

The FLAGSHIP

Volume 18 Issue 1

February 2010

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS ROWE



Special Points of Interest

- Everyone probably remembers their first time at sea. See if your experience was anything like those whose stories are told in our cover stories.
- One more story about hitchhiking is on page four.
- Welcome Mat is on page five. Four new members have been located.
- Larry Eckard has a suggestion for your 2011 reunion. See page five.
- Real Navy Chiefs is the topic of an article we think you'll enjoy. See page six.
- Information about a veteran's benefit of which you may not be aware is on page six.

MY FIRST TIME AT SEA

Editor's Note: For this issue, an e-mail was sent out asking for stories about your first time at sea. Here are your responses:

John O'Meally CWO-3 USN (Ret):

I went to sea for the first time in 1954 on a Destroyer Escort named USS Rizzi. I forget the hull number. I was a Fireman Apprentice in the Naval Reserve. This was going to be a month long reserve cruise to Columbia, Panama, Havana, Cuba and back to Brooklyn, New York. I was eighteen years old. I reported on the ship at noon on the day we were to sail. Was given a watch station and a time to report for the watch. It was the forward fireroom at midnight. But since it was early, I was told to go to the fireroom and assist in preparing for sea. I was a journeyman electrician in

civilian life and had been involved in wiring boilers converted from burning coal to oil. As a result, I had been around large boilers before. I did not stay below to see the boilers get lighted off. I went topside for getting underway and stowing my gear and getting ready for the trip to Columbia. All went well. The ship departed Brooklyn about 1700. I had dinner and went to bed in anticipation for my first watch at midnight. I should also say this was a summer cruise—it was the month of August and it was hot. At 2300 I was up and getting ready to stand my watch in the fireroom. The ship was rolling a bit but it did not bother me. At 2345 I climbed down the ladder into the fireroom and immediately noticed it was at least 100 degrees hotter than it was during the day when the boilers

were not lit off. I had no idea it would be so hot. I started to take my shirt off and was told not only to keep my shirt on, but also roll down my sleeves. This was done to protect you in case of a high pressure steam leak. I spent the next four hours dying from the heat. It was the longest watch I have ever stood in the 23 years I spent in the Navy. It seemed like time stood still. What felt like an hour was only ten minutes. It finally ended and although I have stood many rough watches since then as an officer and enlisted, I still remember that first watch.

I was in the Navy for sixteen years and had never been sea sick. By this time I had left Rowe and was a qualified submariner. The ship was on a 90 day patrol and had been submerged for about two

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weeks. We had a problem with an antenna that required some work on the surface. It had to be carried out at night and as fast as it could be done as we were not in friendly waters. I had just eaten a lot of junk that had my stomach a little upset when we surfaced in a state three sea. The ship went from no movement whatever to bouncing around like a tin can. Now all the foul odors of the sanitary tank and the bilges are escaping due to the ship rolling around and mixing with the air. I got as sick as a new kid at sea for the first time. I had never been sea sick before, and now here I am a Chief Petty Officer as sea sick as they come. Very embarrassing.

Delbert McFadden:

After I got out of Radar School in Norfolk, Virginia, 22 July 1955, it was a short drive to the Naval Base where the Rowe DD564 was located. Walking briskly down the long pier with my duffle bag on my shoulder, I scanned the numbers on the destroyers as I strolled past trying to see the one to which I was assigned. When I at last found the Rowe, it was tied up right next to the pier so I didn't have to cross a number of ships to find it. I heaved my duffle bag on to my left shoulder as I came up the gangplank so that my right arm was free to salute the American Flag waving from the stern of the ship. As I stepped onto the deck, the duty officer took my papers and I was escorted to the foc'sle and down a hatch to my quarters. My bunk was on the bottom, and I stored my belongings in the foot locker below the bunk. I looked around the compartment. The bunks were three-tiered and triced up against the bulkheads on both sides and down the middle. The deck was slick metal. The head was up a short ladder in the foc'sle.

I was taken on a short tour of the ship and then into CIC where I was assigned. The room was com-

pact with radar equipment, a plotting table, a clear plotting board on the bulkhead, intercom to the bridge, a few stools and a couple of chairs. I was given the duty roster and told of my assignments. I was given some assignments for the remainder of the day, and then went down to chow. Food was good and plenty. As I stepped into the mess hall, I looked around and saw few I knew, but sat down at one of the center tables. It was interesting that the tables were attached to the deck and had little ridges around the edges... (later on I found out that they really didn't stop the slopping and slipping trays when it was really rough.)

When evening came it was a good time to write or read. Then at 10:00 PM it was lights out. The bunks had been let down earlier and I was wondering how in the world I would slide into that small space. But slip in I did and even had a pillow, my head inches from the metal of the bunk above.

When the bunks were open, mine was inches above my locker, and the one above me seemed to be only a couple of feet—I guess it was a bit higher, but I remember if I was trying to sleep, that to turn over I would touch the springs of the bunk above me especially if there was a heavy sailor sleeping there and the springs sank closer. It was like sleeping on a bunch of closely spaced shelves in a dark closet.

At precisely 6:00 AM a piercing whistle blasted over the intercom and the boatswain commanded in a loud voice: "Heave Out! And Trice UP!" I woke up all right, slamming my head against the iron springs that were hanging down from the bunk above me. I squeezed out, my feet hitting the cold metal of the deck, and ran up the ladder to the head.

I was razzed about not having my sea-legs and how they would laugh at my sea-sickness when we got underway. I could feel the motion of the ship as the hawsers held the ship fast to the pier, but it was just mildly rocking here in port.

It wasn't long before we headed out to sea for some exercises. When we hit the breakwater, the sea was a

little rougher, but not a lot. You could feel the rise and fall of the ship and a bit of rocking. Our compartment, being at the bow of the ship, not only rocked but also had the rise and fall of the bow as it cut through the water. I loved the smell of the sea air and the wind though my hair when I stepped out on deck. For some reason I did not have motion sickness and really enjoyed being out on the ocean. Some others were not as fortunate, and ended up confined to their bunks, puking into buckets, or on deck leaning over the side and heaving into the ocean and letting the fine spray hit their faces until finally they were able to get over it.

I remember sometime a couple of years later when we were on plane guard duty that I was helicoptered over to the carrier. While there, a whistle came over the intercom announcing "Stand by for heavy rolls." I waited, and waited and felt nothing. I asked the sailor next to about it and he said in an amazed tone, "Didn't you feel it?" I guess, after coming from a rolling and bouncing destroyer, that the carrier's motion was like being on stable land.

Perhaps the best thing I remember is the good people that made up the division, and were always willing to help each other. With friends to talk with it made an easy transition into the procedures aboard ship.

Jan Bohren, SO2 1955-58:

One of my most vivid memories was my first day at sea. Visualize this: New Seaman Apprentice's first day at sea: lying on back prone in a 40 mm gun mount looking into the sky, praying that this day would somehow end.

Yeah, sea sick more than you can imagine.

Fortunately, this affliction dissipated, and I eventually was able to gain my "sea legs", but the memories of this feeling have always provoked sympathy when I see first-time "sailors" experiencing this memorable "state of the stomach."

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John Harris, SO2 1954-57:

My first time on blue water was while I was at Fleet Sonar School in Key West, and was for me a fairly miserable experience. The portion of our training called "Sea Phase" involved actual ASW training on the water versus a submarine.

There were about 15 students in my class and we were assigned to a Minesweeper (around 185 ft in length). One of my classmates was a pretty good artist and had drawn a picture on the back of his denim shirt of a submarine broken in half by a depth charge and the caption "Sub Killers." Some of us prevailed upon him to do our shirts. We felt Gung-Ho, so we wore our shirts that day: Not a Good Idea.

As we filed onto the ship, I noticed some smirks from the salty crew. The ship was rolling some at the dock. I had never had the opportunity to experience sea sickness before so I didn't realize what was in store. The sonar shack was in the vicinity of the bridge. The sonar equipment was the "search light" variety which meant no "cathode ray tube," only the 360 degrees (which was OK because you follow the echo anyway, just a little harder without the blip).

We started out in search of the sub and the further out we went the rougher it got. Most of us got really sea sick, none more so than me. When we began operations, we had to take turns operating the sonar gear

and hanging over the side throwing up. We even put a bucket next to the sonar stack. I don't believe that any of us were able to eat lunch (or even think about it). To this day, I can't remember feeling any worse. Not much sympathy from the crew, only a few snide remarks about our "Sub Killer" shirts. One of the crew did mention that he thought it was unusually rough that day. We did eventually locate the sub and made fairly decent mock attack run. I became concerned whether I would ever feel better again, but when I disembarked, after a few staggering steps on the pier, I began to feel OK. Incidentally, I canned the shirt when I got back to the barracks. I rode the Rowe for over two years and never had a problem after that one miserable day.

Ed Maleski, SF3:

The first time I boarded the Rowe back in 1956 was somewhat of an eye opener. Learning the routine and getting to know your shipmates took some time. Since I did a lot of boating growing up (fishing with my father) being on the water came natural to me. Going out on maneuvers on seas that were rougher than I was used to cause my stomach to be unsettled for several days. After that it wasn't a problem. Since I wanted to join the Navy growing up, my whole time aboard the Rowe and the Bushnell was an experience I won't forget.

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.

If you didn't get a chance to let us hear your "first time at sea" story, send it in for next time. Use ML&RS's address on page 4.

USS ROWE (DD-564) REUNION

SEPT. 23-26, 2010

**PHILADELPHIA,
PA**

**RAMADA INN PHILADELPHIA
AIRPORT**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 11/09 **\$347.97**
Funds received since 11/09 issue
\$60.00
Funds available for 02/10 issue
\$407.97
Funds Expended for 02/10 issue
\$184.66
Ending Balance for 05/10
\$223.31

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. Please send contributions to ML&RS at the address on page 4.

MORE ON THE ADVENTURES OF HITCHHIKING

Carl Cramer, STGC USNR (Ret):

I started hitchhiking at an early age. While attending Shippensburg Jr. High School, I was on the football team and we practiced right after school for a couple of hours. Then we were on our own to get home the best way we could. I lived 7 miles from the school and usually we started walking home and if a car came along, we would stick out our thumb and try to catch a ride. One night we had a night game and I started walking round 10 PM and didn't get home until around 11:30 because I had to walk the entire 7 miles. This would have been in the middle 40s right after WWII.

When I was on the USS Rowe DD-564, I hitchhiked home (approximately 300 miles one way) several times. At that time we had to take the ferry across from Norfolk to Newport News (the bridge-tunnel was not built at that time) and it seemed like several hundred sailors would gather between the main gate at NOB and the ferry dock trying to catch a ride. Sometimes sailors would take you along if you helped pay for some gas. After I got a car and started driving home, I had regular riders who would pay me \$5.00 for a ride home. If I didn't have a load, I would sometimes stop at the bus station in Washington, DC and try to find some riders and we usually did because it was much cheaper than taking a bus. Sometimes I would drop them off at their ship where the bus would drop them off in downtown Norfolk at the bus terminal and then they had to take another bus out to the piers.

One time I was hitchhiking home and was traveling in an older car. There was a metal strip that was bent out on the passenger side of the car and when I went to get out, the metal strip went thru my dress blues and into my leg (left thigh area). This was in Hagerstown, MD, and I had an aunt who lived in Hagerstown at that time. I made my way to their house and they took me to the Washington County, MD emergency room. The emergency

room doctor put 3 or 4 sutures in and sent me on my way. My aunt took me to the edge of town and I continued hitchhiking the last 40 miles home.

One night I was picked up right out side of Washington, DC by a Chief Hospitalman in Rockville, MD. When he stopped the car to pick me up, he asked if I could drive. I started to drive and it was not long until I found out he was gay. Needless to say, I stopped the car in Gaithersburg, MD and got out of the car and started hitchhiking all over again. I met another sailor who was hitchhiking to New York State so we hitchhiked together. It was not long until some lady who had a station wagon with several dogs in the back picked us up. She was on her way home from showing the dogs on a Washington, DC television station. When we got to Frederick, MD, the other sailor got out because he was going north on Rt. 15 and I was going west on Rt. 40. The lady, the dogs and I headed west on U.S. Rt. 40 towards Hagerstown, MD. She said that she lived a couple miles just off Rt. 40 (about 5 miles east of Hagerstown, MD) and she asked me if I would like to go along home with her for a nightcap, and I did. She had several more dogs at home and they were all over the house. After a couple of drinks, she took me back out to Rt. 40 and I started hitchhiking all over again. When I got home, I had so many dog hairs on my dress blues, I had to have them dry cleaned before heading back to my ship in Norfolk, VA.

In 1953, I was sent to Class A School in Key West, FL. While at Sonar School, I hitchhiked to Miami, FL and back. About all I can remember about this episode is a very nice lady picked me up and took me to Miami. I believe she was a teacher at the University of Miami and lived in Coral Gables. I'm not even sure how I got back to Key West, but I know I hitchhiked. You have to remember that was 55 years ago and to be honest with you, I can't believe the things we did then. I would never

think of hitchhiking from my home in Newburg, PA to Norfolk, VA or vice-versa today. I guess we were young then and didn't have a worry in the world. After this period of time, I always had a vehicle for the rest of my time in the Navy. I liked that better than the unknown.

The beltway around Washington, DC was not completed at that time and we always had to go thru the city of Washington, DC. This was a difficult part because if you got a ride to Washington, DC, it was difficult to get to the other side of the city to catch the route exiting the city. Some by-passed going thru Washington, DC by taking Rt. 17 to Winchester, VA. There were always a lot of sailors on this route heading west to Ohio etc.



TAPS

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

James Durborow
(1957-58) CDR
Died January 18, 2009

Published by:
**MILITARY LOCATOR &
REUNION SERVICE, INC.**
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Hickory, NC 28603

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Our reunions work so you don't have to.



WELCOME MAT

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

Ronald DeSmet (1957-59) YN
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NEW POSTAGE STAMPS

The United States Postal Service is issuing some new stamps in 2010 that you may be interested in getting. They are honoring naval history by images of William S. Sims, John McCloy, Arleigh A. Burke and Doris Miller. Also being issued is a stamp for Bill Mauldin, the WWII Army cartoonist for Stars & Stripes, who made us laugh at the images of ourselves at war. These are all 44 cents being issued on 5 February 2010. There are 20 stamps to a sheet (complete set) and a sheet costs \$8.80 each. I purchased 2 sheets earlier this week. For more on these stamps, go to http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=51113.

Submitted by Carl Cramer

FROM ML&RS, INC

OK Guys, here it is! We have found an outstanding reunion site for you – Plano, Texas! Your first question is probably “Where the heck is Plano, Texas”? It is a suburb of Dallas in proximity to all of the major Dallas-Ft Worth attractions. Historic downtown Plano holds something for everyone....shopping, dining, nightlife, culture, etc. Unique and one-of-a-kind of stores and boutiques line the brick street. In addition to shopping you can stop for a bite to eat and one of the many eateries located downtown or a drink after a hard days touring or shopping.

You owe it to yourself to consider Plano for your next reunion; you'll never regret the decision to allow Plano to host your 2011 reunion. We here at ML & RS, Inc heartily endorse Plano!

As your reunion planner for many years, you know we have never so enthusiastically endorsed any reunion site. Since this is an endorsement of Plano, not of a specific hotel, all we'll say about accommodations you will be more than pleased.

Some groups have actually extended their reunion by a day just to take advantage of everything that is available. Let me tell you, in no particular order, just a few of the things that are waiting for you in and around Plano; how much you do depends on how long you stay in Plano.

Southfork Ranch, home to the Ewings is probably the most famous place in Plano and no visit to the area would be complete without Southfork on your agenda. You can tour the famed Ewing Mansion and re-live exciting moments from the series in the "Dallas Legends" exhibit, featuring an exciting array of memorabilia from the series. See the gun that shot J.R., Lucy's Wedding Dress, the "Dallas" Family Tree, and Jock's Lincoln Continental. Relax on a guided tour of the ranch grounds. Eat at Miss

Ellie's Deli and shop in two themed retail stores, offering a diverse selection of clothing, accessories, gifts, and collectibles. You will want to plan in advance for the famous South Fork Chuck Wagon-style buffet followed by some cowboy music. This is a special event for groups, not to be confused with the dinner that is open to the public. Anyone who doesn't love a Southfork evening is un-Texan!

For a taste of Texas night-life there is “Billy Bob's Texas” the world's largest “Country Music Honky-Tonk” where you ride and shoot the bull. Food is excellent, and there really is live bull riding right in the club – and be sure to take advantage of the photo bull. Did I forget to mention the live entertainment?

For the cowboys in the group a visit to the Ft Worth Stockyard Historic District is a must. Here you can see a real cattle drive. For the drovers heading longhorn cattle up the Chisholm Trail to the railheads, Fort Worth was the last major stop for rest and supplies. Beyond Fort Worth they would have to deal with crossing the Red River into Indian Territory. Between 1866 and 1890 more than four million head of cattle were trailed through Fort Worth which was soon known as “Cowtown” and had its own disreputable entertainment district several blocks south of the Courthouse area that was known all over the West as “Hell's Half Acre”, Now the beautiful Fort Worth Water Gardens.

For the more serious minded, you'll want see Dealey Square, the site of President Kennedy's assassination. See where the President was gunned down, visit the building the fatal shots were fired from, see the Courthouse where Jack Ruby shot Lee Harvey Oswald. All things and more are awaiting you and the cost is no more than you've been paying. Give it a try!

REAL NAVY CHIEFS

REAL CHIEFS Think Ensigns should be seen and not heard, and never, ever, be allowed to read books on leadership.

REAL CHIEFS Don't have any civilian clothes.

REAL CHIEFS Have CPO Association Cards from their last 5 commands.

REAL CHIEFS Don't remember any time they weren't Chiefs.

REAL CHIEFS Propose like this "There will be a wedding at 1000 hours on 29 October, be there in whites with your gear packed because you will be a prime participant."

REAL CHIEFS Favorite national holiday is CPO Initiation.

REAL CHIEFS Keeps four sets of dress khaki uniforms in the closet in hopes they will come back.

REAL CHIEFS Favorite food is ship-board SOS for breakfast.

REAL CHIEFS Don't know how to tell civilian time.

REAL CHIEFS Call each other "Chief."

REAL CHIEFS Greatest fear is signing for property book items.

REAL CHIEFS Dream in Navy Blue, White, Haze Gray and occasionally khaki.

REAL CHIEFS Have served on ships that are now war memorials or tourist attractions.

REAL CHIEFS Get tears in their eyes when the "Chief" dies in the movie "Operation Pacific."

REAL CHIEFS Don't like Certified Navy Twill. "Wash Khaki" is the ONLY thing to make a uniform out of.

REAL CHIEFS Can find their way to the CPO Club blindfolded, on 15 different Navy Bases.

REAL CHIEFS Have pictures of ships in their wallets.

REAL CHIEFS Don't own any pens that do not have "Property U.S. Govt" on them.

REAL CHIEFS Don't voluntarily get the mandatory flu shots.

REAL CHIEFS Don't order supplies, they swap for them.

REAL CHIEFS Favorite quote is from the movie Ben Hur, "We keep you alive to serve this ship."

REAL CHIEFS Think excessive modesty is their only fault.

REAL CHIEFS Hate to write evaluations, except for their own.

REAL CHIEFS Turn in a 4 page brag sheet for their evaluation.

REAL CHIEFS Last ship was always better.

REAL CHIEFS Know that the black tar in their coffee cup makes the coffee taste better.

REAL CHIEFS Idea of heaven-Three good PO1's and a Division Officer who does what he is told.

REAL CHIEFS Think John Wayne would have made a good Coast Guard Chief, if he had not gone soft and made Marine movies.

REAL CHIEFS Use the term "Good Training" to describe any unpleasant task...Scraping the sides of the ship is "Good Training." Having to sleep on your seabag in the parking lot because there was no room in the barracks is "Good Training."

AID & ATTENDANCE BENEFIT

"The Veteran's Administration offers a Special Pension with Aid and Attendance (A &A) benefit that is largely unknown. This Special Pension allows for Veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing, undressing or taking care of the needs of nature to receive additional monetary benefits. It also includes individuals who are blind or a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity. Assisted care in an assisted living facility also qualifies.

This important benefit is overlooked by many families with Veterans or surviving spouses who need additional monies to help care for ailing parents or loved ones.

This is a "pension benefit" and is not dependent upon service-related injuries for compensation. Most veterans who are in need of assistance qualify for this pension.

Aid and Attendance can help pay for care in the home, nursing home or assisted living facility. A Veteran is eligible for up to \$1,519 per month, while a surviving spouse is eligible for up to \$976 per month. A couple is eligible for up to \$1,801 per month.

ELIGIBILITY

Any War Time Veteran, with 90 days of active duty, 1 day beginning or ending during a period of War, is eligible to apply for the Aid and Assistance Special Pension. A surviving spouse (marriage must have ended due to death of veteran) of a War-Time Veteran may also apply. The individual applying must qualify both medically and financially."

For more information, and to download the forms needed to file for the Aid and Assistance program, please visit www.veteranaid.org.