

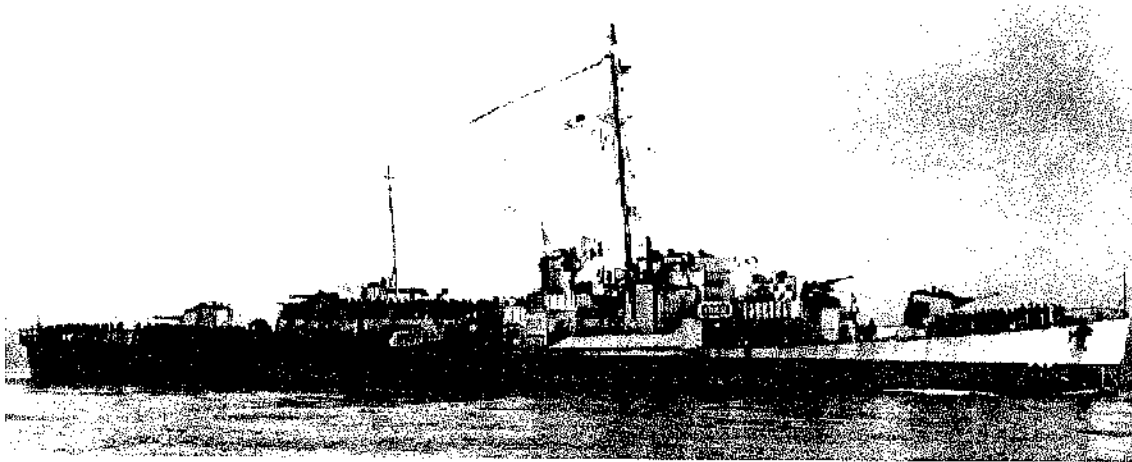
ATTENTION ALL HANDS - FINAL CALL FOR THE REUNION

“HOLT HAPPENINGS”

A NEWSLETTER FOR AND ABOUT THE CREW, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

of. XIV No. 2

March 2004



THE HOLT (DE 706) REUNION - SAN ANTONIO, TX MAY 12 - 15 2004

Just a reminder that the hotel will hold our block of rooms until April 12th. Those rooms not booked by that date will be released and anyone wanting reservations after that date may have to pay a higher price than our reunion rate of [REDACTED] plus taxes. To insure your room at this rate, call the **FOUR POINTS SHERATON HOTEL** at [REDACTED], or you can make reservations by mail. The hotel's address is 110 Lexington Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78205. In either case, a one night deposit is required to hold the reservation. For those who may want to come a day or two early or stay a day or two after the reunion, [REDACTED]. However, you must inform the hotel at the time you make your reservations. When calling the hotel, [REDACTED].

A reservation form for the reunion activities is enclosed. Be sure to get these in to Paul Pickett as soon as possible so we can advise the tour company the number of attendees and have the information to complete the registration process.

The last two newsletters gave the details of the reunion activities. Briefly, Wednesday, May 12th is the day of arrival, with Thursday, May 13th open for activities in the hospitality room. On Friday, May 14th, we will take a day trip to Fredericksburg, TX to visit the Admiral Nimitz Museum of the War in the Pacific. Saturday evening, we will visit the 7A cattle ranch which is west of San Antonio for dinner and a relaxed evening of fun. Very casual attire for this event - boots and jeans or whatever.

The motor coaches used for these excursions are equipped with a head (rest room to the non-seagoing).

The crew will have a short meeting on Thursday afternoon in the hospitality room to decide on future reunions and conduct any other business that is appropriate.

Transportation to and from the San Antonio airport to the downtown hotels is provided by SATRANS, with departures from the airport approximately every 10 minutes between the hours of 7:00 AM and 1:00 AM. For departure from the hotel to the airport check with the SATRAN driver or ask the hotel front desk. One way fare is \$9.00 or round-trip for \$16.00.

LADIES ACTIVITIES

While the men are meeting to decide on the specifics of the next reunion, the ladies will meet to hold another "small gift swap". This has been a fun thing at the last couple of reunions. **Ladies, bring a small, wrapped gift (not over \$10.00 value) which can be easily put into your luggage.** This will take place on Thursday afternoon (May 13th). The time and place will be in your registration packet.

IN MEMORIAM

On Thursday, February 5th, **Jerri Pickett**, wife of our treasurer, Paul Pickett, passed away. Jerri had been ill for quite some time and her health declined rapidly in the last few months. Paul has asked that we extend his heartfelt thanks for all your calls, cards, letters and prayers during these difficult times. Her funeral was held on Monday, February 9th. Jerri's obituary can be seen on-line at www.mem.com

Our sincere condolences to Paul, his daughter Debbie, son Eddie and their families.

On January 11th, **Marshall Gebert**, Boatswain's Mate 1/c, passed away. Marshall was the ship's leading Boatswain's Mate. He commissioned the ship and was

with us throughout shakedown in Bermuda and was transferred off the ship when we arrived in Boston. Marshall and his wife, Marion, attended several of the HOLT reunions. We will miss his presence at our reunions. Our sincere condolences to Marion.

BINNACLE LIST

We still have several folks on the sick list - Virginia Manville wife of Jack Manville, (Chief Quartermaster), Sue Eazer (wife of Ted Eazer), Ralph Parks, Bob DeAngelis, Frank Shepherd, Russ Coates and Phil Corriher. Don Fredette is scheduled for surgery in early March. He said he hoped to be in good shape by the time the reunion rolls around. If you are aware of any other ill shipmates or spouses, please let Bill Morgan know. Please keep these folks in your thoughts and prayers.

SHIPMATES

We make an attempt to remember incidences involving shipmates from time to time. **HARRY O. HILL** (Lieutenant), Gunnery Officer, was an easy to know and get along with individual. In the vernacular of today's youth, he was "Laid Back". The only thing that seemed to bother him was when Captain Blue got on him for some lapse in Harry's memory of things he was supposed to do. Harry was easy for the enlisted crew to get along with. He was approachable and not much of a disciplinarian type. One day, in the backwaters of the Philippines, we were steaming along in a routine fashion with not much of anything going on. Harry was the officer-of-the-deck. As was usual in those waters, it rained like the devil for a short period, then the sun would come out. Right after one of those rains, we got into a water fight among the bridge watch (there were numerous helmets that were scattered around and they collected the water). Just as Harry Hill decided to join in the fun, Captain Blue came up to the bridge. You could have heard a pin drop. Everyone froze. The captain vented his wrath, then sent Hill below (it was just a few minutes until the watch was to be relieved, so there was no big deal). After this incident, Harry Hill stood a more regulation watch, even though he always wanted to be involved in any antics that went on.

Many years later, when we had the first HOLT reunion in New Orleans, Harry Hill was ensconced in the Royal Orleans hotel. Several of us called him when we checked in and were invited to his room where we were greeted with a large tray of drinks - made of gin & milk (I forget what it was called). After imbibing a number of these, Harry insisted we all go to the pool deck of the hotel and have a lunch of steak tartare (great stuff in those days before mad cow disease and other bad effects of raw meat). By the time that Captain Blue arrived at the reunion, Harry was primed for him! Actually, it was a touching meeting between the two (for the first time since the war).

OAK RAMSEY related an incident that was reminiscent of our days aboard ship. The loading of stores was usually an all hands evolution, Cases of canned food of all types were coming aboard and needed to be stored below in the food lockers. As the cases were being passed along, every now and then one would be dropped down a scuttle into a fireroom or engine room where the guys on duty would store them in a special area. On one such occasion, a number of cases were handled in this fashion, so much so, that the Supply Officer was concerned about the "shortages". A search of the ship was ordered, but none was turned up. Seems as though the missing items were stored in a void space that could only be reached by a small person crawling along a catwalk and removing an inspection plate on the boilers. The crawl space was too tight for the inspecting officer(s) to get thru so the culprits were never caught! Apparently, Mr. Dischinger (Assistant Engineering Officer) had observed the "transfer" as he came below seeking a cup of hot chocolate shortly after everything settled down. Oak said "We don't have any right now, but we can whip it up in a couple of minutes."

In the January Newsletter, we related the story of Virgel Gracey building the boat. A note from **Charlie Chavis** expanded on the engine that powered this craft. He is pretty sure it came out of an Australian Jeep. The details of how it came into the possession of the HOLT crew are lacking. A propeller was needed and Sam Badgett came up with the right one. Each of our torpedoes had two counter-rotating screws and Sam figured out which one of the two to use. From that point on, we would have been hard pressed to fire a three torpedo spread! Charlie recalls the boat being lashed down on the fantail. On the way back to Pearl Harbor, we had gunnery practice with a tow plane. The concussion from the 5" gun was too much for the boat and some of the wood separated. As a result, a hole was chopped in the hull and the boat thrown overboard, but it would not sink. HOLT circled back and while trying to decide how to sink it, the boat accommodated us by going down on its own.

Charlie continued with another story concerning Virgel. Usually, as we got underway from an anchorage, the Captain would order "All Ahead Two Thirds" as soon as the word was received that the anchor was aweigh. This was sometime before the anchor was secured on deck as there was considerable chain to reel in and mud to be washed off the lower chain and anchor. On this particular occasion, something happened...the winch moaned and there was a cracking noise. In a couple of minutes, the anchor came into view and the word was passed to the bridge, "Fouled Anchor". All we could see was a mass of cable and what appeared to be the top of a king post from a merchant ship. We stopped and Charlie was thinking out loud..."What if we sent a diver over the side to find out more of what the problem was?" Gracey, who was a diver, was standing right beside him and the two were leaning as far over the side as possible trying to get a better look at what the problem was about. When Charlie made that comment, Gracey gave him a look strong enough to let him know that was not a good idea. The forecastle crew kept working the anchor as Captain Blue kept maneuvering the ship until finally, we were free of all the debris. The shaft of the winch was bent from all the strain and had to be repaired in the shipyard when we arrived in San Francisco.

Charlie had an interesting tale concerning Ed Bouchard. Ed was doing the navigating as we made the voyage home from the Far East. At one point, we had been under heavy weather and there was complete cloud coverage. Ed came up on the bridge to shoot the stars. Charlie was Officer-of-The Deck and said to Ed, "If you find any stars I will buy a drink for each one you find." Within 10 minutes the clouds cleared and the heavens were filled with stars. Ed kept his promise, although he did not buy a drink for each of the stars, but did buy enough for the two of them to enjoy the evening in San Francisco!

OTHER

Bob DeAngelis is interested in hearing from anyone who has information concerning Asbestosis. Several of our shipmates have died in years past with this disease. It is caused by inhaling the fine fibers of asbestos. Ships of the WW II era were packed with asbestos, especially in the engineering spaces. The berthing quarters were not immune as the overhead insulation contained the material and after a firing exercise, the bunks were covered with fine particles of the stuff. The fibers are latent for decades and the disease manifests itself in a serious lung disorder. Has anyone had any experience with the Navy or Veterans Administration in relation to this disease? If so, please let Bob know the details.

SHIPMATE FOUND!!

Just after we mailed the last newsletter, we received an e-mail from **John F. Meenan**. He wanted info about the HOLT Reunion. John was a LT(jg) and came aboard in January, 1946. He served as Executive Officer until May, 1946. John lives in Rock Island, IL. WELCOME ABOARD.

REMEMBER THE REUNION DATES...MAY 12th...15th.. SEE YOU IN SAN ANTONIO!!