



USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Established July 6, 2002

Vol. 2 – No. 6 Late Summer 2003

Bruce Gottsch (71-75) – Editor

bgottsch@optonline.net (845) 634-3993

USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION REUNION

The first ship wide reunion will be held in San Diego, California October 7-10, 2004. The Hanalei Hotel, on Hotel Circle, will be reunion headquarters. All former **BRADLEY** crewmembers **MUST** be registered with the association to receive reunion mailings. Contact your editor for more information. Each registered association member will receive two mailings from ML&RS, the company planning and running the reunion. The first mailing will gather information on each crewmember and will go into a reunion journal. ML&RS informs us that **only 18** of these have been returned to date! The second mailing will be next year. It will contain the actual reunion registration information. Members need to return both mailings.

USS BRADLEY WEBSITE

On Monday, August 4, 2003, our founding webmaster, Tom Lettington, CDR, USN-RET, BRADLEY'S Commanding Officer from 1975-1977, notified those of us on the ship's website that we had a new webmaster, Tom Hyett. Tom Hyett has developed a new website with a new look and feel. The new site is still hosted at Lettington's server in San Diego and he assures us that only the content has changed. He also will continue as server system and mail list administrator and will assist Tom Hyett as needed in updates to the website.

On behalf of the board of directors and members of the association we'd like to extend a sincere, "WELL DONE" to Tom Lettington for all his work in establishing and nurturing the ship's website since December 7, 2002.

We'd also like to thank Tom Hyett for his efforts that created a new look and feel for the site and for assuming this duty. We wish him much success with the website which has come to play such an important role in keeping former BRADLEY shipmates in contact. Tom served aboard BRADLEY from August 1986 until August 1988 as an FC3 (SW).

Leadership, Liberty and Lunch

When the USS Bradley was new she was a fine ship. She had beautiful lines, a lot of modern equipment, notably the steam plant and the sonar. An outstanding crew manned her. Outstanding by any measure possible. We ensured that the building yard and the fitting out activity delivered a ship to the Navy with

very few material deficiencies. After commissioning we did very well in our shakedown training. We passed our nuclear readiness inspection when more experienced ships were failing theirs. We received an outstanding on our first ADMAT inspection. Throughout this period we had almost no absenteeism or other disciplinary problems and maintained a 100% reenlistment rate. It was quite an accomplishment for the times.

Subsequent crews apparently carried on the tradition. The very fact that there is an USS Bradley organization today, with a large number of members, is evidence, in my mind, that the spirit continues.

So how did all that get started? Old salts have always said that a ship develops a personality and pretty much keeps it for her lifetime. This old salt would like to describe a little of the Bradley's first months with her new crew. What follows is a sea story, partly personal memoir, lots of opinion and a few facts as I have the power to recall them.

I was the first officer to report to the Bradley building yard, Bethlehem Steel in San Francisco, in October 1964. I think that it was unusual for the PXO to report first. More usually it would be the Chief Engineer or the PCO. Sometimes the PXO didn't report until he brought the pre-commissioning crew up from precom training, just prior to commissioning. I guess the machinery of BUPERS just spit me out first.

Being there early turned out to be an advantage, at least for me. I got to get acquainted with the PCO, Cdr. Robert H. Robeson, Jr., and the department heads and senior enlisted. I also became familiar with the ship. When I did go down to train the precom detail, I carried the embryo Bradley personality with me.

I had just returned from a WESTPAC cruise in the USS Preble (then) (DLG15), my seventh cruise in thirteen years, and was ready for a little time on the beach. I was flattered to have been selected for new construction. I was looking forward to helping create a new destroyer from scratch. I knew that San Francisco was good liberty (when you could afford it) and was generally pleased with my new assignment. The only downside was that my family would remain in San Diego and I would become a fixture at NAS Alameda and North Island each weekend as I bummed my way back and forth.

The senior man in the nucleus crew was a Chief boiler tender named Mueller. He acted glad to see me, gave me a tour of the ship and our office spaces and took me across the street for a beer and a sandwich for lunch. When we got back he stacked a pile of documents about two feet high on my desk and said "those are the specs". I looked at pile and thought, "OK, XO, the paperwork has already started". Actually, I never read much of the specs. The nucleus crew was very good at that and at checking for compliance. We instituted a process with little half page "deficiency chits" whereby the crew could report recommendations, variance from spec or any comment they felt was pertinent. We reviewed them weekly, consolidated them and the Captain and chief engineer took them to a meeting with the building yard. The very best at this game was our DCA, Tug Art Schroeder. He had an encyclopedic memory of the specs and the eye of a hawk for discrepancies. At first the builders underestimated this quiet spoken young man from Wisconsin. A typical exchange went like this:

Builder: "Naagh!!"

Schroeder: "Step 11 inches inside compartment xxx.xx.x, extend your right hand 6 inches above your head and turn it to the right. You will find a 3" globe valve clocked 90 degrees from the vertical. The specs call for a 4" valve clocked 180 degrees from the vertical. The installed valve is too difficult to grasp and turn."

The builders learned to roll their eyes and negotiate a fix.

About my first or second day on board a YN1 named Jim Bundrick showed up, hot to trot. For the rest of my tour in Bradley, Jim was my ship's secretary and right hand man. When he showed me the stack of checklists for our first ADMAT inspection, I said, "I'm busy". Jim went on to get an outstanding for his (our) area of the inspection. Meantime, the department heads and I created all of the ship's instructions and

the ship's organization book. Bundrick turned them into documents. It was a great experience to be able to write your own instructions as to how you were going to run the ship.

After about six months of this activity, I went down to San Diego to take the pre-com detail through several months of training. They were a great group and training was fairly mundane. I tried to make maximum use of the service schools in the area and tried to get almost everyone through fire fighter's school. I remember a brief hassle with the command's first Lt., who was senior to me. He apparently thought that his working party needs took precedence over our training desires. We finally got the XO to formulate a compromise.

Quite a few of the crew were coming off shore duty and had forgotten the difference between liberty uniform and inspection uniform. We discussed that and I even remember reading the uniform regs to the Navy Exchange tailor because he wasn't treating the Bradley crewmembers right (rating badges are sewn on with TWO rows of stitching). I was carrying the Bradley message, which could be summarized as "Nothing Short of Excellence".

When training was complete and we all met in San Francisco for the commissioning, the two groups of men seemed to meld together seamlessly. I don't recall a single incident of friction. I think that the precom sailors were happy to get to their new ship and the nucleus crew sailors were glad to get some help. My recollection is that we all worked together harmoniously.

So back to my question, how did all this happen so harmoniously? It's true that the kind of success Bradley experienced requires an all hands evolution. It's also true that even a motivated, all volunteer crew (the Navy was all volunteer at that time) needs someone to point the way, set the tone and provide the knowledge as to how to do it. They also require some sort of reward system, beyond personal satisfaction, to continue perform at a high level. I certainly do. What we tried to do in Bradley to accomplish these goals I will call leadership, liberty and lunch.

The way pointing and tone setting is usually the responsibility of the Captain. And so it was in Bradley. We couldn't have been more fortunate. Cdr. Robert H. Robeson Jr. was tailor made for the job. He was an exuberant kind of guy, enthusiastic about everything, interested in everything, approachable by anyone and always valued a good idea. He had high work standards, backed his crew and gave credit where credit was due. He was also a people guy. For example, it was his idea that we all wear name badges so that he, and we, could call each other by name as we made our way around the ship. He even took time in his change of command speech to say some very generous words about his old XO, a complement that I have never forgotten. A good man, a good Captain and a good friend.

The second major source of leadership in Bradley, the source of knowledge, came out of the Chief Petty Officer's quarters. Bradley was the only command that I ever served in during my 21 years that had a full complement of CPO's. I could never understand this. During the several years that I was an AT1 I would have happily put on the hat at any time. Why the shortage? As it turned out, an Ensign's cap blew by first and I grabbed it.

In Bradley we actually had more than our allowed complement of CPO's. An embarrassment of riches. One of my last official discussions before I left the ship concerned a plan to get more bunks into CPO quarters - a CPO-alt. Moreover, some of them were E8's and I believe at least one E9. I'm not sure that the Navy had quite figured out how to best use those "super chiefs" at that time but we sure got value for money in Bradley. The value of having one of these men in virtually every work group, with their experience, knowledge and steadying influence just cannot be overestimated.

None of this should be taken to minimize the contributions of the rest of the crew. The Department heads were all on their second tour as a destroyer department head. Some of the more junior officers were on their second tour in their specialty. Others had been to various schools in their specialty. Still others were mustangs with years of experience. They were all hard working and conscientious. Much the same can be said for the senior petty officers. An all around good crew.

I have always thought that the rewards system in the Navy, at the shipboard level, was a tough deal. We couldn't promote or raise pay like they do in civilian life. We had to do the best we could with what we had. One of the variables, certainly, is liberty. I thought that, by and large, we had pretty good liberty opportunities. The trouble was, not enough of it was in our homeport. First it was San Francisco for commissioning and fitting out. Then it was San Diego for shakedown training, which was mostly at sea all week. Now, getting to play with the Navy's newest destroyer out at sea is not the worst thing that can happen to a sailor, but we all like liberty. I certainly did.

After shakedown it was back to San Francisco for warrantee work and to finish fitting out. Then it was up to Washington to run the sound ranges. We broke down and spent a couple of weeks in the yard at Bremerton. A few weeks after returning to San Diego we were scheduled depart for WESTPAC. As I said, not much liberty in our homeport. I came up with a couple of ideas.

First of all, I decided that everyone should keep their liberty card, rather than turning it in and drawing it each day. Not much of an innovation. It was more a matter of principle with me. I felt that if you could trust a sailor to man a nuclear-capable warship, you had better be able to trust him with his liberty card. Surprisingly, I got some mild resistance from some of the senior PO's. They wanted to know where their people were. I told them to find another way.

The second innovation I thought was more worthwhile. We would work "tropical working hours" while in San Diego. Liberty would expire at 0600, beating morning rush hour traffic, and commence at 1300. I tried to make a point of being up on deck when liberty call was passed in order to watch the heads turn on the other destroyers in the nest. Bradley was unique. To my knowledge, work never suffered. The sides sparkled, topside gleamed and if anything below decks didn't work, sailors were there to fix it.

The only down side that I'm aware of is that the officers, particularly the department heads, were putting in long days. The intent was for them to come to work at 0800 and leave at normal time. I think that most of them came aboard with the crew and stayed late. I even started having officer's call in my room at 1600 so that I could tell them to go home. As I said, motivation was not a problem in the Bradley.

Then Admiral Zumwalt became our flotilla commander and decreed that we should strive for the maximum number of duty sections. I believe that we got up to four or five in most divisions, rather than the normal three sections.

Another variable controllable locally is chow. Bradley was a "feeder". We were doubly blessed. The supply officers, Tug Mike Payne initially and Tug Joe Todd later, did not believe in turning back ration money. Their credo was to spend it on the crew. The major blessing, however, was a chief stew burner named Weaver. He was a candidate for the eighth wonder of the world.

As I recall he came to us from an outfit called the Food Service Team. These were a group of navy cooks who had trained at various five star hotels and restaurants. They would visit your ship for a week and train the galley crew. Once the rest of the crew experienced the kind of chow that could come out of that galley they would never settle for less.

I had used the team's services twice before and I could hardly believe that we had our own private food service team in Bradley. Ship's company! Chief Weaver and I had our own sort of Frick and Frack routine that we would do when I made my morning trip around the ship. Weaver would always be in the galley:

Chief Weaver: Morning, XO.

XO: Morning Chief. What are you feeding 'em today?

Chief Weaver: Steak and lobster, XO.

XO: Again!?

Chief Weaver: I know, XO, I couldn't think of anything else.

XO: Well, let's try to get some variety in the menu!

Chief Weaver: Aye, aye, and sir.

Steak and Lobster! I didn't even know that the Navy had lobster in the supply system. Chief Weaver knew.

Either Chief Weaver or Mike Payne, I think it was Weaver, came up with another idea. With 1300 liberty, there was no one to feed at the evening meal except the duty section, which, post Zumwalt, was pretty skinny. So we had lots of chow money. So how about if we feed the big meal at noon? Send the crew ashore on early liberty with a belly full of shipping over chow! Worked great.

Some of this stuff may seem like small doings today but at the time they were innovations, at least in my experience. The bottom line is that we tried to do the best we could for the crew and they reciprocated in kind.

Then, suddenly, it was time for me to go. My tour was up and I had orders to the PG school in Monterey for graduate studies in computer system management. The Captain had already left, as had Lt. Joe Hock, the weapons officer and LTjg's Art Schroeder and Don Horner, the DCA and EMO, respectively. Captain Whaley had replaced Robeson and I knew almost immediately that Bradley had drawn another good 'un for her first cruise CO. The crew was better trained than any that I had ever deployed with and they were in good hands. And I really didn't need another WESTPAC cruise in my resume. Time to speak sayonara.

Captain Whaley was very gracious to me. He and "the boys" took me over to the club the day I was detached and gave me some Bradley memorabilia, including a chunk of the deck that had been removed to install a helo tie down. A plank! After a few too many martinis and a few tears, I was on my way to Monterey.

Captain Robeson and I were still in town a few days later when Bradley departed on her first WESTPAC cruise. We took our wives out to the breakwater on North Island and watched Bradley steam past Pt. Loma, round buoy 1SD and head west. I never saw her again.

Howard J. Squires (64-66)
LCDR, USN-RET.