

# The FLAGSHIP

Volume 18 Issue 2

May 2010

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS ROWE



### Special Points of Interest

- We asked for e-mails about meeting a celebrity and your stories make up the cover articles.
- On page three read about a Veterans Scholarship started by one of your own. See Mail Call.
- Everyone likes a funny story and we have one for you on page three, thanks to Bob Brooks.
- Delbert McFadden shares his memories of battling Hurricane Hazel during his time on the Rowe. See his story and pictures on pages three and four.
- Don't forget to mark your calendars for September 23-26, 2010 for the USS Rowe reunion in Philadelphia. It will be a great one that you won't want to miss!

## MEETING A CELEBRITY

*Editor's Note: The story idea that I e-mailed out to the readers was to tell about a time in the Navy when you met a celebrity or future celebrity. We received the following stories:*

### Jim Molnar BT 3/c:

In or around 1956, 1957, while serving on the Rowe, I was asked to go to NJ one long weekend from Norfolk. I think he was an old buddy named Siedman. We teamed up and went to his parents' house, and we really had a good time. He fixed a double date. It just happened to be Connie Francis, the singer of "Lipstick on Your Collar." The other was some model who happened to have a convertible. While driving through town, I noticed these gals seemed to be a little older than us and seemed interested in some older guys

we would see while driving. I felt like I was in the unwanted bracket and asked to pull over and let me out. I can't recall all the following events except upon our departure back to Norfolk, she said to listen to the radio and maybe they will play her recording of the song "Lipstick on Your Collar." I thought, "Sure, Baby." Well, it happened. We heard it and could not really believe it. A real good life time memory for me and give thanks to my old buddy if he reads this. Also, if you read this, Siedman, whatever happened to the pictures of the storm we were in at sea with the bow going under water risking our lives to get the photos. While you were holding my legs somewhere above the 5 inch gun mount? You said you would have them developed and send to *Look Magazine* and maybe

we would get something for them. I never even got to see the pictures. Hope you are well and in good health.

### Allan Doerner:

My ship, the USS Rowe, was in Norfolk and I believe the year was late 1952. I took some leave and went home to NYC. My parents thought it would be nice to take me to a nightclub to see one of my favorite performers then—Nat King Cole. He was doing a show when a heckler, a man who undoubtedly had too much to drink, began shouting obscenities directed at him, even using the "N" word! I was outraged! I was in uniform at the time, and got up and marched myself over to the guy's table and loudly told him off, even threatening him with a bot-

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tle that I picked up from his table! About that time, the manager and some of the club's bouncers showed up, and they quickly grabbed the guy and escorted him out of the club! A little bit later, after the show, the manager came back to my table and told me that Mr. Cole and his wife would like me to join them at their table, which was over in the corner of the room. I went over, introduced myself, sat down at their request, and they offered to buy me a drink, which I accepted. We talked over 15 minutes! It was fantastic! I loved the music of Nat King Cole and it was like sitting with my idol of the time! He thanked me for what I did and for being in the armed services. All in all, it was a great night and something to remember.

### STGC Carl L. Cramer, USNR (Ret):

While attending Sonar School in Key West, Florida in 1953, there was a movie made in Key West called "Beneath the Twelve Mile Reef." The movie stars who were in the film were Robert Wagner, Terry Moore, Gilbert Roland, Peter Graves, Richard Boone and Rush Williams. Many times while we were in the mess hall eating, these movie stars would come in the mess hall and eat with us. I don't remember ever eating and/or meeting any of these movie stars, but then again, that was almost 60 years ago. I have a DVD copy of the movie "Beneath the Twelve

Mile Reef" and watch it every now and then to bring back memories of the good old days.

Also, on the Naval Station where the Fleet Sonar School was located was President Harry S. Truman's Little White House. I don't remember of him ever visiting the Little White House while I was attending Sonar School. I believe he visited several times in the late 40s and maybe early 50s before I arrived in February 1953. I played baseball for the Sonar School team and the stadium where we played was not too far from the Little White House.

Also, at the time, there was a famous author who lived in Key West, FL and his name was Ernest Hemingway. The thing I remember most about his property was that he had a lot of cats. I never met Ernest Hemingway personally.

From June 1 to June 10, 1994, Glenda and I attended the 50th Anniversary of D-Day in Europe. On June 3 we visited Churchill's war rooms and we bumped into Sen. Bob Dole and we spoke to him. On June 6, as we were walking on Omaha Beach, we ran into Sen. Bob Dole again, and he said, "We meet again." A few years later, he spoke at the Pennsylvania American Legion headquarters in the Harrisburg, PA area. I attended this meeting and had the opportunity to share my pictures with him that I took while attending the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. Enclosed you will find a picture of U.S. Senator Bob Dole and I after looking at the pictures. (See picture below.) Note the USS Rowe DD-564 baseball cap that I wore to this event.



## 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.

**Walter Conger**  
(1944-46) EM2  
685 Shadow Lake Dr  
Brea, CA 92821  
562-691-6919

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 02/10 **\$223.31**  
Funds received since 02/10 issue  
**\$20.00**  
Funds available for 05/10 issue  
**\$243.31**  
Funds Expended for 05/10 issue  
**\$129.03**  
**Ending Balance for 08/10**  
**\$114.28**

**Funds will be needed for the next issue.** Please send contributions to ML&RS at the address on page 3. 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).



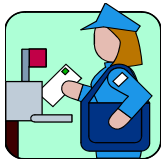
Left to right: U.S Senator Robert (Bob) Dole, Carl L Cramer & Unknown Soldier (in background)

## USS ROWE DD-564 REUNION

**SEPT. 23-26, 2010**

**PHILADELPHIA, PA**

**RAMADA INN PHILADELPHIA  
AIRPORT**



## MAIL CALL

Dear Karen,

Just received my RAO Bulletin today and there was an article on page 94 about one of our USS Rowe DD-564 shipmates. His name is John D Bower and he was an MM2 aboard the Rowe when I was aboard. John and his wife Edna have attended a few of our USS Rowe DD-564 reunions. I don't know if this would be an article for our Flagship Publication or not. I am going to send you exactly what was printed in the article. I understand that it was in the Navy Times AP article 19 Feb 2010. If you go to your explorer website and type in John D. Bower, it will also bring up a much larger article about the John D Bower Veterans Scholarship. Here is what was in the RAO Bulletin that I received today.

John D. Bower Scholarship:

A 1957 graduate of Lynchburg College has given \$250,000 to his Alma Mater to create a Scholarship Fund for Veterans. Dr. John Bower is encouraging others to follow his lead, promising another \$250,000 if donors can match that amount. If that challenge is met, Lynchburg College said it will create a Veterans Center on campus. Bower is a retired Medical Doctor who served four years in the Navy before attending Lynchburg College. The Veterans Scholarship Fund will provide annual scholarships to eligible veteran students with a 3.0 grade point average or higher.

STGC Carl L. Cramer, USNR (Ret)

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

## ONE OF THE FUNNIEST STORIES I EVER HEARD

BY BOB BROOKS GM1

It supposedly happened aboard a Heavy Cruiser during WWII. The ship had suffered severe hull damage from a German U-Boat and was ordered to Norfolk Naval Shipyard for repairs. The Captain was a Mustang. There was a W4 Warrant Boatswain aboard with about 38 years in service, who knew the ship would sink if he wasn't aboard to keep all hands squared away. He had lost most of his hearing in both ears, and he was shell shocked. He kept a young Seaman with him all the time to relay messages, run errands, such as "Boy, get a cup of joe" or "Sailor, go get me a pack of smokes" or "Boy, make a turn around the main deck, take names of everyone who is out of uniform or is goofing off and report back to me." The young Seaman hated his job, he hated the Boatswain, he hated the ship. He just wanted out. Besides that, the rest of the crew teased him about keeping such a close relationship with the Boatswain, if you know what I mean.

The ship was scheduled to go in the dry dock for repairs, the forms had been placed in the dry dock to support the ship's hull, the dry dock had been flooded and the gates were open. She was about 12 fathoms from the gates. Let me set the scene for you.

The Captain was on the open bridge with a bull horn in his hand. A modified special sea and anchor detail had been set, both the port and starboard anchors had been paid out

5 fathoms, and the anchor chains were secured with a pelican hook, which was standard for modified conditions. The Boatswain is standing by the pelican hooks with a 30 pound sledge, the Seaman is standing by, trying to figure out how he could get out of the Navy.

The Captain raises his bull horn to his mouth and says, "10 fathoms to go." The Boatswain asked the Seaman, "What did he say?" The Seaman responded, "Drop the port anchor, Sir." Ka-bam. The old Boatswain struck the pelican hook with the sledge and the port anchor paid out. The ship began to swing to port. The Captain raised his bull horn to his mouth and shouted, "Boatswain, what the hell is going on down there?" The old Boatswain asked the Seaman, "What did he say?" the Seaman responded, "Drop the starboard anchor, Sir." The old Boatswain struck the pelican hook and the starboard anchor paid out. The skipper blew his stack, and pressed the bullhorn close to his mouth and ordered. "Boatswain, report to the Bridge immediately!" The Boatswain turned to the Seaman and said, "What did he say?" The Seaman responded, "The Captain said, 'Well done, Sir.'" Well, the old Boatswain was forced to retire, the Seaman was court-martialed and we don't know what happened to the Captain.

## ENCOUNTER WITH HURRICANE HAZEL

BY DELBERT MCFADDEN

Many years ago after I was attending the university, I was in a Radio and TV broadcasting class and I wrote this from my experience on the Rowe DD-564.

On a small destroyer, there is no straight passageway from one end of the ship to the other below deck. To

go from the bow of the ship to the stern, it was necessary to go out on the main deck or to go to the next higher level with the big guns and torpedoes. With the storm raging, the main decks were constantly washed with water that was very powerful. It could sweep a man away like a twig

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in a stream or slap him against a bulkhead hard enough to break bones. And there were times that it was impossible to travel on the upper decks as well.

USS Rowe, with a squadron of destroyers and a large tanker, had left the Mediterranean Sea and the Rock of Gibraltar behind and were half way across the Atlantic Ocean, doing refueling exercises when we heard that there was a hurricane brushing the East Coast, and it was projected to cross our path. We finished the exercises, filled the ship to capacity with fuel and sent the tanker on its way to its destination, Norfolk, Virginia. We turned southwest to avoid the storm. The tanker left the ships, moving north on approximately the same course we would have taken had we not heard about the storm. The tanker, with its heavy bulk and load of oil, rides deeper in the water and is

able to sustain heavier seas than the small "tin cans" as the destroyers are called, and would be able to ride out the rough seas, while the destroyers would be dashed about in the water, so we adjusted our course to avoid the coming storm called *Hurricane Hazel*.

To avoid the storm we turned to the southwest, thus we would be behind the storm and would not have it overtake us. As we sailed, the storm shifted course and we were not able to miss it. Its fury lashed at the four destroyers, rocking them to sixty degrees. Waves pounded across the deck, water ten feet high. The destroyer would crash into a wave and be submerged and then shudder to the surface again. One sailor on the main deck was caught by a crashing wave that dragged him to the rear of the vessel and slammed him up against the depth charge racks,

breaking his leg. In the midst of the night, the last ship radioed, "Man, overboard!" and four ships turned back to recover the sailor from the frothy sea. During the turn, one of the ships rocked heavily into the sea, ripping off its mast like a twig. The sailor recovered, the ships turned toward land and home, still battling the storm.

When dawn broke, the storm's fury abated. The sea still trembling from the storm, was frothy and gray with seething foam. The four destroyers, one with its mast swinging in the wind, limped through the sea like beaten and torn ghosts of gray steel. They entered the port exhausted, but happy to have survived. Tied stately to the dock, showing no wear or tear, the tanker rested quietly, having missed the storm entirely.

*(See photos below.)*



*Left:* In the midst of the Eye of the Storm. Hurricane Hazel as shown from the deck of the USS Rowe DD564.

*Right:* Sometimes it is good just to get home. We are arriving from a long trip in the bay and berthing of ships at Norfolk, Virginia.

