

# USS HOLT (DE 706)

A periodic newsletter for and about  
the ship, her crew and their families

## REUNION COMMITTEE

Bob DeAngelis  
Judy Johnson Mansur - Ladies Activities  
Bill Morgan - Chairman  
Karl Nease  
Ralph Parks  
Paul Pickett - Treasurer  
"Doc" Steinhauser - Golf Committee Chairman

## "HOLT HAPPENINGS"

JULY 1997

Vol VII - No. 2

## NEWS OF SHIPMATES AND THEIR FAMILIES

We just missed getting this in the last newsletter. Mildred Coutant writes to let us know that Harry is confined to a nursing home as a result of a stroke last year. This is further complicated by the onset of Alzheimers. He would like to hear from his old shipmates...a card or letter would lighten his day as he truly loves the HOLT and has fond memories of those he served with aboard the ship. His address is HARRY COUTANT, c/o James Andrew Convalescence Home. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Since our last newsletter was mailed, we received the sad news that DON SUTHERLAND (Sonarman) passed away on 15 February 2997. Don died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 73. Don expressed a desire to attend the HOLT reunions, but was kept busy during the spring helping his son on the farm. Our deepest sympathy to his wife, Edith.

Thanks to Evelyn Parks, the nice wife of Ralph Parks for preparing a map that shows where each of our shipmates lives (or lived, for those deceased). This was her idea, and despite a busy schedule, she volunteered to do the project. We hope to see it at the next reunion.

## OTHER

In the last newsletter, we noted the task underway to put together a book on each of the 476 former destroyer escorts. This is a huge undertaking, one that is beyond the capabilities of just a few interested individuals. With this in mind, yours truly volunteered to attempt the USS HOLT. Much of the "official" raw data is on hand. What is needed are personal recollections of each

officer and crew member. Why not think about your time aboard the HOLT and jot down some interesting experiences. These will be edited, expanded upon and the author(s) given due credit. Ideally, what we would like is a short story of your experiences aboard the HOLT, how it may have affected your life after the war, some information about you as an individual, what you have been doing in all these past years, comments about your family, children, grandchildren etc. This type of data will be incorporated into the book. When completed, a copy will be deposited with Naval Historical Library of East Carolina University where copies of other ships books are kept. These volumes will be available for future researchers long after we are gone. This is a chance for you to leave something to posterity, so I encourage you to put together your story (stories) and get them to Bill Morgan.

Had a letter from Vince Cocca some time ago . He and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in January. Due to a stroke several years ago, he gets around with the help of a leg brace and a cane. This does not keep him down as he helps his son in the summer with their food concession trailer at fairs and carnivals. Vince very thoughtfully sent a listing of all the places the HOLT touched during her short life. His memory is very good!

## **REMEMBRANCE**

Bob Hoover (Lieutenant) has a theory that the HOLT's trip on the "Slow Tow" convoy from Leyte to Mindoro in December was, in part, a feint to draw out the enemy air forces in the southern Philippines. The Allied high command did not have a good handle on the numbers of Japanese planes in the area at that time.

Admiral Halsey and the Third Fleet Carriers were getting some much needed rest and replenishment, leaving protective air cover for our trip and for the Mindoro invasion force up to the Seventh Fleet Escort Carriers and the Army Air Forces on Leyte. This was just a month after the invasion of Leyte. Forces ashore were having a tough time with the monsoon weather and enemy troops. The Army Air Corps was socked in due to bad weather and a lack of usable landing fields. In reading Admiral Thomas C. Kincaid's (Commander Seventh Fleet) biography, the author states that Kincaid wanted the Mindoro Invasion delayed a few days. General MacArthur initially said no, then reluctantly agreed to a slight delay. Had this not been done, Admiral Kincaid feared that the re-supply convoy (that was our "Slow Tow") may not make it as the full fury of enemy planes would have been available to concentrate on us. As it turned out, we had plenty of contact with the Japanese planes despite the delay in sailing!

REMEMBER - Late June, 1945. Over a four day period, HOLT actually made a mail run! We departed San Pedro Bay, Leyte with a large pile of mail sacks. Our route took us to Cebu City on the Island of Cebu, then to Zamboanga on the Island of Mindanao. From there to Puerto Princesa on the Island of Palawan and finally to Iloilo on the Island of Panay. We took along a passenger to Iloilo....a Filipino Mess Steward who was visiting home for the first time in nearly five years.

REMEMBER - The fleet anchorage at Ulithi Atoll where we celebrated the 4th of July 1945 playing ball and drinking our two cans of beer! The Chief Specialists (Athletics) that were

stationed there to organize sports for the fleet had set up some high stakes poker games, dice tables and roulette wheels. They were cleaning up on the fleet!

REMEMBER - In late July 1945 there were 19 of the 21 total U. S. Battleships lying at anchor in San Pedro Bay, Leyte. Also present were hundreds of other ships of all descriptions making ready for strikes against the Japanese homeland . We did not get to tarry as we had a convoy of amphibious types to escort to Okinawa.

### **1998 HOLT REUNION**

Be sure and mark your calendar for **April 25 - 29, 1998**. These are the dates for the reunion in **MOBILE, AL**. It is not too early to make your reservations. Use the enclosed hotel reservation form and mail it to the **RADISSON ADMIRAL SEMMES HOTEL**, 251 Government Street, Mobile, AL 36602. If you plan to arrive later than 6:00 pm, a one night deposit is required (refundable if you have to cancel). To get the special room rate, use the enclosed card to register.

Our tour activities are yet to be finalized. We will be making a visit to Mobile a little later to schedule the tour activities. All this info, along with the reunion registration form will be in the fall HOLT Newsletter.

**For those of you planning to play golf, please let "Doc" Steinhauser know as soon as possible. He has a lot of work to do to schedule this event and he sorely needs to know how many are planning to play. "Doc" can be reached at [REDACTED]**

#### A Parting Note: **WHY HAVE A REUNION?**

Those of you who served in the military know that those years were among the most intense, unforgettable and influential of your life. And the largest part of that experience, the part that keeps coming back time and again, is the people - those men you served with. Served with? What a strange term. That actually meant eating, working, playing, joking, yelling, suffering and celebrating together, day in and day out. Good times, bad times, great times, boring times and times that scared you to death. At first you were strangers but you became friends, even with some you might have avoided or never met in "the real world."

But it was more than friendship. Your present sense of camaraderie and nostalgia is not really focused around happy and casual memories like (say) those of high school, but on common bonds forged under unusual conditions. You depended on each other to get the job done; you needed each other to survive battles and boredom and you came away with an experience known only to those who have been there.

Then, many of you were catapulted from military service directly back into civilian life. After your discharge, you scattered to towns and cities across America. When you try to remember your military experience and the people you served with, there are blank spots and a sense of incompleteness because no one is around to remember with you and there is a lot you

have forgotten. Your experiences and thoughts may not be easily shared with people you now love and live with. Friends and family may have long ago begun to yawn over old war stories , never realizing their subtle yet profound importance to you.

A reunion offers you a chance to remember, fill in the blanks, re-discover long-lost friends, compare experiences, ask a friend that important question, spend time with someone you had previously overlooked, be with those who understand and finally put into proper perspective that most powerful and profound part of your life.

### **LATE NEWS:**

Word has just been received that Fred Davis has had to interrupt his summer in Rhode Island to return to Florida (that is where Fred and Edna spend the winter and also where his doctor is located) for further medical treatment. He had seemed to be doing better in recent months. Our prayers for a speedy recovery are with you, Fred.

The same phone call from Bob DeAngelis brought the sad news that our shipmate, Normand L. "Frenchy" Cournoyer died.. Those of you who attended the last two reunions will recall "Frenchy" with his humor and good nature. Although his health has not been good in the last few years, he had a positive outlook and cheerful approach to life. Remember the "gift" of SPAM he presented to Ken Bean at the reunion in Pennsylvania. We'll miss you "Frenchy". Our sincerest condolences to his family.

Until next time

May the road rise up to meet you  
May the wind always be at your back  
The sun shine warm upon your face  
The rain fall soft upon your fields  
And until we meet again  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.