

USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION

Founded July 6, 2002

Winter 2016
NEWSLETTER



Presidents Message

Shipmates!

My sincere wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

2017 will soon be here, which means another Bradley Reunion, our 8th! I hope to see many Bradley shipmates in Oct. 2017. This Reunion will be held in New Orleans, Oct 12 – 15, 2017. Our hotel will be the Double Tree, which is close to the airport and French Quarter. “A PLUS” + Comp. shuttle 24/7 to and from the airport. Also, free parking!! Tour Details will be in the Reunion Packet!

Hats off to a bunch of *damn fine* shipmates!

Until October – steady as you go!!

Bill

2017 Reunion New Orleans LA

October 12-15

Doubletree Hotel by Hilton

2150 Veterans Memorial Blvd

Keener LA 70062

The hotel is two miles from the Louis Armstrong Airport with 24 hour free shuttle from the airport to the hotel. Just use the courtesy phone in the terminal to contact the hotel. Free Parking at the hotel if you are driving, as well as free Wi Fi throughout the hotel. All arrangements will be made through our new reunion company, Ozarks Kirkwood Tour and Travel.

All association members on our mailing list will receive the reunion packet next spring.

Our customary reunion activities will include optional tours such as the Mississippi River and bayou boat trip, the World War II Museum or an evening in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

We will also have our business meeting where we elect officers and the banquet and Memorial Service for our departed **BRADLEY** shipmates. A room will also be provided for shipmates attending the reunion to meet, enjoy light refreshments and tell their favorite **BRADLEY** stories. Table space will be available for memorabilia and cruise books shipmates desire to share with others during the reunion.



Keeping in Touch

Since the founding of the **USS BRADLEY Association** more than a decade and a half ago, keeping in touch with those **BRADLEY** Shipmates brought into the association has been an on going challenge.

People, of course move, but many no longer have landlines. And, of course, as we all age we also lose contact due to those who pass. Sometimes we (the association) will be notified of changes in address, telephone number, email address or those shipmates we have lost to death. Other times we will not and loose contact with those shipmates.

In an attempt to update our records, which all of you know are held in strict confidence, we're asking that all association members update their data in one of the following ways.

First, email me ([***brucegottsch@gmail.com***](mailto:brucegottsch@gmail.com)) with your present postal address and a phone number. We'll have your current email address once we've received your email message.

If you don't have access to reliable email telephone me at **914.261.1984**. If you have to leave a voicemail message, **PLEASE** include your **name and telephone number!**

And you may also send a message via snail mail to: **Bruce Gottsch, Secretary P O Box 23516 Oakland Park FL 33307. Please include your mailing address and a telephone number.**

Thank you all for your prompt attention to this very important matter.

My Car Wasn't Stolen

By Bill "The Great Speed" Johnson

Well I'm not exactly positive of *all* the details in the following story, but I'm pretty sure there's good basis for it (if my memory can be counted on).

The Bradley had been back from its 1974 WestPac Cruise for a few months, and the ship and crew were doing mostly routine stuff while in port San Diego and off the coast of Southern California. Maintenance, cleaning, testing, etc. Pretty routine stuff while we were waiting to go into dry dock in Long Beach.

A number of the crew had taken apartments in San Diego, and being good shipmates they would have crewmembers over from time to time (sometimes a lot of times) for some fun and relaxation. Sometimes, however, those gatherings got a bit out of hand. AND, some of those apartments had something of a reputation for the gathering of shipmates getting a bit loud and rowdy. This is a story about one of those apartments and one of those gatherings.

This apartment was "owned" by a second class sonar man (names may be changed, altered, or fudged to protect ALMOST everyone involved – nobody was innocent). Let's call the sonar man Frank. Franks apartment was on the second (top) floor of a small complex that sat on a hillside just north of downtown San Diego. It was right in the middle of the apartments on that floor. As I recall, it was a modest, one bedroom with a small living room, kitchen, and bath. It was small. Looking out the bedroom window one would see a parking lot directly below, and houses beyond.

On this particular night, there was a fairly large gathering at Frank's apartment. I don't remember everyone who was there when we arrived (more on who the "we" were in a minute), but at the peak of the gathering there were about 13 sailors stuffed into Frank's apartment. Thirteen is not an exaggeration. The place was full - packed!

Anyway, I showed up with "Coach" George Braund, Bob

"The Ghoul" Mellon, and a friend of theirs from Michigan called Billy Bong. I don't know why they called him that, but that's the name I remember him by. I didn't know Billy well at all. As I recall, he was stationed somewhere nearby and Mellon and Braund would get together with him from time to time. I should also mention that Coach and Mellon are their real names. I don't think they'd mind my mentioning their names here.

So everybody was in the apartment, just hanging out, drinking beer - usual sailor stuff. Now remember, it was the early 70's in Southern California, so somebody (I truly don't remember who) left to buy some weed. (Yesss, a bunch of us smoked weed back then. I know – you're shocked, right!). So, those who wanted a bag forked over ten bucks and the guy left to get the stuff.

While he was gone, the party progressed, getting a bit louder as people showed up. At one point we were playing a game where we were folding over the plastic holders used to keep a six pack together. You know – six holed holders - one for each can. We were seeing who could break the most holes. We'd fold the holder



lengthwise so there were two holes. Then we'd fold it again and there'd be four holes. One more fold and there'd be six holes to break. Sounds like a bonehead game now, but as I recall we were having fun doing it.

After a short period of time, "the guy" came back to the apartment with 8 or 10 bags of weed. Woo hoo, right?

Well, at that point my buddies Coach and Mellon, along with Billy Bong asked for the keys to my car. I had some rolling papers out there and they wanted to go get them. Looking back, I have no idea why it didn't strike me that it took three of them to fetch the papers.

Anyway, they were gone for quite some time. Then, I don't know how this part came about, there was a bit of commotion outside and a boatswain mate named Joe (yes, his real name and he was the spittin' image of the singer Jim Croce) went outside to check it out. After a minute or so I went out to see what was up. When I looked down I saw the flashing red lights of a San Diego police car and Joe being cuffed! Holy cow!!

Turns out that Joe had been trying to get Coach, Mellon, and Billy Bong to come down off the roof of the apartment building! The apartment manager had had enough and called the cops. The sonar man (Frank) had been warned a number of times before about noise, and this "gathering" pushed the manager too far.

Well I hustled back inside and, in what I'm sure was a very excited voice, called out "Cops!!" I ran to the back of the apartment along with a couple others, looking to get out the back window. With a drop to the cement parking space below meaning certain injury, we quickly abandoned that plan. Plan B involved everybody rushing into the bathroom, dumping the contents of their plastic baggies into the toilet and flushing.

While we were in the bathroom, just as we flushed we heard the cops in the living room calling for/rousting everybody into the living room. Once we were all gathered in the living room one of the cops swept the apartment to make sure they hadn't missed anybody. When he came back into the living room he said, "Didn't you guys ever hear of flushing twice?" Really – that's what he said!

Soooo, they began frisking us one by one and then putting us in the bedroom which served as some sort of "holding area". The cops were actually pretty good natured about the whole thing. I mean they did their jobs but weren't unkind or unfair. When they frisked me they found one of the plastic holders in my pocket. When he asked if I'd brought beer (I wasn't 21) I said no. When asked why I had the holder in my pocket I explained I was saving it for the "breaking contest" with one of my buddies. The cop got the slightest grin on his face, sort of shook his head, and sent me into the bedroom sans beer holder.

Just before I was frisked he searched a young guy who worked on the mess decks – a CSSA. I'll call him "Andy". Andy had cigarettes and a lighter in his pocket. Turns out Andy was only 17 so the cop "busted" him for being a minor in possession of cigarettes. Nothing ever came of that, but at the time we all thought that was pretty amusing.



Fantail Cookout somewhere in
WestPac Spring 1973

After we'd all been searched (by this time there were more cops there – lots of 'em) they marched us outside. Holy smokes – you should have seen what was waiting for us. There were several San Diego cop cars and a paddy wagon. Plus – there were a couple of shore patrol vehicles AND a shore patrol paddy wagon. AND they all had their lights flashing!! Plus – a crowd had gathered on the sidewalk to see what the hubbub was.

The San Diego cops turned us over to the shore patrol without filing charges or anything like that. Because there were so many of us, they (shore patrol) had to cuff us together because they didn't have enough hand cuffs. The only one who had his own cuffs was Joe.

Once they stuffed us all into the paddy wagon, everybody lit cigarettes. I couldn't believe they hadn't taken that stuff away. There was so much smoke in that wagon I felt like I couldn't breathe.

After a few seconds it became clear we weren't all there. Seems Coach, Mellon, and Billy Bong had just laid down on the roof when the first cop showed up and stayed quiet the whole time – cops

couldn't see them from below. Yep – nobody had ratted 'em out. To be honest, I'm not sure if that's because only Joe knew they were up there or not.

Soooo, we all got processed at the brig before being brought back to the ship. As I walked aboard, the OD (I think he was an NC1 named Hazelip) pulled me aside and asked me if my car had been stolen? What!?!? He said the ship had received a call from Naval Training Center (NTC) San Diego base police that my car had been involved in an accident while leaving the base. Since my car had a Navy sticker on it and only I was authorized to operate that vehicle on a base they wanted to know what the story was.

Turns out Coach, Mellon, and Billy Bong had driven over to NTC for some reason. As they were leaving the base they had to come to a stop at the top of a slight hill. Problem was, none of them had much, if any, experience driving a manual transmission. So, when they tried to start moving again they killed the engine. Apparently this happened more than once! At some point they opened the doors to get out and try to push it over the top of the hill. Problem was, it began to roll back down the hill.

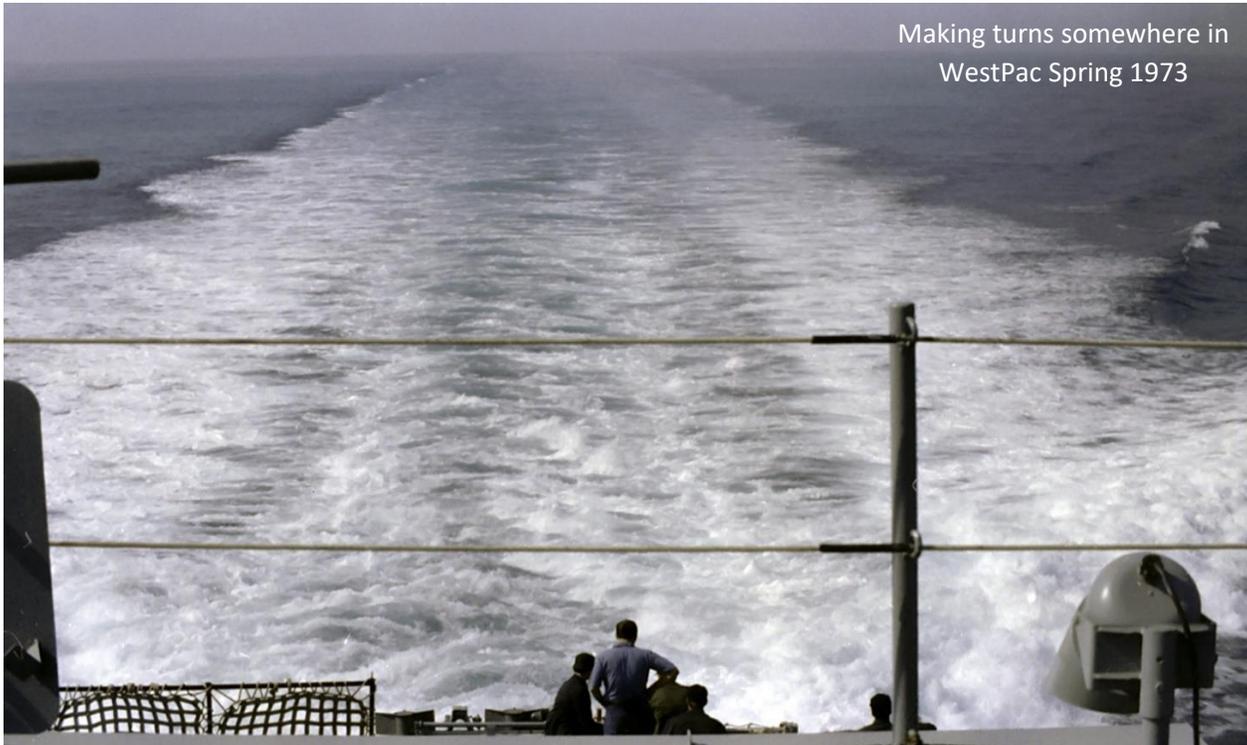
As with many military bases, this one had a gate. As the car slowly rolled back, the open door caught the gate post and peeled the door back towards the front of the car. The door was NOT designed to do that.

That's why the base police had the three of them in lockup waiting to hear if my car had been stolen. I have to say, after all the trouble those guys had gotten us into I stood there on the quarterdeck for a full minute thinking about what to tell Hazelip. After that very long pause (Hazelip just stood there patiently, not saying a word, watching me) I told him "No, they hadn't stolen my car."

Man, was I pissed!! Not only was a large group of us in serious trouble because of them, but those boneheads had taken my car and crashed it. As a result, I lost my privilege to park on base for six months, which later prompted an encounter with the 32nd street base cops – while with Mellon!!! But that's another story.

Anyway, once I got down below it was clear some of the guys that had been hauled in were in a mood to hurt Coach and Mellon. Seriously – they were talking about how they could mess 'em up bad! (Actually, they used somewhat saltier language than that to describe what they wanted to do to 'em)

When Mellon finally got back aboard sometime later, he came by my rack in the Weapons compartment to apologize. I was not in the mood! I told him the best thing he could do then was just go to bed because people were seriously considering hurting him and Coach.



So what happened, you might wonder?

Well, Mellon and Coach didn't get the crap kicked out of them, though that was in question for a while.

Those of us that had been hauled in went to XO's mast en mass. Once we were all in his stateroom he just looked at us and said, "I'm not gonna touch this. You're all going to Captains Mast."

After XO's mast, a couple of the guys went over to base legal to see what our options were. This is what they were told: Because the civilian police had turned us over to the shore patrol without charging us, and because we were in civilian clothes, the military couldn't prosecute us. If I recall correctly, it was because of something they referred to as O'Callahan's Law. (I actually looked this up for the first time just a minute ago, and there it was! O'Callahan v. Parker) While we all were glad to hear this, we weren't totally convinced. After all – UCMJ, Captain of the ship and all that.

So on the day we were to go to Captain's Mast we were all standing around in our dress blues in the passageway leading into the helo hanger. Captain's Mast was delayed because he wasn't aboard. We heard through the grapevine that he was over at legal trying to figure out just what he could do to us.

Sometime after the appointed hour we heard over the ships 1MC, "ding ding, ding ding – Bradley arriving". Immediately following that announcement, we heard "Captain's Mast is now being held in the helo hanger". So, in we all filed. There was the Captain standing behind a podium, and he looked pissed! Once we were all in there he began chewing us out. It didn't last very long, but it was a royal ass chewing! Apparently, he was given the same info at legal that our shipmates got when they visited there.

One of my memories is that part of the reason the Captain was so angry with us was because he felt we'd embarrassed his command. Seems we'd made the local newspaper in a brief article that named the Bradley.



So there you have it. Nobody was busted, fined, restricted, OR lost their security clearance. And Coach and Mellon? After a period of time, the dust settled and they resumed normal interactions with all involved.

Coach and Mellon – man, I used to get into so much trouble with those guys. I wouldn't trade it for anything!

Other info

Special thanks to shipmate Bill Johnson. GMG3 (73 - 76) for his work on the winter newsletter. He's formatted it and included some of his pictures from "back in the day". Great to have another shipmate working on the newsletter along with your editor. Bill is also involved in plans to send future newsletter via email to those shipmates with email. And in addition, he plans to digitize **BRADLEY** cruise books so our new website designer, David Nugent, can include them on our new website. Thanks to both of you once again on behalf of all our **BRADLEY** Shipmates.

