

# The FLAGSHIP

Volume 15 Issue 2

August 2007

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS ROWE



### Special Points of Interest

- More about the famous female entrepreneur in Hong Kong Harbor, Mary Soo, is the cover story.
- Only one new name for Welcome Mat is on page two. If you find an old shipmate, be sure to let us know.
- We need your help with stories for future issues. See page three for details.
- As a veteran, you'll appreciate the poem on pages three and four entitled "A Veteran Died Today."
- We need your reunion memories. See why on page four. Please help out.
- Read a very brief overview of the Battle of Gettysburg on page four.

## THE STORY OF MARY SOO CONTINUES

*Editor's Note: Herbert Royster of the USS E.G. Small, who wrote the article about Mary Soo in the last issue of The Flagship, has sent in another one to share with the readers.*

Hong Kong Mary Soo eventually became a millionaire from all her varied business activities. It is my understanding, that towards the end of her years, she also turned into a philanthropist of the first order.

Ya'll could always tell what the USN had for dinner, as it could be found for sale in various dining places in both Hong Kong and Kowloon—mere minutes after Mary Soo's girls took it away as garbage from the ships. The food that was unfit for human consumption, went directly

to her HUGE pig farm located on the mainland. From that farm, she supplied Hong Kong restaurants with a large portion of their fresh pork.

Mary Soo could be found personally directing her 'girls' (each one in their 30'-50's and built along the lines of a brick) painting ships and doing other such things. When Mary Soo bargained to supply services for a ship, you had better do so with one hand holding onto your wallet. She had her own varying rates for doing "Business", but if she felt you were possibly shorting her (by saying, NOT supplying the paint to use) then you got what you paid for!

From first light to taps Mary Soo could be summoned or she may appear at your ship to conduct "Business." Remember,

USN ships were always anchored well away from shore in that port. Neither she nor her 'girls' had radios in the little Sampans they used (heck, they didn't have engines either), as to how she always 'got-the-word' ASAP was a wonderment!

Becoming a very rich woman didn't seem to faze Mary Soo much. Many days she could be found stopping at various USN ships to operate her little 'Gedunk' stand selling soda pop and the like. You treat her with respect and suddenly you may become "Numba One Sail-O-Mans" then your soda could be bought for about 1/2 price. On the other hand, I can also recall her cussing out an officer and believe "Stupid" was the nicest

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word she used (standing on her tip toes she was eyeball to the third button down on his shirt, but the little lady(?) sure had plenty of steel in her corset)! If you wanted to know about a USN ship in the Far East, where/when it was scheduled to be deployed or other strictly "Confidential" information—just ask Mary Soo, she could tell you.

During the 1960's we aboard the USS Ernest G. Small DD/DDR-838 were deployed for several years to WESPAC and came to know Hong Kong Mary Soo—and she us. The woman was a true legend!!!

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 05/07 **\$591.70**

Funds received since 05/07 issue  
**\$25.00**

Funds available for 08/07 issue  
**\$616.70**

Funds Expended for 08/07 issue  
**\$91.98**

**Ending Balance for 11/07**  
**\$524.72**

This issue is being mailed only to those who returned the coupon to receive a paper copy. Others can view the newsletter at the website [www.mlrsinc.com/rowe](http://www.mlrsinc.com/rowe). Please send contributions to ML&RS at the address below.

**Published by:**  
**MILITARY LOCATOR & REUNION SERVICE, INC.**  
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*Our reunions work so you don't have to.*



## WELCOME MAT

The following shipmate has been located since the last issue of the newsletter. Welcome aboard. We hope to see you at the next reunion.

**William Klaus**  
(1956-59) RD3 OI Div  
24 Gotham Ave  
Brooklyn, NY 11229  
718-332-1274  
[billmaryklaus@gmail.com](mailto:billmaryklaus@gmail.com)

### Correction from 05/07 issue:

**Daniel M. Mott**  
(1955-57) QM3  
63 Glenn Rd  
Apalchin, NY 13732  
[samott@stny.rr.com](mailto:samott@stny.rr.com)



## TAPS

The Flagship has learned of the following deaths since the last publication. Every member of the Association sends his heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the deceased.

**Joseph Brindley**  
Died May 1, 2007

**Charles Barry (Late 50's)**  
Died August 31, 2000

**Edward Becker**  
(1951-53) Lt  
Died February 13, 2007

## STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Flagship is the official publication of the USS ROWE Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in February, May, August and November, *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 ROWE. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

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.

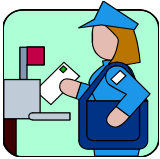
All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

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.

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.**



## MAIL CALL

**Edward Becker**

Edward Arthur Becker, age 82, died February 13, 2007, at Wilmington Hospital. Mr. Becker was born in Milwaukee, WI and graduated from Marquette University High School. He received his Bachelors degree in engineering from the Marquette University. He was a Navy Veteran serving in World War II and the Korean conflict. He was stationed on the Destroyer Escort, USS Gentry at Okinawa, and the Destroyer USS Rowe. Mr. Becker was employed as a mechanical engineer by A O Smith Corp. in Milwaukee from 1946-1962. He then worked for the DuPont Company retiring in 1985 after 23 years of service. He was a member of Sigma Phi Delta Fraternity, American Society of Mechanical Engineers and Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. He is survived by his wife, Lois DeMeyer Becker; sons Robert E. Becker and James C. Becker; and 2 granddaughters.

## STORIES NEEDED FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The Flagship has been very lucky in the past to have some contributors who have been very faithful at sending in material for the newsletter. We have come to a point with this issue where we have run out of material. It is now up to those of you who might not have contributed a story, photo or other piece of memorabilia to dig down into those old trunks, drawers or closets and find something to share. Of course your stories are what we want most, so you may have to do a little digging in your memory for a good story. If you remember something about an article that has already been printed, let's hear what you remember. (Do you remember Mary Soo and her girls for example?)

Please don't assume someone else will send in all the material needed for a newsletter. We need **all** of you involved in order to have a great newsletter.

Karen Hoyle  
Editor, ML&RS, Inc

## A VETERAN DIED TODAY

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling out, and he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done. In his exploits with his buddies: they were heroes, everyone.

And 'tho sometimes, to his neighbors,

his tales became a joke, all his buddies listened, they knew where of he spoke. But we'll hear his tales no longer, for ole' Bob has passed away, and the world's a little poorer, for a VETERAN died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state, while thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories, from the time that they were young,

but the passing of a VETERAN goes unnoticed, and unsung. Is the greatest contribution, to the welfare of our land, some jerk who breaks his promise and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife, goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?

The politician's stipend and the style in which he lives, are sometimes disproportionate, to the service he gives.

While the ordinary VETERAN, who offered up his all, is paid off with a medal and perhaps a pension, small.

It's so easy to forget them, for it is so long ago, that our Bobs & Jims & Johnnys, went to battle, but we know.

It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys, who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys. Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,

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Carl Cramer's Boyd's Bear wearing a USS Rowe DD-564 sweater

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would you really want some cop-out,  
with his ever-waffling stand?

Or would you want a VETERAN,  
who has sworn to defend,  
his home, his kin, and country,  
and would fight until the end?

He was just a common VETERAN,  
and his ranks are growing thin,  
but his presence should remind us,  
we may need his likes again.

For when countries are in conflict,  
then we find the military's part,  
is to clean up all the troubles  
that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor,  
while he's here to hear the praise,  
then at least let's give him homage,  
at the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline  
in the paper that might say:

"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
FOR A VETERAN DIED TODAY."

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## BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

*For your information before your  
visit to Gettysburg at the 2007 reunion.*

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought over the first three days of July 1863 and was one of the most critical battles of the Civil War. Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his "Army of Northern Virginia" had invaded the North and was met by the Union Army led by General George Gordon Meade at the crossroads town of Gettysburg. The Union victory resulted in Lee's retreat to Virginia and an end to the hopes of the Confederacy for independence.

With over 51,000 casualties, the Battle of Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. Every farm field was a graveyard and every church, public building and even private homes were hospitals. In 1864 citizens began a plan to preserve portions of the battlefield as a memorial to those who fought.

## YOUR REUNION MEMORIES WANTED

Your annual reunions have been going on now for many years, and just like your shipboard days, each reunion has created its own memories. Those memories need to be shared with everyone. Think back, what are some of your favorite reunion memories?

Before the 2008 reunion, we would like to publish a book of USS ROWE reunion history and memories. We'll take care of the history part, but we need your help with the memories. Please take the time to think a little while and write down some of your favorite memories and send them to us. They don't have to be humorous, they can be nostalgic, sentimental, or whatever you remember best. If you can remember which reunion the memory occurred in, that would be great. To get you started, here are a couple memories (not necessarily from your ship) that we feel someone (if they are still living) will remember.

A Crewmember borrowed had \$20.00 from a shipmate, and one or the other left the ship before the money was repaid. When they saw each other at the reunion, the debt was paid (in public at the banquet no less).

Two former WW II POW's escaped from a POW Camp in Germany, became separated in the night and never knew what happened to the other – until the first reunion. Both survived and attended

the first reunion – what a greeting when they first recognized each other.

A reservation got messed up and when a couple arrived at the reunion they had no room. The hotel was sold out so the hotel manager put up a bed in the "board room" to get them thru the night. (Hint, think Omaha)

A lady married to a shipmate discovered she and another shipmate had dated years ago. Then it gets complicated.

Two former Officers nearly got into a fight because they remembered the same incident so differently.

These kinds of memories are treasures – don't let them die. For this book we're not interested in what happened while you were in the military – just things you remember from the reunions. Each one of you that has ever attended a reunion has a memory. Please share it with us. Sending us the memory will also give your permission for us to use it in the book.

Again, please take a little time and think about the good times (or if you were unhappy about something) write them down and if you have e-mail send it to:

[elainemlrs@charterinternet.com](mailto:elainemlrs@charterinternet.com) ;

if no e-mail you can either fax it to 828-256-6559 or mail it to:

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## USS ROWE 2007 REUNION

### SEPT. 13-16

## HARRISBURG, PA

### RADISSON PENN HARRIS HOTEL