

# The FLAGSHIP

Volume 16 Issue 1

May 2008

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS ROWE



### Special Points of Interest

- A change of much anticipated plans and several Captain's Masts are the topics of "My Biggest Frustration" in this issue. Read about them in our cover story.
- Welcome Mat is on page two with two new names for the roster.
- Carl Cramer has information on the scrapping of some ships. Find out which ones on page three.
- A listing of enlisted job rates and their current status is also on page three.
- Ever wonder where the term "freezing the balls off a brass monkey" came from? You'll find out on page four.
- Read about asbestos-related diseases on page six.

## MY BIGGEST FRUSTRATION

Your letters on "my biggest frustration" brought in more letters for this issue. We are happy to print those here.

### Bob Brooks:

In 1958 I put the USS Forrestal CVA 59 in commission at Newport News, VA. My duty station before that was the USS Iowa BB 61, an old WWII Battleship with an outdated weapons system, but we made them work and I cut my teeth on the 5" 38 twin gun mount. I got very frustrated because we couldn't get proper parts for their repair and some of the ammo was left over from the war. I really wanted to get off the Iowa, but all my requests for transfer were turned down by the Gunnery Officer and the XO. So I rode her until she went out of commission in

Philly.

Now I had my chance to get some experience with a modern up-to-date weapons system. I knew the USS Forrestal CVA 59 was being built in Newport News, so I requested a transfer to her and got lucky. Maybe too lucky, for when I went aboard I discovered the main gunnery battery was four brand new 5" 54 fully automatic weapons. All the electrical and hydraulic systems required someone with a degree in electrical engineering to understand it and I was in serious trouble. So I requested the A, B, C Gunnery school in Great Lakes and got it. My Warrant Gunner said, "Brooks, I want you to give the school all you've got and get back here and train us to use this weapons system." For 20 weeks

I studied my head off and graduated 7th in the A Class of 25 Gunner's Mates. I was so proud of my accomplishments and could not wait until I got back aboard the Forrestal so I could teach my buddies all about the new weapons system.

However, on graduation day a W4 Warrant Gunner busted my bubble. He said I have bad news. Some of you will be re-assigned to another duty station, and he started calling names. "Brooks, your new duty station will be the USS Rowe DD 564. You can take 30 days leave and catch her in Norfolk just in time for a Med Cruise." I didn't even know what a Destroyer did. But I soon found out—Sea Duty and lots of it, chasing Submarines and playing war

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

games, and by the way, she had the old out-dated WW II, 5" 38 Weapons system. But I learned to love the USS Rowe and her crew. She was a fine ship and I wouldn't take anything for having served on her. I rode her until she went out of commission in Orange, TX, in 1959. So my biggest frustration turned out to be not so bad after all.

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#### Carl Cramer:

I have given some thought to this and there are quite a few and I could probably fill up the Flagship publication. A couple that come to mind seems to be shortly after reporting aboard the USS Rowe DD-564.

1. Just shortly after reporting aboard the USS Rowe DD-564 and on my first liberty in Norfolk, VA, I ran into a Corporal in the Marine Corps in downtown Norfolk that I knew from back home. Since this was my first liberty, he was going to show me around and show me the ropes of how to have a good time in Norfolk. Well, wouldn't you know it, we got into an area that was listed as "Out of Bounds" and the Shore Patrol spotted us and started blowing their whistle. He said, "Run for it," and we both ran in different directions. I went about 2 blocks and as I was rounding the corner, I fell, messing my whites all up and the Shore Patrol got me. It was not long until here they came with the Corporal. They put us in the paddy wagon and took us down to the Shore Patrol Headquarters. They really got all over the Corporal because I was only an SA. They told him that he should have known better than to take me in an area that was listed as "Out of Bounds." They took my Liberty Card and took me back to my ship in the paddy wagon. The next day or shortly thereafter, I had to go to Captain's Mast before Capt. C.S. Arthur and I received a warning.

2. Another time I was on my way to Virginia Beach and as I was

going by Ft. Story (an Army base) the Military Police (MP) stopped me for speeding. They also took my Liberty Card and told me I had to return to the ship immediately. The next day I had to go to Captain's Mast before Capt. C.S. Arthur and he gave me another warning (and maybe a couple hours of extra duty).

3. Waiting in line (sometimes hours it seemed) to catch the Ferry to Newport News when we were on our way home, usually after 1600 on Friday on a 72 hour pass (weekend). We had the same problem on the way back to Norfolk (usually 0300 or later).

4. Another was when I tried out for the DESLANT Baseball Team. (The DESLANT Baseball Team is picked from all men serving on all Destroyers in the Atlantic Fleet.) I was transferred to a Tender in Norfolk and we practiced for a couple of weeks. I stayed with the team until the final cut and was let go and was sent back to the Rowe.

5. This is probably my worst frustration while on the Rowe. Shortly after reporting aboard, I was made the Bridge Talker for setting the "Special Sea Detail." I had quite a few stations on my circuit that I was responsible for and one of them was Main Engine Control. My lowest score on my GCT was Mechanical and I am not mechanically inclined. We were preparing to get underway when Main Engine Control called the Bridge and requested permission to "Spin Main Engines once every 3 minutes." If you didn't understand the message, you were to say, "Repeat." Well, after about 12 "Repeats," I still didn't understand and I turned around to Captain C.S. Arthur and said, "Captain, Main Engine Control request permission to spin something down there every 3 minutes." Needless to say, Capt. Arthur didn't like my request and yes, I got a good a— chewing out. However, whenever we would go along side another ship to take on oil and/or replenish our supplies, I was always the Captain's phone talker. I thought I really improved as time went on and I hope Capt. Arthur did also.

## 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.

**Wayne Martin (1958-59) YN**  
8174 East Olid Ave  
Yuma, AZ 85365  
928-344-8900

**Robert "John" Gawlinski**  
(1957-59) FTSI 1st Div  
113 Westminster DR  
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054  
856-222-1201  
rigepa@comcast.net



## 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.

**Jack Helton (1946)**  
Died January 21, 2008

## APHORISMS

- The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.
- Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail.
- Seat belts are not as confining as wheel chairs.
- Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?

## MOTHBALL FLEET DISAPPEARING

Recently I have learned that the US Navy plans to sink 15 ships in the next few years and scrap 24 more.

The YELLOWSTONE Class destroyer tender USS ARCADIA and the SPRUANCE Class Destroyer USS CONOLLY, as well as the acoustic research ship USS HAYES will be sunk as artificial reefs in fiscal year 2009. Another SPRUANCE Class destroyer, USS RADFORD currently in Philadelphia and the auxiliary aircraft landing training ship and former carrier USS FORRESTAL which is currently in Newport, RI are also to be sunk as artificial reefs but the target date for these ships has not yet been determined.

This report also tells us that the inventory of U.S. Navy inactive ships was up to 195 ships in 1997, but today in 2008, this inventory is down to 62 ships.

USS ARCADIA and USS CONOLLY will be sunk in 2009;

Combat stores ships USS CONCORD, USS SAN JOSE, USS SPICE and USS NIAGARA FALLS to be sunk in 2010;

Combat stores ships USS SATURN and ammunition ship USS KILAUEA to be sunk in 2011

Ammunition ships USS FLINT, USS SHASTA, USS MOUNT BAKER and USS KISKA to be sunk in 2012.

Submitted by STGC Carl L. Cramer, USNR (Ret)

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*Our reunions work so you don't have to.*

## WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO MY RATE?

### A Listing of Enlisted Job Rates and Their Current Status

BM Boatswain's Mate—In use in 1775, established 1797. Changed from Coxswain 1948

BT Boiler Technician—Established 1869. Merged with MM in 1996.

CS Commissionaryman—Established 1948. Changed to Culinary Specialist

DC Damage Control— Established 1948.

DK Disbursing Clerk— Established 1948 from the rating of Storekeeper (D) (Disbursing Storekeepers) Merged with PS in 2005.

EM Electrician's Mate—Changed from Electrician 1921.

ET Electronics Technician—Changed from Electronics Technician's Mate 1948.

EN Engineman—Pay grade 1c and 2c established 1917; disestablished at all pay grades.

GM Gunner's Mate—Established 1797; pay grade C established 1864; pay grades 1c, 2c and 3c established 1893.

HM Hospital Corpsman—Changed from Pharmacist's Mate 1948.

IC Interior Communications— Established 1948

MM Machinist's Mate Remains in use.

PN Personnelman—Established 1948; Merge into PS in 2005

PC Postal Clerk Established 1959

QM Quartermaster—Fully established 1893

RD Radarman—Established 1943. Changed to OS

RM Radioman—Established 1921. Changed to IT in 1999.

SF Shipfitter—1c and 2c established 1902. 3c established 1921; changed to Metalsmith and Pipefitter 1948. Re-established 1958.

SH Ship's Serviceman—Established 1943

SM Signalman—Established 1921; included in Quartermaster 1948. Re-established 1956. Disestablished in 2003.

SO Sonarman—Established 1943; Changed to Sonar Technician July 1964.

TS Steward—Established 1797; changed to Ship's Steward 1838. Re-established from Officer's Steward 1c, 2c, and 3c 1943.

SK Storekeeper—Established 1916

TM Torpedoman—Established 1921; changed to Torpedoman's Mate 1942

YN Yeoman —Established 1835; disestablished 1884; re-established from Ship's Yeoman 1893

(Note: This listing is comprised on only the rates you would find on a destroyer.)

Submitted by STGC Carl Cramer, USNR (Ret)

## THE NEW NAVY BATTLE EFFICIENCY “E” RIBBON AWARD

(New since we were aboard the  
USS ROWE DD-564)

The battle efficiency “E” Ribbon is awarded to ships and aviation squadrons for efficiency in gunnery and for excellence in communications and engineering etc.

The new Navy Battle “E” was established in July of 1976 by Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf.

The Navy “E” Ribbon has been in effect from July 1, 1974 to the present.

A Secretary of Navy recommendation in June of 1976 established this award to replace the Battle Efficiency Award (the letter “E”) which had been worn sewn to the sleeve of the uniform. It is authorized to be worn by all crew members of ships and aviation squadrons winning the fleet-wide eighteen month competitive cycle which has exercises testing all phases of battle readiness. The Battle Efficiency award, called the Navy Battle “E”, in addition to the ribbon, consists of a cloth insignia and a battle pennant to be displayed by the ship or unit winning the award.

The Navy “E” Ribbon denotes permanent duty on ships or in squadrons that won the battle efficiency competition after July 1, 1974. The ribbon replaces the “E” patch previously sewn on the right sleeve of the uniform.

The Navy “E” Ribbon is worn after the Meritorious Unit Commendation and before the Prisoner of War Medal.

A silver “E” one-eighth of an inch high is authorized for wear on the Navy “E” ribbon for first, second and third awards.

For four or more awards, one wreathed “E” is worn centered on the ribbon bar is authorized.

Submitted by STGC Carl Cramer,  
USNR, (Ret)

## FREEZING THE BALLS OFF A BRASS MONKEY

It was necessary to keep a good supply of cannon balls near the cannon on old war ships. But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck was the problem.

The best storage method devised was to stack them as a square based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus the supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon.

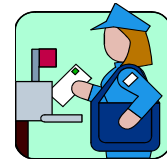
There was only one problem—how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate with 16 round indentations, called a Monkey. But if the plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make Brass Monkeys.

Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would come right off the monkey. Thus, it was quiet literally, cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.

Submitted by STGC Carl Cramer,  
USNR (Ret)

## FLAG DAY

The “Stars and Stripes,” the official National symbol of the United States of America was authorized by Congress on Saturday, **June 14, 1777**. The entry in the journal of the Continental Congress 1774-1789 Vol. VIII 1777 reads “Resolved that the flag of the thirteen United States be 13 stripes alternate red and white: that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.”



## MAIL CALL

To Editor of the Flagship:

This attached was published in our FRA Newsletter. If you can find room please publish:

Sincerely,  
Robert Lowe, BTCS (Ret)  
USS Rowe Sept 1951 to Oct 1956

## I WAS A SAILOR ONCE

I like standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping from the four quarters of the globe. I liked the sounds of the Navy; the piercing trill of the boatswain's pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the strong language and laughter of sailors at work. I liked Navy vessels; plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphibs, sleek subs and steady solid aircraft carriers. I like the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge—memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome. I liked the lean angular names of Navy 'tin cans' and escorts, members of heroes who went before us. And others—San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Chicago, Oklahoma City—named for some of our country's great cities. I liked the precision, tempo and pride of A NAVY BAND. I liked liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even liked the never-ending paperwork and all-hands working parties as my ship filled herself with the multitude of supplies, both mundane and to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her. I liked sailors, officers and enlisted from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small

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towns of New England, big cities, mountains and prairies from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me—for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength, and for courage. In a word, they were 'shipmates'—then, now and forever. I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed: "NOW HEAR THIS! NOW STATION THE SPECIAL SEA AND ANCHOR DETAIL—ALL HANDS TO QUARTERS FOR LEAVING PORT." And I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier-side. The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful. But the companionship of robust Navy Laughter, the 'all for one and one for all' philosophy of the sea was ever present. I liked the fierce and dangerous activity on the flight deck of air craft carriers, earlier named for battles won but sadly now named for politicians; Enterprise, Independence, Boxer, Princeton, and oh so many more, some lost in battle, and sadly...many scrapped. I liked the names of the aircraft and helicopters; Skyraider, Intruder, Sea King, Phantom, Skyhawk, Demon, Skywarrior, Corsair, and many more that bring to mind offensive and defensive orders of battle. I liked the excitement of an alongside replenishment as my ship slid alongside the oilier and the cry of "STANDBY TO RECEIVE SHOTLINES" prefaced the hard work of rigging spanwires and fuel hoses echoed across the narrow gap of water between the ships and welcomed the mail and fresh milk, fruit and vegetables that sometimes accompanied the fuel. I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night. I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness—the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern lights, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters—they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead. And I liked drifting off

to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me that my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe. I liked quiet mid-watches with the aroma of strong coffee—the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere. And I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness. I liked the sudden electricity of "GENERAL QUARTERS! GENERAL QUARTERS! ALL HANDS MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS!" followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war—ready for anything. I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize. I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men who made them. I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones, Burke. A sailor could find much in the Navy-comrade-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood. In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, we will remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods—the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and mess decks. Gone ashore for good now, we grow humble about our Navy days, when the seas were a part of us and a new port of call was ever over the horizon. Remembering this, we stand taller and proudly say, "I was a sailor once."

## 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.**

## ASBESTOS—RELATED DISEASES

### *Millions of Veterans Exposed to Lethal Asbestos*

During and after World War II, asbestos use greatly expanded as the asbestos manufacturing companies helped write specifications for products on U.S. ships. This caused hundreds of thousands of workers and sailors to be unknowingly exposed to dangerous asbestos dust in the cutting and handling of insulation products. As a result, many of these men and women would develop an asbestos-related disease decades later.

### *Unnecessary Exposure*

During a 50-year period leading up to the mid-1970's, the asbestos industry manufactured insulation products that were installed in almost every building, home, school, ship, car and plane in America. Surprisingly, these manufacturers knew about the long-term hazards of asbestos, but chose to ignore the danger. It was not until the 1970's that the U. S. Navy became aware of the dangers of asbestos...too late for the thousands of veterans who became afflicted with abestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma as a result of their unnecessary exposure.

### *Veteran's Lives Cut Short by Asbestos Cancer*

After their service to our country, most veterans of the asbestos era led lives outside the military. They married, built careers, and raised families; never knowing that their exposure to asbestos while in the military might cruelly cut short their lives. Decades later and near retirement, many of these men and women were denied the pleasure of living out their golden years with family and friends.

### *No Location Aboard Ship Was Safe*

The wide variety of occupations of the victims of asbestos disease proves no one was immune—even family members became inflicted. Although fire engine rooms were

most commonly associated with asbestos disease, no one aboard ship was safe including sleeping quarters, mess halls, and navigation rooms. Thousands were exposed to asbestos while working at shipyards and docks. Here are a few examples of the type of personnel jobs, and situations where people were exposed:

Boiler/Tender  
Gunner/Seaman  
Seabee—military construction  
Housewife (exposed by asbestos dust on husband's laundry)  
Fireman (in engine room)  
Boilerman  
Engine Mechanic  
Shipfitter (1st Class Petty Officer, E6)

## EARLY DETECTION

*If You Were Exposed to Asbestos in the Military, DO NOT DELAY Taking the Following Preventive Steps*

1. Learn about asbestos-related diseases and the symptoms.
2. See your doctor and establish a regular health monitoring program. Always be conscious of your health because each year brings on new risks to those exposed to asbestos.
3. Have regular chest X-rays (read by a Certified B-Reader) to get a high-resolution CT-scan. Also, have a pulmonary function/breathing testing to detect asbestos disease. **EARLY DETECTION CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE!**

**Early detection is critical in the treatment of asbestos-related disease.** Although the effects of asbestos may not be apparent for several years, asbestos-related diseases may progress rapidly following the initial onset of symptoms. Monitor your health regularly.

## JOKES THAT CAN BE TOLD IN CHURCH

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

The mother replied, "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment and then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

A Sunday school teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, "They couldn't get a baby-sitter."

## 2008 USS ROWE REUNION

### SEPTEMBER 4—7

### INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Hilton Indianapolis North

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 02/08 **\$605.99**  
Funds received since 02/08 issue  
**\$0**  
Funds available for 05/08 issue  
**\$605.99**  
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**Ending Balance for 08/08**  
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