other venue brings together the fleet and expertise with our SPACECOM joint partners to address warfighting issues in the space domain at the most senior levels of Department of the Navy and DOD,” said Kilby. “Advancing the state of the art in space-based capability is fundamental to advancing our maritime advantage. This also requires a deep bench of talented naval leaders who understand the technologies and can develop new concepts of operations for how we fight – this is happening at NPS.”

The first Naval Space Summit in 2023 was convened by Del Toro at NPS with the goal of assessing the needs, challenges and opportunities of future maritime operations in the space domain.

For this year's event, Raven and other senior leaders



not only expanded on those themes, but also centered their discussions around strengthening U.S. warfighting capabilities in the space domain. Dialogue focused on the development of space capabilities as force multipliers, as well as the increasing demand for military and commercial space capabilities to support naval operations.

As with the inaugural event, the 2024 Naval Space Summit featured classified briefs and discussions involving DOD's top space stakeholders, with the intent of giving attendees the opportunity to share information, make connections and continue the dialogue begun the previous year.

“Our goal this year is to build on last year's discussions (of current military space capabilities and operations and NPS space-based research) and continue on the path to align our efforts on how we plan to fight in this critical domain,” said Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare and Director of Naval Intelligence, during his opening address on July 9.

In addition to Raven, Kilby and Thomas, senior Navy and Marine Corps leaders who came to NPS included Vice Adm. Craig Clapperton, commander of Fleet Cyber Command, Navy Space Command and U.S. Tenth Fleet; Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Brian Cavanaugh, commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic and Marine Forces Command; and Vice Adm. Blake Converse, deputy commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Among the senior DOD and U.S. government officials attending were U.S. Space Force Gen. Stephen Whiting, commander of U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM); Space

*Continued on page 55 — see DOD*

Force Lt. Gen. Douglas Schiess, commander of U.S. Space Forces-Space; U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Steve Butow, military deputy and director of the space portfolio at the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU); and Mr. Bale Dalton, NASA Chief of Staff.

Raven, Whiting, Schiess, Butow and Dalton presented keynote addresses during the course of the summit, while Schiess, Cavanaugh and Converse participated in a flag and general officer panel – moderated by Thomas – to discuss dependencies of warfighting on the space domain.

The majority of the other briefs during the Naval Space Summit's agenda were presented by senior DOD and DON representatives, as well as subject matter experts from other U.S. government agencies.

As the host of the Naval Space Summit, NPS – and in particular SSAG – provided substantial contributions to the summit's agenda, ranging from student research presentations during the opening session in King Hall Auditorium to student showcase events later in the week.

“Bringing the Naval Space Summit back to NPS reinforces the importance of our institution as a center of space education, research and innovation for the Navy and Marine Corps,” said retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau, President of NPS.

Rondeau, NPS Acting Provost Dr. Jim Newman and SSAG Acting Chair Dr. Wenschel Lan all spoke during the opening session, which saw presentations by three NPS students – Marine Corps Maj. Dillon Pierce and Navy Lt. Chuck Bibbs and Lt. Conor Murtha.

“The underlying message of the Naval Space Summit aligns closely with the lessons from NPS' space policy and space strategy courses,” said Bibbs, who graduated from NPS in December 2023 with dual master's degrees before returning to support the school's Space Systems research efforts. “Both emphasize the need for military and commercial partners to develop solutions proactively to address imminent space challenges posed by adversaries.

“NPS serves as the perfect venue for these crucial conversations, offering junior and mid-level officers the opportunity to listen to general and flag officers and familiarize themselves with these challenges early in their careers, and for them to hear our ideas. I was grateful for the opportunity to share my story and research with these senior leaders.”

Among the NPS students attending sessions throughout the week were Navy and Marine Corps officers who had been designated as Maritime Space Officers – individuals

with space expertise who will directly support Navy and Marine Corps activities in key space-oriented billets.

Students from SSAG also had the opportunity to provide updates on their own space-based research during a showcase event and poster session, and a separate Emerging Tech Showcase gave summit participants a chance to learn more from industry partners who have signed Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs) with NPS to support relevant research efforts.

“Having the Naval Space Summit at NPS was a great opportunity for our students,” Lan said. “Not only were they able to hear from our naval and joint space leaders and engage with them firsthand, the meaningful discussions have already enhanced course lectures and spurred future thesis research ideas.”

The participation of non-Navy agencies in the Naval Space Summit, including NASA and the Space Force, served as a reminder that space operations are truly a joint effort – something which Lan believes is also reflected in NPS and its mission.

“Our student population doesn't just include naval officers – we have officers from the other armed forces as well as our foreign partner nations, which we recognize as an incredible value as the space domain evolves,” she added. “Through the interdisciplinary nature of the Space Systems curricula at NPS, we strive to educate our students so that they can contribute towards solving real-world operational problems.”

According to Thomas, the Naval Space Summit resulted in greater information sharing and an increase in dialogue between the services – and considerable enthusiasm to continue that dialogue again next year.

“This was a busy three days of open and frank discussions on current and future issues of critical importance to the naval space mission and the future fight,” Thomas said. “Additionally, many new working relationships were established and connections made – these relationships will ensure this important work and focus continues.” 🐦

## SHIPMATES

Would you like to see stories about your ship? Of course! So sit down and pull those memories out of the old gray matter and put them on paper. Send us your article and any photos that you might have to go along with the story. The article should be about 500-2000 words. Send via snail-mail or e-mail, whichever is easier for you.

# Meetings Schedules

Please confirm with contact person for the event you plan on attending.

## PHOENIX, AZ

Informal lunch at 11am on the 1st Thursday of the month in the back room at Tiny's restaurant. Mostly sailors but all branches of service are welcome, we would be happy to have visitors. Tiny's restaurant, 600 E. AZ Hwy 260 Payson 85541. Tim Deegan 951-837-8789 call or text.

## SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

Meetings for Navy Social Lunch/ John C. Butler Chapter meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at the American Legion Post #44, 7145 E. 2nd St., Scottsdale, AZ 85251, at 1100 for a no-host lunch. Tin Can vets welcome!

## NORTH TEXAS, DESRON I

Meeting on the 3rd Tuesday in March, June, September, December (quarterly meeting/bull session) at the Dixie House Cafe on Lancaster Ave, Fort Worth TX at 12 noon. Bring an appetite and your favorite sea stories. Contact Rick Cubbins 757-912-3691 for more info.

## SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS AREA

A monthly gathering of destroyer and cruiser veterans (joint meeting of TCS DESRON2 and USN Cruiser Sailors Association) is held at Las Palapas Mexican Restaurant (4802 Walzem Road in NE San Antonio) at 11:00 a.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month for lunch and camaraderie. Destroyer vets should contact T. Noel Osborn (210) 641-7733. Cruiser vets should contact George Keith (210) 609-2826.

## LAGUNA HILLS, CALIFORNIA AREA

Meets every Friday morning for breakfast at 0730 at The Snooty Fox Restaurant, 23028 Lake Forest Drive, Laguna Hills, CA. 8 am. All military welcome.

## OHIO/KENTUCKY/INDIANA

Tin Can Sailor OKI veterans getting together in south-western Ohio to share old sea stories, pictures and a few laughs. Meetings will be on the 4th Thursday of each month at 2:00p.m. at Ross Community U.M. Church, 2943 Hamilton Cleves Road, Hamilton, OH 45013. There will be no meeting in December. For further information please check our Facebook Group page or call Phil at 513-868-2338 or Wayne at 513-896-5851.

## TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY

The Tin Can Sailors (TCS) / Destroyer Veterans (DESVETS) of New Jersey meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 12 noon. Our meetings are held at the George P. Vanderveer, American Legion Post #129 located at 2025 Church Road, Toms River, NJ. For more information you can email us at [commander@tcs-desvets-nj.org](mailto:commander@tcs-desvets-nj.org), visit our website at [www.tcs-desvets-nj.org](http://www.tcs-desvets-nj.org), or call us at 732-630-1855.

## MONTGOMERYVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

North of Philadelphia meeting from 9 to 11 a.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Michaels Family Restaurant in Montgomeryville, PA located at 709 Bethlehem Pike (SR 309), Montgomeryville, PA. (215) 368-9909

## SOMERSET, MASSACHUSETTS

The Volunteers at Tin Can Sailors headquarters in Somerset, MA invite local area members to a Coffee & Donut Get Together on November 7th at 9:00am. Please come and share your stories and visit our Library. Bring your own photos and memorabilia and get ready to share some sea stories. The TCS Offices are located at 1077 County Street in Somerset in the same plaza as the Post Office. Please call the office at (508) 677-0515 if you wish to attend or if you have questions.

## NEW PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA

Florida Naval Sailors Association meets at 1p.m. the 1st Saturday each month in New Port Richey, Florida at the American Legion Post #79, Veteran Way and Legion Place. USN-USMC-USCG-US MERCHANT MARINE-US ARMY AMPHIBS are all welcome as Military Sea Service Veterans. There is also a weekly breakfast meeting each Wednesday at Susie's Too, 8010 Old County Rd. 54, North Port Richey, FL. Contact Mike Trowse at (256) 655-2700 for more information. Come Join Us!

## GOOSE CREEK, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Tin Can Sailors of Goose Creek meet the 4th Wednesday of the month at 19:00 at American Legion Post 166, 116 Howe Hall Rd., Goose Creek. All Tin Can and Destroyer Tender Sailors welcome. Contact Rick Bernard at (843) 553-5454 or [adjutant@alp166sc.com](mailto:adjutant@alp166sc.com) for more information.

## VENICE, FLORIDA

Tin Can Sailors Squadron, meet at the Moose Lodge, 111 N. Auburn Rd. Venice FL 34292. We meet on the second Monday of each month at 11:30 AM. All US Navy, US Coast Guard or Royal Canadian Navy Veterans who have served on board a Destroyer, Destroyer Escort, Frigate or Auxiliary Ship are welcome to attend and join. Contact Jim Gersch at (715) 642 2503, [jim.gersch@gmail.com](mailto:jim.gersch@gmail.com)



## MAIL CALL

Dear Editor,

I joined the Navy in 1968. In November, I went for my basic training to Great Lakes. Upon completion, I was given my orders to report to the USS *Forrest Royal* (DD 872), homeported at the naval station in Mayport, Florida.

I caught a flight to Jacksonville Airport and got a taxi to Mayport. When I arrived at the main gate, the guard told me the *Forrest Royal* was not in port.

I was told to instead report to the USS *Yellowstone* (AD 27) TAD for two weeks. I reported to the *Forrest Royal* when it returned to port. Now, I am just out of boot camp entering the fleet as a deck ape, first division.

I was aboard for about two months, and we were getting underway for my first time at sea. While steaming ahead toward the Caribbean, I was told that I would have to stand "mail buoy watch". I asked what I had to do. I was told to don my kapok life jacket, battle helmet, sound-powered phones, binoculars, and a boat hook. Now, I was ready to go.

*Continued on page 62 — see MAIL CALL*

## Leave a Legacy

"Sure, I'd like to give, but I want to be careful. I might need my money later." That is a common thought. We want to be generous to our important causes today, but we don't want to be caught short tomorrow.

Have you considered including the Museum Ships and other Navy organizations in your will or estate plan? With a simple adjustment to your will, these historical ships can be a part or full beneficiary of an asset such as a 401(k). You keep and have access to all your money for your lifetime. If you need it, it's there for you and your family. You can feel secure. The gift only happens after your expenses are covered.

Estate giving is not just for the wealthy. Gifts of all sizes make a difference. And, giving via your estate plan can pass more of your money to your family and favorite causes by reducing the impact of estate taxes. Consult your tax advisor or an attorney to learn how making a bequest to charity may actually benefit your family after you're gone. Options like changing the beneficiary on an asset are generally free of any cost to you.

## What is a ...

**Field Day** — a working day aboard a destroyer that is now designated as a museum/memorial. For many, it is a chance to go back in time.

All types of volunteer labor are welcome. Electricians, welders, plumbers, and carpenters are especially needed. Always extra hands are appreciated who can clean or paint or do any of the many task that are always needed.

**Bull Session** — a one day event where all sailors are welcome regardless of which ship they served on or when.

It is a social event at which memories are shared, old friendships renewed and new friends made. We try to keep the cost low so everyone can afford to attend.



## That Good Navy Chow!

### SPICED BEETS

Portion: Approx. 2/3 cup, 4 to 5 ounces  
100 Portions

#### Ingredients

Beets, A. P.	33 pounds
Water	To cover
Cloves, whole	¼ ounce (approx. 1½ tablespoons)
Water	(approx. 1 gallon)
Cinnamon, ground	(approx. 2 teaspoons)
Salt	2 ounces (approx. ¼ cup)
Pepper	(approx. 1 teaspoon)
Sugar, brown	2 pounds, (approx. 1½ quarts)
Sugar	1 pound (approx. 1 pint)
Vinegar	(approx. ½ gallon)
Butter	1 pound, (approx. 1 pint)

Wash beets thoroughly. Trim stems 2 to 3 inches above beets. Retain roots.

Heat water to boiling temperature. Add beets. Cook for about 35 to 60 minutes or until tender. Drain.

Cover beets with cold water. Peel. Dice or slice.

Add cloves to 1 gallon water. Heat to boiling temperature. Add cinnamon, salt, pepper, sugar and vinegar. Cook 10 minutes. Strain.

Pour juice over beets. Heat to boiling temperature. Add butter.

Note.- 1. 4 No. 10 cans (3¼ gallons) beets may be used in place of 33 pounds fresh beets.

2. Reduce sugar if a sourer sauce is preferred.

Source: The Cookbook of the United States Navy, Revised 1944. Which can be found in the Tin Can Sailors Library (Not for Sale)

# SCUTTLEBUTT MAIL CALL



Dear Editor,

Ask any sailor who has sailed on a destroyer, and you will hear with near-unanimous response that the job they had was the best one onboard. As a signalman on a *Gearing*-class destroyer from 1969 to 1973, I, of course, was certain that my job was the best one on the ship.

The signal bridge on a *Gearing*-class was the highest continuously manned space while underway on the ship. We, as signalmen, had a front row seat on the world with a 360-degree view from the horizon to horizon, a distance of approximately eight miles any direction. Nothing happened around the ship that we did not witness. Cruising on the vastness of the ocean, entering leaving port, sailing and maneuvering with other Navy ships, and passing by ships of every type from many countries, we saw it all. At night, we were treated to the panoply of the heavens. Stars, their light undiminished by land-based particulate and light pollution, took on a brilliance never seen by those ashore. The moon appeared significantly larger and brighter than when observed when on land. Bioluminescent diatoms in the warm ocean water glowed with a soothing yet eerie light when agitated by the passing of the ship.

During naval gunfire support missions off the coast of Vietnam, we witnessed the impact of the projectiles ashore. While assigned as a plane guard destroyer to an aircraft carrier during flight operations, we were participants in and observers of an incredibly intricate evolution. Fighter planes were being launched and recovered simultaneously. Planes were making final approaches to land and were in formation above the ships. Some returned from their missions with battle damage. Others never returned at all as demonstrated by an incomplete formation.

Signalmen used two methods for visual communication and message transmission. Flag hoist is the oldest method for naval ship communication and continues to be utilized for formation maneuvering. Flashing light utilizing Samuel Morse's unique dots and dashes is the most utilized communication method. The signalmen also were the custodians of the American flag. We hoisted the ensign in response to the command "Underway, shift colors", and we brought down the ensign in response to the command "moored, shift colors."

On some days the weather was cold and wet, on other days the weather was hot and dry, however the majority of days the weather was awesome. Not all was enjoyment and interesting, however. During heavy weather, the signal bridge was subjected to stunning pitches and rolls, along with considerable green water. If conditions became severe

enough, the captain would secure the weather decks and the signalman would be sent below.

During surface radar operations against North Vietnam, artillery rounds passed close overhead. The signal bridge was wide open and offered little or no cover. The captain ordered that all but two signalmen were to remain on the mess decks during raids.

Despite the few downsides, being a signalman was the best job on the ship. The signalman rating was disestablished by the Navy in 2003. One wonders if the quartermasters, who have assumed the duties of the signalman, now believe what a great job the signalman had.

Roger Chagnon SM2  
USS *Hanson* (DD 832) 69-73

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Dear Editor,

I was just starting my senior year in high school when I noticed a really pretty girl who was riding on the same school bus, but I had never seen her previously, and I felt I just had to get to know her.

Never saw her in any of my daytime classes and as I inquired around, I found out she was a freshman, so I had to find other ways to meet and get to know her.

Library room studies were one way and, chatting on the bus was another, and once I was able to get to know her better, I was able to convince her to share her home phone number with me.

We will call her Sheila, and her parents made no secret that she was too young to date, certainly no one at my advanced age and, they would appreciate limiting the number of phone calls.

Under those guidelines, I called her as frequently on the phone as I could and in one of the conversations, I shared that I was planning on joining the Navy as soon as I graduated. "That's nice."

One of my close high school chums named Jimmie had the same intentions to get to know Sheila as I did. We all lived within a four-square block area in our hometown and so it was not uncommon that we would run into each other on the streets before our parent-established curfews took effect.

As graduation was soon upon us, I had already been accepted into the Navy having passed all my preliminary testing. Jimmie, Sandy, Sheila and I arranged to meet at a miniature golf course on a Saturday near our homes and celebrate my joining the Navy.

Afterwards, just hanging around, in a last somewhat desperate attempt to impress Sheila, I indicated I would show them how to jump over a 4-foot chain link fence. I was somewhat proficient in those days with high jumping skills,

*Continued on page 59 — see MAIL CALL*

but alarmingly as I approached the jump, my push-off foot slipped in the wet grass. . . but I made it over!

Jimmie and Sandy thought that was pretty neat. Sheila thought “that was nice” that I was able to do that jump. I said my goodbye to all of them, heading out to do my patriotic duty.

On the Monday following high school graduation, I was in Louisville, Kentucky being inducted into the U.S. Navy. Then there was boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois, where additional testing qualified me to attend Class A Sonar School in Key West, Florida. Sounded like a really good assignment. All the while, my mind and heart continued to dwell on the girl back home, Sheila.

I became friends with a number of shipmates at the Sonar School and is often the case, you share stories about home, wives, girlfriends, etc. One of my close friends, a fellow named Gursky from Connecticut, was well aware of my dilemma with Sheila and offered up a way where he felt certain she would recognize how much I cared for her.

Gursky would write a letter to her expressing how he observed she seemed to always be on my mind. Perhaps this third-person observation would clear the way for winning her over, so I proofread his letter, and it looked really good. I then shared her home address with him.

After graduation from Sonar School, I could not wait to get back home and see what effect Gursky’s letter had made on Sheila. I called her and arranged to visit her at her home.

Spit shined shoes, neatly pressed dress whites, clean shaven with a touch of Aqua Velva. . . another attempt to impress. When I arrived at her home, she greeted me and invited me in as her family had just sat down for supper, kind of bad timing. I introduced myself and waited on their living room sofa while they finished eating.

The conversation was a bit awkward. . .her father asked a number of questions like what I was going to be doing while in the Navy, and I offered up that I was heading to San Diego to serve on a destroyer, which I thought was somewhat impressive.

After supper, Sheila and excused ourselves and went out onto the front porch. Didn’t take too long until she asked me if I knew someone named Gursky. I feigned surprise that she would know that name and inquired why she asked.

She explained that she had received this really nice letter from a person named Gursky who apparently knew me and shared how he was a good friend of mine. She said Gursky had expressed himself so well that she thought it would be “really nice” to meet him. OUCH!

With that, it was time for me to take my leave, which I did. I shipped out shortly thereafter on the USS *Twining* (DD 540) out of San Diego, heading to WestPac. Thoughts of Sheila stayed with me for some time, but I knew it was never to be.

Years later after I had gotten out of the Navy, I was attending a high school class reunion back home. I caught up with Jimmie and asked him what ever happened to Sheila. He indicated that sometime after high school, she had met and married an officer in the U.S. Air Force.

Then he told me that Sheila’s current address was in prison as she had been convicted, life without parole, for murdering her Air Force officer after finding out he was cheating on her. She had stabbed him 28 times!

Well. . . Joey had dodged a bullet, er or potentially a knife? But I also know I would never have given her a reason for such. . .not for the girl back home.

Joe Edd Jones  
USS *Twining* (DD 540)  
USS *Rogers* (DD 876)

Dear Editor,

First of all, I wish to commend your staff on the fine stories and the publication of *The Tin Can Sailor*.

I would like to talk about my boot camp experience. In late August 1964, I left Dayton, Ohio and flew aboard a jet to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (my first ever plane trip). From there, I transferred to a prop plane to fly on to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Naturally, with all the ups and downs on that prop plane, I got air sick. Thank goodness for the barf bags!

Anyway, I arrived around 4PM that day, and met up with another bunch of guys as we commenced our start of boot camp. Boot camp for us Navy guys is taught Marine-style. After we graduated, I had enough experience to become a Marine, too.

Anyway, that first day upon arrival, NEVER, EVER, call a Marine, “YOU!” Of course, you all know why. Well, we had to unpack and “dispose” of all radios, electric razors, etc. The instructor even attempted to have me dispose of my prayer book, which I refused to do and finally was allowed to keep it.

Anyway, we had our Navy boot camp, Marine-style. I got through it, but wow! I will admit that those 14 days were fun (99% of the time).

On the following Sunday, after Mass, I had a chance to view the Navy Yard and see the old ships moored, and it was fun.

On the Friday before we graduated, we had to decide where/what we wanted to do and assignments. I had a chance later again to meet my drill instructors, Eubanks and Foglio, back in Philadelphia. Actually, they recognized me first.

Finally, on the day prior to Labor Day, I flew home to Dayton until my orders came and again was to report to Philadelphia on 29 November 1964 but this time active

Continued on page 60 — see MAIL CALL

duty where I was to report to the USS *Leary* (DD 879) who was finishing FRAM work and we left for NORVA on 18 December 1964.

I will tell you more of my experience of active duty later.

Respectfully,

Les Pomerville, RM

Dear Editor,

On Saturday, 29 July 1967, destroyers USS *George K. Mackenzie* (DD 836), USS *Rupertus* (DD 851), and USS *Henry W. Tucker* (DD 875) were on Yankee Station in the Tonkin Gulf off Vietnam, performing carrier escort and plane guard duties for the carrier USS *Forrestal* (CVA 59). Much earlier in the pre-dawn hours of that day, a sailor fell overboard off the *Forrestal*.

Destroyers *Tucker* and *Rupertus* were dispatched to search in the darkness of the pre-dawn hours for the sailor. Unfortunately, despite the valiant efforts of a *Forrestal* helicopter crew, the sailor could not be recovered. The sailor had disappeared from the surface. After an hour of diligent searching, he could not be found.

*Rupertus* was sent back to *Forrestal* to resume escort/plane guard duty. *Tucker* (of which I was one of the crew) was assigned to stay behind and hopefully recover the sailor's body. We never found him. Several hours later, we received a cryptic message from USS *Forrestal* to "Close to assist at best speed." *Tucker's* crew went to general quarters and raced back to *Forrestal's* position on Yankee Station. When we arrived, *Forrestal* was fully engulfed in smoke and flames.

We learned she had suffered accidental explosions of ordinance just prior to launching air strikes over North Vietnam. This conflagration resulted in one of the worst accidents in U.S. naval history. *Forrestal* lost 134 sailors and many more suffered terrible injuries. All three destroyers on the station did the best we could to assist in the firefighting and recovery of sailors in the water (some alive, some not).

Eventually, many wounded were transferred to the hospital ship *Repose* (AH 16). USS *Tucker* escorted *Forrestal* back to Subic Bay, P.I. to undergo major repairs. A book was written about this tragedy, *Sailors to the End*, by Gregory A. Freeman. Everyone interested in naval history should read it.

Jim Dowling FTG3  
USS *Henry W. Tucker* (DD 875)  
12/65 – 12/67

Dear Editor,

I have tons of memories of my brief time serving aboard destroyers, DDs, or tin cans. At my age and because of my recent desires to put some of these memories on paper. I have been compelled to search the internet to see what it has to say about the origins of TG Alpha, and it clearly states that the designation was applied to an aircraft carrier and a group of destroyers operating in the Atlantic starting in April 1958. My memories are a bit different as to the start time.

It was late January or early February 1958, and I was an RD2 serving aboard the USS *McGowan* (DD 678). At that time, we were engaged in ASW operations (to the best of my memory) in the South Atlantic. We were part of DesDiv 202, but I don't remember if we were operating with other elements of the division or the squadron (DesRon20). As I recall, it was a large exercise consisting of multiple carriers and destroyers operating over a wide area.

At any rate, it was a weekend, and we were tied up in Mayport, along with many cans and about four carriers. Suddenly, the crew was called to Special Sea and Anchor detail, and we were in the midst of preparations to get underway immediately. It was amazing to observe how fast the carriers cleared the harbor. And I remember someone saying that it looked like we were trying to prevent another Pearl Harbor. That thought got everyone's attention.

I can't piece together the total sequence of events, but we eventually found out that a large group of Russian submarines were operating off the east coast of the U.S. and our assignment was to form up so we could hunt these subs down. And while we were not in a shooting war, our goal was to hold one of these beauties down long enough to get it to stick its snorkel up for air, or to fully surface, then to take a picture of it. It was estimated that these subs could go almost 48 hours before needed a recharge.

As I remember, we formed up in a task group of about six cans a carrier, with the carrier conducting air operations, and the cans in a bent line screen. Our sonar men were probably on port and starboard and our ship and other ships of the screen made some contacts but were unable to hold them. I do recall a particular contact that we held for over 24 hours, along with another can in the screen. I remember using the duet template as the *McGowan* and its partner can executed Operation Duet several times. But we lost contact.

There were more contacts over a period of about 28 days, until we were relieved and ordered back to our homeport. But the operation continued, and I do believe it eventually became Task Group Alpha.

The following summer, having returned to civilian life, I saw an article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* with an accompanying picture of a Russian snorkel. My best recollection was the USS *Henley* (DD 762) took the picture.

Dan Davies RD 1  
USS *McGowan* (DD 678) 57-58

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## Vietnam Veteran Cap Khaki

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By James D. Hornfischer and David J. Hornfischer

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I'm on the fo'c'sle and I am to locate the "buoy" and pluck the mail bag off it. Sailors on the bridge were yelling at me that it was coming up off the starboard bow and not to screw it up. I'm yelling back, "I don't see it." I turned around and looked up at the bridge and everyone was laughing. There wasn't any mail buoy that even existed. It was pretty funny.

After all was said and done, a boatswains mate came and said to me, "Welcome to the fleet."

Regards,

Denis H. Zanetti BM3  
USS *Forrest Royal* (DD 872)

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## A History of the Formosa Patrol

By W.A. Anderson

From prior to World War II, China was known as the Republic of China or ROC and its leader at that time was General Chiang Kai-shek. In 1949, Mao Zedong led a communist revolution which drove the then government of the Republic of China to its east coast, where it set up its government offshore in the city of Taipei on Taiwan, a large island approximately 100 miles from the mainland. The communists took over the mainland and became the People's Republic of China or PRC. Thus, the separation of China into two different governments.

At the time, the ROC claimed the very large island of Formosa or Taiwan as well as the island of Quemoy and the island group of Matsu, just off the mainland coast. These offshore islands were highly fortified and became the first line of defense for the ROC government from the communists. Also assisting the defense of Taiwan was the body of water between the mainland and Taiwan. This narrow seaway is known as Taiwan Strait. However, at that time the U.S. Navy knew it as Formosa Strait. The reason for the two names is that early on, Formosa was the name of a short-lived republic on the island of Taiwan and some still call it by that name today.

The U.S. Navy set up patrols in the strait at the time primarily using destroyers to maintain separation and peace between the two Chinese governments. These patrols were called "Formosa Patrols." Destroyers from the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet were assigned to steam up and down the strait in excess of 20 miles from the coast, as International Law specified that the boundary of countries extends 12 nautical miles into the ocean. The destroyers were assigned about a 48-mile line parallel to the coast to travel back and forth at a speed of about 12 knots. Usually, there were two destroyers on patrol at a time, thus covering a total of 96 miles north and south between the mainland and the island of Taiwan. Each ship was expected to be on high alert. However, it soon became somewhat boring, and three section watches were usually the standard.

On a couple of rare occasions, the Communist Chinese

or PRC attacked Navy planes and shot them down. One occurred in 1955 and one again in 1956. On 23 August 1958, the Communists, in an effort to take over the area held by the ROC, began shelling Quemoy Island along the coast, and as a result the ROC returned fire defensively. Upon a request from the ROC, President Eisenhower responded by reinforcing U.S. naval units and sending them to enforce a blockade in the area. This was due to obligations in a 1954 defense treaty between the U.S. and the ROC.

A cease fire was reached between the Communists PRC and the ROC on 6 October of that year. However, for a period of time afterwards, the U.S. Navy continuously kept units from the 7th Fleet patrolling in the Strait.

In 1958, I was serving on the destroyer USS *Henderson* (DD 785) and during our WestPac deployments, we were occasionally assigned Formosa Patrol. At that time, we were well aware of the fighting that had occurred on those islands. We therefore were very familiar with the names Quemoy and Matsu and I remember them to this day. During our Formosa Patrols, *Henderson* operated out of Kaohsiung, a harbor on the southwest corner of Taiwan. That town, at that time was a completely other story I need not go into now. Suffice it to say, it was a rough neighborhood.

Traveling between Kaohsiung and our patrol area required that we pass through a group of small islands known as the Pescadores. Usually, we passed through them at night and had to be extremely careful, as the area was full of small Chinese fishing boats showing little or no lighting. While on patrol the most excitement we had on *Henderson* was when the ECM operator announced that we had a fire control radar locked on us. That was soon put to rest when it was determined it was our own mount 51 fire control radar he was picking up. At least he was right that it was a fire control radar. As a result of duty serving in and on Formosa Patrol, the Republic of China on Taiwan awarded medals for gratitude and participation.

I'm not sure when the Navy stopped operating the Formosa Patrol on a regular basis and our policies have certainly shifted over various administrations, but the U.S. still remains an ally of Taiwan to this day.

The strait is considered international water, thus all shipping – military or otherwise, have freedom of the seas to operate and travel through that area regardless of what the People's Republic of China say. To this day, the Navy periodically sends some of their vessels through the strait to maintain the understanding of Freedom of Navigation.



USS *Henderson* (DD 785). Photo by W.A. Anderson.

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We have decided to sell computer reproductions rather than photographic reproductions. After considerable experimentation we found that this gives us better control over focus, contrast, and cropping.

Most of these photos were taken for internal Navy use, and were never intended to be portraits for framing. They may have classification stamps on them, shipyard markings, etc. Often when a photo was declassified, someone simply took a pair of scissors and cut off the portion of the photo with the Confidential stamp on it. As a result, an 8" x 10" photo might become a 6" x 10" photo. There's not much we can do about this (the damage was probably done 50 years ago), so some photos will have white or black bands at the top and bottom.

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USS Theodore E. Chandler (DD 717), at Mare Island on 21 March 1950. U. S. Navy photograph.



USS John W. Weeks (DD 701), an Allen M. Sumner-class destroyer.



USS Barton (DD 722) in the Sea of Japan, off Korea, during replenishment operations with USS Philippine Sea (CV 47) and USS Iowa (BB 61). Photo is dated 1 July 1952. Photo courtesy of Joe Radigan.



USS Wallace L. Lind (DD 703) of Destroyer Division 161, enroute to Norfolk, Virginia. Stern view looking forward with crew massed on deck, 09 June 1951. U.S. Navy photograph.