

# The FLAGSHIP

Volume 10 Issue 3

August 2002

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS ROWE & USS WATTS



### Special Points of Interest

- *If you've been following the mystery of the three "Gray Ghost" ships mentioned in the last several issues, you'll find the answer in pages one, two and three.*
- *WELCOME MAT on page four has eleven newly located shipmates.*
- *We have two deaths to report in TAPS on page four.*
- *If you haven't been able to locate our website or get us by e-mail, maybe the solution is on page four.*
- *Hope to see you all in Reno, NV on Sept. 19-22, 2002.*

## MORE ON THE "OLD GRAY GHOSTS"

Dear Karen,

On page two of the last issue of the newsletter you requested more information concerning the "Old Gray Ghosts."

I am enclosing an official action report from USS Watts which includes the names of all the ships in Task Force 92, which included the raids previously mentioned.

This information was given to me by Mr. Robert M. Andrews, crew member/plank owner of Watts during this time.

I'd like to see all the ships given due credit in the newsletter if at all possible. I regret I couldn't remember

more of them in previous correspondence, but HEY, that was fifty-eight years ago!

Thank you for your interest in these old ships and sea dogs!

Sincerely,  
Don G. Bowman  
TMCM USN RET.

ENCLOSURE (A)  
CONFIDENTIAL  
27 November 1944

ACTION REPORT, USS  
WATTS (DD-567)

### PART I

1. General narrative of the action. All times are zone plus 10 (William).

a. This vessel, in company with Task Force 92,

less USS TRENTON (CL-11), bombarded Japanese installations, Matsuwa To, Kurile Islands, on the night of 21 November, 1944. Duration of the bombardment was approximately eighteen minutes. The islands was blacked-out during our approach. Fires and explosions were observed in the target areas during and after the bombardment. No opposition was encountered.

### 2. Preliminaries.

(a), (1) At 1253, 18 November, 1944, got underway and proceeded to patrol station to cover sortie of Task Force 92 from Massacre Bay, Attu, Alaska. Sortie was completed at 1420 and all ships took station in Force Cruis-

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

ing Disposition 4-R. Thereafter proceeded according to plan, heading via prescribed route for Matsuwa To. On 20 November weather conditions and predictions were unfavorable for final approach and it was necessary for the Task Force to retire at 1400 on various courses; initially course 080T, the operation being postponed twenty-four hours. At 0720, 21 November, approach course of 282T was set and was maintained with small variations until bombardment area was reached.

2. During the forenoon of the twenty-first the USS HOOD, (DD-655), was assigned to Task Unit 92.2.2 vice USS PORTER, (DD-800), the latter ship then taking the assignment, for the bombardment run, of screening on the disengaged side. The PORTER had sustained a casualty to her director which she was unable to repair.

3. At 1500 assumed engineering condition of readiness 31. The Captain made a short address to the crew covering the bombardment proper, probable oppositions to be encountered and own courses of action, personnel having previously been instructed a number of times in their detailed duties for this raid.

4. At 1854 made SG Radar contact on Matsuwa to bearing 290T, distance sixty-eight miles. Fleet course was changed to 290T. At 1912 picked up Rasheduwa To at sixty-four miles, bearing 275T. At 2030, on signal, took station in anti-submarine screen 6-S, fleet course 290T, fleet axis 280T, speed sixteen knots. Fleet course was changed to 275T at 2120. Increased speed to twenty knots and took station in bombardment disposition, on signal, at 2140.

(b) See CTF 92 report.

(c) See CTF 92 report.

(d) No enemy forces encountered.

(e) See CFT 92 report.

## PART II

### 1. Chronological account of action.

2140- Executed TBS signal from CTF 92 to form bombardment disposition.

2230-Executed TBS signal from CTF 92 to turn to course 045T.

2232-Changed speed from twenty knots to eighteen knots, according to plan.

2234-40-TBS signal from CTF 92 to commence firing was executed.

2235-20-WATTS commenced firing with target bearing 351T, ranged 12870 yards.

2242-Large fire observed on plain above beach, in target area. Appeared to be from oil or paint stores. Surrounding terrain illuminated by fire. Distance too great to observe buildings.

2245-Executed TBS signal from CTF 92 to change course to 020T, by column movement of task units.

2249-A second fire has started in target area and is burning beautifully.

2249-30-Momentary SG radar contact at 242T, 11000 yards. Evaluation zero. Not reported.

2252-20-TBS signal to cease firing was executed by CTF 92. Ceased fire with target bearing 306T, range 10390 yards, and unloaded guns into target area.

2252-30-Task Unit 92.2.2 changed course to 090T by column movement and increased speed to twenty-five knots, as planned, commencing retirement.

2253-Four large fires are now burning in target area and explosions are observed there, as from exploding ammunition dump or highly inflammable stores, estimate the latter more probable.

0007-Upon request, USS JOHN HOOD (DD-655), by TBS, amplified mount damage report, telling CTF 92 gun house had caved in and that it was necessary to slow in order to extricate crew.

0111-30-CTF 92 executed TBS signal to form A.A. cruising disposition. Track on USS JOHN HOOD, (DD-655), shows speed thirteen knots.

0029-WATTS designated by CTG 92.2 to remain with USS JOHN HOOD, (DD-655), and proceed in company to base at best possible speed, accordance orders of CTF 92. Proceeded to station 2000 yards on port beam of USS JOHN HOOD (DD-655). Momentary or short duration radar contacts have been made by several ships during the above stage of retirement. Could not verify any of these in our radars. WATTS and USS JOHN HOOD (DD-655), stayed within radar contact of the Task Force, finally rejoining, when heavy sea moderated, at 2100, 22 November.

*Part III will continue in the next issue.*

*We want to thank Mr. Don Bowman for submitting this Action Report. We received several other letters from others about the "Gray Ghosts." They are as follows:*

Dear Dina,

I read with interest the article submitted by Don Bowman re: "A Tale of Three Ghosts." I am fortunate to have information given me by the widow of Jack C. Costner, QM3/c. Jack very thoughtfully kept a log of the ROWE and the squadron's activities. Also, I have a copy of the Ship's History as submitted to the Secretary of the Navy by our Captain, A.L. Young, Jr., Commander, USN.

The complement of ships in Desron 57 was:

Desdiv 113

USS ROWE DD 564

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

USS SMALLEY DD 565  
USS STODDARD DD 566  
USS WATTS DD 567  
USS WREN DD 568

#### Desdiv 114

USS BEARSS DD 654  
USS JOHN HOOD DD655  
USS JARVIS DD 799  
USS PORTER DD 800

#### The complement of Crudiv 1 was:

USS RICHMOND CL 9  
USS CONCORD CL 10  
USS TRENTON CL 11

On the night of November 21, 1944, the Task Force bombarded the Kurile Islands and enemy installations. During the twilight hours of January 5, 1945, we bombarded the Kurile Islands, Suribachi Wan and Paramushiro. The next strike was made on Matsua To Island during the night of March 15, 1945.

One more proposed strike on Suribachi Wan, Paramushiro Island was aborted due to extensive ice flows.

Bombardments consisted of firing five inch, 38 caliber guns for 20 minutes before retiring at high speed. About 500 total rounds were fired each time from each destroyer.

The sonarmen had helm duty during normal duty hours. During general quarters, the helm was turned over to the chief quartermaster.

We plan to attend the ROWE/WATTS reunion in Reno in September.

With best wishes,  
Wes Reynolds, (SoM3/c)  
George Wesley Reynolds  
4317 Santa Monica Ave  
San Diego, CA 92107  
619-225-1063  
Wesrey@aol.com

Hello,

I read with interest your latest Flagship newsletter for the Rowe and Watts. I want to add the names

of the ships I know to the front page article.

At the top of the third column should be the names for the "ghosts": Concord, Richmond and Trenton.

The other names of the destroyers at the bottom of the third column are the Smalley and Wren.

Thanks for your good work with the newsletter.

Dale Bethke, WATTS

Gray Ghosts; I think that the third cruiser was the Richmond. The two missing cans were the Smalley (DD-564) and WREN (DD-568). The WREN was featured in Operation Petticoat with Cary Grant as the can that brought up the pink submarine.

I tried to get the web site without any luck. I will be happy to get the newsletter from the web when available.

Tom McNamara  
1224 93rd Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14304  
NAMARAN@AOL.COM

*Editor's note: That's it for the letters about the "Gray Ghosts." Thanks so much to all of you who shared your information on this incident. Now, can we conclude that the three ships were USS RICHMOND, USS CONCORD, AND USS TRENTON? If anyone else has more to say about this, we will be glad to publish it next time.*

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 05/02 **\$469.60**

Funds received since 05/02 issue  
**\$50.00**

Funds available for 08/02 issue  
**\$519.60**

Funds Expended for 08/02 issue  
**\$282.60**

**Ending Balance \$237.00**

**Funds will be needed for November.**

## STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Flagship is the official publication of the USS ROWE and USS WATTS 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/WATTS. 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.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

#### MILITARY LOCATOR & REUNION SERVICE, INC

PO Drawer 11399  
Hickory, NC 28603  
Phone: 828-256-6008  
Fax: 828-256-6559  
Email: dinamlrs@aol.com  
Newsletter: mlrsnewsletter@aol.com  
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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. If we missed anyone, please accept our apology. Let us know and you'll be in listed in the next issue.

### USS WATTS

Hubert Chinn (1961-63) EN1 R Div  
5201 SE 36th Pl  
Portland, OR 97202  
503-775-8430

Jim Moore (1959-62) YN2, YN1 Oper  
PO Box 1684  
Winchester Bay, OR 97467  
541-271-5281

Mike Lynch  
138 Rosewood Dr  
Cloverdale, CA 95425

Marvin Wiederhold  
31 North 700 E  
Saint George, UT 84770

Richard Cyr  
621 Tropicana Dr  
Grand Junction, CO 87504

John Burk (1944-45) SN1/c 2nd Div  
8791 Gingersnap Ln  
San Diego, CA 92129-3715  
858-484-8801  
johnburk85323@aol.com

### USS ROWE

Melvin Huffman (1956-58) BT  
841 S Kolb Rd # 552  
Tucson, AZ 85706  
520-663-1034

D.R. Hardesty (1956-58) QM  
98 Floyd St  
Hampton, GA 30228  
770-946-3047

Donald Wilson (1957-59) RDM 3/c  
4909 N Galoena Rd  
Peoria Hts., IL 61614  
309-685-2537

Terry Wendell (1958-60) MM3 M Div  
2200 Harper D17  
Lawrence, KS 66046  
785-843-4433

Tommy Brown (1952) S1/c 2nd Div  
8686 East Rd # 41  
Redwood Valley, CA 95470  
707-485-7517

### CORRECTION

Ted Mullett listed in the last issue  
should have been:

**Ted Newman USS ROWE (1952-56)**  
3624 Baring St  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
215-222-2144  
tneonew11@aol.com

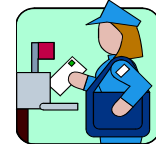


## TAPS

*The Flagship* has learned of the following deaths since the last publication. Every member of the Association sends his heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of the deceased. If we missed anyone, please let us know and we will publish it in the next issue.

Clyde H. Mielke (USS WATTS)  
Died May 21, 2002

Paul O'Brien (USS ROWE)  
Died December 2001



## MAIL CALL

MLRS,

First: I've tried to e-mail you and find you on the internet; in neither case has the yahoo or Microsoft systems been able to find you. The two addresses in the Watts/Rowe newsletter that I have used are:

- E-mail [dinamirs@aol.com](mailto:dinamirs@aol.com), and
- Internet [www.mirsinc.com](http://www.mirsinc.com)

Please let me know why I can't find you to give you the information I'm now writing.

Second: For the gentleman (Don Bowman, TCMC) who writes as a plank owner of the WATTS, I, too, am a member of that respected group and my e-mail address is [grapetender@yahoo.com](mailto:grapetender@yahoo.com). I started out at commissioning as Ass't Chief Engineer and ended up as Chief Engineer and Senior Watch Officer.

Lastly: I will be coming to the meeting in Reno but will only be present for the concluding dinner as we have a cabin in the Sierras some 50 miles to the west of Reno (a little less than an hour's drive) and will be staying there. Please let me know the fee for the dinner.

Very truly yours,  
L. R(ay) Damskey  
Cdr. USNR (Ret)

*Editor's Note: Mr. Damskey's first question is one we get quite often. The mistake is in the part of the address mirs. It should be mlrs. (That's an "L"). It stands for Military Locator & Reunion Service. (You can also use all capital letters.) Hope this will help others who may have made the same mistake.*

Dear Sirs:

I am in receipt of your new newsletter. I regret to inform you that Paul O'Brien passed away in

*(Continued from page 4)*

December of 2001. I know that he would have liked to attend the reunion, something that he talked about often. I really do appreciate your newsletter and shall continue to follow it either by paper or on the computer. If you do post his name in "Taps" block, I really would like a copy of that.

Paul died from complications of asbestosis and he served his country well. If I remember correctly, he joined the Rowe after the Chevalier sunk in October of 1943, I believe. He was water tender first class. Anyone remember him—any stories to be told? Picture?

His wife,  
Esther O'Brien  
1796 Washington St  
Braintree, MA 02189  
781-843-5964

Hi,

I'm writing to let you know to take Clyde H. Mielke, USS WATTS (DD-567) off your mailing list. He passed away on 5-21-02 after a long bout with numerous health problems.

He loved the Watts/Rowe reunions where he could reminisce with the old sailors and I enjoyed the reunions too. Clyde and I were good friends for many years.

Sincerely,  
Doris McMiller

## USS ROWE/WATTS 2002 REUNION

**SEPTEMBER 19-22  
RENO, NV**

**HOLIDAY INN &  
DIAMONDS CASINO**

## THE REST OF THE STORY

Some people have been offended that Lee Marvin is buried in Arlington Cemetery with three and four star generals. His marker gives his name and rank (PVT) and service (USMC). Nothing else—only famous movie star.

Here is the amazing answer in dialog from a "Johnny Carson Show."

Johnny said, "Lee, I'll bet a lot of people are unaware that you were a Marine in the initial landing at Iwo Jima and earned the Navy Cross (only one higher was the Medal of Honor). How was it?"

He said, "I got shot square in the ass and they gave me the Cross for securing a hot spot half way up Suri-bachi. Johnny, at Iwo Jima I served with the bravest man I ever knew. We both got the Cross the same day, but what he did for his Cross made mine look cheap. The dumb bastard actually stood up on Red Beach directing troops. Sergeant and I have been life long friends. When they brought me off Suribachi, we passed Sergeant and he lit a smoke. Well, Bob, if you make it home before me, tell Mom to sell the outhouse. Johnny, I'm not lying. Sergeant Keeshan was the bravest man I ever knew.

...the world knows him as Captain Kangaroo.

*Sent in by Bob Marvin of the VC-12/  
VAW-12 Group.*

## DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

Hot summer days are called "dog days" because of the star Sirius, often called the "Dog Star." The Dog Star rises in the early summer, and in the early 16th century, its heavenly ascent became the explanation behind the hot, sultry days of summer.

## NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE ON LINE

The Newsletter for the USS ROWE/WATTS reunion will be available soon to download from the Military Locator & Reunion Service Inc web site.

If you are able to visit our web site and download the Newsletter, and therefore do not need a paper copy mailed to you, please let us know.

Please visit our web site at [www.mlrsinc.com](http://www.mlrsinc.com), then follow the link labeled Reunions, then scroll down until you see the listing for the USS ROWE/WATTS. Click on the button labeled Newsletters, and in a few minutes the newsletter should appear on your screen. (As a side note - it took about 4 minutes on my computer). This will only work if you have Adobe Reader 4.0 or higher. You can also download this viewer for free from our web site.

If this works for you and you would like to receive all future mailings from us in this method, please send me an e-mail requesting to subscribe to the ROWE/WATTS E-mail Roster. Each time something new is available, we will send you an e-mail informing you something new is available on the web site.

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