

POWELL POST

Volume 14 Issue 3

June 2008

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS HALSEY POWELL



Points of Special Interest

- *Jim Wyatt shares his thoughts on Memorial Day with you in the cover article.*
- *See how the kamikaze attack in 1945 related to the events of November 1963 in C.A. Smith's story beginning on page two.*
- *Learn about the one time biggest and most active naval base in the world on page four.*
- *The biography of one of your Duty Section members, Luciano De La Cruz, is on page four.*
- *Ed Collender's story continues on page five.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

While watching the National Memorial Day concert, I was struck by the bravery exhibited by many of the veterans that were honored as heroes.

As I thought about the men I have gotten better acquainted with at the Halsey Powell reunions, I realized that while attending these gatherings, I am in the company of heroes. The men who were aboard during WWII and especially at the time of the attack by the suicide plane, were all heroes. Not only those who were killed or wounded, but also the men who worked so hard under dangerous conditions to save the ship

and bring her back to port and safety.

Then I thought of the men aboard during the Korean and Vietnam Wars who sailed in harms way. They served their country with honor and conviction. Proud to be Americans.

As one who was never in action against an enemy, I hold these men in high regard. But one thing we all have in common is that we all were ready and able to do whatever our country asked of us, and we all served our country well. I look forward to seeing you all at the reunion in Nashville this September. It will again allow me to be "in

the company of heroes." I would hope you all will be able to attend with me and become better acquainted with those who served with you aboard the great ship Halsey Powell.

Jim Wyatt
Reunion coordinator/"Skipper"

**2008 HALSEY POWELL
REUNION**

SEPT 10-14

NASHVILLE, TN

**HOLIDAY INN SELECT
OPRYLAND**



WELCOME MAT

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

James Crenshaw
PO Box 578
Goose Creek, SC 29445



TAPS

The Post was notified of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. The entire crew sends our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the deceased. Please let ML&RS know if you learn of the death of a former shipmate so he can be recognized in here and on the Honor Roll at the reunion.

Larry Benning
Died April 1, 2008

John Harris
(1945-Decommissioning)
Date of death not reported

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

MAIN SHAFT BREAKS AT FULL POWER

By: C.A. Smith
USS Halsey Powell (DD686)
Dec 1961-May 1965
M & B Div Officer, MPA, Engineering Officer

USS Halsey Powell (DD686) successfully thwarted disaster when the starboard stern tube shaft fractured during a full power run while returning from Southeast Asia in November 1963.

When I read the Crews Profiles published by the reunion group, I realized that the stage was set for this casualty on March 20, 1945 when the ship was hit by a Kamikaze while operating in waters off Okushu, Japan. The number of shipmates from the 1943-45 time period that graciously gave their information in the Crews Profiles all listed under "worst memories" the "shipmates lost during the kamikaze attack", the damage caused by the "suicide plane", "being hit by Kamikaze", "the hit" and then both shooting down kamikaze planes and being hit by a kamikaze plane.

On March 20, 1945 Halsey Powell was alongside USS Hancock (VCA 19) for fuel. As the Halsey Powell was getting clear a kamikaze plane overshot the Hancock and hit the Halsey Powell, disabling her steering gear and doing significant damage to the starboard quarter of the ship. Nine men were killed and over 30 were wounded in that attack. Quick work with the engines helped avert a collision with the carrier, all while the ensuing fires were being contained and controlled on board. The ship sailed for Ulithi, arriving March 25th and then set sail for San Pedro, California. She arrived on May 8th and sailed again for Eniwetok on July 19th. She arrived in time to participate in the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

These bits of history are very important to the events of November 1963. Early in 1963 we had started our WestPac tour after

spending part of 1962 as very active participants in Operation Dominic as part of JTF-8 at Christmas and Johnson Islands for a 29 shot nuclear testing program. Steering gear problems and starboard line shaft spring bearing problems were events that were a constant during this WestPac deployment. We replaced spring bearings in the after fire room and after engine room underway during this deployment. We had rudder problems, steering gear synchro-servo problems and gyro problems all during this deployment. As I learn more about the damages suffered during the Kamikaze attack in March 1943 and the expediency of the repairs in order to get this ship back into action more of the pieces seem to fit together.

On the 1963 deployment we were part of the task force with USS Constellation (CVA 64), going to WestPac for her maiden deployment after becoming part of the fleet in January 1962. Our deployment involved many hours of patrol in the Straits of Formosa in addition to our plane guard duties with the task force. We got shipboard work done at the yards in Sasabo, Japan as well as getting assistance from the ROC Navy in Keelung, Formosa. Much of what we got assistance on was related to the starboard shaft and the starboard propeller. We got assistance as well with our steering gear and gyro concerns. I was always grateful for the foundry and machine shops in Keelung as that is where we got the spring bearings re-babbitted and machined. These were the shells from the bearings replaced underway during deployment.

We spent endless hours in casualty drills while on patrol in the straits. All the night watches had drills, the 8 - 12, the mid and the 4 - 8. Lots of men getting very tired of drills but we were getting quite proficient in most all areas. All in all we had a very good cruise. On our

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way back to the states in November 1963 we were scheduled for our Full Power Run with Squadron Observers Aboard. We were ready. Things were running well. We fueled at Midway Island and commenced our run. All the Engineering spaces were really up to the graded run. We were right on target at 396 RPM on both Main Turbine Engines. Both fire rooms were maintaining plenty of steam, good super-heat temperatures and all was going well. We had a very successful four hour run for grade and then were going to run to the best speed we could make. The Squadron Engineering Observers were keeping their eyes on things even after we completed the required four hours.

Then all hell broke loose. RPM's took a slight jump, all safeties on both boilers in the forward fire room lifted and the order was given to "Lock it up". The observer punched his stop watch and headed for the ladder in Main Control. He was not up the ladder yet when the turbine engine was stopped and locked. He pushed stop at the top of the ladder and it was under 20 seconds. That meant that from greater than design max full power to stopped and locked was between 15 and 20 seconds. You could not hear. You could not see. All safeties on everything were blowing. All drains were open. All main engineering spaces were filled with steam. No one knew what happened yet. We could still see the main shaft in the mirror by the jacking gear. A First Class Petty Officer (I can't recall if it was Gormley GM1 or Corley SF1) stuck his head down below the hatch cowling above the ladder to main control on the port side and said, "The starboard screw is hanging over the fantail". We were not in the mood for funny stuff at that moment but I knew he was serious. Sure enough the screw was visible past the transom on the starboard side.

We were not taking on water in the shaft alley and had not ruptured the hull but had very little clue as to where the shaft was broken.

As with all things that affect your readiness to fight there were many reports to be sent immediately to higher authorities, CASREPS or casualty reports. That opened the flood gates to constant updates on our condition although we really did not know our condition at the time. Returning to Midway we were able to don masks and have a pretty good look underwater and see that the stern tube shaft, sometimes called the propeller or tail shaft, had broken. The break was just aft of the forward stern tube bearing and the shaft assembly had moved aft until the fairwater sleeve on the outboard flange coupling rammed into the fairwater sleeve of the strut and strut bearing assembly. This movement of the shaft aft after fracture is why the propeller was visible over the transom.

After considerable deliberation the starboard screw was secured with a cable to the bits and chocks on the fantail to prevent rotation as we moved through the water. The fear was that the coupling would cut into the strut bearing, cause further movement aft and allow the shaft to tip due to the weight of the propeller and possibly pierce the hull. With everything secured we headed for Pearl Harbor. Slow going with one fire room and one engine on line. The rudder necessary to offset the drag of the screw was determined by trial and error and we made the trip without further incidents.

In Pearl Harbor at the shipyard they were ready for us. The propeller was backed off while being held by a crane. Once clear of the shaft the screw was placed on the fantail, on the starboard side for trim considerations. Pad eyes were wended to the deck to further secure the screw in place and we got underway for San Diego. We still needed a rudder correction but the drag from the idle screw was absent and made for better movement through the water.

I'm in touch with another member of the Halsey Powell crew that was reporting for duty when we pulled into San Diego with tug boat assistance and the screw lashed down to the fantail. Was a pretty sad sight for him

and is a vivid memory of his first sight of the ship.

We had our docking plan ready and were taken almost immediately to dry dock. It is then that we could really see the full scope of the casualty and I personally could see how very fortunate we were that the fracture had not been any further forward and that the strut and strut bearing held.

Once the shaft was removed and the protective covering removed it became very obvious that the initiation points of the fracture were stress lines that had been attacked by sea water for a long period of time. The sealing materials at both ends of the protective covering had leaked. The depth of the corrosion in the initiation points of the fracture were an indication of just how long those cracks had been there.

BUSHIPS Technical Manual states that what was accomplished by the engineering crew of Halsey Powell is not possible without wiping the bearings and gears of the main reduction gear. It was therefore the first order of business to lift the reduction gear casing and start the process of checking bearings and gears. Not a single one was damaged and not a single bearing was wiped. That is a great benefit of training and being ready for any casualty. You cannot practice the kind of drill that we had that day but practicing over and over for weeks and weeks is the preparation for the unexpected.

In the end, all was made right again, sea trials were successful and once again Halsey Powell was ready to answer all bells. We were a very fortunate group that day when everyone reacted to an extreme emergency with the professionalism that we just came to expect from the Engineering Department of Halsey Powell. The gamblers amongst the crew were sorry to have lost their money on "who is the fastest in the squadron" but we did something no one else had ever done before. There is a lot of satisfaction in that.

ULITHI NAVAL BASE

SUBMITTED BY C.A. SMITH

When Halsey Powell was hit by the kamikaze, the first repairs were made at Ulithi. As many people probably have no knowledge of that group of islands or their location, I thought this might be useful info.

By George Spangler

In March 1945, 15 battleships, 29 carriers, 23 cruisers, 106 destroyers and a train of oilers and supply ships sailed from "a Pacific base." What was this base? The mightiest force of naval power ever assembled must have required a tremendous supporting establishment. Ulithi, the biggest and most active naval base in the world was indeed tremendous, but it was unknown. Few civilians had heard of it at all. By the time security released the name, the remarkable base of Ulithi was a ghost. The war had moved on to the Japanese homeland, and the press was not printing ancient history about Ulithi.

Ulithi is 360 miles southwest of Guam, 850 miles east of the Philippines, 1300 miles south of Tokyo. It is a typical volcanic atoll with coral, white sand, and palm trees. The reef runs roughly twenty miles north and south by ten miles across encircling a vast anchorage with an average depth of 80 to 100 feet—the only suitable anchorage within 800 miles. Three dozen little islands rise slightly above the sea, the largest only half a square mile in area.

The U.S. Navy arrived in September 1944 and found resident about 400 natives, and three Japanese soldiers. The natives on the four largest islands were moved to smaller Fassarari, and every inch of these four was quickly put to use. Asor had room for a headquarters; port director, radio station, evaporator (rain is the only fresh water supply), tents, small boat pier, cemetery. Sorlen was set up as a shop for maintaining and repairing the 105 LCVPs and 45 LCMs that be-

came beasts of all work in the absence of small boats. Mogmog was assigned to recreation. The big island, Falalop, was just wide enough for a 3500-foot airstrip for handling the R4Ds (Douglas DC-3s) and R5C Commandos, which would presently fly in from Guam 1269 passengers, 4565 sacks of mail and 262,251 pounds of air freight a week. This took care of a few services-but where were they going to put the naval base? Enter the "secret weapon," as Admiral Nimitz called Service Squadron Ten. Commodore Worrall R. Carter survived Pearl Harbor to devise the miraculous mobile service for what made it possible for the Navy to move toward Japan in great jumps instead of taking the slow and costly alternative of capturing a whole series of islands on which to build a string of land bases.

Within a month of the occupation of Ulithi, a whole floating base was in operation. Six thousand ship fitters, artificers, welders, carpenters, and electricians arrived aboard repair ships, destroyer tenders, floating dry docks. USS AJAX had an air conditioned optical shop, a supply of base metals from which she could make any alloy to form any part needed. Many refrigerator and supply ships belonged to three-ship teams: the ship at Ulithi had cleaned out and relieved sister ship No. 2 which was on the way back to a rear base for more supplies while No. 3 was on the way out to relieve No. 1. Over half the ships were not self-propelled but were towed in. They then served as warehouses for a whole system of transports which unloaded stores on them for distribution. This kind of chain went all the way back to the United States. The paper and magazines showed England sinking under the stockpile of troops and material collected for the invasion of Normandy.

The Okinawa landings were not so well documented, but they involved more men, ships and supplies—including 600,000 gallons of fuel oil, 1500 freight cars of ammunition, and enough food to provide every person in Vermont and Wyo-

ming with three meals a day for fifteen days. The smaller ships needed a multitude of services, the ice cream barge made 500 gallons a shift, and the USS ABATAN, which looked like a big tanker, really distilled fresh water and baked bread and pies. Fleet oilers sortied from Ulithi to refuel the combat ships a short distance from the strike areas. They added men, mail and medical supplies and began to take orders for spare parts.

When Leyte Gulf was secured, the floating base moved on, and Ulithi which had had a temporary population the size of Dallas and had been the master of half the world for seven months, shrank to little more than a tanker depot. Once again, it became a quiet, lonely atoll.

BIOGRAPHY OF LUCIANO DE LA CRUZ

MEMBER OF THE DUTY SECTION OF HALSEY POWELL RE-UNION COMMITTEE

I was born in Laredo, Texas, on 02-01-40, but reared in Mirando City, Texas.

I graduated from Mirando City High School in 1959 where I participated in football, basketball, volleyball and track.

On 12-30-60, I joined the U.S. Navy on the buddy system. Boot camp was in San Diego, California, where I went aboard the USS Halsey Powell in 1961. I was commissary 3rd class.

In 1962, I was transferred to the USS Halsey DLG 23, which was commissioned in 1963 in San Francisco. Later transferred back to San Diego. I was discharged on 12-23-64.

In 1964, I moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, to attend barber college. I graduated from barber college while Janie was a teacher in Corpus Christi Independent School District. We already knew each

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other, but had not been in contact since I joined the Navy.

We re-connected when I called her one evening in July 1965 and that's how our romance had its beginning. We married on 10-31-65 (Halloween)! Our church wedding took place in her home town of Oilton, Texas, which is 2 miles from Miranda City.

After we were married, Janie kept on teaching and continued her studies at the university in guidance and counseling. I attended trade school at Del Mar College under the GI Bill from which I graduated as a machinist.

We have one son and one granddaughter.

Financial Statement

The cost of this issue is **\$188.48** mailed to **79** members who returned the coupon for a paper copy. The newsletter is available on the website at www.mlrsinc.com/hpowell. Contributions for the newsletter are to be sent to **Jim Wyatt, USS Halsey Powell Association, 344 E 600 S, Logan, UT 84321**.

RED'S JOKE CORNER

A young Native American woman went to a doctor for her first ever physical exam. After checking all of her vitals and running the usual tests the doctor said, "Well, Running Doe, you are in fine health. I could find no problems. I did notice one anomaly however."

"Oh, what is that, Doctor?"

"Well, you have no nipples."

"None of the people in my tribe have nipples," she replied.

"That is amazing," said the doctor. "I'd like to write this up for The New England Journal of Medicine if you don't mind." She said, "OK."

"First of all," asked the doctor, "how many people are in your tribe?"

She answered, "Approximately 500."

"And what is the name of your tribe?" asked the doctor.

"We're the Indian Nippleless Five Hundred."

"THE STORY OF MY LIFE" BY ED COLLENDER

Continued from March 2007

Somewhere in this period of time, unknown to us, some 40,000 Japanese had retreated to the other side of the island to a cliff known as Marpi Point—and just jumped into the ocean. We became aware of it when corpses started popping to the surface a few days later. With the appearance of the first one we put a boat over the side to recover the body. It was too far decomposed, so Doc retrieved the dog tags. While they were there, two more popped up. Then they covered the sea at 200 foot intervals as far as you could see...

As things became less tense, we Shanghaied Willie for a good lunch, tossed his clothes in the laundry and with a shower, shave, haircut and a good meal, put him in the lower bunk in my cabin for the evening. When the routine morning GQ sounded, I told him to roll over and stay put. He began to relax a bit and the wild animal look in his eyes subsided a bit.

As the need for call fire subsided, it was felt necessary to remove the Train, (the assemblage of non-combatants including merchant marine) from the area during the hours of darkness. Uncle Beanie was in command, with us and two other DDs as the designated herdsman and protectors of five columns of ships on a zig-zag course outbound, to countermarch at 0100 and return. There must have been 50 or more, all with different turning circles and not accustomed to this type of operation. The countermarch at one AM was the crunch time. Uncle Beanie would be at the radar repeater console in CIC in his pajamas (the only pair aboard) uttering profanities as some plots merged—and then separated with nary a scratch. One night, he had a need to contact VAdm Turner, call sign "Buckeye" on TBS, saying, "Hello Buckup, this is PinEye...er I mean PinEye, this is Buckup...aw shit..."and he never used it again.

During the days we would patrol various sectors, including the shores of the adjacent island, Tinian, where one of our signalmen spotted a truck moving on a hillside in an unsettled part of the island near Masalog Point. It disappeared into a cave that was hardly discernable. He coached our Main Battery Director on to the target and we fired two rounds each from two guns and they went right into the hole without disturbing the hillside. A few days later, it looked like a shooting gallery backstop. Another observation here. Army B 25s were bombing Tinian Town to soften things up for our occupation of the place. It was quite a spectacle to watch the show. Suddenly there was a flash of smoke on the nose of a plane and the craft recoiled. It had been hit was our reaction. Then successive planes took the same apparent fire. This was our introduction to the 3-inch cannon firing aircraft.

One day I took a liberty party ashore on Saipan. An assigned shore patrol and I were armed, but the crew was free to roam the designated area. The SP and I decided to take a walk down a quiet wooded road. Then we saw Marines, every 50 yards or so, concealed back in the woods. Decided that that wasn't where we belonged, so returned to join the group. One thing that we did see was a small barbed wire enclosure, full of native Chamorro men and women with minimal clothing and unenclosed sanitary facilities. Seemed rather demeaning, but who could tell a Jap from a local.

TINIAN

Tinian became an ordnance testing ground during the 43 days of preliminary naval air and air bombardment. Various mixtures of napalm with oil or gasoline were being worked out and dropped on Japanese "guinea pigs." LCI gunboat 40 mm accuracy was being evaluated. Naval Guns coordinated and re-

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corded every shot fired and shore fire patrol parties with their Naval liaison Officers worked on procedures to improve promptness and quality of naval call fire. We continued on with assigned area bombardments, call fire and ASW patrolling in the vicinity. 7-24 Two Regiments of the 4th Marines were ferried from Saipan's Charon Kanoa beaches to the White beaches adjacent to the Ushi Point airfield on Tinian, covered by artillery fire from Saipan and naval gunfire. A fake diversion by the 2nd Marines at Tinian Town had drawn the defenses from the landing site. At the end of the day 15,000 Marines, sailors and soldiers had come ashore. Not a single Japanese aircraft was in the sky for the entire week.

GUAM

Guam was a concurrent separate operation employing Joint Southern Attack Force Adm Richard I Conolly, USNA '14, CTF 53, carrying MGen Roy S Geiger USMC III Phib Corps with the 3rd Marine and 77th Army Divisions, landing on 7-21. (We were not involved.) Innovations in this operation included increased use of rocket firing LCIs, employment of Navaho talkers and use of battlefield dogs by Marines. Organized resistance on Guam ceased on 8-10. Now the Philippine Sea and the Marianas Islands of Saipan, Tinian and Guam were under American control.

To be continued in a later issue.

INVESTMENT ADVICE

Submitted by Cornell Anton

During the worst of times of the 1930s depression, someone always had a nickel for a bottle of beer (beer cans were not yet in use). So one sure investment prospect was to invest in beer companies, but they were all family owned entities. Therefore, here are some facts for those contemplating retirement and future planning.

If you had purchased \$1000 of Nortel stock one year ago, it would now be worth \$49.

With Enron, you would have had \$16.50 left of the original \$1000.

With WorldCom, you would have had less than \$5.00 left.

If you had purchased \$1000 of Delta Air Lines common stock, you would have \$49 left.

BUT, if you had purchased \$1000 worth of pop, beer or wine one year ago, drank all of the pop, beer or wine, then turned in the cans/bottles for the aluminum/glass recycling REFUND, you would have had \$214.00

Based on the above, the best current investment advice is to drink heavily and recycle—and start now.

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. 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 **James Wyatt**, USS Halsey Powell Association.

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

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

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

STATUS OF NAVY AS OF JUNE 5, 2008

Active Duty: 331,608

Officers: 51,248

Enlisted: 276,024

Midshipmen: 4,336

Ready Reserve: 125,734 (as of 08 Apr)

Selected Reserves: 70,060

Individual Ready Reserves: 55,674

Reserves Currently Mobilized: 4,463 (as of 04 Jun)

Personnel on Deployment: 66,437

Navy Department Civilian Employees: 180,303