

THE PURDY REPORT

Volume 15, Issue 4

March 2006

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS PURDY DD-734



Special Points of Interest

- *President DiPasquale discusses possible reunion sites for the future. See his thoughts in the cover article.*
- *Welcome Mat on page two has eight newly located shipmates. Hope some can make the reunion.*
- *Stuart Hartman has a recommendation for a book about WWII. See his letter in Mail Call.*
- *Read about Bennett and Vivian Levin's gift to some injured American troops in "The Best Christmas Story You Never Heard" beginning on page three.*
- *Ken Scott's story continues on page five.*
- *Don't miss the important information on page six!*

A MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

Hi again shipmates and Purdy ladies,

I sure hope that many of you are packing and getting ready to head for Nashville for our next reunion.

Karen and I are looking forward to seeing many old friends again and hoping to meet many first-timers this year. We were considering riding our motorcycle to Nashville, but I realized I would need a trailer to haul all of Karen's outfits, so guess I'll be stuck driving our four-wheeler to the reunion.

Those of you who attended last year's business meeting will recall that Branson, MO was

suggested as a site for this year's reunion, but we were told that a two-year lead was necessary for reservations in Branson. Since we will be in the mid-west this year, we should vote for an east-coast site for next year's (2007) reunion, and, if we are still interested in going to Branson, we should vote on that for the 2008 reunion.

While on the subject about reunions, I don't need to point out that they are getting costlier every year. Therefore I'm going to suggest that, when we bring up future reunion sites, we consider less popular tourist areas. This will consid-

erably lower the costs of future reunions. If you agree with this, I will ask our ML&RS representative to attend our business meeting to recommend less costly sites on the east-coast, and in the mid-west areas. It is my opinion that reunion sites don't necessarily need to be Navy oriented (or even military oriented) as a requirement for a reunion site. Almost anyplace we hold a reunion will have some sort of attractions, but the real reasons for a reunion are to renew old friendships, meet with shipmates we probably haven't seen in many years, and to have

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

a real good time with those friends.

As most of you know, our annual \$5.00 association dues was due in January. If you haven't done so yet, please send your check made out to "Purdy Association" to Sec/ Treas James Meechan, 145 Laura Dr, Gahanna, OH 43230, or you can pay Jim at the reunion. Other than donations, our dues enables us to produce this quarterly "Purdy Report". If your dues aren't paid by reunion time, Jim will be forced to remove your name from our mailing list and you will no longer receive this newsletter.

If you would like to purchase some really nice Purdy items, VP Bill Dow has jackets, sweatshirts, T-shirts, ball-caps and ship's patches for sale. He will have many of these items at the reunion, but if you want any of these before then, call him for information and prices at:

860-426-1278, or e-mail him at bdowusspurdy@wmconnect.com, or write him at 11 Riverside Dr, Southington, CT 06489.

Karen and I wish all of you a Happy Easter and Passover, and are looking forward to seeing many of you at the reunion in Nashville.

Sincerely,
Larry DiPasquale
President, Purdy Association

Published by:
Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc
PO Drawer 11399
Hickory, NC 28603

828-256-6008 (voice)
828-256-6559 (fax)

dinamlrs@charterinternet.com
karenmlrs@charterinternet.com

www.mlrsinc.com

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



WELCOME MAT

The USS PURDY family proudly welcomes the following recently located shipmates. We hope to see you at the next reunion. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

Bob McCormack (1960-62) SFP2
7357 South Ireland Cir
Centennial, CO 80016
303-680-8016
dnvrdisc@msn.com

William Morgan (1955-58) SM3
729 Golden Eagle Dr
Conway, SC 29527
843-397-3648
tmcs729@hotmail.com

Hubert Doyle
6670 Lindenhurst Ave Apt 1
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Cletus Hatfield (1958-62) QM3
3700 W Wheatmore Dr
Louisville, KY 40215
502-367-6143

Leo Soporowski (1959-62) EM1
4415 Hwy 76
Cottontown, TN 37048
615-672-4294

James Gebhart (1959-60) BT2
696 Southfield Dr
Maumee, OH 43537
419-893-9341
James.gebhart@skyfi.com

Richard Hoeg
12372 Orion St
Victorville, CA 92392
760-951-9581
frezypoker@hotmail.com

John Santos (1961-65) MM2
400 Hazel St
Key Largo, FL 33037
305-766-3707

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The PURDY REPORT is the official publication of the USS PURDY DD-734 Association. It is published quarterly in June, September, December, and March *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by dues to the Purdy Association by its members. All members are encouraged to support the newsletter by sending their contributions to the Association Treasurer.

The Purdy Report 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.

Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted for publication. It would be an impossible task 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

Shipmates,

I am turning the Purdy Web Site over to someone else. I have had it for 5 years and it's time someone younger takes it over. There is such a man, and he will be running the site in the near future. I do have to add some more to the Purdy History, and that will be all I am going to do. I want to thank all of the people who have contributed material. Most I have used, and some of the pictures were not of the quality that I could use them. Tin Can Sailors have been very good about my going over my allotted space on their servers. Without them, the Purdy web site probably would not have been created.

Morris Plummer
usspurdydd734@sbcglobal.net

Dear Purdy Report Folks,

Congratulations on the good work you have done once again in arranging the schedule for the Purdy reunion in April 2006. However, I'm sorry to tell you I will have to miss it because of health problems for me and my good wife Barbara. I received a Pace Maker in September and must be helping my wife more each month because of early stages of dementia. She is taking Exelon which helps greatly.

Thanks for letting us know about my good friend's passing on in January 2005. Ira Holden was my bunkmate and a good Navigator. He also was original crew and known as a "Plankowner." We appreciated his good work navigating us through many troubled waters safely.

Recently I had been corresponding with the author of a very interesting book, "Do Not Thou Forget Me" by Richard Goss. The enclosed (see article below this

letter) tells of his narrative which includes the invasion of the island of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. His reference in the second paragraph of the enclosed reminds me of the reason the Purdy's guns were not needed at the beginning of the Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945 invasion. His ship, the Bladen and others, had successfully pulled the Jap troops toward the Southeast corner whereas Purdy and others were going to land on the Southwest area of the island.

I recommend his book highly.

Sincerely,
(Plankowner) Stuart L Hartman, Lt,
Sonar Officer

This is the article Mr. Hartman is referring to in his letter.

Do Not Thou Forget Me is a narrative describing the World War II Pacific experiences of the author, as he served in the Navy Amphibious Forces as a boat officer aboard the Amphibious Attack Ship, the USS Bladen (APA- 63); it describes the part this ship and its crew took in the invasion of Iwo Jima.

During the invasion of Iwo Jima (19 February 1945) the author led three LCVPs loaded with ammunition into the beach, and lost all three, being stranded on the beach at a time when the beachhead was still being contested and under heavy mortar fire. The role of the Boat Group of the Bladen at Okinawa (1 April 1945) was to make two fake landings on the opposite beaches from the actual landing site in an attempt to draw the Japanese troops away from the beaches. He describes being under kamikaze attack.

The Bladen was scheduled to take part in the invasion of the main islands of Japan, having orders with the invasion plans already aboard to land near Kagoshima on the southern island of Kyushu when the war ended, much to the relief of the crew, especially the boat group. The boat officers also took part in the initial landing of occupation troops in Japan in September and October 1945. The ship

was also part of the target group during the Bikini Atomic Bomb Tests, in June 1945.

Along with the unpleasant experiences of wartime, the author describes some funnier events, such as stealing an Army Jeep at Guam, egging on a senior officer who had too much to drink to handle an LCVP boat, eventually running it into the gangway of the ship and almost knocking the Officer of the Deck into the water, even the fist fight between two officers during the Okinawa invasion.

This book was reviewed by a well-known author, George Feifer, the author of *Tennozan*, among others, who wrote: *I especially admired and am profiting from your wonderful detail-and honesty. I am glad you avoided war-glorifying heroics, and included such real things as officers' resentments, conflicts and breakdowns. Very well done! It's an incomparably better read and more accurate depiction than The Greatest Generation.*

Purdy Report,

A footnote to Ken Scott's story about the man overboard drill. On page 77 of the '53 Cruise Book, it is titled "Painting the Waterline." Sam Walden and myself, Tom Clark, are struggling to put the box into the cargo net.

Thomas A. Clark

The Best Christmas Story You Never Heard

It started last Christmas when Bennett and Vivian Levin were overwhelmed by sadness while listening to radio reports of injured American troops.

"We have to let them know we care," Vivian told Bennett. So they organized a trip to bring soldiers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital to the annual Army-Navy football

(Continued on page 4)

game in Philly on Dec. 3.

The cool part is, they created their own train line to do it.

Yes, there are people in this country who actually own real trains. Bennett Levin—native Philly guy, self-made millionaire and irascible former L&I commish—is one of them. He has three luxury rail cars. Think mahogany paneling, plush seating and white-linen dining areas. He also has two locomotives, which he stores at this Juniata Park train yard.

One car, the elegant Pennsylvania, carried John F Kennedy to the Army-Navy game in 1961 and '62. Later it carried his brother Bobby's body to D.C. for burial. "That's a lot of history for one car," says Bennett.

He and Vivian wanted to revive a tradition that endured from 1936 to 1975, during which trains carried Army-Navy spectators from around the country directly to this stadium where the annual game is played.

The Levins could think of no better passengers to reinstate the ceremonial ride than the wounded men and women recovering at Walter Reed in D.C. and Bethesda, in Maryland. "We wanted to give them a first-class experience," says Bennett. "Gourmet meals on board, private transportation from the train to the stadium, perfect seats—real hero treatment."

Through the Army War College Foundation, of which he is a trustee, Bennett met with Walter Reed's commanding general, who loved the idea.

But Bennett had some ground rules first, all designed to keep the focus on the troops alone: No press on the trip, lest the soldiers' day of pampering devolve into a media circus. No politicians either, because, says Bennett, "I didn't want some idiot making this trip into a campaign photo op." And no Pentagon suits on board, otherwise the soldiers would be too busy saluting superiors to relax. The general agreed to the conditions, and Bennett realized he had a problem on his hands, "I had to actually make this thing happen," he laughs.

Over the next months, he recruited owners of 13 other sumptuous rail cars from around the country—these people tend to know each other—into

lending their vehicles for the day. The name of their temporary train? The Liberty Limited.

Amtrak volunteered to transport the cars to D.C.—where they'd be coupled together for the round-trip ride to Philly—then back to their owners later. Conrail offered to service the Liberty while it was in Philly. And SEPTA drivers would bus the disabled soldiers 200 yards from the train to Lincoln Financial Field, for the game. A benefactor from the War College ponied up 100 seats to the game—on the 50-yard line—and lunch in a hospitality suite. And corporate donors filled, for free, and without asking for publicity, goodie bags for attendees: from Woolrich, stadium blankets; from Wal-Mart, digital cameras; from Nikon, field glasses; from GEAR, down jackets. There was booty not just for the soldiers, but for their guests too, since each was allowed to bring a friend or family member.

The Marines, though, declined the offer. "They voted not to take guests with them, so they could take more Marines," says Levin, choking up at the memory.

Bennett's an emotional guy, so he was worried about how he'd react to meeting the 88 troops and guests at D.C.'s Union Station, where the trip originated. Some GIs were missing limbs. Others were wheelchair-bound or accompanied by medical personnel for the day. "They made it easy to be with them," he says. "They were all smiles on the ride to Philly. Not an ounce of self-pity from any of them. They're so full of life and determination."

At the stadium, the troops reveled in the game, recalls Bennett. Not even Army's lopsided loss to Navy could deflate the group's rollicking mood.

Afterward, it was back to the train and yet another gourmet meal—heroes get hungry, say Levin—before returning to Walter Reed and Bethesda.

"The day was spectacular," says Levin. "It was all about these kids. It was awesome to be part of it."

The most poignant moment for the Levins was when 11 Marines hugged them goodbye, then sang them the Marine Hymn on the platform at Union Station.

"One of the guys was blind, but he said, 'I can't see you, but man, you must be f—ing beautiful!' says Bennett. "I got a lump so big in my throat, I couldn't even answer him."

It's been three weeks, but the Levins and their guests are still feeling the day's love. "My Christmas came early," says Levin, who is Jewish and who loves the Christmas season. "I can't describe the feeling in the air."

Maybe it was hope. As one guest wrote in a thank-you note to Bennett and Vivian, "The fond memories generated last Saturday will sustain us all—whatever the future may bring."

God bless the Levins. And bless the troops, every one.

Submitted by Roger Schulrud, who received it from Errol Melander CDR, Chief Engineer on Purdy in 1964-65.

USS PURDY 2006 REUNION

APRIL 19-23

NASHVILLE, TN

NASHVILLE HOLIDAY INN

NEWSLETTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Cost of this issue is **\$254.36**. This **Purdy Report** is being sent to dues paying members only.

Thank you to the following contributors: James Day, Charles Gerardi, Lula Holley, Lennart Holmberg, and James Ruziska.

KEN SCOTT'S STORY

*A collection of memories written for his grandchildren and shared with us.
Continued from December 2005*

There's a way to goof off on any job, but it's harder when you are confined to a small area like a destroyer. There's not much of an area to hide, so you have to be inventive to survive. To make the chore harder, you must remember everyone on the ship knows you and can read you like a book.

One of the most successful schemes I was aware of, was also one of the most simple. And you didn't have to have a hiding place to work it. In fact, the more open, usually the better it worked.

All you had to do was walk around with an empty bucket in your hand. Everyone thought you were going after something and it was rarely if ever challenged, but it was wise to have some kind of story like, "I'm going aft to get some fresh water to wash a freshly chipped bullhead." Or "I'm going to get some rags from the paint locker." You don't have to have a strong story just as long as you came back promptly with an answer.

Another side to this little play is if whoever challenges you has to stick with you and make you prove your excuse. On the other side, if you are the bucket man, you can always go to the paint locker and get a hand full of rags, put them in the bucket and head forward again. It is really hard to stop this scheme, but you can't pull it often.

It isn't often you hear about a stow-away on a Navy ship, but we had one aboard the Purdy when we left going to Korea. Not many stow-aways would want to go to Korea during a war. (Ops—I should say a police action.)

We were about two days out when our stow-away was spotted. We noticed our visitor and everyone immediately knew this was no crew member. We had a Carolina wren stow-away!

No one knew for sure when she (I don't really know what sex it was.)

came aboard, but we were well out to sea when she was first sighted. She would flit about and was very elusive. Of course, she was adopted immediately by the men that maintained the stern deck section and they conveniently left bread here and there for her.

No one knew when she joined us or for sure when she left, but we were within sight of Spain when she was last seen. We had wall to wall drills, including gun firing drills, but she stayed with us until land was in sight before she abandoned ship. We missed her when she was gone. I hope she was happy in her new home!!

Once off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, we met a hurricane, and for two or three days we did the rock and roll big time. I enjoyed about all of that I could stand. A lot of the men got their quota real sudden like. I don't think anyone wanted any more of it! We headed into the wind and even though we were showing a speed of ten to twelve knots, we were basically sitting still. At times we would ride the crest of a wave and our screws would come out of the water. The whole ship would shudder, shake and make a terrible sound like it was going to come apart.

Waves regularly came over the bow and broke as high as the bridge. Paint was peeled off of the mast about forty feet above the water line. Some of the men thought we should rate submarine pay. Those of us that didn't get sea sick stood watches of four hours on and four hours off. I was the captain's messenger when the ship was underway, so I was on the bridge most of the time even though he was seldom there.

The galley was a mess. All but about a dozen cups were broken. The galley smelled like puke so bad I hated to go there. Dozens of sailors were so sick they laid in their bunks

and vomited all over themselves. One sailor from North Carolina was new to the ship and when he reported aboard weighed well over his ideal weight. He lost forty pounds. I have never seen anyone so sick!

There was a roll indicator in the pilot house and one watch we saw it hit forty-five degrees. At times you could step on the bulkhead (wall) and stand there a few seconds before the roll went the other way. Yes, we could literally walk on walls—not for long, but enough to say we had walked on the wall.

Our sister ship was operating about five hundred yards from us and at times she couldn't be seen for the waves between us for a minute or two.

Of the damage done to the Purdy, probably one of the most lasting things was all the cups and bowls were broken except for a few. True to the way things work, it took a month or so to get replacement cups and bowls. We drank from tin cans with essentially no complaints during this period.

To be continued 06/06.

FIVE STAR GENERALS

In all, four Army generals, four Navy admirals, and one Air Force general have held the rank of Five Star General. The Army's five star generals were General George C. Marshall, General Douglas MacArthur, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and General Omar N. Bradley. The Navy's five star fleet admirals were Admiral William D. Leahy, Admiral Ernest J. King, Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey. And General Henry Arnold was the Air Force's five star general.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information contained in this letter is very important! Please read it very carefully and respond as necessary! **You must respond as indicated in this message to continue receiving information about your reunion through the US Postal mail!**

Big changes are going on here at ML&RS, Inc! They're not going to happen overnight, but the process has begun. As you are certainly aware, rising costs for hotel rooms, meal prices and fuel for autos and tour buses makes for a more expensive reunion! We are doing everything we can to keep our costs to a minimum. However, prices continue to rise, including postage (which has gone up again the first of this year). In an effort to offer you and your fellow attendees the lowest possible cost, we are going to make some changes to the way things have been done in the past. We hope you will work with us to implement these changes as smoothly as possible!

Due to the multitude of requests we have received over the last few years, we are going to now upgrade our web site to include a variety of information pertaining to your reunion. There will be a small web site within our company's web site for each of the reunion groups we work with. The main page for each group will contain basic information about the upcoming reunion, as well as links to several other pages, including but not limited to lists of those who have signed up, the actual registration packet as a web page, a link to the profiles that were previously printed in the Sentimental Journal, newsletters, and after the reunion a link that can be used to order copies of the memory books that will now be included as part of the reunion package. Also, we will not duplicate anything your group already has on their web page. We will do our best to keep personal information secure. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Email addresses will only be published with permission.

Beginning with the 2006 reunions, we will be discontinuing our memorabilia sales, including the Sentimental Journal. There are so many web sites out there now where hats, t-shirts, etc can be ordered, and the turn-around time is just a matter of days. When we first started this business, this was not the case. We began offering these

items as a service to the reunion groups who didn't know where else to order items. Due to the increased availability of memorabilia, our sales have declined over the last few years, and it is no longer cost effective for us to continue offering these items. Also, there are a lot of groups who prefer to sell the items themselves as a fund raiser for the association. We certainly do not wish to compete with your association sales!

In place of the Sentimental Journal, we will begin including a 2006 Memory Book as the memorabilia item given away at the reunion. This will replace the note cards, clocks, pens, etc that have been given in the past. However, they will not be given at the reunion, they will be sent to each attendee (who signs up for one of the Option Packages or orders one as part of their Individual Option) following the reunion. The 2006 Memory Book will contain photos from the reunion and "then and now" photos that have been submitted prior to the reunion each year. The very popular profiles will now be accessible from the web site.

Now that the group's web site is up and running we will discontinue the majority of the paper mailings we sent out. Newsletters, Surveys, Introductory Letters and Questionnaires, and the Registration Material will all be available on the web site. Your group's web site is www.mlrsinc.com/purdy. Be sure to visit the site frequently and take advantage of the information that will be/is available there. If your profile is not listed in the Crew Profiles, then be sure to submit yours via www.mlrsinc.com/questionnaire.htm.

We do realize that there are still some people who do not have or do not want internet access. Because of this, we will continue paper mailings to those who let us know they want their info via the postal mail. **You must return the "coupon" at the end of this letter if you wish to continue receiving paper copies of the various materials we send out—newsletters, registration packets, surveys, etc.** If you do not mail in this coupon, we are assuming you have internet access and can obtain all the necessary reunion information off your group's web site.

At some point in the near future, we plan to add on-line registration capabilities to each group's web site. That probably won't happen this year, but I do foresee it happening soon. That is another feature we got a lot of requests for.

As we strive to provide you and your reunion group with the best possible value for your reunion dollar, it is sometimes necessary to change the way some things are done. Our ultimate goal is to offer each and every reunion attendee a great reunion at a reasonable price. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, comments or suggestions!

Respectfully,
Dina Coffey
Office Manager
M L&RS, Inc

Return this coupon if you want to receive all future mailings from us on paper via US Postal Mail:

Reunion Group: _____
(ship or unit name)

Your name: _____

Your mailing address: _____

Your phone number: _____

Return this coupon to:
ML&RS, INC
PO DRAWER 11399
HICKORY, NC 28603