

POWELL POST

Volume 9, Issue 3

June 2003

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS HALSEY POWELL



REUNION DATE CHANGE

The dates for the 2003 USS Halsey Powell reunion have been changed from the formerly announced October dates to **September 24-28**.

The change is due to the fact that the hospitality room available on those dates was far too small for the Halsey Powell group. In order to get a more acceptable hospitality room, the dates had to be changed. The Norfolk Airport Hilton is still the host hotel, the only thing changed has been the dates. We regret any inconvenience this has caused any of you, but feel it was the best decision for you.

BOOT CAMP MEMOIRS IX: THE FIRING RANGE

WRITTEN BY JOHN EWING

As raw recruits we had hoped to prolong the issue indefinitely, but eventually we were required to demonstrate our ability to fire the M-1 rifle. We had spent several hours during our stint at Camp Decatur clicking-in with empty rifles and familiarizing ourselves with the fundamentals of firing the M-1, such as not shooting each other or dropping it on our feet. But the inevitable came; we were placed on busses and driven up the warm Southern California coast to the

Marine Corps' Camp Matthews to spend the day in real firing, with real bullets.

The rifle range was in a sweltering, dry, and barren area, far away from built-up areas. It had long earlier been decided by very wise men that it would be prudent to keep Navy guys with weapons as far from civilization as possible; the minimum safe distance was worked out to be at least the range of an M-1.

The busses were parked in the hot sunshine on a mesa-like rise overlooking parts of the Camp

Pendleton at Oceanside; the view was wide and pretty, if you like desert. We trooped off the busses and endured more last-minute instructions, this time from rifle-experts: Marines.

We took our places on the firing line, a double row of boys-in-blue trying not to show the apprehension we each felt expanding in our bosoms. Very, very few of us had any ideas what to expect from the M-1, except that it would in all likelihood be unpleasant and/

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or dangerous, since we were, after all, in the Navy.

We held the M-1s as the Marines instructed us, balanced nicely in our left hand with the butt resting just above the groin, with a clip of live ammunition in the right hand. That clip of live ammunition became suddenly a defining symbol of what we had done in joining the Navy, and made us perhaps more attentive to the Marines than we would ordinarily have been. Events were taking on an unexpected realism.

When we had been given permission, we inserted the 8-round clip of bullets into the breech of the M-1, many of us getting our fingers clear before the mechanism snapped into place and sheared them off. I got off lightly; one finger jammed and turned blue, but I only lost a fingernail.

At the proper commands and according to prearranged signals, we fired several clips from each of the several positions: the Prone, the Kneeling, and the Upright. I can recall with pleasure the loudness of the firing, and the musical little "cling" sound when the empty clip is ejected. It was a happy surprise to me that the kick from the M-1 was much less fierce than I was expecting. In fact, it was a distinct thrill to experience through the shoulders and arms the power a real weapon has.

The procedure for ascertaining whether we were wasting the Navy's time and ammunition was that after each round we fired, our targets were lowered by pulleys into trenches underneath the targets, and the Marines positioned in the trenches would paste a round white marker over the place where the bullet went through the target. They then raised the target back up so we could see how close we came to the bulls eye.

I do not consider it a reflection on the accuracy of our firing that the Marines immediately started digging the trenches deeper; I prefer to think of it as a mark suggest-

ing the delicate nature of the Marines, and find myself wondering how they ever managed to take Guadalcanal.

The Marines also took great delight in waving a bright red flag in front of the whole target when we missed it completely. We were supposed to feel humiliated, but we just laughed and acted as though that was the way it should be.

That attitude drove the Marines crazy, of course, which made us feel good.

The red flag that the Marines waved on our wild misses was referred to as "Maggie's Drawers," and although we got not so much as even a glimpse of Maggie herself, we consoled ourselves with the thought that at least on such a hot day she was that little bit cooler than we were.



NOW HEAR THIS!

Short article this month as it's that time of year I get busy with the reunion planning and my yard and garden.

Trauts will be here for a day next week, so Duane and I will discuss the reunion.

ML&RS advises that hotel and buses are booked and more final details are in process.

My goal of 36 new names on the mailing list this year is going well. We have added 30 so far.

On the home front, all is well. Ruth is now retired, Bubba is still Bubba. This is tulip time week, so will try to stay home, out of everyone's way.

Look forward to seeing many of you in Norfolk.

That is all,
Skipper Mike



NEWSLETTER FINANCIAL STATEMENT:
The cost of this issue is \$274.01.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The POWELL POST is the official publication of the USS HALSEY POWELL Association. It is published quarterly in March, June, September and December, *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 Halsey Powell by sending contributions to Mike Baker, President USS Halsey Powell Association.

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.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations. Copyrighted material cannot be used without attribution to the author and publication. If you think an article printed in another publication would be of interest to your shipmates, send the entire article - do not paraphrase it and send it in your own words. Let the editor do that.

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



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!

David Harrison (1963-?) CS3
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David Parker (1966-68) EMC
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CHANGE OF E-MAIL
J. E. "Jim" Alton
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TAPS

The Post was notified of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. Not all members died recently, but we just learned of their deaths. The entire crew sends our deepest sympathy to the widows, families and friends of the deceased.

Arthur Reece (1951-55)
Date of death not known

Edgar Davis
Died March 18, 2003

Sanford Freeman
Died January 21, 2003

Richard Palmer
Date of death not known

Arnold Hoit
Died 1988

Clarence Martin (1955-61) RM3
Died April 20, 2003

Basil Patterson (1944-45)
Died 1958

Raymond E. Brewer (1952-56) BT1
Died April 6, 2003

Anyone knowing of, or learning of the death of a shipmate, please notify the Powell Post, at ML &RS, Inc. The date of death doesn't matter, we want to recognize the former crewman by listing his name in the Powell Post and by placing his name on the Halsey Powell Honor Roll.



MAIL CALL

Dear Halsey Powell shipmates,

I enjoyed so much reading shipmate John Ewing's letter in the March Powell Post that I feel encouraged to make a contribution as well. There is an old saying in the Navy that you never forget your shipmates on your first ship. I can recollect the wardroom of Halsey Powell in 1951-52 so well that I think I can still call out a roster. This may be of interest to both mess decks and wardroom shipmates.

Commanding Officer: CDR Francesco Constagliola ("All ahead flank, Frank") Naval Academy '41 and a loyal attendee at all reunions.

Executive Officer: LCDR Norton Gireault. Saw him at the San Francisco reunion. He still looks as young as he did 50 years ago.

Operations Officer: LT Ted Curtis. Saw him at the Washington reunion. We made a boat ride together.

Gunnery Officer: LT Joe Chambliss. My mentor and roommate. He taught me how to shoot. Saw him at the San Francisco reunion.

Engineering Officer: LT Pete Wren. "Anyone want to buy a REO truck?" Was at the San Francisco reunion.

First LT: LT Andy Jones. He tried to make a seaman out of me.

Navigator: LT Howie Steel. "Where are we?"

Asst. Gunnery: LT Fred Potoff. 40mm battery officer.

Asst. Engineering: LT Wally Kelber. "He's not sleeping on watch, he's in ecstasy!"

Comm Officer: LTJG Dante Scaccia. Doubled as a legal officer.

Supply Officer: LTJG Howard Whittaker. He may still owe me money.

CIC Officer: LTJG Richard Gehring. (deceased) Went to high school with Arlene Dahl.

Electronics Material Officer: F.L.

"Lank" Felsen. As tall and as skinny as I was.

Registered Pubs Officer: Howard Jackson. "Need to catch some shut-eye."

Asst First Lieutenant: ENS Don Angier. "So what if I do get wet; we need to heave in on that anchor!"

Main Propulsion Asst. ENS "Smitty" Schmidt. (deceased) Was always at our reunions in spirit.

5" Battery Officer: ENS Jim Winnefeld. "Surface action starboard!"

Asst. EMO: Warrant Officer Ty —?— (Somebody help me.) He moved from the CPO mess to the wardroom during the cruise.

Forgive me if I left anyone out. Unforgettable are the good sailors who served with me in the first and second divisions: Chief Neal, GM1 Pederson, GM1 Pomeroy, TM1 Herbison, FC2 Swamson, FC3 Hancak, GMSN Brotzman, TM3 Archer, then BM3 Ewing, BM2 Palmer, our fire controlman chief whose name escapes me but who always stood a good watch and relieved me as director officer, BM3 Belden. Other memorable shipmates: DC2 Flaherty, RDSNs Anton and Hanne (who looked the other way when they had a seasick CIC watch officer on their hands).

If this stirs up memories, drop Skipper Mike a line and help fill out our Halsey Powell genealogy with your own sea stories and recollections. As we enter geezerhood together, our memories need all the help they can get.

The best,
Jim Winnefeld
1310 River Crescent Dr
Annapolis, MD 21401

The following excerpt was submitted by John Preston and comes from "Military Magazine." More from this article will appear in the next issue.

**OKINAWA CAMPAIGN
22 MARCH TO 27 MAY 1945**
Rearming support during the

Okinawa campaign was principally made to the 5th Fleet fast carriers. From 22 March to 27 May 1945 the five AEs, in a total of 106 days of at-sea rearming operations delivered 15,159 tons-or a daily average of 143 tons. Regardless of the difficulties, the concept of rearming warships at sea had been proven.

As an example of the intense pressure under which the service squadron ships and their crews operated was the complicated and challenging station-keeping situation that came about while the Vesuvius was rearming the USS Bennington (CV-20) and USS Blue (DD 774).

The Bennington was to port with Blue to starboard. Outboard of Blue, a second destroyer was passing mail to Blue and to a third destroyer on her starboard. There were five ships in line, attached to one another, steaming at 10 knots. Bennington had to launch a CAP of fighter planes and the launchers required all five ships to maneuver and come about into the wind while Vesuvius continued rearming operations. (I wonder if the Air Force has ever had 5 planes refueling at the same time.)

This was a challenge in station-keeping that, to my knowledge, has never been duplicated. However, it would not be fair to say that rearming operations were all work. Whenever a carrier was alongside, one could always count on being entertained by the ship's band and usually, the last cargo net that was returned before the ships disengaged would be loaded with tins of ice cream for that evening's well-earned dessert.

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