

BRYCE CANYON UPDATE

Volume 17, Issue 3

July 2012

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A Newsletter Serving Former Crewmen of USS Bryce Canyon (AD-36)



BC ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY MICHAEL NESBIT

Ahoy Sailors:

Our Bryce Canyon Reunion is now only 4 months away, October 25-28th, 2012 in sunny San Francisco, California. This is going to be a special Reunion because one of our own BC Sailors, HARRY STEWART, MR 2 R-2 Division from Apr 79-May 80 will be hosting our Luncheon on the USS HORNET, compliments of his Great American Barbecue in Alameda, CA. You won't want to miss this. Thank you Harry, our BC Members always step up to help when needed. I also want to thank Captain Raymond Ward for his great article in the April Newsletter. He was my Captain when I was on the Bryce Canyon from 69-71 and

was a credit to the Bryce Canyon. I hope to see more articles and maybe some pictures of our Great Ship. Good News for our BC Sailors, the BRYCE CANYON CHALLENGE COIN has arrived at our Premier Reunion Service and they will be mailing them out to Sailors for \$15. You're going to love these coins. You'll see the quality by the colored picture inserted in the Newsletter. This money goes into our account so we can accomplish more things for our BC Sailors and keep the newsletter going.

If you haven't sent in your \$20 Annual Association Dues, please do so. Down the road we maybe able to use some of

our Association money to help defray some of the cost for first-timers that come to the reunion. I'm looking at a lot of ideas to help people experience a Reunion for the 1st time. Believe me, you won't regret the experience. Our BRYCE CANYON Group is looking at all the 900+ members on our mailing list to get you to a Reunion close to where you live. My special thanks to Bruce Campbell, 65-67, for helping me design this BC Coin and all the other stuff he does behind the scene. You're a great partner behind the scenes in making our BC Newsletter a success. We will all be dining together in Chinatown for a great meal. Don't forget to

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**2012 USS BRYCE
CANYON REUNION**

OCTOBER 25-28

**SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA**

**SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT
DOUBLETREE HOTEL**

(Continued from page 1)
bring your "GIFT" for the gift exchange that we always have at our Banquet. Buy something nice that you would like to keep yourself. We will also be raffling off some BC Gifts which is always fun at these reunions. Remember if you spent time on ALCATRAZ, wear a disguise. I'm Michael Nesbit, your BC Association President and Reunion Coordinator. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Reunion in San Francisco. Also remember, next year's 2013 Reunion will be held in Providence, Rhode Island. Call or E-mail me anytime if you have any questions or suggestions for future Reunions.



REUNION BANQUET GIFT EXCHANGE

Don't forget to bring a nice gift (no white elephants) for the gift exchange at the banquet during the 2012 reunion in San Francisco, October 25–28. Participate in the fun of seeing what you get to take home—if you don't bring a gift, you'll miss out on all the fun!

USS BRYCE CANYON SEA CADETS AT BANQUET



Bill Ratner, who is in charge of the USS Bryce Canyon Sea Cadets based out of the San Fernando Valley in the LA basin, will be bringing 5 Cadets and 4 Cadet Leaders to our San Francisco Bryce Canyon Reunion on Oct. 25-28, 2012. His Cadets will be the Color Guard at our Banquet on Saturday night, Oct. 27. We look forward to welcoming these fine young men to our reunion.

Mike Nesbit
BC Association President



WELCOME MAT

The USS BRYCE CANYON Association announces the following former crewmen have recently been located. Welcome aboard and we hope to see you at the next reunion.

Robert Manzanares
man-zy80007@yahoo.com

Jerry DeFlores
jerrybarb@frontiernet.net

Jack Smith
(1965-67) DK1 S-2 Div
210 Westwood St
Hot Springs, AR 71913
501-545-0041

Hal Davis
hal.davis@xrayspecialists.com



TAPS

The Bryce Canyon Update learned of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. Every member of the Association sends his heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the deceased.

Browning Baker
(1963-66) BM2 Weapons
Died March 21, 2011

Leland McGee
(1960-64) HTC Repair
Died April 8, 2012

Ross Edwards
(1958-60) IC3 E Div
Died February 18, 2010

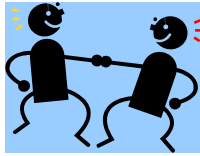
Deane Christ
(1951-54) MR2 5th Div
Died October 24, 2010

DO YOU HAVE ONE OF THESE PATCHES?



Charles O'Brien would like to have one of the original Bryce Canyon Patches, dated 15 September 1951 and would like to know if any of you plankowners have extra ones or know where they can be ordered. If so, contact **Charles O'Brien** at **5450 Witherspoon Dr G-101 Colfax, NC 27235**

or phone at **336-664-9222.**



SWABBIE STORIES

Editor's Note: For this issue we asked to hear from you about the loneliest time you spent in the Navy—for example maybe you missed a holiday, birthday, the birth of your child, a wedding, funeral or any other important occasion for your family or friends. What was the occasion and how did you handle it? Here are your responses:

From **Joe Peone, EM3 1977-80:**

My first duty station after boot camp was Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. I just spent two weeks at home and arrived at Pearl sometime early Spring. What a culture shock to be practically on the other side of the world as I am from upstate N.Y. The first few months I was learning to be a sailor and a "local." Quite a journey it was. The one thing I wanted to do first was check out Honolulu and Waikiki Beach. I had no problem finding friends and stories on where to go and where to stay away from. Hotel St. as I was told was not the place to go, especially for a "boot" sailor. That was probably the worst advice one should give to anyone who has a pocket full of dough and a young curious sailor. Put it this way, I had fun and got back to the base many times over my stay in Pearl. I also remember Hawaii as one of the most memorable places I have ever

been. Now the rest of the story. As I said earlier, arriving at Pearl in early Spring I did not get any more leave that year and spent my first Christmas in "shorts." What a shock it was! No snow, no tree and no family. It was very depressing and I really missed my family and friends. I will never forget that Christmas but sure will remember my first Winter in SHORTS! Aloha, or as they say in Hawaiian, Mele Kalikimaka.

From **Birney Phillips, HTCS, Ret.:**

It was off the coast of Viet-Nam at around Christmas time. My wife and three year old daughter were making me some Christmas cookies to send, and they had the tape recorder on so they could talk to me while baking. My wife told daughter Laura that she would send them talking along with the cookies for my Christmas present. Laura said into the mic, "Hello Daddy, (pause) hello Daddy, (a bit louder), much louder, HELLO DADDY!" then said, "Mommy, Daddy won't Hi me." It was a tough tape to play at Christmas, and that was the loneliest time of my life.

From **R. H. Nickles, Repair Officer (R-1 Div) 1959-61:**

I was always too busy to be lonely at any time in my service in the navy where I always had a great time socially with my fellow shipmates as well.

From **Charles O'Brien, Plank owner:**

San Diego, California, "boot camp," Christmas 1947.

THE GREAT CAR CAPER

By Jerry Sternberg

My name is Jerry Sternberg. I served on the Bryce Canyon from 1952 to 1955, first as communications officer and then as operations officer.

I have been active in several businesses over the years and for several years have written a column for our local weekly here in my home town of Asheville, NC.

My column is called "the gospel according to Jerry" and can be accessed by typing into your browser, "The gospel according to Jerry Mountain Express"

This is the first of about three

articles I think would interest my shipmates, but it may not fit the category that you are requesting.

I went aboard the Bryce Canyon in the summer of 1953 as communications officer.

I had a 1947 Chevrolet 2 door sedan that was worth no more than \$600 in the states. Japan had not revived their car industry and there



was a serious shortage of cars. The rich Japanese were paying out-

rageous prices for anything that rolled.

One of the ship's doctors and I convinced the captain to load my car onto the ship on the premise that it would be very convenient to have our own car in Japan for liberty and R and R.

We arrived in Yokosuka and the car was unloaded on the dock. I had little trouble getting the car registered with the Provost Marshall to drive it on the base.

I had been studying a little Japanese on tapes that the Chaplain had

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given me but it certainly didn't prepare me for dealing with the Japanese DMV in order to get the car registered in Japan. Since I brought the car in "cumshaw" I knew I was somehow going to have to finesse the paperwork.

I showed them my North Carolina title and I had a bunch of insurance papers which did not impress them in the least.

They were looking for the import documents which of course I didn't have. Finally I got them to show me what the document looked like.

It was a piece of paper with about 20 different ink stamps on it. (I don't think the Japanese bureaucracy writes anything. They just have these big racks of stamps that they apply to any open space on a document.)

I went back to the ship and went to the radio shack. One of my insurance papers had this fancy gold embossed seal and had the make model and serial number of the car on it. I decided that was my import paper.

I then stamped imprints of every stamp we had on board including such important things as RUSH, CLASSIFIED, TOP SECRET and affixed a couple of revenue stamps from some old



document I found.

Back at the DMV I handed them this official paper. They took one look at it (of course they had no clue what it said) and it sailed through like silk.

Then I had to go to an inspection station to get the car inspected with my new title in hand. In those days cars did not have electric turn signals and since the Japanese drove on the left side of the road I had to jury rig a wooden turn signal arm on the right hand side of the car.

We all enjoyed the car, especially the captain, and in time I became pretty good at driving on the left side and navigating their primitive roads.

About 8 months into the deployment I decided that I had better do something about selling the car. Car sales were handled by brokers and I found one that was recommended to me by one of the officers on the base.

It should be noted that only rich Japanese had personal cars and had drivers. Therefore 4 door cars were worth considerably more than 2 door cars. I was absolutely overwhelmed when he told me that he could get me 75,000 yen for the car. That was the equivalent of nearly \$1800 American.

We met at the gate and the new owner's driver drove us to Tokyo to a motor vehicle office.

My first surprise was that same cockamamie paper that I had doctored was in their files and was part of the transaction that was completed swiftly.

We went into a small office and they counted out to me the 75,000 yen in 100 yen notes. Then the all jumped up with a "sayonara" and disappeared.

It hadn't occurred to me as to how they were going to pay me and that I was on my own to get back to Yokosuka.

I had all this money and no bag to carry it in. I was wearing my officers overcoat so I filled up the pockets but that only held a fraction of the money. The rest I stuffed down my shirt back and front and buttoned up my over coat best that I could.



It was like a "B" movie, I cautiously found my way to the train and gingerly sat down in those little narrow seats just knowing that I was going to start leaking 100 yen bills and someone was going to kill me for the money.

Even though I got back safely with the money I still wasn't out of the woods. I had to somehow convert the money to American dollars for it to do me any good.

Luckily I found a Japa-

nese travel agent who was selling discount tickets to service men who got a special deal if they bought their ticket overseas. Many of these guys who just arrived from the states paid in dollars. We cut a deal and he converted my cash which enabled me to have a nest egg when I got back to the states and got mustered out.



And there you have the great car caper complete with international monetary intrigue.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 07/12

Balance from 04/12	
\$2513.32	
Received since 04/12	
\$380.00	
Available for 07/12	
\$2893.32	
Expended 07/12 issue	
\$1045.05	
(6 pages—805 copies)	
Postage:	\$232.65
Paper:	\$217.35
Envelopes:	\$ 56.35
Printing Costs:	\$434.70
Labor:	\$104.00
TOTAL COSTS:	
\$1045.05	
Balance Remaining for 10/12	\$1848.27

Dues of \$20.00 are due in January of each year. If you have not sent in your 2012 dues, please mail to Premier Reunion Services, PO Box 11438, Hickory, NC 28603

WESTPAC SAILOR BARS

Submitted by Birney Phillips

Our favorite liberty bars were unlike no other watering holes or dens of iniquity inhabited by lesser men. They had to meet strict standards to be in compliance with the acceptable requirement for a sailor beer-swilling dump. The first and foremost requirement was a crusty old gal serving suds. She had to be able to wrestle King Kong to parade rest, be able to balance a tray with one hand, knock sailors out of the way with the other hand and skillfully navigate through a roomful of milling around drunks. On slow nights, she had to be the kind of gal who would give you a back scratch or put her foot on the table so you could admire her new ankle bracelet some "mook" brought her back from a Hong Kong liberty. A good barmaid had to be able to whisper sweet nothings in your young sailor ear like, "I love you no shit sailor, you buy me Honda?" "She could buy a pack of Clorets and chew up the whole thing before she got within heaving range of any guy she ever wanted to see again." And, from the crusty old gal behind the bar, "Hey animals, I know we have a crowd tonight, but if any of you guys find the head facilities fully occupied and start pissing down the floor drain, you're gonna find yourself scrubbing the deck with your white hats!"

The barmaids had to be able to admire great tattoos, look at pictures of ugly bucktooth kids and smile. They had to be able to help haul drunks to cabs and comfort 19 year-olds, who had lost someone who he thought loved him. They could look at your ship's

identification shoulder tab and tell you the names of the Skippers back to the time you were a Cub Scout. If you came in after a late night maintenance problem and fell asleep with a half eaten Slim-Jim in your hand, they tucked your pea-coat around you, put out the cigarette you left burning in the ashtray and replaced the warm draft you left sitting on the table with a cold one when you woke up. Why? Simply because they were one of the few people on the face of the earth who knew what you did, and appreciated what you were doing. And if you treated them like a decent human being and didn't drive 'em nuts by playing songs they hated on the juke box, they would lean over the back of the booth and park their soft, warm tits on your neck when they sat two San Miguels in front of you.

The imported table wipe down guy and glass washer, trash dumper, deck swabber and paper towel replacer was always the same. The guy had to have baggy tweed pants and a gold tooth, a grin like a 1950 Buick, and a name like "Ramon", "Juan", "Pedro" or "Tico". He had to smoke unfiltered Luckies, Camels or Raleighs. He wiped the tables down with a sour wash rag that smelled like a billy goat's crotch and always said, "How choo navee mans tonight? He was the indispensable man. The guy with credentials that allowed him to borrow Slim-Jims, Beer Nuts and pickled hard boiled eggs from neighboring beer joints when they ran out where he worked.

The establishment itself: The place had to have walls covered with ship and squadron plaques. The walls were adorned with enlarged unit patches and the dates of previous deployments. A dozen or more old, yellowed photographs of fellows named "Buster", "Chicago", "P-Boat Barney", "Flaming Hooker Harry", "Malone", "Honshu Harry", "Jackson", "Douche Bag Doug", and "Capt Slade Cutter" decorated any unused space.

It had to have the obligatory Michelob, Pabst Blue Ribbon and "Beer Nuts sold here" neon signs. An eight-ball mystery beer tap handle and signs reading, "Your mother does not work here, so clean away your frickin trash." "Keep your hands off the barmaid." "Don't throw butts in urinal." "Barmaid's word is final in settling bets." "Take your fights out in the alley behind the bar!" "Owner reserves the right to waltz your worthless sorry ass outside." "Shipmates are responsible for riding herd on their ship/squadron drunks." This was typical signage found in any good liberty bar.

The juke box was built along the lines of a Sherman tank loaded with Hank Williams, Mother Maybelle Carter, Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash and twenty other crooning goobers nobody ever heard of. The damn thing had to have "La Bamba", Herb Alpert's "Lonely Bull", and Johnny Cash's "Don't take your guns to town". The nicer place might have a 3 or 4 piece "band" with a singer crooning, "I Reft my Hear in San Pram-cisco" by Tony Bennett.

The furniture in a real good liberty bar had to be made from coal mine shoring lumber and was not fully acceptable until it had 600 cigarette burns and your ship's numbers or "F**k the Navy" carved into it. The bar had to have a brass foot rail and at least six Slim-Jim containers, an oversized glass cookie jar full of Beer-Nuts, a jar of pickled hard boiled eggs that could produce gas emissions that could shut down a sorority party, and big glass containers full of something called Pickled Pigs Feet and Polish Sausage. Only drunk Chiefs and starving Ethiopians ate pickled pig's feet and unless the last three feet of your colon had been manufac-

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tured by Midas, you didn't want to get anywhere near the Polish Nalpm Dogs.

Decorations: No liberty bar was complete without a couple of hundred faded ship or airplane pictures and a "Shut the hell up!" sign taped on the mirror behind the bar along with several rather tasteless naked lady pictures. The pool table felt had to have at least three strategic rips as a result of drunken competitors and balls that looked as if a gorilla baby had teethed on the sonuvabitches.

Liberty bars were home and it didn't matter what country, state, or city you were in. When you walked into a good liberty bar, you felt at home. These were also establishments where 19 year-old kids received an education available nowhere else on earth. You learned how to "tell" and "listen" to sea stories. You learned about sex at \$10.00 a pop - from professional ladies who taught you things your high school biology teacher didn't know were anatomically possible. You learned how to make a two cushion bank shot and how to toss down a beer and shot of Sun Tory known as a "depth charge."

We were young, and a helluva long way from home. The mind set was, "If I get caught, what are they going to do to me; put me on a 27-Charlie and send me to the South China Sea?" We were pulling down crappy wages for twenty-four

hours a day, seven days a-week availability and loving the life we lived. We didn't know it at the time, but our association with the men we served with forged us into the men we became. A lot of that association took place in bars where we shared the stories accumulated in our, up to then, short lives. We learned about women and that life could be tough on a gal. While many of our classmates were attending college, we were getting an education slicing through the green rolling seas in WestPac, experiencing the orgasmic rush of a night cat shot, the heart pounding drama of the return to the ship with the gut wrenching arrestment to a pitching deck. The hours of tedium, boring holes in the sky late at night, experiencing the periodic discomfort of turbulence, marveling at the creation of St. Elmo's Fire, and sometimes having our reverie interrupted with stark terror. But when we came ashore on liberty, we could rub shoulders with some of the finest men we would ever know, in bars our mothers would never have approved of, in saloons and cabarets that would live in our memories forever. Long live those liberties in West Pac and in the Med - They were the greatest! "Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, I SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY."

WHERE'S MY SHIPMATE?



Looking for a lost shipmate? Send in his name, dates of service and any information you have about him and we'll see if anyone can help you locate him.

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Reproductions of Bryce Canyon Cruise Books Available

Reproductions of the below cruise books are available:

1st Anniversary Cruise Book September 1950-51
1956 Far Eastern Pacific Cruise Book
1957-58 Western Pacific Cruise Book
1959 Western Pacific Cruise Book
1966-67 Western Pacific Cruise Book
1967-68 Western Pacific Cruise Book
1969-71 Cruise Book
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The books are also available on a CD ROM.

Calendars are also available. To see them, go to the following website:

<http://ussbrycecanyonad36.shutterfly.com/499>

Contact:

Bruce Campbell

bluejacket411@gmail.com

408-729-6088



USS BRYCE CANYON (AD-36)

Challenge Coins



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