

POWELL POST

Volume 9, Issue 4

September 2003

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS HALSEY POWELL



Points of Special Interest

- Jim Chambliss shares his pick for a reunion site for 2004 in our cover story.
- Eight new names were added to the roster since the last newsletter. See the names in WELCOME MAT on page three.
- A touching story written by the daughter of a former shipmate, encouraging you to share your stories with your family before it is too late. See her letter in MAIL CALL on page four.
- Peter Wren relates the story of his first guard duty, and submits a newspaper article to verify his tale. See pages five and six.

WESTWARD HO—SAN DIEGO, 2004

Now that 2003 reunion is all in hand for Norfolk, it's time to think about the locale for 2004. I'll be early and fire the first salvo. I propose San Diego since it will be a western site that year and I kinda like this place.

It will have been nine years since we were in San Diego (1995). Our hotel location at that time, in Mission Valley, was not the best. I suggest a hotel/motel on San Diego Bay at the Embarcadero. It's a tad more expensive, but far superior in every respect. The Embarcadero location affords a convenient place

to new down town developments such as the new PADRES baseball park that opens in 2004 (now, if we only had a new team!); SEAPORT VILLAGE (the wives will love it—just drop 'em off and you'll have time for 18 holes); the GAS LAMP enclave (a bit of New Orleans) with many new high rise hotels, excellent restaurants; a much expanded CONVENTION CENTER; the MARITIME MUSEUM just across the street from the 1863 built squared-rigged sailing bark—21 times around the world; and the airport is only 5 minutes away. Coro-

nado is directly across the harbor housing the Naval Air Station, North Island with 1-3 aircraft carriers in full view. Also, within walking distance are the harbor excursions (a must tour for all old sea dogs—a view of the Fleet facilities/ships from the Bay.) The Navy pier usually with a destroyer or amphib ship present and open to the public, and a scenic local commercial fishing fleet.

Since the last government base closures and realignment decisions, the whole West Coast Naval structure has been consoli-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

dated into San Diego and Everett, Washington, plus expanded air stations. The Navy has abandoned Long Beach, San Pedro, San Francisco/Oakland, Alameda and Treasure Island. Also closed were Naval shipyards at Long Beach, Hunter's Point (San Fran) and Vallejo (Mare Island). Also eliminated was the Naval Training Center (some of you were through boot training there) and was deeded to the City of San Diego, now under commercial/housing/recreational development. In addition, the Marine Corps Squadron (jets and heavy lift helios) formally at El Toro (Orange County, Santa Ana) took over NAS MIRAMAR with the Navy jet squadrons moving to NAS Lemoore, CA (near Fresno) and NAS, Fallon, Nevada. This huge consolidation required expansion and modernization of the Naval Station, San Diego at 32nd Street, on South San Diego Bay, in order to accommodate the increase in ship and personnel populations. The National Steel & Shipbuilding Company (adjacent to 32nd St) has picked up lucrative ship construction/repair/conversion contracts since it's the only large ship building yard, navy or commercial, on the West Coast.

In addition to all of these nearby sites of interest, tours to locations within the Metropolitan area high on the tourist lists are: BALBOA PARK (similar to NYC Central Park) houses many first-rate museums and cultural events; the AEROSPACE MUSEUM (from Wright Brothers to Space Shuttle); a SPORTS MUSEUM; an elaborate, fully operational model railroad exhibit; botanical gardens, a super aviary; the Old Globe Theater (Shakespeare in the round); classic car show and an IMAX theater—to touch on the main attractions very close in town. The famed San Diego Zoo is adjacent.

A standard Point Loma tour includes driving through the National Military Cemetery (85,000 military graves), past several large training

sites for shipboard combat systems (radar, communications and electronics). At the south end of Point Loma is the Cabrillo National Monument (first landing of the Spanish circa 1730?) with a visitor's center. This location offers the best overall view of the whole city/harbor from an elevated position—a bit like Rio harbor from Sugar Loaf Mt. and Syndey from the trans-harbor bridge. The view takes in the Submarine base, Coronado and air station, the Mexican Islands (Coronados), the Pacific Ocean to south and west, extending forever. How well I remember those long, long voyages westward after clearing Point Loma; 2,400 miles to Pearl; 5, 800 miles to Japan; 7,100 miles to the Philippines; 7,700 to Vietnam; and now days, 11,000 miles to the Persian Gulf (11 time zones, 28 days at 16 knots)—and you get to do it once more homeward bound! Another favorite for the ladies is to visit Fashion Valley and Mission Valley shopping centers where you find all first rate stores such as Neiman Marcus, Nordstroms, Tiffanys, Saks Fifth Avenue, and equally interesting local/western/latino shops—BRING MONEY! Last but not least, are the renowned SEA WORLD and WILD ANIMAL PARK located in Escondido—truly spectacular.

San Diego is unique in that a visitor can travel from sea shore, coastal/inland areas, mountains to desert within an hour's drive. Several scenic tours include all of these plus time to poke around a bit, from 3 to 4 hours.

As my personal situation stands at this time, I will not be able to attend the Norfolk get-together due to my wife's health. She suffered a stroke last year so that I can't travel that far and long. She gets around on a walker, but is physically weak and requires someone at home. I very much would like to join you and have a few cheers.

If you choose San Diego for 2004, I am available to assist in any way. There is much to see and enjoy and tough choices to make in view of the time available—so much to do and so little time!

Most sincerely,

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. ML&RS, Inc is not responsible for the accuracy of articles 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.

NOW HEAR THIS!

Just returned (7/29) from family reunion in Tennessee and am behind in garden work, yard work, and ship's reunion work.

Ruth is OK. I am OK. Bubba is OK.

Hope to see many of you in Norfolk.

Now it's time to get back to work.

That is all,
Skipper Mike

REUNION NOTICE

Please feel free to donate a door prize for the Saturday night banquet. Ship funds are down a bit this year so we may not purchase any. Will pay all bills first.

Something from your home area is nice to remember people. Home craft items are nice too.

Also plan a small auction on Wednesday night and possibly a 50/50 raffle. Bring some \$\$.

Skipper Mike

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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!

Gerald Johnson (1951-54) SW2
PO Box 253
Delphos, KS 67436
785-523-4221

Richard O'Connell
1350 County Rd East
Spooner, WI 54803
715-635-6924

Kenneth Rivers (1943-46) SN
3B Browning Ct
Tocasep, MA 02559
508-563-6297

Joe Rutland (1967-68) BM2
PO Box 412
Cherokee, AL 35616
256-359-6688

Tom Gearhardt (1967-68) RDC
1451 E 6th St Space #10
Beaumont, CA 92223
909-845-1096

Michael Vaughan (1954-55)
455 Camino Flora Vista
San Clemente, CA 92673
949-422-5633

Walter Millar (1950-53)
2835 Pine Ridge Ave NW
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-751-5956

Freman Musick (1962-63) BT1
5766 Lone Star Dr
San Diego, CA 92120
619-607-5124



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. 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.

Paul Meredith (1943-45) S1/c Deck
Died June 25, 2000

Glenn Connelly (1952-53) LTJG
Died May 20, 2003

Guy Ballard (1953) QMC
Date of death not known

Leonard Drum (1943-45) SOM 3
Died March 18, 2003

James Semmens
Died April 28, 2003

Charles Jewell (Comm—Mothball)
Died June 16, 2003

Charles Privitera
Died June, 2003

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

Marion Graw
Died May 12, 2003

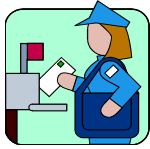
Arnold Hoit
Died 1988

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

Frederick Potthoff (LT)
Died September 28, 1997

Henry Vaughan
Date of death not known

Anthony Bruno
Died 1999



MAIL CALL

Shipmates of Charles Jewell,

This is to inform you that Charles W. Jewell passed away May 16th, 2003 of asbestos related mesothelioma carcinoma of the left lung and stomach.

He served aboard the USS Halsey Powell October 1950—January 1952. He was a Chief Radioman.

Survived by a wife, Mary Jewell, and three daughters. Married 58 years. Also served July 1940—July 1946 and 4 years in the Naval Reserve.

Sincerely,
Mary S. Jewell

Powell Post,

With reference to the June issue of the Powell Post, one of the officers that RADM Winnefeld mentioned in his letter was the Assistant Gunnery Officer, LT Fred Poff (sic). Frederick H. Potthoff II passed away in Houston, Texas, on September 28, 1997. I did not see his name listed in the deceased list included in the Sentimental Journal for the 2002 reunion, so I thought I would send in this information. I've attached a copy of his obituary as it appeared in the September 30, 1997, issue of the Houston Chronicle.

The obit mentions that at one time, he was vice-president of the family business, Union Bottling Works/Dr. Pepper. The crew at the time knew that his family was involved in the soft drink business, but we thought it was Pepsi Cola. In fact, our irreverent nickname for him was Pepsi Pete. If I'm not mistaken, there was a comic strip character with that name in those days. Or maybe it was a comic character the Pepsi used in their advertising.

RADM Winnefeld also noted the "Smitty" Schmidt, who was an ENS

and the Main Propulsion Asst. at the time, is now deceased. I was very sorry to learn this, he was highly respected among us white hats. I knew that he had been a paraplegic for quite a number of years. When did he pass?

Roy Wagner
SO3, 1951-1953

Editor's note: Our records do not show Mr. Schmidt as deceased. If anyone knows which is correct, please contact ML&RS.

Dear Mr. Baker,

This is to inform you that my father, Marion Graw, passed away on 5/12/03 at Lake District Long Term Care in Lakeview, OR. He was 85 years old. The local VFW (Lane Clifton Post) participated in the graveside services. Dad was a past commander of the Ludington, Michigan VFW Post in the 60s. I want you to know he enjoyed reading the Halsey-Powell news the past two years. In Dad's things we found a long scroll-type photo and map of the Halsey-Powell and a large tray with a photo of the ship. In the scroll, one end is apparently a photo of the ship going out to sea and the other end is a photo of the ship coming back to harbor at the end of the war. In the middle third of the scroll is a map of the Pacific that shows the travels of the ship with the dates of significant events along the way and accomplishments of the ship during the war. We also found Dad's medals. Also found some Japanese money. We had seen none of this before. How sad that Dad never showed these things to us and talked about his experiences. He left his job and family to go fight. He enlisted in April 1945—I was 11 months old and my brother was 4 years and 11 months. All of you veterans should share your experiences with your families. Think about someone finding these types of things after you die and wondering and having questions that you are not there to answer. They can't

understand what you did and you won't understand how much they admire you for it, if you don't talk about it.

Judith Vaughn (daughter of Marion Graw)
judykv@usa.net

Mr. Baker,

I have just opened your e-mail and I am just totally poleaxed. I had hoped, but was skeptical I could find anyone who knew my dad, Guy Ballard. It is difficult to explain how much it means to my brother and me to find anything about our father. He died when we were quite young. (He was only 34.) Thank you very, very much.

Even though my brother and I are both in our 50s, we feel strong emotions about it, and we are both proud of his service in WWII and Korea. I am a Vietnam Era veteran myself, of the US Army. I am leaving for Florida in the morning to see my son graduate from the Florida Air Academy, and will not be home until Sunday. Can I call you some time on Sunday?

Art Ballard
3000 N Sam Houston Parkway E
Houston, TX 77032

Dear Skipper Mike,

No, this is not related to my "death," rather it is to relate some of my bridge watch experiences. I beat Jim aboard by one day after the ship completed its shakedown exercises. I had to hustle as I was flat broke and I figured that I would at least get a meal. The officers aboard first asked me what type of department would I like. I said, "Engineering." They said, "Good choice. You will be under LT Baker's wing. He is a good teacher." Hell, I never even saw the man! He had said he would not make the coming deployment, and he had the connections to make it so. Anyway, all went well for me that day and I took up my residency in the Engr's stateroom, and there I stayed until detached in 1954.

And, now to the bridge where my

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

prime mentor was Joe Chambliss just like Jim. He had a sharp, crisp delivery but got the job done. I trailed Jim by about one month in getting qualified for all underway watches, but I must admit that they took care to pair me with an experienced partner in CIC or on the bridge.

After I became more experienced, I realized that there was more to worry about. In particular, my relief. Some were more attentive than others and after a nerve jangling watch, I wanted to rest without having to worry about another ship poking its bow into us. To focus their attention I practiced "Passing Through Station" scam during my watch. I watched the formation carefully and determined how far back I could drop without drawing that dreaded "Campfire Station." If safe, I would take off 3/4 turns and then when at the limit I would put them back on station just as my relief took the watch. Actually I was just passing through station as I never took the extra turns off. I never told anyone of this, but as we sat in the wardroom unwinding, once I heard those dreaded words followed by the Captain's kind words of rebuke, I would smile inwardly, knowing that the bridge now would have the OOD's undivided attention and I could rest easy.

I doubt if I dreamed this up by myself, or if it was taught to me by one of the soon to be departing recalled reserves or who? Anyone want to step forward and take credit? Just to be safe, upon taking the watch, I would check with the fwd engine room to get the average rpm for the hour and what rpm changes were made in the last 1/2 hour.

Well, guys, take it easy.

Smitty, Harold, Lazaruz, Mostly Honest Harold (Alaska)

Dear Ones,

Many of you have heard me

speak of my "first guard duty" when I was in Boot Camp, January 1942 in Norfolk, VA. Because of my draft status I enlisted in the US Navy three weeks after Pearl Harbor rather than serve in the US Army. At that time I was in my junior year at Michigan State and according to the recruiting Army Officer, after having passed the entry exam, I was to go home and wait for my orders. I volunteered for the Navy on 28 December 1941 and was shipped to the Norfolk Naval Base and placed in the "Boot Camp" program.

Well, about 2:00 AM sometime in mid January 1942, the lights in the barracks in which we were billeted were turned on and a Naval Lieutenant asked who among those present could handle a rifle. I, like several "boots," raised my hand and he queried each of us. Most of the others were, as he called them, "squirrel hunters," but he seemed to like the fact that I had two years in the ROTC at MSU, so I was selected to be the one he needed. I dressed hurriedly and he escorted me to an empty barracks where there were several men present who seemed to be of a foreign nationality.

I was given a rifle with no bullets and told to guard the inside barracks door. No one was to leave or enter without the Officer's permission. I stood outside the swinging doors and shortly thereafter another Naval Lieutenant was ushered into the barracks room. I understood he was from ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence). With his arrival some loud talking commenced. Whoever was doing the speaking was using broken English with some "cuss" words.

Well, curiosity got the best of me, so I nudged the swinging doors slightly open with the rifle muzzle and began to listen to the conversation. The men were from a freighter that had just been sunken off the Capes of Virginia and after being rescued from the Atlantic Ocean they were brought to the Naval Base for questioning. It was very obvious that the rescued crew was very irritated with the sinking of their ship and the one who spoke the best English must have

been the cook. This is what I heard. He said, "I am a goddamn sick and tired of these German bastards. You gotta do some-ting about it! I am a goddamn sick and tired of throwing potatoes at them. You gotta give us some guns and some protection out there!" His fervor was intense and I found it humorous and chuckled outloud. Well, with that the Naval Lieutenant, having heard me, appeared at the swinging doors and directed me to a position where I was out of hearing range, and told me to stay there.

Later, when I would talk about the German submarines that preyed off the east coast of America, I would recite the above story. The attached news article now gives credence to my first "guard duty" story. It has been a 61 year wait.

Hope you enjoyed this.

L. Peter Wren
Barracks Guard-No Bullets
1011 Ridgetop Rd
Richmond, VA 23229

From the Richmond Times Dispatch, March 28, 2003.

EIGHT LATVIAN SHIPS DEFIED SOVIET ORDERS
Exiled World War II Sailors Get Recognition They're Due
By J. Michael Lyons

RIGA, Latvia: Unsung heroes for decades, 164 Latvian sailors who joined U.S. Atlantic convoys in running the gantlet of German U-boats during World War II finally are making front-page news.

A series in Latvia's Chas newspaper is telling the tale of eight Latvian-flagged freighters that defied Soviet orders and remained abroad after Red Army troops occupied the Baltic Sea nation on June 17, 1940.

The story—banned from history books and newspapers during five decades of Soviet rule—has come as a surprise to most in this

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

country of 2.4 million.

"Europe and America know its history, but our history was kept from us," said Irina Shneidere, a Latvia University history professor familiar with the ships. "We are still learning about what really happened to our country and who our heroes are."

Upon annexing Latvia, Josef Stalin's regime ordered all Latvian vessels to return home and threatened to deport the families of any rebellious sailors to labor camps. Dozens of ships did return—and some of their crews vanished into Siberia.

But crews on eight ships refused and, along with Latvian embassies in Washington and London, became remnants of an independent Latvia.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Latvian ships ferried coal, rubber, and other raw materials needed by the United States to wage war in Europe. By this time, the Latvian nation had been seized by the Nazis, an occupation that would last until 1944.

"In their minds, they were fighting the Germans to free their country," Shneidere said.

The ships joined the U.S. convoys as they plied the Atlantic Ocean—South America, Europe and North America. Only two ships survived the war, which left Latvia back again under Soviet rule.

Off the coast of North Carolina—later dubbed "torpedo alley" because German U-boats sunk dozens of merchant ships there—the first Latvian freighter was torpedoed Jan. 18, 1942. Only two of its 32-man crew perished, but the *Ciltvaira* was lost.

"When it was sunk, it was as if one-eighth of what remained of an independent Latvia was gone," said Alex Krasnitsky, the Chas journalist who researched the story with the help of Latvian emigres in the United States.

The *Ciltvaira* shipwreck near

Nags Head, NC, remains a popular site for scuba divers. On land, a Nags Head street bears the ship's name.

"We couldn't fight back this time, but probably our next ship will be armed and then we can do something about it when the devils attack," the *Ciltvaira's* radio operator, Rudolph Musts, was quoted as saying in a 1942 story in the News and Courier of Charleston, SC.

While the Latvian freighters had no significant weaponry, some went down with a fight anyway.

Off the coast of Barbados on Feb. 27, 1942, the *Everasma* rammed and sank a surfacing German U-boat. But a few hours later, having suffered collision damage herself, the freighter proved an easy target for an Italian submarine. It torpedoed the *Everasma* then finished her off with its deck guns.

The reports said 164 sailors were aboard the eight ships. Most Latvian sailors who survived the war received U.S. citizenship and never returned home. None is known to be alive today.

But now that their story has gotten out, efforts are underway to ensure they are not forgotten.

City officials in Riga, the capital, said they might rename streets after each vessel.

The following excerpt was submitted by John Preston and comes from "Military Magazine."

4-7 JUNE TYPHOON

A second deployment to waters off Okinawa was cut short by the 4-7 June typhoon that battered the 5th Fleet, halting all active combat operations. The 5th Fleet and SERVON 6 were trapped when the typhoon veered to the East leaving no choice but to head directly into the eye of the typhoon. Wind gusts of more than 110 miles were reported with 80 to 100-foot waves. Fortunately, all ships survived with minor damage.

3RD FLEET OPERATIONS OFF JAPAN 20 JULY-6 AUGUST 1945

The full value of underway replenishment was demonstrated during 3rd Fleet operations off the coast of Japan, 20 July –6 August 1945.

Back home, newspapers reported that the 3rd Fleet was operating under a strict news blackout and its location was carefully guarded military secret. The fleet was, in fact, on a round-robin, round-the-clock offensive, bombing and shelling the Japanese home islands of Hokkaido and Honshu.

Meanwhile SERVON 6 was steaming barely a day's journey offshore, ready and waiting to satisfy the insatiable warships with fuel, stores, and munitions, enabling the fleet to continue their battering offensive against the Japanese homeland. Crews worked long, hard hours, transferring stores and ordnance that were measured in hundreds of tons.

RED'S JOKE CORNER

Court Room Jokes

These are from a book called Disorder in the Court. They are statements people actually said in court, word for word.

Judge: "Well, Sir, I have reviewed this case and I've decided to give your wife \$775 a week."

Husband: "That's fair, your honor. I'll try to send her a few bucks myself."

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July fifteenth.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of impact?

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.