



## **USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

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*SHIPMATES! 2004 IS THE YEAR! USS BRADLEY'S FIRST SHIPWIDE REUNION!  
OCTOBER 7-10, 2004, RED LION HANAIE HOTEL, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA!*

*ARE YOU REGISTERED WITH THE ASSOCIATION? REGISTERED MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE THE  
NECESSARY MAILINGS ABOUT THE REUNION AND HOW TO MAKE RESERVATIONS TO ATTEND.*

*DON'T MISS OUT ON MEETING AND SPENDING TIME WITH SO MANY OF YOUR FORMER BRADLEY  
SHIPMATES! CONTACT YOUR EDITOR TO JOIN AND ATTEND THE REUNION.*

### **BRADLEY'S FIRST TWO WESTPAC CRUISES**

I was asked to write an article of the BRADLEY'S first deployment from the prospective of the CO. As meaningful as they were to me, my memory of events 38 years ago is less than complete. The proper sequence of events is the most difficult aspect. Having been CO for two BRADLEY deployments, I tend to mix the two. Please bear with me. The BRADLEY ASSOCIATION newsletters have, in one way, or another, pretty well covered the itinerary of BRADLEY'S first deployment (July-Dec 1966) and her achievements. Perhaps I can review these things adding some details, and my thoughts and feelings.

It is important to appreciate that this was not just the first operational deployment of the 1040 class, and a combat deployment at that. The Chief of Naval Operations had designated the deployment as a CNO Operational Evaluation Project to determine the 1040 class capability to perform the operational tasks of a general-purpose destroyer. In this regard the senior people in the destroyer community were strongly opposed to construction of the 1040 class and were aghast that anyone would think of replacing DD's with 1040 DE's. For these reasons most people were looking at us with great skepticism and many openly hoped we would fail.

We sailed from San Diego on 2 July 1966 with DESRON 7, bound for Subic Bay, P.I. via Pearl Harbor, Midway and Guam. The transit time was put to good use improving skills, developing teamwork, and gaining operational confidence. For me, having been onboard less than a month, this was valuable time to learn the ship and her crew, assess our effectiveness at various evolutions, and determine areas that needed more emphasis. Right away it was apparent

that the crew was very self disciplined, had tremendous pride in BRADLEY, and were highly motivated toward a successful deployment. The commissioning detail had gotten it right with these people! This was reflected in the remarkable material condition and the immaculate cleanliness of the BRADLEY day in and day out. Knowing that these matters would be taken care of, I was able to devote time to more operational things – the capabilities and limitations of the main plant, maneuvering characteristics, functioning of the weapons systems, CIC, communications, and bridge watches and the coordination of those maximizing our ability to perform the tactical tasks anticipated. The transit went well and without significant incidents but all the while our operational performance was maturing. Through this preparation and assessing of performance, the work and advise of the XO was invaluable. Additionally he and his navigation team got us to where we were going. Quietly in the background the Supply folks were helping moral by serving really good food. Also they were running the soft ice cream machine with the good commercial mix – and it was free to all hands.

As we left Subic Bay for DIXIE station off the south coast of Vietnam I just knew the crew and ship were ready. Several weeks before the Weapons Officer had shown me that both 5"/38 mounts could fire 18 rounds/min which was the fleet standard. I complimented them but mentioned that as a midshipman I was on a 5"/38 that could fire 25 rounds/min.

At DIXIE station we joined INTREPID (CVS-11) and three destroyers. Though a CVS, INTREPID had recently been converted from a CV and was called upon to fill that role in spite of the conversion. She was operating low performance aircraft such as F-8's, A-4's, and AD's. In no time at all we had gained INTREPID'S respect and special attention. Mostly it was just small things that we did better, faster and more aggressively than the other destroyers – screen maneuvers, plane guarding, helo ops, HIFR ops. Communications, etc. Early in our time with INTREPID we played an important part in the rescue of a downed pilot and this caught their attention. We were in screen station 4000 yds ahead when signals and CIC detected that a plane had flown into the water astern of INTREPID and the plane guard. The plane guard acted as though he didn't have a clue so our OOD did a fast break, announced his intentions, and maneuvered to DATUN. A helo arrived to make the rescue but we were there if needed. One thing the helo crews liked about BRADLEY is that we always sent ice cream up to them.

One night a Russian trawler began following INTREPID close astern. INTREPID was not comfortable with the situation and asked BRADLEY to leave screen station and try to get rid of the trawler. We got rid of her all right. Rang up 29kts and headed for a spot about 100 yds astern of INTREPID and barely ahead of the trawler. The trawler saw what we were doing, took off, and was never seen again. We passed so close to INTREPID'S port quarter that they lost sight of us.

The CO of INTREPID thought so highly of BRADLEY that he asked to send a few of his surface officers aboard to observe our operations. We exchanged three officers for a couple of days.

From DIXIE station INTREPID and her escorts were moved north to YANKEE station in the Tonkin Gulf. CV operations continued with us screening and plane guarding interspersed with some UNREPS.

From YANKEE station operations the INPREPID'S group went to Sasebo, Japan for UPKEEP. I felt that the just completed TG operations had gone beautifully and the crew should be very proud of themselves and the BRADLEY. When I met with CO INTREPID in Sasebo he had nothing but compliments for BRADLEY.

Sasebo was a nice break for the crew. From there the TG went to Hong Kong, B.C.C. for a brief visit. Hong Kong is always exciting and the crew enjoyed themselves.

From Hong Kong the TG returned to YANKEE station. At this point BRADLEY was detached from the INTREPID group and assigned to escort ORISKANY. This meant an increase in the tempo of operations because ORISKANY was operating a busier flight schedule and higher performance a/c (F-4's, A-3's), which required greater flight deck wind speeds. This would put greater demands on the plant and on the skill of the OOD's and CIC. As we approached the ORISKANY TG we could see that there was a plane guard and two screen ships but the screen ships were on the beams. There was no screen ahead of the CV. We sent a light to the screen commander saying unless otherwise directed we would take screen station 4000 yds ahead of the CV. Screen commander replied he appreciated our initiative but the CO of ORISKANY was not comfortable with a DD directly on his bow. He assigned us station 45 degrees off the bow and said if we wanted to edge in closer to the bow, we were free to try – good luck. On these operations as the CV turned into the wind and then out of the wind we would have to gain about 8000 yds at each turn. Instructions to the OOD's were that each time we did this maneuver they were to take station a little closer to the CV bow, but without frightening him. Instructions in the night orders were that when I got up in the morning we should be 4000 yds dead ahead of the CV. And that's the way it turned out. OOD's and CIC had a busy night. A few days later when we were detaching from ORISKANY the CO sent a light saying, "You are a slick fox but don't think I didn't know what you were doing. Well done. BRADLEY is the best escort I've seen".

To this point in the cruise BRADLEY and crew had done beautifully. Everyone had been worked hard and all had responded. The ship's plant had really been put to the test. ORISKANY'S signaled speed was always 30 to 31kts (We felt she was only doing 29-30) Our 29+kts handled her even when we had maneuvering distances to make up. The only slow downs were for UNREP and the crew became very adept at those evolutions.

From YANKEE station BRADLEY went south to the vicinity of Qui Nhon in the II Corps area of South Vietnam. We reported to the Naval Gunfire Support Commander. He was an Atlantic Fleet Destroyer squadron Commander. As we passed his flag ship in the vicinity of Da Nang I boated over for a short briefing. I invited him to come see the ship thinking it might help him evaluate us. He said no. He had seen GARCIA DE 1040 on the east coast and was convinced the class couldn't perform. – It was not long before he would be eating crow!

BRADLEY fired her first combat round on 6 Sept. We fired missions for Army and Marine units including air cavalry, mortar positions, trenches, and supply and infiltration routes. While in the IICorps area we had to be manned to provide gunfire support nearly 24hrs/day. We eventually worked around to where we could handle it on a port and starboard basis in CIC (augmented) and on the bridge. The gunners didn't get it that good but were able to get some rest somehow. The XO had always been a second in command but from this point on, because we had so much 24 hr demand, he was frequently and alternative CO. The speed with which we

could deliver the first round, the rapid rate of fire, the pinpoint accuracy, and the tight battery alignment astounded the spotters and the troops ashore. Some spotters asked that we put a small deflection so our shells wouldn't fall on top of each other. Additionally, the BRADLEY was nimble enough that we didn't need to anchor. This allowed us to take really optimum position for each mission and if need be we could be headed for a new area at 29kts in minutes. BRADLEY was in such demand that an AE was kept in our vicinity to keep our magazines full. Port and starboard gunfire, police brass, replenishment stations, and repeat – port and starboard gunfire-----. Not all of our time on the gun line went that way. One day the gunfire liaison officer gave us a two-hour stand down about midday. Some of the crew went to mess decks for chow (mess was 24 hours/day) and others turned in their bunks to get some zzz's. I was relaxing in my port wing chair taking in rays, when suddenly I heard incoming shells. As I took cover airbursts appeared nearby at a low altitude. The OOD hit the general alarm and cautioned people to take cover quickly. CIC radioed ashore to the liaison officer asking if he had anyone firing in the area. He replied no. The OOD had the ship up to speed and maneuvering away from the airbursts. The burst didn't move and the fire seemed to come from a friendly area. Finally the liaison officer called us saying it was an army 90mm battery. They fired there *every Tuesday* to register their battery. There had never been any ships there before but henceforth they would check to see if the area was clear.

From gunfire support the BRADLEY returned to YANKEE station for more CV escort work. During this time BRADLEY was visited by COMSEVENTHFLT for a brief tour. Perhaps more importantly we had a different type of visitor. Sue Thompson, a country western singer, was visiting the CV when the tactical situation changed so that Sue couldn't get back ashore and was going to be overnight with the TG. The CV's CO said he thought BRADLEY was the best place for her to spend the night. I didn't know whether that was a compliment or an insult but I agreed to host her. The XO moved out of his room and Sue moved in. She was a great gal and the crew loved it. She and some BRADLEY musicians did a show that evening. After Sue left the next day the XO wouldn't let anyone change his bunk sheets for a week.

Departing YANKEE station we went to Subic Bay P.I. There I visited with the deployed flotilla commander who was coordinating BRADLEY'S evaluations. On entering his cabin he said he had just received our evaluation from the gunfire commander and asked if I had seen it yet. I hadn't so he read it to me. It enumerated our accomplishments and said BRADLEY was easily the best NGFS he had worked with. He went on to say he didn't attribute our success to BRADLEY'S characteristics. Rather he said the CO of BRADLEY was a wild man who had the officers and men thinking they were ten feet tall. The admiral asked what I thought of the evaluation. I said it was a good report but the gunfire commander was wrong about one thing. --- --I didn't have the officers and men *thinking* they were ten feet tall-----they *are* ten feet tall! The admiral agreed.

After Subic we participated in a joint British/US anti-submarine exercise Silver Skate. All I recall of the exercise was the excellent performance of the ASW team. It seemed most of the time as though we were the only ship with a sonar.

From the ASW ops BRADLEY went to Kaohsiung, Taiwan for an upkeep period. I believe this may have been the crew's favorite port.

Upon completing the UPKEEP BRADLEY set course for the Saigon River delta in the III Corps area to provide additional NGFS. On this mission most of our fire was harassment and interdiction at VC delta camps and their supply and infiltration routes. One station we had was a short way up the Saigon River in very shallow water. As we passed Vung Tau we had winds to 50kts and horizontal rain. Piloting was very difficult but the XO and his navigation team handled it. We were vulnerable to small boat attack there so we had to set up machine gun and small arms strong points topside. This was BRADLEY'S last NGFS assignment for the deployment. We had fired more than 4000 rounds of 5"/38.

Upon completion of the III Corps NGFS duties BRADLEY went north to join HALSEY DLG-23 as the northern SAR (search & rescue) team in the Tonkin Gulf near Hiaphong. The SAR teams were composed of a missile shooter, with a helo, and advanced CIC facilities, and a shotgun DD to protect against PT boats. CO HALSEY and I knew before leaving San Diego that we would be paired. He asked that, despite lesser CIC sophistication, we do whatever we could to keep the strike/air picture as a backup to HALSEY. Anxious to test ourselves I readily agreed. This put a real strain on CIC (augmented) but they succeeded beautifully. Supply was a big augment, the Supply Officer and the Disbursing Officer did port and starboard in CIC maintaining and displaying the massive and complex strike plan. HALSEY'S helo actually preferred our flight deck and flight support. On one high visibility rescue from way inland the helo was running low on fuel and we were closer so he wanted to land on BRADLEY. HALSEY was having none of that—lost publicity—and the helo did make it safely to HALSEY. CO said we performed so well it was his opinion that BRADLEY could be a single SAR station (Where is the Missile?).

After SAR duty BRADLEY was assigned for several days to a specified location with shallow water. We were assigned a submarine and conducted extensive tests of the SQS-26 to determine it's shallow water performance.

On leaving the Tonkin Gulf a typhoon that went where it wasn't supposed to go blocked our getting to Subic for fuel for several days. This forced us to a high sea UNREP. The seas were so great we could see much of the oiler's keel clear of the water. To keep fore and aft position alongside the oiler, instead of adding and subtracting RPM's we were making full bell speed changes. From there we returned to San Diego.

It was a fabulous cruise. It was challenging learning to adapt BRADLEY'S capabilities to the tasks assigned. Our missions and tasks were exciting and demanding. It was with pride that I watched this wonderful crew and capable ship meet every demand. No skipper ever had it so easy.

In spite of the wonders of that first deployment, I've got to say that the second deployment went just as well. That deployment had some of the same challenges and some different ones—mad dash with CVS across the Pacific into winter storms without a stop—northern picket outside Vladivostok for Pueblo Crisis—initial detection of Badger over flight—designated to tow Pueblo out of Wonson if it came to that—challenging Tiger Islands 8" guns on Market Time ops—crossing the equator—forty days at sea—etc.

William S. (FISH) Whaley