

POWELL POST

Volume 9, Issue 2

March 2003

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS HALSEY POWELL



Special Points of Interest

- Skipper Mike keeps you updated and gives you some ideas for stories for the next newsletter. Hope you will respond.
- Page two has the WELCOME MAT. We welcome twelve new members. Hope they can make the reunion in Norfolk.
- Don't miss MAIL CALL on pages two thru four. Great reading for you written by John Ewing. More in the next issue also.
- And of course, we have to have a joke by Red! See page four and have a laugh.

“NOW HEAR THIS”

What's that saying, "Time flies when you're having fun"? Well, I must be having a blast! Seems like I just wrote a column for Powell Post.

I'll start with the not so good news. We are about 10% behind in dues paying members compared to last year. Let's all, who have not yet remembered, try to take care of this problem. John Preston will be helping me by making some contacts by e-mail. Thank you, John.

More not so good news is that I added four (4) names to the deceased list since I returned from Cor-

pus Christi. On the other side of that, I added ten (10) names to the mailing list.

As of late I have not had much contact with the ML&RS about the 2003 reunion. They are planning, and as we get into the spring and summer, I will be contacting them and working out the details. Dates are still October 1-5 at the Airport Hilton in Norfolk.

On the home front, things are both bad and good. It's cold and snowy with no relief in sight. Talked to DeLaCruz in Corpus Christi a couple weeks

ago, and he sounded as if he wouldn't survive the 40s at night and 50s during the day. Sounds better than 16"-20" of snow and 2 degrees. I told him that, but haven't talked to him since because our phone lines are frozen. It's just plain terrible.

The good news is that Ruth has vacation this week, and when she goes back she has 30 days to work. I have a short timers chart on my desk. She's quite happy—I'm thrilled.

Bubba doesn't like to go out in this weather. He does, but my garage is

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about as far as he goes. Can't blame him, like his legs are only 4 inches long, and that's not good.

The good news from here is that after 2 1/2 years of fighting with Social Security, I won.

Elsewhere in this issue is a letter from John Ewing to everyone.

That is all,
Skipper Mike

WWII VETS

Capt. Merrill told me that when he reported aboard the Powell the main conversation was the exploits of various individuals when on liberty in New Orleans, LA.

I'd like to hear more. Why don't one of you WWII guys write something for the Powell Post?

Maybe change the names to protect the guilty.

Mike Baker

????

I heard at the reunion in St. Louis that the Korean War crews fired more 5" ammo than WWII crews. O. K.—COULD BE.

Let's hear from a WWII Vet with the story of firing off one side of the ship while loading ammo on the other side. I think it was at Saipan.

And what about Willy Peter rounds, pigs and roast pork for the Marines?

Mike Baker

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



WELCOME MAT

The USS HALSEY POWELL Association welcomes the following recently located crewmembers. We hope to see you at our next reunion, and trust that you will become an active member of the Association. Welcome Aboard!

James Alton (1963-65)
13104 Ruth Ella Rd
Geismar, LA 70734
jalton1973@aol.com

John McDanel
730 Mockingbird Cir
Escondido, CA 92025-7454
jkmcdanel@yahoo.com

Terry Rummel
3173 Diablo View Rd
LaFayette, CA 94549
trummel@pacbell.net

Moses Rodriquez
6511 S Allison St
Littleton, CO 80123
303-979-2079
moe2lou@aol.com

Eugene Lisle (1951-52) QMQ1 Bridge
46160 Burroweed Ln
Palm Desert, CA 92260-5575
760-341-7577
skeeix@msn.com

Herbert Woods
PO Box 14484
Huntsville, AL 35815-0484

J.P. Burns, Jr.
11800 Sunrise Valley Dr
Reston, VA 22091

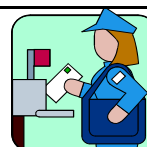
F.L. Felsen (1951-53) Ltjg Ops
2146 A Clinton Ave
Alameda, CA 94501
510-749-0516

Robert Learn (1951-53) BT3
325 Brownsville Rd
Watsonville, CA 95076
831-724-1639

Leonard Forster (1955-56) FT3
2461 Princeton Dr
San Bruno, CA 94066
650-589-6041

Peter Reis (1967-68) Supply Officer
21 High Field Dr
Burlington, CT 06013-1510
860-675-0227

Donald Brant (1954-57)
101 Spring Creek Ln
Chester, IL 62233
618-826-3928



MAIL CALL

Dear ML&RS,

After my recent back surgery, I received so many well wishes, that it made me realize how truly rich I am in great friends! I'm getting better every day.

Thank you,
Gary D. Mootry
102 Molalla Ct
Roseburg, OR 97470

To My Halsey Powell Shipmates,

Just on the off chance that you might be interested, or at least curious, as to what overtakes your ex-Bo's'n in New Zealand when he is unsuspecting?

A year ago when I sent out the first of this sort of message, I vowed a quiet but determined vow that I would do it about once a month, hoping by doing so I would provoke some of you to write me now and then. However, my record over the past twelve months in this matter will provoke no one. Well, not to write a letter, that's for sure. Well, hey, friends, what say we forget the past, hey? Fresh start out west, as they say?

So here, in no order at all, are a

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few thoughts for you to mull at???

On the Health Front:

My scalp continues to push its way heroically up through my hair—something I wouldn't have thought possible in 1953—glistening brightly when the sun hits it, such as today playing tennis. I am not bothered when my opponents shield their eyes and cry, "Foul! Foul!" They should have brought their sun hats and dark glasses. They knew I was going to be there.

The scheduled kayak-paddle of 35 miles up the Kaipara Harbor into Dargaville did not eventuate. Forecasts of a solid week of wind and rain sent that scheme onto the back burner. On paper it looked good. A seven-knot tide pushing us if we caught it right, was an enticing part of the project. It is rumored, even by historians, that a Spanish galleon of 1600s vintage lies under the mud somewhere in the river that runs past Dargaville. I doubt whether we ever were *really* convinced we would stumble across it, but we nevertheless insisted on longer-than-average paddles for our kayaks. Doesn't hurt to take a sounding now and then. I am told that gold bullion bars make a distinctive "ka-ching" when struck with a paddle.

My general fitness is returning, but with the speed of a crippled glacier, after time off to have a toe straightened. Silly thing was curling up quite in circumvention of what is proper for toes. The surgeon made a couple of cuts, then inserted a pin to make the toe permanently stiff. The bright little head of the pin sticking out from my toe gained the immediate approval of all the students at the art school. "Hey, cool, man," was the universal opinion. They accepted me as one of *them* until the pin was removed. I appealed to the surgeon to leave it in, and add one each to my other toes, with bigger, brighter heads on them. His reply was, "You may put your sock on now, Mr. Ewing."

Next Tuesday I begin a regime

of dental work that I will happily trade with any of you for any old thing you want to name. In fact, I will *give* it to you. All you need do is ask.

Anyone?

No?

OK, guess I'll go through with it. The bridge I am currently wearing in front dates back to Mare Island Navy Shipyard, 1953, or whenever. On a whim I asked the station dentist, a three-striper, I believe, if he would pull my front teeth and construct me a bridge that would make me handsome.

"Why?" he asked. "Your teeth are OK."

"Yes, sir, but they are not straight."

Some of you older hands may remember the hilarity I provided at chow my first meal with no teeth in front. I would never have guessed how much joy biting a piece of Navy bread would bring to the lives of those on-looking sailor-folk. All I did to the bread was mash a couple of holes in it. When I tried to pull the bite of bread off, the mess decks reverberated with howls of delight. I gave up and simply gnawed at it from the port side, a maneuver that worked, but did nothing to dilute my humiliation. Later, (I'm *sure* you all remember this) when I stood Boatswain Mate of the Watch, I was sent to the PA to alert those concerned to the 2000 Reports. I spluttered the words exactly according to protocol, I swear it, and guys began emerging from hatches in great bewilderment, dressed and half-dressed, crying, "What was that? What was that?" and grabbing life-jackets. Before calm was restored over 40 men had abandoned ship. This was extremely painful to them, for we were in drydock at the time. I seem to remember that the OOD passed the word himself for the rest of the watch. He was quoted as saying, "Let Ewing blow his pipe all he wants to, but keep him away from the PA system." This may be true.

Anyway, on Tuesday I start with Pene Childs, dentist #1, cutting off the old bridge. She says, "Don't worry, John. We have the best

equipment. High speed cutters and stuff." Does she think I am reassured by that? I'm not a nincompoop. Not a complete one anyway. Does she think I don't know what happens if you don't turn off those high-speed cutters quickly enough? But she will cut the thing off and with luck leave me my tongue and send me reeling up the street to dentist #2 who will pull the two teeth (one of which got broken playing tennis. The guy has teeth marks on his shoulder to this very day) that have served as anchor points for these many years. He will trim the gums up as he pleases, grind new settings on the next two teeth back, pat me on the shoulder and say, "Here's the telephone number of the pharmacy if you feel any stress later." I then return to Pene who will jam plate-sized trays of goo into my already traumatized mouth to make impressions for the bridge. For all this I get the privilege of paying about \$12,000 for them to divide up, while I go around for goodness-knows-how-long unable to eat solids, and unwilling to smile. Not that I expect to do any smiling.

My times of looking after and tending stroke victims are a bright spot for me. That I have been blessed with good health is something I will never take for granted, and it is my hope that I may make a gesture of gratitude for that by giving these folk all the extra attention and care I can. Certainly it is not to be doubted how grateful they appear to be when someone shows something in the way of concern for them, or sits and talks with them for a while. I think my next step may be to take my sketchpad and go sit among them and make drawings. It seems everyone likes to watch people draw. Even bad drawings hold their attention. I will get by.

Jenny, my native-girl wife, is fit and well also, providing those pleasant distractions Navy guys line the rails for. I am very pleased with her progress in understanding my Navy Ways. We were securing kayaks on the roof rack recently, and she said,

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"Do some of those knot-things like you had in the Navy." It gives me a warm feeling to know my time as a Boatswain was not misspent. Perhaps it is best after all that I didn't become a captain, or exec. I will not, however, try to explain the SOS breakfast to her.

I freely admit to many moments of wishing I could be amongst you folk more often. I enjoy so much the visits that have been possible these past few years, and at the same time regret the passing away of some of the guys. In that regard I would make this request of you: take some time now and then to sit quietly and think of each other. You will find that the quietness and thinking soon leads to something very much like prayer, and there is nothing more worthwhile than praying for your good mates. None of us have reached, nor will we ever reach, the point where we do not need a certain amount of attention from God now and then.

I close with love???

John Ewing, BM2

SEASICKNESS

By John Ewing

In 1946 the USS Valley Forge (CV-45) was taken down from the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard down the Delaware River to Chesapeake Bay for a "shakedown cruise." This means about what it sounds like: give the old girl a good shaking and see what comes loose. We didn't put too much stress on her, though; simply a couple of days at a gingerly pace, working out a few things having to do with steering, or engines, or something.

As new arrivals we were anticipating getting seasick and having it done with, so this river cruise provided the opportunity. We dreaded it, but consoled ourselves with the thought that getting seasick was like having an inoculation; do it once and it will last for your whole Navy career.

It was very exciting to throw off the mooring lines and feel the huge monster of a ship gradually ease away from where she had been sitting for so long. In fact, it was more as if Philadelphia was moving away from us. We probably never really expected that the Valley Forge could move. She had been like part of the shipyard, and now suddenly she was no longer attached to it. Once the tugs had towed us out into the river clear of the clutter of the shipyard and surrounds, the ship picked up speed, possibly to about 5 knots, or about seven miles an hour. I stood on the hangar deck feeling the thrill of actually being afloat on a moving Navy ship. I waited expectantly to feel the wind rushing, sort of, past me. Jameison and I took position near the rail. We watched intently with narrowed eyes to see whether the ship was actually rolling from side to side; I thought I saw the horizon slant a bit, but the movement was so subtle I wasn't positive.

"Is it moving?" I asked Jameison.

"I ain't sure, but it might've," he replied.

We kept watching.

"There! Look! It moved!" I said.

"I see it, I see it," said Jameison, and we hurried back to the fantail and sat down with a bucket between us to await the onset of seasickness.

Nothing happened for a very long while as we watched each other across the bucket. We began to wonder when the seasickness was going to take effect. We waited a bit longer, then mess call sounded, so we decided to postpone the seasickness until after chow.

After chow I forgot about the seasickness and went to the movie, then forgot again and hit the sack.

Next morning, after breakfast, I suddenly remembered (it may have been something about the breakfast) that I had to get seasick, so I went back to my spot on the fantail and sat down again with my bucket. To console and comfort me in my sickness I had provided myself with a few Milky Ways. But some days nothing works out; the Chief Bo's'n came onto the fantail, to pick his

teeth I believe, and saw me sitting eating candy with my bucket in my lap. He then created such a fuss about something that I went away from there to some other place, just to have peace.

I never got around to being seasick and feel that my Naval Career may lack a certain symmetry because of it.

John Ewing

RED'S JOKE CORNER

Sent to Red Belden from
John Preston

I went to the store the other day, and I was in there for only about 5 minutes. When I came out there was a motorcycle cop writing a parking ticket. So I went up to him and said, "Come on, buddy, how about giving a guy a break?"

He ignored me and continued writing the ticket. So I called him a pencil-necked Nazi. He glared at me and started writing another ticket for worn tires!. So I called him a piece of horse s***. He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket! This went on for about 20 minutes... the more I abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

I didn't care. My car was parked around the corner. I try to have a little fun each day. It's important.

IMPORTANT DATES IN MARCH

MARCH 3, 1871— Navy Medical Corps established

MARCH 10, 1933— Pacific Fleet provides assistance after earthquake at Long Beach, CA

MARCH 28, 1800—Essex is first US Navy ship to pass Cape of Good Hope

USS HALSEY POWELL REUNION

OCTOBER 1-5, 2003
NORFOLK, VA
NORFOLK AIRPORT
HILTON HOTEL

NEWSLETTER FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

The cost of this issue is \$270.10.