

USS BRISTOL DD 857 VETERANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2016

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In this issue.....
 Paul Ratcliffe
 Message.....Page 1

What God Did At Pearl Harbor.....Page 1

BRISTOL Around the World Cruise 1951-2.....Page 2

The First Draft.....Page 21

World Team Sports Face Of America Bike Ride April 2016.....Page 23

The Talking Dog.....Page 23

A Poem: That Was Us.....Page 23

An inspiration to us all.....Page 25

The China Marines.....Page 25

Distinguished Flying Cross awarded for shooting down an American Plane.....Page 25

Sometimes I Think.....Page 27

Some things to Think About Before It's Too Late.....Page 27

Parallel Lives.....Page 28

As I See It MOAA Adding Insult to Injury.....Page 30

2016 REUNION – WILMINGTON, N.C.

Shipmates:

Time is marching on and soon our 2016 reunion will be taking place in Wilmington, North Carolina. This year Tony and I, along with the Board, have planned a great event. You should have received your reunion packets from The Reunion Brat and if you have not received a packet, let me know.

Please make your hotel reservations as soon as you can. The dates are September 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 (Monday through Friday). We have five days and four nights to enjoy a beautiful area with lots to do.

The price is right and the location is great, so please get started and call the hotel and send your respective paperwork to The Brat.

Thank you all and have a great Summer. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the reunion in Wilmington.

Paul Ratcliffe, EM2
President, USS Bristol Association

What God did at Pearl Harbor

that day is really interesting, and I never knew this little bit of history: Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington D.C. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the phone. He told Admiral Nimitz that he(Nimitz) would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet.

Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet. He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941.

There was such a spirit of despair,dejection and defeat--you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war.

On Christmas Day, 1941, Adm. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Big sunken battleships and navy vessels cluttered the waters everywhere you looked.

As the tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman of the boat asked, "Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction?" Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone within the sound

Continue on page 21 Pearl Harbor

The following has been copied from an original supplied by our shipmate xxxxxxxx. Enjoy!

FOREWORD

The USS BRISTOL (DD 857) is the second U.S. Destroyer to be named in honor of the late Rear Admiral Meri L. Bristol, USN, who loyally served in the Navy for forty-three years and who at one time commanded the United States Pacific Fleet.

The first BRISTOL, the DD 453 was commissioned in October of 1941. She operated in the Mediterranean and participated in the North African, Sicilian and Salerno landings during World War II. Two years later, in October of 1943, she was sunk by an enemy submarine.

The present BRISTOL, the DD 857, which was commissioned in March 1945, was built by the Bethlehem Steel Company in San Pedro, California. She is one of the many DD692 Class (short hull) destroyers built during W.W. II. She operated in the Pacific during July and August of 1945, serving with the 3rd Fleet, and later with the occupation fleet in Japanese waters at the conclusion of the war.

In April of 1946, the BRISTOL joined the U.S. Atlantic Fleet operating out of east coast ports for the remainder of that year. She then made a "good will cruise" in the Mediterranean which lasted from January to August of 1947. She conducted limited operations for a year, from September 1947 to September 1948, and then made a tour of Northern Europe, visiting ports in England, Norway, Belgium, Holland, and France.

Upon her return she was designated as a Reserve Training vessel. She operated for the next 18 months in this capacity, calling New Orleans, Louisiana, her home port.

In October 1950, her home port was changed to Newport, Rhode Island. After completing seabee training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, she reported there for general duty, operating out of Newport until the following March, when she made another good will cruise to the Mediterranean which lasted for three months.

In September, 1951, the BRISTOL got her orders to make this seven-month cruise around the world. Along with these orders she received a change of command when Commander Robert B. McLaughlin, USN, was relieved by Lt. Commander Charles A. Dornik, USN.

This cruise book, then, is the story of the BRISTOL as told by the BRISTOL crew. Liberal usage of photographs taken by members of the crew have been included here with the thought in mind that "a picture is worth a thousand words".





*Captain William H. Groverman
Commander Destroyer Division-122*

CAPTAIN William H. Groverman, U. S. Navy, was born in Covington, Kentucky, November 4, 1909. He was living in Huntington, West Virginia, when appointed to the Naval Academy and graduated in the class of 1932. He had attended Peddie School, Highstown, New Jersey, prior to entering the Academy.

Before the war, Captain Groverman served in various units of the fleet, including the carrier *Saratoga*, the battleship *Mississippi*, the patrol gunboat *Charleston*, and the destroyers *Yarnall* and *Wickes*. He taught chemistry, ordnance and marine engineering during a tour of duty at the Naval Academy. In June 1951, he graduated from the U. S. Naval War College, Newport, R. I., and assumed command of Destroyer Division One Twenty-two the following month.

During the war he served as executive officer of the destroyer *Radford* during the Guadalcanal Campaign in which the vessel was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for the battle of Kula Gulf and subsequent rescue of the *Helena* survivors. In June 1943 he assumed command of the destroyer *Phillip*. In February 1944 he was detached from the U. S. S. *Phillip* and ordered to the Staff of Commander Destroyers, Atlantic Fleet, to establish the Combat Information Center program for that command. He later became anti-submarine warfare officer on the same staff. In May 1945, he was ordered to command the destroyer *DeHaven* which was part of the Third Fleet. He was present at the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay.

After the war, Captain Groverman continued in command of the *DeHaven* as a unit of the Seventh Fleet operating in China, Japan and Korea.

From 1947 until entering the War College in 1950, he served as Head of the Undersea Warfare Branch of the Office of Naval Research in Washington, D. C.

Captain Groverman holds the Silver Star and Gold Star in lieu of the second award, the Bronze Star and Gold Star in lieu of the second award, and the Presidential Unit Citation.

In August, 1951, he assumed duties as Commander Destroyer Division 122.



Commander Charles A. Darrah, skipper of the *BRISTOL*, has the distinction of being the youngest commanding officer in Destroyer Division 122. He was only 31 years old when he assumed command of the DD 857 in September, 1951, just a few days before we sailed on this cruise. He previously had served for over a year on board the *U.S.S. PURDY* (DD 734) as Executive Officer, having been graduated from the General Line School, Newport, R.I., in May 1950.

Commander Darrah came on active duty November 22, 1940, having completed two years at Vanderbilt University where he majored in physics. He attended the Reserve Midshipman's school in New York, and following a one month's cruise in the Atlantic, received his commission as ensign on February 28, 1941. He then reported aboard the *JOHN D. FORD* (DD 228) as Assistant Communications officer. He was in Manila on December 10th when the Japanese bombed it for the first time. The *FORD* conveyed ships from Manila to the Netherlands East Indies and served admirably in the battles of the Badoeng and Macassar Straits in the Java Sea.

Nearly a year later, in February of 1942 Darrah was ordered to the Naval Academy where he completed a graduate course in Applied Communications. Upon completion of this course he was assigned to the staff of Amphibious Group 5 for the Palau and Okinawa. In July of 1945 he was appointed Communications Officer on the staff of Commander Underwater Demolition Team 5, in preparation for the invasion and occupation of Japan.

In 1946, Commander Darrah was appointed Executive Officer on the staff of The Commander Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. In 1947 he reported to the office of the Commander Amphibious Force for duty in the Operational Readiness Division. In 1948 he returned to Vanderbilt University under a leave of absence and was graduated a year later with a B.A. degree in physics.

Commander Darrah's home is in Decatur, A his wife, Janie, and two boys, Charles Jr. and Thomas, now reside.

CRUISE BOOK



It is October the first and for the past three weeks Destroyer Division 122 has been alongside the tender Yellowstone anchored in Narragansett Bay, Newport, R.I. At long last our feverish preparations for our coming seven month "round the world" cruise are complete. We've taken our last boat ride in to the fleet landing, "hoisted" our last beers, and kissed our loved ones goodbye. All the "short-timers" have been transferred and there are many new people aboard - people we'll get to know much better in the next seven months. The last minute details have been taken care of, and anything else that comes up will have to wait.

At 0730 on October the second, the boatwain's mate lets go with the long blast that sends the special sea detail to their stations. We listen to that whistle with more feeling than usual, for if nothing happens it will pipe us around the world. At 0812 the lines are cast off and our screws turn slowly as we nose out into the harbor. The shutter-bugs snap their last shots of our home port as DesDiv 122 noses away down the Harbor. Take good care of those pictures boys - they'll have to serve your memories through the years to come.

The four "cousins" move into column with the BRISTOL bringing up the rear. We can overlook this humiliating position because we've conquered all four ships of the Division and know that the "BRISTOL" is the trimmest of the lot. We're on our way and as we pick up speed, we're already thinking of our first stop - Panama.

Old Man Trouble overtakes us on our first day of sea. Hurricane "BOR" rumbles north out of the Gulf of Mexico, across Florida, comes at us with a roar. The sea builds up to tremendous heights and it all but buries us in its wrathful fury.

We take a 45° roll and the sea slides aboard and takes James Reagan back with it. The ship sticks its bow into the air and the sea slams Donald Johnson against mount 51, lacerating his face and fracturing his hip. In his efforts to help Johnson, Charles Romney slips and falls on a deck cleat injuring himself to the extent that it'll be quite some time before he is able to get down. Despite monstrous waves the PERDUE picks Reagan up. Some crises so far. Can this be a pattern of things to come?

The hurricane passes, the sea is flat, and we steam through the Salween and Windward Passage into the Caribbean. The sun is getting warmer and out on the deck we take in the sunshine and pat each other's hair. Beards start cropping out and some of the fellows have more hair on their chins than on their chests.

We arrive at the Panama Canal over the weekend. This is the "Big Ditch", the most important 50 miles in this old world. We're through the Gatun Locks by noon and into the lake that suddenly widens out as we proceed down the channel. We stop here for awhile and let the deck hands wash down the ship with fresh water. We then proceed on to the Pedro Miguel locks at the Pacific end. As we tie up at Balboa for refueling we suddenly realize that the first leg of our trip is finished. Some of us go on a well-chaperoned bus tour of the city, while the rest of us grab a quick beer at the Naval Base Callied Men's Club. We're underway again by 2200, this time out into the Pacific. Now we set our sights for our next stop - San Diego.

After leaving the Panama Canal we steam up the coast of Central America and the weather is hotter than Hell's kitchen. Each day now starts and ends with "general quarters", with a lot of "training" in between. We knock down to drills, especially "boarded-ship". This Panama-San Diego run is the longest of the cruise, and before its over we're mighty anxious for some liberty. It's now the tenth of October and we run into dirty weather. Oh watch we long onto our socks and wonder where we ever heard the Pacific is always calm. It feels like Hatteras.

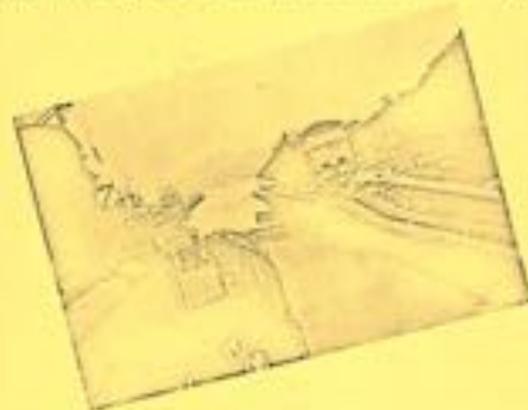
Columbus Day sees us off the Mexican coast. The sun beats down and we chip paint, cutie, sweat, and wonder how the Eskimos are making out. The BRISTOL is all painted and stained up, but it's too hot to make any difference to us.

Late one Sunday afternoon, in mid October we noseover into San Diego bay. The weather has cooled at last and the liberty uniforms are blown. We're due for our first big mail call since leaving Newport, but that can wait. Liberty call comes at 1500 and with it a warning to stay away from Tin Jams! Ha!

We stay in port for two days and everyone pulls at least one liberty. The advancements in ratings now go into effect and the new Petty Officers hand out "stogies". Thanks and congratulations, now because by-words.

Before we know it we're on our way to Pearl Harbor. The sea stays calm and the weather mild. We stand our watches, get off a letter or two, take in the daily movies, break out the postboards, and "shoot the bull". Turn-to? Yes, a little. Rack out? Yes, a lot.

By the end of the week we make the long turn around Diamond Head and then before us, resting quietly in the setting sun, is our once-battered Naval Base of Pearl Harbor. It's been almost ten years since the Japanese made hash of the place but few signs of the attack remain. Somehow it doesn't seem that long. We gaze up at the sky and can almost hear the whine of the dive bombers, the crash of exploding bombs, and the noise of the ships frantically trying to get under way. Parts of the old Arizona can still be seen protruding from the water, where she lies, serving as an everlasting memory of one of the most infamous days in the history of the United States Navy.



We are fortunate to arrive in Hawaii during "oloha" week—the annual celebration of age old Hawaiian customs. We see several parades and pageants put on by the "natives" of the islands depicting Hawaiian history from the past to the present. Along with these activities, many of the old hands get to visit places they haven't seen for years, places most of them thought they'd never see again. We have four of five mail calls here with the best delivery yet. Some letters make it from the East Coast in two days.

We load up with ammunition and fuel and a few days later shove off for Midway. This leg of our trip is a short one, as it only takes us several days to get there. We've never seen such a fringing speck of sand and coral. It's worse than "Gitta". We're warned not to molest the goosey-birds that inhabit the island. Now who in his right mind would want to molest a goosey-bird? Just picture what would happen to the dignity of a sweet martial comrade to try a "goosey-bird molester"! We pull a hose liberty (where else?) and down a few brews. Fuel comes aboard that afternoon and the next morning we head back to sea. In a little over a week now we'll be in Japan. The laundry because the most popular place on the ship as the men get out their blues to be cleaned and pressed.



Now the "scuttlebutt" starts to fly. So far we have no definite word on what kind of duty we'll get once we arrive in Japan. We hear rumors that we may get six weeks of patrol off Formosa before Christmas but nothing official has been said about it. The mess cooks, as usual, have many variations of this line.

The 26th of October never existed for us. We crossed the International Dateline the night of the 25th., making the following day the 27th. A guy would get old fast doing this sort of thing.

We get weather reports of typhoon Sarah. She's a long way off just now but traveling in our general direction.

Sunday rolls around and we spend the afternoon changing our boots and lockers to different compartments. We're informed that this is a precautionary measure which would minimize casualties to any one particular division should the ship be hit while in the combat area. Conclusion:reigns supreme. It's

the greatest mass movement of personnel since "Moses led his people down into the promised land", and we curse the evil genius whose mind conceived the idea.

Yokosuka is now only one day away. Typhoon Sarah has subsided but now Thelma comes switching her skirts at us. We hold back, hoping she'll precede us. However, like a woman, she takes her time and we turn on steam for 27 knots to try to beat her. The night of the 28th is a nightmare. The ship pitches and rolls so badly that few of us get any sleep. The night finally wears itself out and the next morning we safely slip into the harbor at Yokosuka.

When we look at the map we see that we have traveled almost half way around the world in less than a month. Pay day on the first of November has us getting script in place of greenbacks. Script, or Military Pay Certificates, as they are called, is used by the United States Armed Forces here in the Far East to maintain the possibility of selling U.S. currency on the home market. We trade most of it in for Yen and hit the beach. Japanese liberty turns out to be a bit of all right. The usual attractions are here, but it's a new country for most of us and therefore seems different. The women are small and pretty and laugh a lot at nothing in particular. We're complaining? Ha! The first two days see a colorful assortment of clothes and accessories brought aboard, some to be mailed home in time for Christmas and some to be kept on board to take back with us.

We spend several short days in Yokosuka waiting and wondering just where we'll be sent. On a Sunday morning we get under way. Now we get the allotted word that the BRISTOL will head for the Yellow Sea, off the Korean West coast. We're to operate with the Australian carrier SYDNEY on blockade and patrol duty. After we pass through the Shimane-shi Straits the other three ships of our division head for the firing line and duty on the eastern coast of Korea in the Sea of Japan. We're alone as we enter the combat zone. The word is that we'll be out here for six weeks. Swell! Who wanted liberty in the first place?

The following day we rendezvous with the SYDNEY and several other smaller ships and commence the monotonous duty of steaming back and forth through the Yellow Sea just beyond sight of the Korean coast. SYDNEY'S planes take off every day and we hear they do quite a bit of damage. The weather stays mild and the sea calm most of the time and we have to read the morning paper to find out how the war is going. We go to general quarters every morning and evening—resistant at World War II days—and learn to man our battle stations without giving it a second thought. Every second or third night we're sent "up the line" on patrol. This patrol constitutes our only possibility of excitement. Everything remains quiet however, and this duty begins to drag.



Armistice day rolls around and the Captain makes peace with the crew by giving the green light to a beard growing contest sponsored by the wardroom. The "beard race" gets off with a rough startle and we stow our razors for a few weeks.



The contest runs for five weeks until the day before we enter Yokosuka harbor. Fantastic designs are grown by some of the crew and brave attempts are made by some of the youngsters to emulate these old "sails". We resemble a bunch of pirates as the contest draws near its close and much speculation is bandied about as to who will be chosen "whisker" champ. Several of the recreation committee members make up the judging staff and after careful deliberation Leo J. Bryck CMEN is picked as the man with the healthiest, most impressively designed beard. For his five weeks effort Bryck is given a \$10 prize donated by the wardroom.



A fast trip down to Sasebo to meet the Linetop *RENDOVA*, coming out to relieve the *SYDNEY*, is our next assignment. The *BES COMES* sends over some mail and this is the high point of the past two weeks. Back up "to the line" we go and the *SYDNEY* heads into port for a few days rest. Now it's the same old grind as we sail back and forth patrolling the Korean west coast with nothing to break the monotony.



Thanksgiving Eve the word comes through to head for the west coast and shore bombardment. We may get something to write home about yet. The next day, Thanksgiving, we ahead down a banquet of "shipping over chow" while we steam at 25 knots around the tip of Korea and up the west coast to the firing line. Late that night we approach the firing line and we can hear the guns of other ships firing. We get in our ticks the following evening and for five days thereafter. The five-inches pour in like clockwork and we tell ourselves that we're mighty glad to be where we are and not under that umbrella of falling steel. It's so cold as a witch's garter belt and we sleep wherever the mounts knock off for a few minutes. We head up the coast a few miles to the island of Namsa to assist the Army in recovering a motor launch from several deserters. On arrival we place our own crew in the boat but the sea has gotten too choppy for our own crew to beach it and they are forced to spend the night tacking about on the crests of the icy waves. The next day we come alongside the launch and replace the half-drunken crew with a new one. We start towing it in the choppy sea, waiting for the wind and waves to recede before trying to beach it. The launch puts up a valiant fight, but the seas are too much for her and she swamps, throwing the crew into the freezing waters. After an hour of heroic effort on the part of all hands on board, the hapless boat crew is finally retrieved, more dead than alive. We sink the launch with our 40's and 20's.





That night we get orders to leave the flying line and proceed to the Island of Hokkaido, part of Manchou, where a few ships of the line are waiting for us to escort them to the West coast of Korea. After a short, rough trip we arrive at Manchou. It's a cold, bleak city with the smoke hanging over it, reminding us of Pittsburgh. It feels good to "hit the beach again" after more than three weeks at sea, even though there is little of interest to see here.

Late on a Saturday afternoon we leave Manchou with the transports in "tow" and head back to the combat zone. Four days of steady steaming on flat seas are leisurely passed by, and with two liberties just behind us and only two more weeks of this now remaining, we feel the duty is getting better all the time.

Several days later we arrive in Korea. Many ships are scattered throughout the bay unloading men and material so vitally needed at the front, some forty odd miles away. We look over on the beach and see that this "beach" is pretty well covered up from last year's invasion.

Now we find out that the transports we ferried down from Japan were loaded with an Army regimental combat team. We sit in the harbor for several days while the "G.I.s" transfer. We're happy to sit and watch, glad we're not going with them. It's been over two weeks since we've had mail and we're all ripe for a letter or five. The mailman goes all the way to Seoul hunting for some, but no luck. The transports are reloaded and a few days later we leave Incheon and the dull bombing of the distant guns.

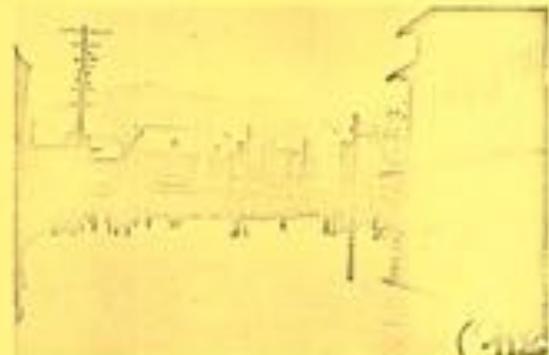
It's another uneventful return trip to Hokkaido, but this time our port of call is Otsu. The transports drop off several at a time, into Tsuoporo straits. It's rumored that we'll "baseline" for Yokosuka after we've refueled at Otsu. We're all getting anxious for some liberty now and the sooner the better.



Now we steam into Otsu harbor with the other escort ships, on a cold, wet day, made more miserable when we learn that none of the waiting mail is for the BRISTOL. One section goes ashore and comes back with the usual reports; it's a dirty cool mixing town with little or nothing in the way of entertainment for the American sailor.

The U.S.S. POWELL is our relief, and she's welcome to the job. We leave her and Otsu the next morning, make turns for 23 knots, and head for Yokosuka. Our first six weeks of Korean duty are behind us, with liberty and much mail ahead.

Yokosuka is a beautiful sight for eyes tired of squinting at the endless waters of the Pacific. We tie up with the rest of the division which had arrived immediately before us. The NYMAN took a shell at Yonson and got her bit of scrap. Fortunately she had no casualties and for that we're glad. Liberty mail awaits, and we're off. When we get back at midnight the mail is waiting. It's been 24 days since the last call, a long time to spend with no state-side literature.



After only one night in Yokosuka, the division weighs anchor for a few days ASB work. Our theater of operations lies a few miles off the Japanese coast, with Mt. Fuji in sight at all times when the weather is clear. At dusk each night we anchor off a Japanese resort whose bright lights shining at us only a few miles away put us all in the mood for liberty, which we don't get. The submarine work passes uneventfully, except for the last night out when one of the subs gets hung up in a fish net. We put out a boat to render assistance, but it took some diving and cutting by one of the Japanese fishermen to get her free again.



The next afternoon all units secure from operations and head for Yokosuka and ten days of Christmas liberty. Destroyer Division 122 ties up alongside the repair ship *AMX* and the next few days fly by as we mend power cables, chip paint, replace burned out light bulbs and generally overhaul all work-worn equipment. Plenty of liberty comes our way and for this we're mighty grateful.

While all this work is going on, about ten percent of the crew get two or three days in one of the various rest camps in the Tokyo area. The boys bring back reports of dances, good chow and soft beds, although few if any of them look as if they did much resting. Each mail call brings Christmas packages, and for awhile it looks as if we'll turn into jolly soldiers, what with all the fruit cake, candy and cookies we're getting from the storehouse folks.



Before we know it Christmas Day is upon us and we have a fine turkey dinner with all the trimmings, no more or less ease that full heart ache that comes with being away from our families. It's a pleasant surprise to learn that we're not eating alone today after all. The recreation committee under the guidance of Ensign Rockwell has arranged to have thirty little Japanese orphans on board for dinner and a party afterwards. It gives us all a good feeling to see the children dig in with the rest of us and then tightly clutch the hard candy that they get afterwards. Seeing their happy faces gives us all a feeling that this tour of duty means more than we at first thought it would. It's not hard to look at these children and see our own, orphaned by Red aggression in the United States. So if we



have to stay away here a little longer and work a little harder we can see that it's worth it if it keeps the light away from our own country.

After close we show the IJG orphans around the ship and have quite a job keeping up with them. At two o'clock Santa Claus, alias "Edge Stein QMS", comes aboard with his pack of toys for the children. For the girls there are scarves, pocket-books, dolls, caps and gloves, and for the boys, miniature gliders, toy automobiles and kites. The children react just like American kids, running around comparing gifts and exclaiming about this, that or the other thing. We all get a big kick out of having the kids aboard and for a little while at least we forget that we're some 10,000 miles from home.

This stay in port has more or less marked the halfway point of the *BRISTOL's* tour in WestPac. It's our longest sojourn in any one spot in three months, and looking ahead, we can see that it will be our longest stop for three or four months to come, as well.

Several days after Christmas we take to the sea again and head for Okinawa. We spend New Year's eve pitching and tossing about midway between Yokosuka and Okinawa. We think back on other New Year's eves and how we've spent them and this one without a doubt, is the quietest we've celebrated since we were babies-in-arms.



At long last we arrive at Buckner Bay, Okinawa, where in 1945 the marines stormed the beaches and gave their lifeblood to help finish up the "war to end wars". Now over six years later we're here with a "police action" going on a few hundred miles to the north. We look over on the beaches and see the rusting hulks of trucks, landing barges, and grave markers for Americans who came to Okinawa and stayed. Their blood doesn't show on the beaches any more, but yet we can't help thinking how it was back in 1945, when Uncle Sam and these same Nations were engaged in another conflict. But this one is different. The free nations instead of trying to defeat Communism, as we did Fascism and Nazism in 1945, are fighting a holding action in the hopes that we may be able to contain it. We wonder?



Hell cell, coupled with a few uneventful liberties winds up our stay in Okinawa. We head north, making twice the speed we seemed to be making down. Information is scarce, but we do hear rumors that we may cut into Yokosuka for a last liberty or two before rejoining on with our scheduled operations. It turns into a "pipe-dream" however. We leave in sight of the coast of Honshu and see the battleship WISCONSIN coming out to meet us. She's in a hurry to get planes, and the BRISTOL is designated as an escort to keep her company. We peel off from the Division and take our station up ahead of the "old girl". And now we get the word: "Korea and East, zig up 28 knots!" At the speed we're making it doesn't take us long to get there. While the WISCONSIN lies anchored in the harbor, we protect its entrance on Anti-Submarine Patrol. Next morning we pull alongside her to refuel.



As soon as refueling operations are completed we hot foot it out of the harbor, take our station out ahead of the "bottle-wagon" and steam north to join a fast carrier Task Force. This Task Force sends its planes night and day against communist installations along the Korean east coast.

Joining up with the Task Force, we take our station in the screen around the carriers ESSEX and VALLEY FORGE, and settle down to two weeks of circling up and down the East coast. This duty is much like that we pulled over on the West Coast, routine and unbelievably dull. The days slowly tick away with nothing more unusual happening than plane guard duty every four or five days. One morning the VALLEY FORGE sights a mine and gives us the duty of blowing it up. We spend an hour or two circling on it and finally we're close enough to pepper it with rifle fire. She won't explode though and looks like a dud. White caps help hide it from sight, and we finally lose it; presumed sunk by our rifle fire.



Late in January we break away from the Task Force, join the WISCONSIN, and head back for the firing line. It feels good to break the routine of operating with the flattops with a trip "up to the line". We steam up and down the east coast with the WISCONSIN doing most of the shooting. We do get in some firing but not as much as we would like. One Saturday morning we go to General Quarters at dawn prepared for a rough day. Our orders are to head north of the "firing line" and pulverize an enemy hot spot. The WISCONSIN, aided by planes from the Task Force, pounds the Commie positions all morning long with excellent results. The weather up here is extremely cold, although by this time we've become accustomed to it.

We hardly get settled back on "firing line" duty when we get the word to proceed to Wonsan. Nobody seems to know just why but it doesn't take us long to find out. Shortly after noon we rendezvous with an LST just outside of the harbor. They send us a "message" over by helicopter. It seems the Communies were lucky with their 44 fire and had knocked him down. After a couple of high moments on the ground, during one of which he was stopped by a rifle bullet (under the chin) he had been rescued by the LST's "windmill". We get the duty of delivering him back to his flattop base.

After joining up once more with the Task Force, the treasure is carried out. The carrier sends back a couple of ice cream in exchange for their "hidman", and we figure it to be a pretty fair trade. After making the transfer we pull out into the screen with the rest of the "crews" and begin to look for our relief ship. We're due for some liberty after all this hustling around and we hear that this time it will be Sasebo.

Our relief arrives and we make for port. It's a four day stay this time and as luck would have it we get an administrative inspection along with it. Sasebo has much the same liberty as did Yokosuka, only more regulation.

The days fly by and before we know it we're shoving off for more sea and patrol duty. February stretches before us and it looks like a long hard month especially with more plane guard coming up. This will finish up our tour in the war zone though, and with this in mind we knuckle down to the daily grind.

After a one-day trip we rendezvous with the "gang". Nothing has changed, and the BRISTOL slips into her slot in the screen and plods along. Now it seems the cruiser MANCRESTER needs an escort up to the "firing line". So who gets the job?

It's back to the Korean east coast for the third and we hope last time. Our orders read "ten days on the firing line". Ha. It never happens. After three days of firing we're relieved by the BEATTY. It seems that DesDiv 132 has been given a photographer as part of the Navy's growing publicity campaign, and each of our division's "crews" gets a day or two in the limelight. A shuttle service is set up between the bombarded coast and the carrier Task Force. "Lights, action, camera." We're movie heroes!

Now it's back to the carriers and the final screening operations for the BRISTOL. The final week goes by with us watching the planes take off and return in unending waves. Now that our hitch in the Korean theater is all but history we look back and see that it's not been as bad as we had anticipated four months before. We've done our job without the loss of a single man.

The long awaited day of detachment arrives, and as we pull away from the tank down the word is passed: "All hands are advised to go topside for a last look at Korea." The BRISTOL roars under oars of successive laughter as she steams at flank speed for Yokosuka. We make a two day group south around Korea recasting the carriers VALLEY FORGE and PHILIP-PINE SEA back to port. The division moves together and spends five days of watchful waiting for our reliefs to show up. We make the most of our last few liberties in Japan; bidding goodbye to our new found friends and making a few last minute purchases. We sincerely hope that our trip home will be as pleasant as our liberties here in Japan have been. Stores are taken aboard and a few final repairs are made.

February 27th finally rolls around. Late in the afternoon the four destroyers pull in. We transfer our load weather gear and make all preparations for getting under way. At 1430 the lines are cast off and we begin the long trip home.

Now that the primary purpose of this cruise, is complete, we relax and prepare to enjoy our homeward trip. It is still cold as we head out of Yokosuka bound for our first port of call, Hong Kong. Our trip to Japan and Korea was made in a hurry, but our homeward voyage will be a leisurely affair, with the division spending at least two days in every port we touch.

As we circle south around China and Formosa the weather starts to warm. It's not hard to forget the snow-capped peaks of the "backline" with the sun shining down and making us sweat as we knuckle down to ship's work. Turn to, in the order of the day. We didn't have to do too much of it in Korea, while standing condition III watches, but now the Captain lays down the law and the working day begins early and ends late. Maybe we should have stayed in the warzone!

Early on the morning of the second of March we pull into the harbor at Hong Kong. This British Crown Colony now acts as a haven of refuge for the thousands of persons who have had to flee before the advancing armies of Communist leader Mao-Tse-Tung. Hong Kong, in recent years has seen its population rise with astounding rapidity from a mere 800,000 to well over 2,000,000. An ever-increasing influx of humanity from all parts of China arrives each day by ship, train and plane.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of Hong Kong is the famous Peak, a mountain at one end of the island, which rises 1825 feet above sea level. Daily, thousands of visitors ascend this natural monument to gaze in awe at the beautiful harbor below.

Wide streets, busy shops, and magnificent concrete structures all point to the prosperity of the colony; but while riches and luxury are evident everywhere, there is object poverty to remind one of the misery of China's war-torn millions.



Refugees have poured in without any means of subsistence. Today, they are proving to be a menace to the community in many ways—health, security and economy.



Before the hook is down "half" the population of the city surrounds the ship in suspense, hocking the OOD'S for permission to come aboard and jockeying for the best position to do so. Attempts are made to keep the merchants at a respectful distance. Communist rioting in the city of Kowloon, adjacent across the bay from Hong Kong, has made liberty unobtainable, after five or six concentrations and "un"-concentrations we manage to put men over on the beach during both of the days that we're there.





The BRISTOL looks like a combination of Macy's and Woolworth's five-and-dime during our stay in port. All the way from the hatch to the midships passageway can be seen an amazing assortment of merchandise, ranging from ivory napkin rings to suits of the finest English gabardine. Cheap labor enables the vendors to sell at ridiculously low prices and we take full advantage of the bargains. As we pull out of Hong Kong the living compartments look like Hollywood wardrobes.

Now it's a course southward to Singapore. Three days of calm weather and smooth sailing unfold before us. Early on the morning of March 7 we pull into port, one of the most important points in Southeast Asia. By now the weather has progressed from warm to hotter. Singapore is just a few miles above the equator and humid days and thunder showers are common occurrences. Liberty here is rather mediocre. The British are polite and open up their facilities for our use, but Japan is still fresh in our minds and it will be a long time before we



see any foreign ports that can compare to the good times we had back in Yokosuka and Tokyo. A tour of the city is arranged but a foul up at the last minute has all six of the touring buses traveling together, and 100 men dropped off at each of the tour stops makes for much confusion and little actual enjoyment of the trip. The results are disappointing and we leave Singapore without much likelihood of anyone getting homesick for the town.

Our course changes now to due west, and we feel for the first time that we're heading home. We follow the run into the Malacca Straits, on through them and around the northwest tip of Sumatra. The morning of the 9th we turn south and head for the equator. We've been pointing for this crossing, the shellbacks with relish and the pollywogs with foreboding. The divison deliberately goes sixty miles out of her way to make sure all pollywogs come in for a liberal amount of King Neptune's justice, and the shellbacks begin to make "preparations".

At this point in our story the editors feel that the origin of the Neptune Ceremony should be included, not only as a reminder to those who already know, but as a point of interest to those who will read this book in the future.





THE ORIGIN OF THE NEPTUNE CEREMONY

The practice of navigating the seas dates back to the early voyages of the Phoenicians who, as early as 500 B.C., explored the shores of the Mediterranean and some of the more extensive were distant voyages, the Phoenicians explored the West Coast of Africa and Northwest as far as England. In all the years since these early voyages sailors have developed numerous customs, one of which has stood the test of time and is more rigidly adhered to than any other, that is the "Crossing the Line" ceremony.

During the seventeenth century, so legend tells us, the French custom, performed a sea baptism upon green hands who for the first time sailed through the Pass de Fontenay. The Pass is a very strong and rapid current which, rolling over every

rock, disposes itself into the sea along the coast of France at the southern end of the Douarnenez Bay, and is a very dangerous passage. The ceremony consisted of the master's mate clothed in a ridiculous garment performing a burlesque baptismal ritual. All men who had not previously made this dangerous passage were required to enter the ceremony and kneel before the master's mate to be baptized. After the ceremony each one of the land lubbers recently baptized, had to present gifts to the master's mate. This ceremony varied in certain details as time went on and in some countries was performed on other occasions. The British sailors, for instance, performed the initiation of land lubbers when the "Tropic of Cancer" or the "Tropic of Capricorn" was crossed. Eventually as cruises became longer and more parts of the globe were navigated the initiation ceremony was only performed when crossing the equator, hence the title of "Crossing the Line" ceremony as the sailors at that time crossed the equator's surface in 0° Latitude. As time went on the ceremony expanded from a simple baptismal ritual to an elaborate initiation into the mysteries of the deep, and presentation of the land lubber to King Neptune, the Exalted Ruler of the Seven Seas, and his Royal Court. This Presentation ceremony is usually followed by the trial of the polybus for his numerous shortcomings and the punishments assigned for these offenses. Usually the ceremony is brought to a close for each polybus by throwing him to the lions in the tank where on is taught the proper respect for King Neptune and the habitues of the sea.

March the 10th finally rolls around, the day for which we've all been waiting. For weeks now the shellbacks have been tormenting the pollywogs, with tales of violent tortures to be inflicted on them the day we cross the equator. The pollywogs have been able to do little more than grin weakly and threaten the old salts with violent measures on "their" day - "pollywog" day. That day has finally come and we're all feverishly waiting

The pollywogs commenced tormenting the shellbacks last night when they threw the water tank framework over the side. The shellbacks have worked for the past three days to get this framework ready for the initiation; and to loose it in such a manner has been quite demoralizing for them. Some are in favor of not having an initiation at all, thinking this just punishment for the rebelling pollywogs. The others think that since so much work has gone into the preparation for the initiation it should be held anyway. A meeting is called and after much discussion it is decided to go on with it. Pollywog humiliation begins an hour before four in the afternoon when lookouts are posted atop masts 51 and 52 and on the forecastle to watch for the appearance of Davy Jones, the emissary for his majesty, King Neptune Rex. These lookouts wear dimers or insignia with signs of "kick me, kiss me, or ally pollywog", scrawled in lipstick on their backs. Promptly at four o'clock, Davy Jones "comes aboard". He calls to Captain Demah saying that he has a summons from King Neptune Rex. He then proceeds to read the following message.

TO: Captain Demah, U.S. Navy, Commanding Officer, U.S.S. BRISTOL (DD857)

Subject: Welcome to the Royal Domain.

Greetings:

A royal and hearty greeting is extended to you and the faithful Shellbacks in your command. I wish to commend you for the meritorious deed of assembling such a large and healthy collection of mastels, landlubbers, pollywogs, beachcombers, titterbugs, big apple bums, lounge lizards, on the good ship BRISTOL and assure you that the modern tortures devised for this initiation into the ancient order of the deep will prove both interesting and amusing.

Upon entering my royal domain you are directed to have the BRISTOL and her crew in readiness for a very rigid inspection by myself and the Royal Court. Subpoenas will be delivered by my Royal Representatives. All landlubbers, pollywogs, beachcombers and what-not are directed to prepare their defenses to be submitted before the Royal Court. In case of any fatalities, please have the subpoenas delivered to their next of kin.



I have further directed that my Chief of Police shall immediately place under arrest and lock up for subduing a number of the most notorious offenders. Your cooperation is anticipated.

S/NEPTONUS REX
Ruler of the Raging Main

Davy Jones then proceeds to dole out punishment and prescribe uniforms, for some of the more wacky pollywogs. Pollywog officers Lt. JG C.W. Roberts, Lt. JG J.P. King, Lt. JG S.D. Mondolph, Ena. D.C. Learyman, Ena. C.V.E. Callich, Ena. B. Thores, and Ena. V.N. Pansiers are detailed to serve as mess cooks in the crew's mess hall while pollywog LCDR Sullivan, the executive officer, and pollywog Lt. Dyne, the



gunnery officer, serve as mess cooks for the Chiefs. A.E. Boudack, EMCA and C.R. Reinks, GMC, serve the Shellback officers in the wardroom.

Some of the more notorious offenders are made to stick their heads in buckets of water and then bow down before Davy Jones, at which time they are forced to say: "I'm a lowdown ally pollywog." Davy finishes with the most offensive pollywogs and turns to bid Captain Demah good night. As he does so, pollywog Reinks, suddenly grabs a pail of water and throws it on Davy Jones and the Shellbacks. The royal police wade into the broom and in no time at all subdue pollywog Reinks and the few others who jumped in to help him. Thus so incenses the shellbacks that they decide to go ahead with what remaining lumber there is on board and build another water tank. Davy then wishes the shellbacks good luck with this second tank and after shaking hands with the captain he turns, walks forward, and "disappears" through the house pipes.





Now the pollywog serves notice on all the shellbacks to beware ! For an hour and a half the weather decks are unsafe for any shellbacks caught on them. Pollywogs with buckets of water lie in wait behind every obstruction large enough to hide them, and away a shellback is soaked to the skin before the Captain calls a halt to their frolic antics.

Darkness closes in and the ship rests uneasily with everyone waiting eagerly for what is to come on the morrow.

The pseudo mess cooks are roasted out at 5:30 the next morning as preparations for the "BIG" day get under way. Chow goes down as usual, but there is something different about it this morning. On closer observation it can be seen that the shellbacks are all eating together and the pollywogs are tending them, hand and foot. Some shellbacks are fanned while they eat, while others direct the pollywog helpers to carry trays to the scullery. There is some grumbling but no outright refusal to disobey the "lady" word of any shellback.

At nine-thirty the divisions are sent to quarters to await the arrival of King Neptune and his royal party.

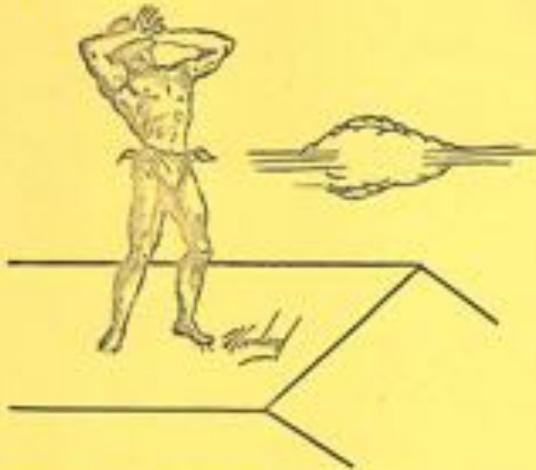
Various means of torture have been rigged on the deck, in readiness for the impending initiation. These tortures which include the water tank, barber chair, doctor's cot and aloft chute have been carefully prepared by the shellbacks to insure the pollywogs of getting a thorough initiation. It is the shell-



backs wish that no pollywog ever forget the slowness of March, 1932.

Promptly at ten o'clock King Neptune and his royal court "come aboard." The King is resplendent in his flowing purple robe, bushy beard and silver crown. There is that darling of the court, the royal baby, with her white diaper and powder blue bonnet. A closer look shows us "wastard" spread over the baby's bottom. We wonder? Now we see the royal princess decked out in white bra and panties with a sheer white cloak of erseydy. On her long golden hair curls rests a delicate crown of the finest cardboard covered with tin foil. Close behind the Princess comes the Royal Consort in brilliant yellow bra and panties, short yellow bang curls and dress of the sheerest erseydy. "She" also has on a pair of "top" glasses which we understand are the rope back bone. These members of the royal family along with the rest of the court, proceed down the port side to the midships passageway where they are met by Captain Darruh. Duvy Jones then reads the following message addressed to Captain Darruh, Shellbacks and pollywogs of the U.S.S. BRISTOL, from His Majesty Neptune Rex.





From: His Majesty Neptuneus Rex
 To: Captain Darrah, USN, Shellbacks and Pollywogs, U.S.S. BRISTOL

GREETINGS:

I welcome this excellent ship of a proud and mighty Navy into my great Realm. I, Neptuneus Rex, Emperor of the Sea Cooves, Lord of the Trade Winds, Protector of Mermaids and Mermen, Exalted Ruler of the Rooping Main, have not welcomed you before, but no ship that ever plowed this ocean since the first rude savage set forth in his proo has given me more pride and satisfaction. I have made several tests of your craft to determine her worthiness, and she merits my supreme admiration.

As Exalted Ruler of the Deep, I have sent this ship through storms of wind, mountainous seas, and much foggy weather. From myriads of dolphins, I learned how gallantly you and your crew of loyal subjects bore themselves and also how this manifestation of Royal might struck terror to these landlubbers with whom, unfortunately, you came infested. Well might they tremble! They have other and greater perils to face before they stand worthy to be numbered among my seasoned subjects. Captain Darrah, you and my loyal Shellbacks, of this happy ship, know how to give your Ruler a hearty welcome.

(Shouts and applause from the Shellbacks)

As for you, you cringing landlubbers, belay and splice my knave if ever I saw such an ill-favored lot of scum, since Frankie Drake and Billie Balboa, first sailed these waters on my Royal Aides. I inspect all ships that enter my domain and I have seen the quality of landlubbers getting worse year by year. You are the worst yet. Bow your heads and listen to me, you surly scum of the pasture lots. If you so much as hold a disrespectful thought toward any member of the Royal Court, especially her Majesty, Queen Aphrodite, or the Royal Baby Slipnipple, if you attempt to flirt with any of the mermaids of Honor, I shall visit upon you my extreme displeasure and you will find my ordinary displeasure dreadful enough. Heed and Beware!"

NEPTUNUS REX
 Ruler of the Rooping Main

Attest:

Davy Jones
 His Majesty's Scribe

Davy then thanks the captain for having the ship ready for the inspection and with a flourish he introduces him to the Royal Court. His King Neptuneus steps forward and declares the ship worthy.

Captain Darrah, my loyal subjects and lowly pollywogs!

"True to the age old traditions of my Great Realm, I have come forth from my Castle deep in the Booms of Atlantis, to once again hold forth with my Royal Family and Court in Royal Splendor and Pomp, to cleanse from the ranks of my faithful earthborn subjects such landlubberly scum as dare to enter my realm, and through shallow water entrance below the very air, my faithful decisions of the deep must breathe.

On the day is done, you shall appear one and all before my Royal Court, and there shall stand trial and have noted out to you such just sentences as shall befit your cases. Woe be-tide those who fail to appear in response to the summons of my August Judges. Beware you lowly scum, lest you taste my extreme wrath!"

Within the space of a minute or two, the duty Bos's sounds "Sweepers" and King Neptuneus and the Royal Party move forward to inspect the divisions. Davy Jones leads the Royal Party on the inspection tour. Neptuneus Rex remarks on each division to Davy Jones as to the scurvy lot on board such a fine ship. The Royal Party now takes seats on the festail after each division is inspected.



The word is then passed for the Division Officers to march their divisions one at a time to the Festail for the Trial. As soon as the King has finished the Royal Chaplain steps forward and offers this short prayer:

MOTUS: NOKEN: DEDIT: COCIS:

To Thee, Oh Great God Zeus, do we offer up this prayer. Guide once again with thine ancient laws, our great Sovereign Neptuneus Rex in his task of human sacrifice Of the scurvy decisions of Pollywogs. Let not our King nor thine allies of our honorable court hesitate in carrying out the dearest wishes of our Ruler. May the mortal elements be blessed for justice! Guide us ever and be fulfilled with fervor.

MOTUS: NOKEN: DEDIT: COCIS:



Captain Dorch has the Jolly Roger broken at the bow and then turns the ship over to King Neptune. The King sends his royal navigator to the bridge and the rest of his Royal Party retire to the forecastle where the Court is set to try the pollywogs for their heinous crimes. Twenty-five pollywogs have run the gauntlet of the paddlers and torturers when a message is received from ComDesDiv 122 that the Division will leave to at 1300 for two-and-a-half hours to allow the ships time to have



fleety cloud, and once again it is time for King Neptune's court to convene The pollywogs line up on the starboard side all as their names are called. They are forced to their knees and after charges have been preferred against them by the prosecuting attorney they are paraded (and on their knees) past the royal family which is seated on the forecastle forward of the starboard depth charge rack. Each one is forced to kiss the concubine's toe, the princess' knee and the baby's belly. From



their various torturations. Captain Dorch calls a truce for the next two hours, which allows the shellbacks to strengthen the water tank that has partially collapsed due to the pinch and roll of the ship. The pollywogs have one last desperate try at tormenting the shellbacks by securing several of them forward and trying to keep them out of the initiation. The royal navigator, however, who has remained at his post on the bridge, is able to see what's happening and passes the word for the royal police. Liberation for the shellbacks is swift and efficient and the offending pollywogs are awarded for extreme tortures when the initiation continues in the afternoon The sun burns down out of a bright blue sky muted only here and there by a

here they are paraded over the barber's chair where such punishment as the barber deems necessary is meted out. It's only three pediles and a slide over to the doctor's cot where each pollywog is forced to swallow a tablespoon of nerve tonic, consisting of cayenne pepper, raw eggs, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar and tomatoes. While he swallows this concoction the pollywog gets a gentle application of the tident in axle greases, on his neck, belly, behind his ears, around his ankles, or sometimes even in his hair. The royal dentist and the doctor collaborate to make this part of the initiation as nasty as they can. The victims abjectly verify this later by saying that the nerve tonic made most of them gag, and went



Editor's Note: Pages 26-28 or the copied Cruise Book are missing.



We bypass the southern tip of Sicily as we come to the west and north for the Persian Gulf and Bahrain. The trip consumes six days filled with the sound of chipping hammers and the slop of paint brushes. Old hands on the BRISTOL swear they have never before seen such concentrated turn-to on this ship. As the weather cools we move into the Gulf and try to figure out why this group of ships is going 1200 miles out of its way to visit a God-forsaken, lonely piece of sand where a handful of homeless British and Americans pump oil out of the earth. We recall that Commodore Government once said that this was a "show the flag" tour, and settle for that explanation.

On the cool morning of 25 March we anchor in the harbor of Bahrain and gaze out over the desolate, sandy foothills that stretch far away beyond our sight. A lead of mail arrives and brightness fills considerably, at a time and place when we need it. Once again our friends the British have taken the trouble to make our visit a reasonably pleasant one. They have arranged for us to use their ball field, petty officer's and enlisted men's clubs, and have even chartered buses for swimming parties. The only liberty we get is a supervised shopping tour of the nearby Arab city of Manama and a guided tour of the Rasco oil refinery. Parties and receptions are held by the civilians for the officers, who reciprocate by having a "clambake" of their own aboard the FORDY. The following morning we up anchor and leave this oasis of oil and sand, each of us hoping that we will never have to see it again. We all crave the bustle and bustle of our own Western civilization and with this in mind we once more turn our faces to the west knowing that the Suez Canal is the only barrier that stands between us.

Leaving Bahrain, we retrace our course down through the Persian Gulf. Once out of it, we turn southward again, paralleling the coast of the great sandy desert of Arabia. The temperature rises and then falls again as we progress on the five day trail around Arabia and then south to Aden, the southern gateway to the Red Sea.

We drop anchor in the outer harbor and lie in the shadows of the desolate mountain peaks that surround this bustling little town. Liberty is granted for a few hours while we're refueling, just long enough to permit some of us to go ashore and decide if it isn't worth it. By 2300 the entire division is underway, steaming into the Red Sea.

For three days we head north toward Suez. This sea isn't red but it surely is hot! With only two or three days left until we reach cooler weather, the sun beats down and wrings a final "bucket" of sweat out of us. Chipping and painting continue unabated, and the skipper's master plan of complete turn-to is being fulfilled.

On the morning of March the 30th we anchor at Suez, the southern entrance to the canal. Two hours later we're cleared by the authorities and the BRISTOL points her bow slowly into the calm, green waters of this current hot spot in our world today, with the other three ships of the division following. Although Suez has been the scene of rioting during the past six months, there are few signs of unrest, other than the large number of British Army posts manned and ready along the entire route. After transiting the lower part of the canal we anchor in Great Bitter lake for four hours waiting for the other ships to catch up with us. The captain gives his O.K. on swimming and fifty or sixty of us climb into swimming trunks and hit the water off the starboard side. The water seems positively frigid to bodies that have been subjected to such extreme heat in the recent past, but we get a kick out of it anyway.

At 1400 we up anchor and continue on past Ismailia, focal point of the recent disturbances, and push steadily toward Port Said. Weather cools and conditions improve as the color are switched on to light the few remaining miles. Port Said is reached at 2000; the clearance procedure of the morning is repeated; and we've given the green light. By 2100 we're for out in the Mediterranean, and once more heading west.

Our passage through the Suez has been effected in much less time than was expected and the Commodore wires ahead for permission to arrive in Naples a day early. Permission is granted and we have four long days of sunny Italy ahead, as we pass through the straits of Messina.

The next morning the rocky outlines of the Italian west coast loom up before us as we slip into the little town of Positano and away of the fishing piers. Fueling takes longer than usual and it's dark before we complete the short trip from Positano to Naples. Once in Naples harbor we anchor for the second time today and call every the liberty boats we need for the second time of other Navy ships with the exception of the U.S.S. ADV-RONDACK AGC 15, from which the four stars of CINCPACFLT flutter conspicuously in the breeze.

Early the next morning, 78 sets leave the ship for a tour to Rome and an audience with Pope Pius XII. A few hours later the local tours get away to Pompeii and Capri. Spring is coming to Italy now that April is here and the countryside is clothed in a soft green coat of buds and grass. We eat it all up with hungry eyes since it's our first sight of Western civilization in six months. Up to now we've seen nothing but the cities of the Orient and Middle East, and even a completely European city, such as Naples, makes us feel at home.

The wine and spaghetti coupled with Neapolitan song and dance combine to make our visit to Italy a pleasant one. The members of the Home tour return the night before our departure, with glowing reports on the wonders of the Eternal city, and with photographs showing the Holy Father surrounded by the officers and men of DesDiv 122.

It's Sunday, April 6th, and we're steaming out of Naples harbor and being buzzed by a Navy plane taking aerial photographs of the division. We've had fun here; some of us have visited relatives whom we may never see again; others have made new friends and still others have enjoyed taking pictures and sight-seeing. We ring up 22 boats and commence a last one-day hop to "Bikini beach", sometimes called the French Riviera.

We drop anchor in the bay off Cannes, France early on the morning of the seventh. This is our last big liberty port, but we have evidence that it may well prove to be the best one we've hit yet. Each section gets an early liberty and the days remain sunny and pleasant during our entire stay. Some of the boys go on town to Paris and Switzerland and come back with excellent reports of time well spent sightseeing and shopping. The ship's score taken on orders for perfume, French dolls, Bikini bathing suits, lingerie, and also less subtlecloths. The ship takes on the appearance of a department store for a few days until all the gear is stowed away.

The people here in France treat us very well and it gives us all a good feeling not to have the populace always after the "almighty" dollar as they have been in some of the other ports we have visited.

Local tours are arranged for Monte Carlo, Nice, Gaiter Jean, and Cannes, the perfume center of Southern France. This tour takes in the entire Riviera with the exception of Menton over on the Italian border. For many of us this is a chance to renew acquaintances with people we met over here last year. A good time is had by all and it is with a feeling of regret that we leave France so soon. However, as the old saying goes: "time marches on", and the morning of the 10th we ship anchor to slip quietly out of this garden spot of the world, with its gorgeous parks and beaches. As we leave the harbor we pass the U.S. Constitution, one of America's largest and newest passenger liners. She is just entering Cannes after a trip from New York. She's from home, U.S.A., and a sight for eyes anxious to see that old "land of liberty".

A short two-day trip brings us to Gibraltar, the gateway to the Mediterranean. We pull in shortly after 0800 to fuel and some of us get a few hours liberty to look the town over. Being British, Gibraltar's shops have much the same merchandise that is to be found in the stores back home plus the added items that are brought over from the Spanish mainland. Just a few more words: we receive some rain from clouds to finish fueling and at 1300 we pull away from the dock and start the long haul across the Atlantic.

We steam into the Atlantic with a distant sense of foreboding, well remembering the hurricane we encountered just prior to the start of this cruise. Our suspicions are well founded, for the second day out we run into rough weather that lasts for five days. The ship pitches and rolls with increasing violence until we wonder if we're not hitting another typhoon.

Suddenly on the fifth day out the seas begin to flatten out. We all have a sigh of relief and turn to on all weather decks, cleaning off the salt and painting where necessary.

We're all creating the journey's end now, and it is only a day away. Soon this trip will be history and we can all look and long or curse to suit our pleasure. We feverishly continue to "dress ship" in preparation for the reception being planned for us. Tugboats are scheduled to put on a water display, television and movie crews are ready and waiting to "shoot" us, and high ranking Naval officers along with the appropriate civilian authorities are all waiting to give us a "hero's" welcome as we pull in. This is the first east coast division that has been received in just this manner, following a Korean tour and round the world cruise, and we understand it is partially in keeping with the Navy's present publicity campaign. Whatever the reason, we're happy to be getting home and leave is apparent in the minds.

Now the big day arrives. It's April the 21st and a beautiful sunny day. We couldn't ask for a better one. The ships slip into Narragansett Bay escorted by a fireboat and other small craft. We ease on up to Melville and anchor alongside the tender, Yosemite. Ranking officers from the Newport area and the mayor of Newport greet us with welcoming speeches and then the ship is opened up to receive the wives, mothers, fathers

and sweethearts who have waited so long for us to return. The men on board who hail from New England have interviews with the press and radio and a few of them get their pictures in the papers. It's a hectic affair for us all as some prepare for transfer and others for leave.

Before we wind up our cruise story, we'd like to set down a few vital statistics concerning our tour of duty in support of the United Nations in Korea. Our tour lasted from October 1951 to February 22, 1952, our date of departure from the combat area. During this period of time we spent more than 80 days at sea with only 20 days in port. In our combat operations in and around Korea and Japan we steamed 31,316 miles, using 1,485,394 gallons of fuel. One hundred and sixty-four movies were shown while the officers and men drew \$115,000 on pay days, smoked 35,000 packs of cigarettes and ate 65,000 hours of ruddy. "Wow"!!!

It's all over now. We left six months and 21 days ago and now we're come back. We've sweated, sweated, shivered, laughed, and cheered. At times we reached the "top" in working together and on other occasions we've been extremely antagonistic towards one another. All things considered though, we have become a cohesive team able to work and play together. Whenever we go after we leave the BRISTOL one thing is certain; we'll never forget this cruise and the good and bad times we've had together. Excelsior!!

Excelsior!!



USS BRISTOL DD 857

Editor's Note: The remaining pages contain the names and addresses of the ship's company at the time of the publishing of the Bristol Cruise around the world 1951-1952.

Pearl Harbor

of his voice. Admiral Nimitz said, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America Which do you think it was?" Shocked and surprised, the young helmsman asked, "What do you mean by saying the Japanese made the biggest mistakes a attack force ever made?" Nimitz explained:

Mistake number one:

The Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. if those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk--we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Mistake number two:

When the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired. As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America . And already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships.

Mistake number three:

Every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is on top of the ground in storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply.

That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an

attack force could make or God was taking care of America.

I've never forgotten what I read in that little book. It is still an inspiration as reflect upon it. In jest, I might suggest that because Admiral Nimitz was a Texan, born and raised in Fredericksburg Texas -- he was a born optimist. But any way you look at it--Admiral Nimitz was able to see a silver lining in a situation and circumstance where everyone else saw only despair and defeatism. President Roosevelt had chosen the right man for the right job. We desperately needed a leader that could see silver linings in the midst of the cloud of dejection, despaired and defeat. There is a reason that our national motto is, in GOD WE TRUST. Why have we forgotten?

.....

The First Draft *from Together We Served*

In the spring of 1861, decades of simmering tensions between the northern and southern United States, over issues including states' rights versus federal authority, westward expansion, and slavery, exploded into the American Civil War. Since neither the Union nor the Confederacy relied on conscription to fill the ranks, both sides believed volunteers would be enough to do the fighting - which was expected to be over by the end of summer 1861. However, as the one-year mark neared, it became obvious to the Confederacy and the Union that the war would last much longer and its armies would need many more soldiers in the increasingly violent and protracted conflict. But it wasn't until the Battle of Shiloh on April 6th, 1862 that the need became critical enough to address. The battle began when the Confederates launched a surprise

attack on General Ulysses S. Grant's Union forces in southwestern Tennessee. After initial successes, the Confederates were unable to hold their positions against fresh union reinforcements and were forced back, resulting in a Union victory. Both sides suffered nearly 25,000 casualties, killed, wounded, or missing -it was the bloodiest single day of the Civil War so far. The glaring deficiency in troop numbers prompted Confederate President Jefferson Davis to quickly authorize the first Conscription Act on April 16, 1862.

This legislation required all white males aged eighteen to thirty-five to serve three years of Confederate service if called. Soldiers already in the military would now be obligated to serve an additional twenty-four months. Five days later, the Confederate government passed the Exemption Act, which excused from military service select government employees, workers deemed necessary to maintain society (such as teachers, railroad workers, skilled tradesmen, ministers and owners of twenty or more slaves.) Substitution was an additional way to avoid the draft, though the Confederate Congress abolished the unpopular practice in December 1863. However, even before the 1862 Conscription Act, a group of Unionists in Arkansas known as The Peace Society were essentially drafted after their arrest, being given the choice between enlisting or face a trial.

Exemption and substitution were just two of the many reasons conscription was controversial. Governors considered that a draft assigning soldiers to Confederate national service was an usurpation of their state authority. Those who had volunteered in April 1861 and whose enlistments were expiring resented the additional two years of obligatory service. Draftees, who had not volunteered in the initial excitement of 1861 and were less enthusiastic about the Confederate cause, were not eager to leave their homes and families.

The first conscription act was only moderately successful, and a second was passed in September 1862. This legislation raised the draft age to forty-five. A third conscription act in February 1864 stipulated that boys of seventeen and men up to fifty would be eligible for reserve duty.

The draft was especially problematic and difficult to enforce in Arkansas, and figures for Union and Confederate conscription are difficult to quantify. The Union victory at the Battle of Pea Ridge fought March 6th, 1862, one month prior to the enactment of Confederate conscription, meant that the pro-Confederate administration of Arkansas Governor Henry Rector no longer had full autonomy statewide. Resistance to Confederate conscription was also noteworthy in the highlands of Arkansas, where there was little investment in slavery. In the Ouachita Mountains, men who had avoided conscription efforts fought with Confederate forces in the February 15, 1863 Skirmish at McGraw's Mill, resulting in a Confederate victory.

The Union government instituted its own draft a year later in March 1863. The Enrollment Act required all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to serve in the local units of their state militias. In the decades prior to the Civil War, these laws were rarely enforced; state militias, such as they were, served more as social clubs than military units, with parading and picnicking more common than artillery and musketry drill. In the first year of the war, the militia system was the template to organize volunteer recruits into local regiments. Now, states would be legally required to fill quotas apportioned by the War Department. These troops were to serve for up to nine months. The Union government allowed some exceptions for certain occupations and physical disabilities, and for religious conscientious objectors.

Like the Confederate conscription act, the Union's state militia draft of 1862 achieved only moderate results. A more permanent procedure would be needed to provide necessary troops. To this end, President Lincoln signed the Enrollment Act on March 3, 1863, which called for a Federal draft that summer. Exemptions from the draft could be bought for \$300 or by finding a substitute draftee. Protesters, outraged that exemptions were effectively granted only to the wealthiest U.S. citizens, led to bloody draft riots in New York City where eleven African Americans were killed by angry mobs in July 1863. Immigrants and the poor were especially resentful of the methods used by wealthier citizens to avoid service.

In both the North and the South, compulsory service embittered the public, who considered it an infringement on individual free will and personal liberty and feared it would concentrate arbitrary power in the military. Believing with some justification that unwilling soldiers made poor fighting men, volunteer soldiers despised conscripts. Conscription also undercut morale, as soldiers complained that it compromised voluntary enlistments and appeared as an act of desperation in the face of repeated military defeats.

Conscription nurtured substitutes, bounty-jumping, and desertion. Charges of class discrimination were leveled against both Confederate and Union draft laws since exemption and commutation clauses allowed propertied men to avoid service, thus laying the burden on immigrants and men with few resources. Occupational, only-son, and medical exemptions created many loopholes in the laws. Doctors certified healthy men unfit for duty, while some physically or mentally deficient conscripts went to the front after sham examinations. Enforcement presented obstacles of its own; many conscripts simply failed to report for duty. Several

states challenged the draft's legality, trying to block it and arguing over the quota system. Unpopular, unwieldy, and unfair, conscription raised more discontent than it raised soldiers.

In the Union and Confederacy, conscription was partially meant to encourage voluntary enlistment, as those who joined as volunteers were eligible to receive bounty money (enlistment bonuses) from states, counties, cities, and the federal government - in some cases totaling a sum upwards of \$1,000. However, these bounties created the problem of bounty jumping, wherein men would volunteer, collect the money, then desert and re-enlist elsewhere and collect that money as well.

Neither the North nor South exercised full control within the state through the remainder of the war. Regardless, the primary purpose of conscription was never to raise substantial numbers of troops but to spur enlistment. In this aspect, at least, Union and Confederate conscription achieved some success.

Although the Civil War saw the first compulsory conscription of U.S. citizens for wartime service, a 1792 act by Congress required that all able-bodied male citizens purchase a gun and join their local state militia. There was no penalty for noncompliance with this act. Congress also passed a Conscription Act during the War of 1812, but the war ended before it was enacted. During the Civil War, the government of the Confederate States of America also enacted a compulsory military draft. The U.S. enacted a military draft again during World War I, in 1940 to make the U.S. ready for its involvement in World War II, and during the Korean War. The last U.S. military draft occurred during the Vietnam War.

World Team Sports Face Of America Bike Ride April 2016
Contributed by Diane Coleangelo, EMT, Point Pleasant Boro EMS,

Volunteer at this event. I received a thank you note from Diane. Here it is:

Dear Ed,

I wanted to thank you for your very generous donation of \$100.00. You know what happened on the ride - I reported all that I know (see the pics and test messages following). But this year I felt it was different. I talked to more people than the previous years. I always wear my first aid backpack & maybe it's because they recognize me from previous years. I sometimes run into my "guardian angel". He took care of me when I had my seizure 3 weeks prior to the ride. He always looks for me and says hello. At the end of the ride, I had a chance to meet his three young children. I just have to say that our veterans look forward to this ride & I am proud that I was able to raise money for them to participate.

Your "Cub Reported" Diane,



Usually a guy with a big bicycle has these boots and sign and flag on the back of his bicycle you might have seen him in previous pictures. Unfortunately he had to have a pacemaker inserted this year and he also has hip problems but he gave permission for one of the other disabled riders to put this on the back of his bicycle so that's what this rider did he rode with the sign that Lou always rides with

Edward C Lynch:

Got it

Diane Coleangelo:



This is Rory and me at one of the rest stops

Diane Coleangelo:

Actually Rory did not lose his legs. He lost the use of his legs

Edward C Lynch:

K

R U back at work today?

Diane Coleangelo:

No I am on vacation and will not return to New Jersey until this Friday

Rory also did a Vietnam challenge that was also sponsored by World Team Sports it was 80 miles

Google rorys name and you will see more information about him

Talking Dog *Contributed by Charlie Weaver*

A guy is driving around the back woods of Montana and he sees a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house: 'Talking Dog For Sale' He rings the bell and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard.

The guy goes into the backyard and sees a nice looking Labrador retriever sitting there. 'You talk?' he asks. 'Yep,' the Lab replies.

After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says 'So, what's your story?' The Lab looks up and says, 'Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so... I told the CIA. In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping.' 'I was one of

their most valuable spies for eight years running...

But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals.'

'I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired.'

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog. 'Ten dollars,' the guy says. 'Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?'

'Because he's a Bullshitter. He's never been out of the yard'

A POEM: THAT WAS US
Contributed by Joe Kelsey

A little house with three bedrooms,
One bathroom and one car on the street
A mower that you had to push
To make the grass look neat.

In the kitchen on the wall
We only had one phone,
And no need for recording things,
Someone was always home.

We only had a living room
Where we would congregate,
Unless it was at mealtime
In the kitchen where we ate.

We had no need for family rooms
Or extra rooms to dine.
When meeting as a family
Those two rooms would work out fine.

We only had one TV set
And channels maybe two,
But always there was one of them
With something worth the view

For snacks we had potato chips
That tasted like a chip.
And if you wanted flavor
There was Lipton's onion dip.

Store-bought snacks were rare
because
My mother liked to cook
And nothing can compare to snacks
In Betty Crocker's book

Weekends were for family trips
Or staying home to play
We all did things together –
Even go to church to pray.

When we did our weekend trips
Depending on the weather,
No one stayed at home because
We liked to be together

Sometimes we would separate
To do things on our own,
But we knew where the others were
Without our own cell phone

Then there were the movies
With your favorite movie star,
And nothing can compare
To watching movies in your car

Then there were the picnics
at the peak of summer season,
Pack a lunch and find some trees
And never need a reason.

Get a baseball game together
With all the friends you know,
Have real action playing ball –
And no game video.

Remember when the doctor
Used to be the family friend,
And didn't need insurance
Or a lawyer to defend

The way that he took care of you
Or what he had to do,
Because he took an oath and strived
To do the best for you

Remember going to the store
And shopping casually,
And when you went to pay for it
You used your own money?

Nothing that you had to swipe
Or punch in some amount,
And remember when the cashier
person
Had to really count?

The milkman used to go
From door to door,
And it was just a few cents more
Than going to the store.

There was a time when mailed
letters
Came right to your door,
Without a lot of junk mail ads
Sent out by every store .

The mailman knew each house by
name
And knew where it was sent;
There were not loads of mail
addressed
To "present occupant"

There was a time when just one
glance
Was all that it would take,
And you would know the kind of
car,
The model and the make

They didn't look like turtles
Trying to squeeze out every mile;
They were streamlined, white walls,
fins
And really had some style

One time the music that you played
Whenever you would jive,
Was from a vinyl, big-holed record
Called a forty-five

The record player had a post
To keep them all in line
And then the records would drop
down
And play one at a time.

Oh sure, we had our problems then,
Just like we do today
And always we were striving,
Trying for a better way.

Oh, the simple life we lived
Still seems like so much fun,
How can you explain a game,
Just kick the can and run?

And why would boys put baseball
cards
Between bicycle spokes
And for a nickel, red machines
Had little bottled Cokes?

This life seemed so much easier
Slower in some ways
I love the new technology
But I sure do miss those days.

So time moves on and so do we
And nothing stays the same,
But I sure love to reminisce
And walk down memory lane.

With all today's technology
We grant that it's a plus!

But it's fun to look way back and say,
HEY LOOK, GUYS, THAT WAS US!

Good friends are like quilts-they age with you, yet never lose their warmth.

.....
An inspiration to us all.
Contributed by David "Guns" Lincoln who is sharing his friend's Tito's thoughts

As we get older we sometimes begin to doubt our ability to "make a difference" in the world. It is at these times that our hopes are boosted by the remarkable achievements of other "seniors" who have found the courage to take on challenges that would make many of us wither.

Harold Schlumberg is such a person:

HAROLD SAYS: "I've often been asked, 'What do you do now that you're retired?' 'Well...I'm fortunate to have a chemical engineering background and one of the things I enjoy most is converting beer, wine and whiskey into urine. It's rewarding, uplifting, satisfying and fulfilling. I do it every day and I really enjoy it." Harold is an inspiration to us all.

**Seniors:
Hints on how to liven up your idle hours ...**

To Maintain A Healthy Level Of Insanity:

1. At Lunch Time, Sit In Your Parked Car With Sunglasses on and point a Hair Dryer At Passing Cars.
Watch 'em Slow Down..

2. On all your check stubs, write 'For Marijuana.

3. Skip down the street, rather Than Walk and see how many looks you get.

4. Order a Diet Water whenever you go out to eat,with a serious face.

5. Sing Along At The Opera.

6. When The Money Comes Out of the ATM, scream 'I Won! I Won!'

7. When Leaving the Zoo, Start Running towards the Car Park, Yelling 'Run For Your Lives! They're Loose!'

8. Tell Your Children Over Dinner, 'Due To The Economy, we are Going To Have To Let One Of You Go.'

And The Final Way To Keep A Healthy Level Of Insanity :

9. Pick up a box of condoms at the pharmacy, go to the counter and ask where the fitting room is.

.....
The China Marines

Gunboat Marines

"You let him on board" cried the USS Monocacy. "No" replied Cpl Watson nervously but firmly. "Here go ahead anyway" urged the Monocacy to the befuddled chief watertender. Cpl Watson drew his gun "He shall not pass."

Dialog recorded by the Captain of the USS Palos when the USS Monocacy forcibly tried to transfer an unwanted and poor performing sailor upon the Palos and the Palos's Captain gave orders to the Marine guard to prevent his transfer. From Gunboat on the Yangtze by Glenn Howell

After the first few years of the twentieth century the navy maintained two squadrons of gunboats in China, a southern squadron out of Hong Kong and a Yangtze River squadron out of

Shanghai. Marines did not normally serve aboard these ships, a part for two larger gunboats:the USS Wilmington and USS Helena. Carrying around 40 Marines these men served as the gunboat flotilla's strike force. Both ships were replaced in the 1920's by the USS Ashville, USS Tulsa, and briefly the USS Sacramento, but Marines continued to maintain a presence aboard these newer ships. On occasion, when the necessity dictated Marines could find themselves embarked on a number of smaller gunboats for brief periods, such as Cpl Watson and his Marines were in 1920. In addition, during the troubles in the Yangtze Valley in the mid-1920's through the mid 1930's Marines found themselves aboard American flagged cargo vessels operating on the great river. All gunboats were subordinate to the Commander of the US Asiatic Fleet.

.....
Distinguished Flying Cross awarded for shooting down an American Plane. Contributed by Gary Johnson

Another bit of WW2 history that's mostly unknown.....

The Story of "Bad Angel": Pima Air and Space Museum

On the Saturday following Thanksgiving 2013, Ms. Karen, my 94-year-old father, Bill Gressinger, and I were visiting Pima Air and Space Museum.

We were in Hanger #4 to view the beautifully restored B-29, when I happened to take notice of a P-51 Mustang near the big bomber. It's name ? "Bad Angel".

I was admiring its aerodynamic lines and recalled enough history to know that until the Mustangs came into service, the skies over the Pacific

Ocean were dominated by Japanese Zeros.

Then something very strange caught my eye. Proudly displayed on the fuselage of "Bad Angel" were the markings of the pilot's kills: seven Nazis; one Italian; one Japanese AND ONE AMERICAN. Huh? "Bad Angel" shot down an American airplane?

Was it a terrible mistake? Couldn't be. If it had been an unfortunate misjudgment, certainly the pilot would not have displayed the American flag.

I knew there had to be a good story here. Fortunately for us, one of the Museum's many fine docents was on hand to tell it. Read Less

In 1942, the United States needed pilots for its war planes lots of war planes; lots of pilots. Lt. Louis Curdes was one. When he was 22 years old, he graduated flight training school and was shipped off to the Mediterranean to fight Nazis in the air over Southern Europe.

He arrived at his 82nd Fighter Group, 95th Fighter Squadron in April 1943 and was assigned a P-38 Lightning. Ten days later he shot down three German Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters.

A few weeks later, he downed two more German Bf -109's. In less than a month of combat, Louis was an Ace.

During the next three months, Louis shot down an Italian Mc.202 fighter and two more Messerschmitts before his luck ran out. A German fighter shot down his plane on August 27, 1943 over Salerno, Italy.

Captured by the Italians, he was sent to a POW camp near Rome. No doubt this is where he thought he would spend the remaining years of the war. It wasn't to be. A few days later, the Italians surrendered. Louis and a few other pilots escaped before the Nazis could take control of the camp.

One might think that such harrowing experiences would have taken the fight out of Louis, yet he volunteered for another combat tour. This time, Uncle Sam sent him to the Philippines where he flew P-51 Mustangs.

Soon after arriving in the Pacific Theater, Louis downed a Mitsubishi reconnaissance plane near Formosa. Now he was one of only three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers: Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Up until this point, young Lt. Curdes combat career had been stellar. His story was about to take a twist so bizarre that it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter.

While attacking the Japanese-held island of Batan, one of Louis wingmen was shot down. The pilot ditched in the ocean. Circling overhead, Louis could see that his wingman had survived, so he stayed in the area to guide a rescue plane and protect the downed pilot.

It wasn't long before he noticed another, larger airplane, wheels down, preparing to land at the Japanese-held airfield on Batan. He moved in to investigate. Much to his surprise the approaching plane was a Douglas C-47 transport with American markings. He tried to make radio contact, but without

success. He maneuvered his Mustang in front of the big transport several times trying to wave it off. The C-47 kept to its landing target.

Lt. Curdes read the daily newspaper accounts of the war, including the viciousness of the Japanese soldiers toward their captives. He knew that whoever was in that American C-47 would be, upon landing, either dead or wish they were. But what could he do?

Audaciously, he lined up his P-51 directly behind the transport, carefully sighted one of his .50 caliber machine guns and knocked out one of its two engines. Still the C-47 continued on toward the Batan airfield. Curdes shifted his aim slightly and knocked out the remaining engine, leaving the baffled pilot no choice but to ditch in the ocean

One of "Bad Angel's" .50 caliber machine guns built into it wings. The big plane came down in one piece about 50 yards from his bobbing wingman. At this point, nightfall and low fuel forced Louis to return to base.

The next morning, Louis flew cover for a rescuing PBY that picked up the downed Mustang pilot and 12 passengers and crew, including two female nurses, from the C-47. All survived. .

For shooting down an unarmed American transport plane, Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Thereafter, on the fuselage of his P-51 "Bad Angel", he proudly displayed the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese and one American flag.
.....

Sometimes I Think !!

Contributed by Charlie Weaver

I was thinking about how a status symbol of today is those cell phones that everyone has clipped onto their belt or purse.

I can't afford one. So, I'm wearing my garage door opener.

I also made a cover for my hearing aid and now I have what they call blue teeth, I think.

You know, I spent a fortune on deodorant before I realized that people didn't like me anyway.

I was thinking that women should put pictures of missing husbands on beer cans!

I was thinking about old age and decided that old age is 'when you still have something on the ball, but you are just too tired to bounce it.' When people see a cat's litter box, they always say, 'Oh, have you got a cat?'

Just once I want to say, 'No, it's for company!'

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older.

Then, it dawned on me. They were cramming for their finals.

As for me, I'm just hoping God grades on the curve.

Enjoy Your Days & Love Your Life, Because Life is a journey to be savored.

Gentle Thoughts for Today -

Birds of a feather flock together . . . and then Poop on your car.

A penny saved is a government oversight.

The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat have gotten to be really good friends.

The easiest way to find something

lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

He who hesitates is probably right.

Did you ever notice: The Roman Numerals for forty (40) are XL.

If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he can tell when he's really in trouble..

Did you ever notice: When you put the 2 words 'The' and 'IRS' together it spells 'Theirs...'

Aging: Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to your youth, think of Algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young. Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

Lord, Keep your arm around my shoulder and your hand over my mouth AMEN

Some things to think about before it is too late!

Contributed by Charlie Weaver

Real life stories that teach you many things in life. Excellent reading; These are based on true incidences both wonderful and inspirational.

1. Today, I interviewed my grandmother for part of a research

paper I'm working on for my Psychology class. When I asked her to define success in her own words, she said, "Success is when you look back at your life and the memories make you smile."

2. Today, I asked my mentor - a very successful business man in his 70s- what his top 3 tips are for success. He smiled and said, "Read something no one else is reading, think something no one else is thinking, and do something no one else is doing."

3. Today, after a 72 hour shift at the fire station, a woman ran up to me at the grocery store and gave me a hug. When I tensed up, she realized I didn't recognize her. She let go with tears of joy in her eyes and the most sincere smile and said, "On 9-11-2001, you carried me out of the World Trade Center ."

4. Today, after I watched my dog get run over by a car, I sat on the side of the road holding him and crying. And just before he died, he licked the tears off my face.

5. Today at 7AM, I woke up feeling ill, but decided I needed the money, so I went into work. At 3PM I got laid off. On my drive home I got a flat tire. When I went into the trunk for the spare, it was flat too. A man in a BMW pulled over, gave me a ride, we chatted, and then he offered me a job. I start tomorrow.

6. Today, as my father, three brothers, and two sisters stood around my mother's hospital bed, my mother uttered her last coherent words before she died. She simply said, "I feel so loved right now. We should have gotten together like this more often."

7. Today, I kissed my dad on the forehead as he passed away in a small hospital bed. About 5 seconds after he passed, I realized it

was the first time I had given him a kiss since I was a little boy.

8. Today, in the cutest voice, my 8-year-old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" Because that's where I keep all my stuff," she said.

9. Today, when I witnessed a 27-year-old breast cancer patient laughing hysterically at her 2-year-old daughter's antics, I suddenly realized that I need to stop complaining about my life and start celebrating it again.

10. Today, a boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said, "I hope you feel better soon."

11. Today, I was feeling down because the results of a biopsy came back malignant. When I got home, I opened an e-mail that said, "Thinking of you today. If you need me, I'm a phone call away." It was from a high school friend I hadn't seen in 10 years.

12. Today, I was traveling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating. The first thing the man said was, "We can share it.

The best sermons are lived, not preached

.....
Parallel Lives, Shared History Herb Heilbrun and John Leahr were twenty-one when the

United States entered WWII. Herb became an Army Air Forces B-17 bomber pilot. John flew P-51 fighters. Both were thrown into the brutal high-altitude bomber war against Nazi Germany, though they never met because the Army was rigidly segregated - only in the air were black and white American fliers allowed to mix.

Both came safely home but it took a chance meeting 20 years ago when the two retired salesmen met at a reunion of the Tuskegee Airmen in Cincinnati. That meeting led them to review their parallel lives and discover their shared history.

It began in 1995 when Herb read in the newspaper that the city was honoring the local chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen; the all-black 332nd Fighter Group. They flew "Red-Tail" P-51s on missions escorting bomber squadrons from Italy into Germany and German held territories. Herb could still remember hearing, amid the radio chatter over the target, the distinctive voices of the Tuskegee Airmen. He felt that his thanks were overdue.

So Herb went down to the hotel where they were having a reception and told somebody he flew B-17s in Europe during WW II and that the Tuskegee Airmen escorted him.

He then asked if there was a fighter pilot around that was over there and that he'd like to give him a hug for saving his behind. One guy pointed telling him there was a fellow standing across the room that he thinks flew fighters.

The man was John Leahr. When the two were introduced, Herb hugged John and said, "I've been waiting 50 years to meet one of you guys. You saved my tail on many a day." John, who felt for many years that the nation he had served had paid him back with prejudice and discrimination, had been waiting just as long for one of those white

bomber pilots to come along and say thanks. That was all he ever wanted.

It did not take long for the black ex-fighter pilot and the white ex-bomber pilot to become friends. They went out for lunch. They visited each other's homes for dinner. Both men had their old mission logs and Herb also kept a diary. They began matching up dates and other details of combat missions they'd flown. Turns out John had flown cover on at least two of Herb's 35 missions: once on Dec. 16, 1944 on a bombing raid on an oil refinery on Brux Czechoslovakia and the next day a strike on an oil refinery in Blechemmer Germany. Flying through a wall of flak in Brux on Christmas Day 1944, Herb's fuel tanks were hit, his high-altitude oxygen system was smashed, and his armor gunner ended up getting wounded in the foot. Herb left John sitting and returned moments later with one of the 89 chunks of shrapnel that ventilated his bomber on that mission. As the two got to know each other even better, they discovered other things in common. The men had been born within a mile of each other, and only seven months apart. Both had come up through Cincinnati public schools, and both had managed to scrape together two years of college during the Depression. Both had enlisted in the Air Corps within weeks of Pearl Harbor. Both had to wait months to be called for flying school, so both took jobs at the same airplane engine factory: Wright Aeronautical in Lockland, Ohio. Herb tested engines, firing up Cyclone Engines on test stands. John worked in the plant foundry. The work was filthy, hot, and done exclusively by blacks.

Following flight training, Herb got assigned to Italy as part of the 32nd Squadron of the 301st Bomb Group. He arrived well-schooled in the elaborate squadron takeoff ritual that quickly launched and stacked dozens of bombers into box formations. Rising from field all around Foggia, Italy the bomber

echelons assembled themselves until hundreds of aircraft were swarming up the Adriatic.

Like Herb, John too had always wanted to fly and volunteered for flight school, ending up at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama for primary pilot training. Travelling to the deep-south in that era scared him to death. There were so many stories. At that time, there was no federal anti-lynch law, and black people were beaten up and killed and nothing was being done about it.

John earned his wings in February, 1944 and was assigned to the all-Black 332nd "Red Tail" Squadron located at Ramitelli Airfield on the Adriatic Coast in Italy. The black airmen completely segregated from the white Air Corps. The pilots also flew hand-me-down aircraft. When John's squadron first went into combat with the 12th Tactical Air Force, they were the only Americans in Europe flying the cranky and obsolete P-39 Airacobra. That July, the squadron was given weary P-51Bs and Cs Mustang fighter planes left them by white squadrons trading up to the more advanced P-51Ds.

Initially, they were little used and looked down on by the military establishment, but eventually they were given brand-new P-51Ds and, at the insistence of their commander Col. Benjamin O. Davis (retired as a Brigadier General), given the mission of dive-bombing and strafing missions. They were so successful that they were assigned to one of the most important tasks in the Army Air Force: escorting bombers deep into Europe on strategic bombing missions.

On missions, the bombers would be about two hours out when the fighter escorts caught up with them. The escorts were supposed to handle enemy interceptors, but nothing seemed to lessen the flak. The Germans moved mobile flak units around to surprise the Allies while they were crossing the Po Valley or

near the mountain passes that they followed into Austria and Germany. And once the bombers reached their target, all the anti-aircraft guns on earth seemed to be waiting for them, altitude fuses set.

John recalled seeing those poor bomber boys line up and go straight into that flak. "Those bombers would fly right through it," he said. "We watched those guys go through hell. We're sitting out on the side waiting for them to come out and we could see them getting hit. If they got hit in the bomb bay, the plane just exploded into a great big ball of fire. The whole plane blew up and then it was nothing." None of the B-17s that survived the missions were lost with the Tuskegee squadron escorting them home.

Once he was out of the military, John discovered that he was a pretty good salesman. He sold securities and managed a brokerage office before retiring as an office administrator from Cincinnati Gas & Electric. Herb became a salesman too, selling radio ads and then commercial real estate. Today, John is a widower with children and grandchildren. Herb is remarried and busy with his own children and grandchildren, as well as his step-children and step-grandchildren, plus the kids who attend his wife Carol's in-home daycare center. When their paths crossed at the Tuskegee Airmen's reception, the men were living 10 minutes apart.

One night, Herb were having dinner when John said he had grown up in Avondale. Herb said he had also. John reminded Herb there were only five black families in Avondale, and that he went to a school on Clinton Springs Avenue which had at one time been an old mansion. Surprised, Herb reported he too had gone to that school.

Both claimed they did not remember the other but that wasn't surprising. When it came to racial matters,

Cincinnati had Southern ways. During World War II, Cincinnati's railroad station had the distinction of being the southbound point where passenger segregation began. Most of Cincinnati's hotels, restaurants, and even hamburger stands were for whites only.

After Herb learned that he and John had gone to the same school, he wondered if they had ever crossed paths. When he got home he went through his photo album looking for his second grade picture taken more than 75 years ago in front of North Avondale School. After a short search, he found the 1928 photograph.

In it are 40 kids; 38 are white and two - a boy and a girl - are black. Herb sent the photograph to John with a note that read, 'John, this thing is getting crazier and crazier by the minute. If that little black guy in this picture is you, well, that kid behind him who is almost touching him is me.'

The two men now in their early 90s have been speaking publicly for years telling their stories in words and picture, putting on record not just their valor at war but the ugliness they confronted at home. An underlying theme is about the segregation that kept them apart.

John begins by showing a video - a segment from a TV documentary on the Tuskegee's. He talks about his training, about shipping out, and about getting jumped over Linz, Austria, by 40 German Bf 109s.

Two of his wing mates were shot down at once, his flight leader was driven off, and, surrounded by enemy aircraft, he discovered that his machine guns had frozen at the high altitude and were unable to fire. He tells the audience that he owed his escape to a mixture of aerial acrobatics and applied religion. He then introduced Herb, gives him a

hug to the wide applause from the audience.

When it's Herb's turn, he tells the audience about the bomber war. He tells them about the wooden boards in the briefing room where each crew member's last name was posted on a metal strip; one morning Herb watched the operations officer take down a stack of strips and toss them in the trash. They were shot down, the officer explained. They're not coming back. Herb reaches into his pocket and with a grin hold up a battered metal strip with "Heilbrun" written in white. The audience claps.

He talks about his homecoming in 1945, about meeting John all those years later, and about piecing together their past. Herb hits the button of the projector and up comes the black and white photo of the second grade kids standing in front of North Avondale School. When he points out the two 8-year-old boys squeezed together shoulder-to-shoulder, the audience cheers wildly.

At the end of their presentation, John wraps his arm around Herb and says the two have one request: "Don't forget us," he says.

In 2003, the men were honored guests of The Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations for their mission of telling young people why race once made all the difference and why it shouldn't anymore.

In January 2012, they were both honored in a private screening ceremony in Cincinnati for the George Lucas film "Red Tails". The movie tells the story of a fictional squadron of the

332nd Fighter Group who fought discrimination and prejudice to become one of the most decorated fighting units of World War II earning 1,000 awards and decorations; and the respect of the white bombers pilots whose tails

they protected on thousands of mission.

As the movie ended, John and Herb, trim and erect and dressed in his Army Air Force uniform, slowly made their way up the stairs out of the theater, surrounded by fellow movie-goers who wanted to shake their hands and thank them for their service.

"It was real," John said, leaning on his cane at the top of the steps. "That was pretty much the way it was."

John and Herb were featured on NBC and The History Channel.

As I See It MOAA | Adding Insult to Injury

Over the past decade plus of war, we've heard time after time about the difficulties severely wounded, ill, and injured service members encounter across a variety of fronts. There seems to be a never ending supply of stories about insensitive people and unresponsive bureaucracies making life even tougher for those whose military service already cost them significantly in terms of quality of life. The good news is well meaning people at all levels have been making sincere efforts to improve the situation. Many aren't making progress as fast as we would hope, and many problems remain to be overcome. But in most cases, active efforts are under way to address the most significant administrative problems. Two statutory issues, in particular, are proving more problematic. The first involves the deduction of VA disability compensation from service earned military retired pay. Congress has provided some significant relief on that front, prioritizing the most severely disabled and the combat disabled. MOAA believes strongly in the principle that no disabled retiree, regardless of disability percentage, should have to fund his

or her own disability compensation by forfeiting an equal amount of service earned retired pay. But we find it particularly inequitable one group of severely disabled retirees was excluded from any relief: those who were medically retired for noncombat disabilities with less than 20 years of service.

Under current law, a 20 year retiree with a 10 percent combat related disability (rightly) suffers no retired-pay offset. But someone who suffers a noncombat service caused injury that leaves him a 100 percent disabled quadriplegic and is medically retired with two to 19 years' service must forfeit most or all of his military retired pay under the current VA offset law. That's plain wrong. Sen. Harry Reid will offer an amendment to the FY 2017 Defense Authorization Bill to correct that when the bill comes to the Senate floor, with MOAA's strong support. The second statutory inequity stems from the requirement for severely disabled military retirees (including many in their 20s) to enroll in Medicare and pay Medicare Part B premiums of \$105 a month. Had these members not had the misfortune of becoming 100 percent disabled in service, the military would have fully covered their health care until retirement, and they wouldn't have had to enroll in Medicare until age 65. MOAA believes 100 percent service disabled retirees should be exempted from paying Medicare enrollment fees until age 65 or DoD should provide them an allowance to offset the fee. Both options have proven problematic, mainly for funding reasons. MOAA understands funding for defense is not unlimited. What we don't understand is, of all the things DoD spends money on, why preventing 100 percent disabled retirees and military widows (i.e. SBP DIC Offset) from having to pay extra for having suffered those conditions doesn't make the cut.
