Ahoy Bryce Canyon Sailors:

We're planning a Great Reunion for 2007 in San Antonio, Texas. The reunion will be in October and we'll be staying at the Holiday Inn near the River Walk. We're planning a trip to the historic town of Fredericksburg, Texas, which is 65 miles northwest of San Antonio. Here they have wineries, shopping, art galleries, museums, Texas honky-tonks and a flavor of the Old West. We're also planning a day to see the Infamous Alamo River Walk and their 115 stores and the rich San Antonio heritage. The Saturday night Banquet will be a "Western Theme" so bring your best Cowboy/Cowgirl Dud's. There will be a prize for the best outfit. We will also be having the 2nd annual Gift Exchange. Bring a nice gift valued at $20-$25. This will make the gift exchange more fun. Friday night, we'll try and arrange dinner at a restaurant at the River Walk-casual dress. San Antonio will be a great place for our 2007 Reunion, a lot of history, shopping and sight-seeing and FUN. If you're into Great Cowboy Boots, this is the place to buy them.

Please send in your contributions to ML & RS Inc., PO Drawer 11399, Hickory, NC 28603 indicated for the BC Update. Your contributions will keep the Newsletters and e-mails coming and support the planning for Your Reunions. We have some great events planned for this reunion, so try your best to make it, you'll be GLAD you came. We're getting more new people at each reunion, and the great experience you'll have with your fellow Sailors will make you wonder why you didn't come sooner Also, the Reunion for 2008 will be in Portland Oregon. We'll be planning for 2009 at this reunion, so think of some good (Continued on page 2)
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance from 10/06 issue Minus $2.99
Funds received since 10/06 $265.00
Funds available for 01/07 issue $262.01
Funds expended 01/07 issue $117.85 (4 pages/90* copies)

Postage: $29.70
Paper: $ 8.10
Envelopes: $ 4.05
Copies: $18.00
Labor: $58.00
TOTAL: $117.85

Balance Remaining for 04/07 $144.16

* From now on, the Bryce Canyon Update will be mailed only to those who returned the coupon to receive it by USPS. All others can access the newsletter online at www.mlrsinc.com/brycecanyon.

Send contributions to ML&RS at address to right. Mark for the Bryce Canyon Update.

YOUR STORIES AND LETTERS NEEDED!

We need to hear from you! Most of you have stories to tell from your time on board the USS Bryce Canyon and we would like for you to share them with others. In the past we have suggested a variety of ideas for stories—your most memorable character, crossing the equator, Christmas, first days aboard any ship, etc. If we didn’t hear from you on any of these subjects, please consider sending them in now. If we did hear from you in the past, please consider another story. I’m sure you have plenty! This newsletter is only as good as YOU make it. We depend on you for the material that goes in the newsletter. Please help out!!!

Karen Hoyle, Editor (address on left)
Friends,

I was chaplain from May of 1969 until June of 1971 and have many fond memories. I guess the greatest lesson I learned was the more people you get involved with the better things turn out. The first Christmas Eve we had a sparsely attended candlelight service, but the second year I did some planning. Since the DASH hanger was no longer used, I suggested that we use it for the candlelight service. The signalmen heard of this and lined the inside of the hanger with signal flags with the church pennant right behind the podium. The mess deck felt it would be appropriate to serve coffee and cake and that drew more of the crew. Of course the deck crew had to assemble the chairs and another crew had to set up a sound system. That Christmas Eve the DASH hanger was full and it was surely a joy to see all those at the service, including dependents.

Best to you all,

LCDR Garee M Harrison, CHC, USNR (Ret)
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Ocala, FL 34471
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**PEACOATS**

You remember them as those ton and a half monsters that took the annual production of thirty-five sheep to make. Those thick black rascals with black plastic buttons the size of poker chips. The issue coats that drove shore duty chief petty officers stark raving nuts if they caught you with the collar turned up or your gahdam hands in your pockets.

"Hey, you rubber sock, get those gahdam hands outta them damn pockets! Didn’t they issue you leather gloves?"

So, you took your hands out of your pockets and risked digital frostbite rather than face whatever the Navy had in store for violators of the “No Gahdam Hands In Peacoat Pockets” policy. There’s probably a special barracks in Hell full of old E-3s caught hitchhiking in sub-zero weather with hands in peacoat pockets.

As for those leather gloves, one glove always went missing.

“Son, where in th’ hell are the gloves we issued you?”

We?? I don’t remember this nasty, ugly bastard at Great Lakes when the “jocks and socks” petty officers were throwing my initial issue seabag at me and yelling, “Move it!”

As for the gloves, once you inadvertently leave one glove on a whorehouse night table or on the seat of a Greyhound bus, the remaining glove is only useful if a tank rolls over the hand that fit the lost glove.

In the days long ago, a navy spec peacoat weighed about the same as a flatcar load of cinder blocks. When it rained, it absorbed water until your spine warped, your shins crackled and your ankles split. Five minutes standing in the rain waiting on a bus and you felt like you were piggybacking the Statue of Liberty.

When a peacoat got wet, it smelled a lot like sheep dip. It had that wet wool smell, times three. It weighed three and a half tons and smelled like “Mary had a little lamb’s”

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gym shorts.

You know how damn heavy a late '50's peacoat was? Well, they had little metal chains sewn in the back of the collar to hang them up by. Like diluted navy coffee, sexual sensitivity instruction, comfortable air-conditioned topside security bungalows, patent leather plastic-looking shoes and wearing rags configured to look like bidet bowls, the peacoat spec has been watered down to the point you could hang them up with dental floss. In the old days, peacoat buttons and grocery cart wheels were interchangeable parts. The gear issued by the U.S. Navy was tough as hell, bluejacket-tested clothing with the durability of rhino hide and construction equipment tires.

Peacoats came with wide, heavy collars. In a cold, hard wind, you could turn that wide collar up to cover your neck and it was like poking your head in a tank turret.

The things were warm, but I never thought they were long enough. Standing out in the wind in those “big-legged britches” (bell bottoms), the wind whistled up your cuffs and took away body warmth like a thief. But, they were perfect to pull over you for a blanket when sleeping on a bus or a bus terminal bench.

Every sailor remembers stretching out on one of those oak bus station pews with his raghat over his face, his head up against his AWOL bag and covered with his peacoat. There was always some “SP” who had not fully evolved from apehood, who poked you with his Billy bat and said, “Hey YOU!! Get up! Waddya think yer doin? You wanna sleep, get a gahdam room!”

Peacoats were lined with quilted satin or rayon. I never realized it at the time, but sleeping on bus seats and station benches would be the closest I would ever come to sleeping on satin sheets.

Early in my naval career, a career-hardened (lifer) first class gunner’s mate told me to put my ID and liberty card in the inside pocket of my peacoat.

“Put the sonuvabitches in that gahdam inside pocket and pin the damn thing closed with a diaper pin. Then, take your heavy folding money and put it in your sock. If you do that, learn to never take your socks off in a cathouse. Them damn dockside pickpockets pat ‘cha down for a lumpy wallet and they can relieve you of said wallet so fast you’ll never know you’ve been snookered.

“Only a dumb ass idiot will clam-fold his wallet and tuck it in his thir-teen button bellbottoms. Every kid above the age of six in Italy knows how to lift a wallet an idiot pokes in his pants. Those little bastards learned to pick sailors’ pockets in kindergarten.

“Rolling bluejackets is the national sport in Italy.”

In Washington, DC, they have a wonderful marble and granite plaza honoring the United States Navy. Every man or woman who served this nation in a naval uniform, owes it to himself or herself to visit this memorial and take their families. It honors all naval service and any red-blooded American bluejacket or officer will feel the gentle warmth of pride his or her service is honored within this truly magical place. The focal point of this memorial is a bronze statue of a lone American sailor. No crow on his sleeve tells you that he is non-rated. And, there are further indications that suggest maybe, once upon a time, the sculptor himself may have once been an E-3 raghat. The lad has his collar turned up and his hands in his pockets. I’m sure the Goddess of the Main Induction nearly wets her panties laughing at the old, crusty chiefs standing there with veins popping out of their old, wrinkled necks, muttering, “Look at that idiot sonuvabitch standing there with his collar up and his gahdam hands in his pockets. In my day, I would have ripped that jerk a new one!”

Ah, the satisfied glow of E-3 revenge.

Peacoats...One of God’s better inventions.

FROM THE 1ST ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION OF THE USS BRYCE CANYON

On 15 September 1950, the Bryce Canyon was commissioned a ship in the UNITED STATES NAVY. On the day of commissioning the BRYCE CANYON had become a ship. But she had a long, long way to go before she could be considered an effective unit of the NAVY. The need for hard and skillful work on the part of all hands was plainly evident to everyone.

Now that one year has passed we can examine the results of our efforts. To say that the task has not been easy would be an understatement. In fact, it has been very difficult. But our efforts have been successful.

As the present Commanding Officer, who also had the privilege of being the first Commanding Officer of the USS BRYCE CANYON, I wish to congratulate all of those who have helped, some more than others, some perhaps more willingly than others, to make it possible for all of us to say that the task has been well done.

M.R. Gerin, Captain, USN
Commanding Officer