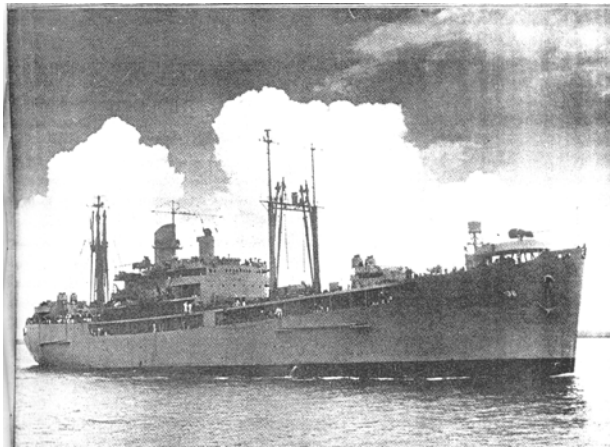


BRYCE CANYON UPDATE

Volume 11, Issue 2

April 2006

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS BRYCE CANYON AD 36



Points of Special Interest

- *Mike Nesbit shares some of the great things about the Annapolis/Washington area in his Coordinator's Message.*
- *Three new names for the roster are found in the Welcome Mat on page two.*
- *Stories of typhoons top the list of worst memories beginning on page three. Best memories include Hawaii for several of the guys.*
- *Learn about the USS Ronald Reagan in an article on page four.*

COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

AHOY BRYCE CANYON SAILORS:

Those of you that made the 2005 BC Reunion last October in San Diego will remember the Great Turn-out we had and fun touring the USS HOWARD (DDG-83), the USS MIDWAY (CV-41) and the site seeing tours throughout San Diego. This year's reunion will be held **Oct 12-15, 2006 at ANNAPOLIS, MD.** If you've never been to the US Naval Academy or seen Washington, DC, you're in for a real treat. The Academy is where the Best and the Brightest Naval Officers are trained and it's a fantastic place to explore. I've been there twice, had a brother gradu-

ate from the Academy, and he also got married there—so it will be fun to go back again to visit. The town of Annapolis is built around the Academy and is a Navy town through and through. The restaurants in town are great and the nautical flair will bring all you sailors back in time when you first joined the Navy. The smell of salt air, fresh ocean breeze and the site of Midshipmen walking around the town will bring back a flood of memories that we all enjoyed while being in the Navy and on the USS Bryce Canyon. Washington, DC has so many things to see that you could spend weeks

there and never see it all. The history, museums and site seeing exhibits, the Vietnam Wall, the World War II Monument, the Capital, Arlington and the White House are just a few of the great places to visit while in Washington. This will be a fantastic place for our reunion this year, so don't miss this one. Remember 2007's reunion will be held in San Antonio, Texas. I look forward to seeing you all again this year. Remember to continue to support the Military Locator that plans our reunions and keeps the newsletter and e-mails alive to keep you informed of all your shipmates.

Mike Nesbit



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.

Bobby Garrison
(1952-55) MM3 3rd Div
1108 Dixon Bridge Rd
Maysville, CA 30558
706-652-2318

Bill Kidder
(1964-66) SK2
607 Grand Ave
Fort Payne, AL 35967
256-845-3714

Daniel Tobin (1972-74)
314 Fox Run Rd
Meridian, MS 39305
843-513-9258
danielkobin1@hotmail.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.

George Sitton, III
(1977-79) LCDR
Died January 13, 2006

James Whaley
Died February 2, 2006

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance from 01/06 issue
\$198.11
Funds Received since 01/06
\$400.00
Funds Available for 04/06 issue
\$598.11
Funds Expended 04/06 issue
\$560.23 (4 pages/785copies)

Postage:	\$227.65
Paper:	\$70.65
Envelopes:	\$ 35.33
Copies:	\$157.00
Labor:	\$69.60
TOTAL:	\$560.23

Balance Remaining for 07/06
\$37.88

Funds will be needed for the next issue. Send contributions to ML&RS PO Drawer 11399, Hickory NC 28603. Be sure to state it is for the Bryce Canyon Update.

USS BRYCE CANYON 2006 REUNION

OCTOBER 12—15

WASHINGTON, DC/ ANNAPOLIS AREA

HOLIDAY INN BWI

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"Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To"

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The UPDATE is the official publication of the USS BRYCE CANYON Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the BRYCE CANYON. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of article submitted for publication. It would be impossible to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the submitter to research each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.



MAIL CALL

Bryce Canyon Update,

I served during WW II on an aircraft carrier, a battleship and a cruiser. I was recalled in the Korean War. I reported on board the USS Bryce Canyon AD 36 in Feb 1951 as a Seaman in the 2nd Division. It was on the first WestPac Cruise. The Bryce Canyon was the best ship I ever served on. I was on active duty during Vietnam. I was Chief MAA in a Seabee Battalion. Also served as security chief at Naval Station in Norfolk, 1974-75. I retired as a Chief Boatswains Mate.

More on XO Frederick W. Hawes. Commander Hawes (Ret) died in 1993. Commander 05 was a member of Fleet Reserve Association, Branch 66, South Weymouth, MA. (www.fva.org) Now called South Shore Branch 66. Phone 508-888-4164.

I will be at the 06 reunion.

James (Red) Phelps
3837 Willowcreek Dr
Dayton, OH 45415
937-890-4910

PLANK OWNERS

A "plank owner" is an individual who was a member of the crew of a ship when that ship was placed in commission. In earlier years, this applied to a first commissioning; since then, it has often been applied to one who was part of a recommissioning crew as well. "Plank owner" is not an official Navy term, and has consequently been variously defined by different Navy units.

Plank-owner certificates are procured by and issued to crew members of the ship being commissioned; they are not officially issued by the Navy. Some ships' crews design their own, while others purchase them from commercial sources. Perhaps the best known of these are the ones sold by the United States Naval Institute.

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE THE BEST & WORST

Editor's Note: We sent an e-mail and asked for the best or worst memory from your time on board the Bryce Canyon. Here are your responses. Thanks to all who participated! If we didn't hear from you, send in your story for the next issue.

I'm not sure if this is the Best or Worst story, but...

During the transit to California in '78 (might have been '79), the BC went through a rough bit of weather.

Being as my bunk was in Forward Repair Berthing (as close to the bow at the waterline as one could be), and getting there during the ship's pitching and rolling from the Optical Shop (on the forward end of the After Boat Deck), although immensely fun, didn't hold much promise for a good night's sleep. Sure, we had the old canvas racks—with trice-up straps which held us in place so we wouldn't end up on the deck, but as several "shippies" in berthing were new to rough seas, the atmosphere was a touch less than what I would consider desirable.

A few of us who shared the belief that it might be better to sleep in the shop, opted to do so. I don't recall exactly who of my buds participated, but I'm sure a few of these wild seafarers chose to camp out in Shop 35 A: MRFN Greg Barton, OM2 Brian "Stump" Mowers, IM2 Steve "Bonzo" Connelly, OMSA Randall Lemons, RM3 Steve "Scarfo" Karchefsky, and of course, myself.

We corralled chairs into a few corners of the shop, secured anything that might move, duct taped Navy wool blankets to the wonderfully soft (ha-ha) linoleum tile deck, and hung on to whatever we could to keep from sliding off the blankets and into the parts of lockers and work benches.

I don't think any of us got more than 10 minutes of sleep that night.

Neptune was definitely showing us how much fun he could send our way.

At one point during the night's roller coaster ride, the chairs we had tied into the forward-port corner of the shop broke loose and stampeded us. Boy, those things could really roll! That was followed shortly by a loud crash in the Typewriter Repair Shop, just inboard of us.

Well, we had to go look, didn't we? A very large parts cabinet had broken free of its fasteners and was lying all over the deck—not much to do then but share a few well-seasoned expletives and get back to our makeshift bunks.

Morning dawned, and the Bos'n blew reveille. We were still in some large seas, and as it turned out, would remain so for a few days.

The biggest benefit to such weather was the incredibly short chow line. It was better than going to Shoney's Big Boy—no waiting, no bill to pay, and the cook would give you whatever you desired. Apparently, he had ridden out worse in his time.

The fondest memory of this adventure was sitting on the mess decks (with its long tables arranged forward to aft), seated across from our buddies, and in turn, lifting our trays from the table as we felt the beginnings of a large swell come up. We slid back from the table a few feet—for several seconds, and then slid back to the table to grab a few bites and watch our counterparts slide away.

This memory still brings a huge smile to my face. Where else but on the briny deep can you have such fun?

Thanks to my comrades for getting back in touch after so many years.

Fair winds, me hardies!
Mark M.M. Mitchell (OM1 ret)

I was not stationed on the BC for very long. To the best of my memory, I was aboard for the years 1978

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

and 1979. I guess one of the best memories was just enjoying the beauty of the islands. For a few bucks you could travel anywhere (by bus) on Oahu. The North Shore was so beautiful. At the time it was not really developed. You could see bits and pieces of old Hawaii and the beautiful shores, unlike Waikiki Beach and Honolulu. Don't get me wrong. Oahu in itself is a beautiful place, but too commercialized even back then. I miss being there. The worst memory, not that it was terrible, was being there for Christmas and New Year. Being from upstate New York, I missed the snow and the feel of a family Christmas. I think back now almost thirty years later. I would almost give up anything to go back even for a few days. The Navy was not a bad way to make a living and Pearl Harbor and the Bryce Canyon were great duty!

Joe Peone

I reported to the USS Bryce Canyon in April 1973 shortly after the ship had returned from its last WestPac tour. I was a young 18-year old when I reported to the Data Processing area in the Supply Department. I heard all of the old stories of the West Pac. My fondest memories are going out to sea to perform training and stopping in some of the other islands (Hawaii & Maui) for the weekend. I quickly learned that the commissary men were the best people to become friends with. With Chief Brown in charge, I experienced some of the "Soul Food" I had never eaten, pigs feet, fried okra, lobster, pecan pie, etc. It was delicious! I remember the good guys that I worked with, Rufus (RW) Johnson, the Dwyer brothers, Robert Velez, Max, Dave Clark, Bill.

Peter Dibala
DP3 1973-74

Here's my worst memory. I'm John Elliott, and I was aboard the Bryce

Canyon for the 1959 WestPac tour in "D" Division. We had left Subic Bay in September for Sasebo, Japan. On the way we encountered Typhoon Ellen. We ran around the Pacific for three days trying to dodge that damn typhoon and wound up right in the middle of it. Trying to walk throughout the ship was impossible. You would put one foot out to step forward and the deck would literally go out from under you, or worse yet, the deck would come up to meet you. Either way you were on your backside. The bow of the ship would completely submerge in the huge waves and in a hard roll, the portholes in our work space, the dental clinic, midship's main deck would show green water. We wondered at times if we would survive the experience. By the time we arrived at Sasebo, we had lost two of our utility boats from the main deck forward and had some damage to the forward boom. That was an experience I would not choose to repeat.

John W. Elliott

My worst story on the B.C. was in 1968. We were coming back from Japan, to Long Beach, CA. It was around January/February. We came down through the Alaskan Straits and the temperature was below zero and the wind blew very hard. When standing a watch on the Bridge, you had to hold on to something so you wouldn't be thrown down. The ship could take a 22 degree roll safely, (back and forth) and we were taking 20 degree rolls. The Port & Starboard lookouts were only allowed outside the bridge for 15 minutes because their faces would have frozen. A four hour watch seemed like 10 hours long. This lasted about 2 or 3 days before we got into better weather. Most of the crew got sea sick because of the rough seas. We sure were glad to see land again.

Thanks,
Tom Price

USS RONALD REAGAN

Thought you might be interested in some statistics about the new Navy ship, USS Ronald Reagan, commissioned in 2003.

CAPABILITY

- A. Top speed exceeds 30 knots
- B. Powered by two nuclear reactors that can operate for more than 20 years without refueling.
- C. Expected to operate in the fleet for about 50 years.
- D. Carries over 80 combat aircraft
- E. Three arresting cables can stop a 28-ton aircraft going 150 miles per hour in less than 400 feet.

SIZE

- A. Towers 20 stories above the waterline
- B. 1092 feet long; nearly as long as the Empire State Building is tall
- C. Flight deck covers 4.5 acres
- D. 4 bronze propellers, each 21 feet across and weighing 66,200 pounds
- E. 2 rudders, each 29 by 22 feet and weighing 50 tons
- F. 4 high speed aircraft elevators, each over 4,000 square feet

CAPACITY

- A. Home to about 6,000 Navy personnel
 - B. Carries enough food and supplies to operate for 90 days
 - C. 18,150 meals served daily
 - D. Distillation plants provide 400,000 gallons of fresh water from sea water daily, enough for 2000 homes
 - E. Nearly 30,000 light fixtures and 1,325 miles of cable and wiring
 - F. 1,400 telephones, 14,000 pillow-cases and 28,000 sheets
 - G. Costs the Navy approximately \$250,000 per day for pier side operation
 - H. Costs the Navy approximately \$2.5 million per day for underway operations (Sailors' salaries included.)
-