



# THE BRIGHT PENNY

April 2009

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE USS BERKELEY (DDG-15) ASSOCIATION



## Chief's - Happy 116th Birthday



Now that we're well underway in 2009, I would like to provide an update on Association activities. This includes 2010 reunion planning, master roster updates, and future additions for the web site.



Our 2010 reunion in Denver, Colorado is in the early planning stages, and Darrell Delimont and Doc Johnson are checking out available hotels for the August/September time frame. We hope to have the host hotel and exact dates available in the next couple of months. This information will be posted at the web site, and will appear in the next edition of the newsletter. Later in the year we plan to forward additional information, including Denver area attractions, available public transportation options, recommended group tours, and reunion activities to all active Association members. If you have any suggestions for the upcoming reunion, please forward them and they will be reviewed by the reunion committee for possible inclusion in our planning.

The 2009 edition of the master roster was recently forwarded to 2008 and 2009 active members either by email or regular mail. Reviewing the roster, it is evident that contact information for many former shipmates is not current. I would like to encourage all former Berkeley crew members to provide current contact information (address, telephone number, and email address) by visiting the web site and entering the information on the "Quarterdeck" page.

Our web site has been greatly enhanced since our reunion in Boston last year thanks to the hard work and dedication of our webmaster Jim Barrett. Don Carson, our ship's historian is currently busy scanning the 1965/66, 1970 and 1972 cruise books. Our intention is to make these books and the 1967, 1971, 1981,

*(Continued on page 2)*

Captain van der Schroeff began his professional career in the U.S. Navy in 1964 receiving a commission through the Officer Candidate School in Newport Rhode Island after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut

Upon commissioning he was assigned to the Naval War College for a brief period as Senior Foreign Officer Liaison. Subsequent sea assignments followed as Communications Officer and Damage Control Assistant in USS BERKELEY (DDG 15) from 1964 to 1967, Weapons Officer in USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852) 1968 to 1970, home ported in Yokosuka, Japan, Combat Information Center Officer in the commissioning crew of USS TARAWA (LHA 1) from 1974 to 1975, Executive Officer of USS WADDELL (DDG 24) 1976 to 1978, and Commanding Officer of USS HENRY B. WILSON (DDG 7) 1981 to 1983. Following command he was the Operations Officer for Commander Middle East Force from 1983 to 1985, the Persian Gulf. He subsequently commanded USS ENGLAND (CG 22), 1988 to 1990, and completed his final sea assignment as Commanding Officer of USS WISCONSIN (BB 64), 1991 to 1992.

Tours ashore included assignments as the U.S. Naval Advisor to the Iranian Navy in Bandar Abbas, Iran during 1972-1973, as Combat Systems and Missile/Gun Department Head at the Naval Ship Weapon Systems Engineering Station, Port Hueneme, California and, prior to returning to sea in USS ENGLAND, as Anti-Air Warfare Branch Head for the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations, Surface Warfare. He returned to Washington to be the Deputy Director, Surface Warfare Division, again for the Assistant CNO, Surface Warfare. His last tour of duty on active service was as the Director, Test and Evaluation Division, under the Director Test and Evaluation and Technology Requirements in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

Captain van der Schroeff earned a Master of Science degree in Chemistry in the Ordnance Engineering Curriculum at the Naval Post Graduate School, graduated from the Naval War College in 1986 and from the Royal College of Defence Studies, London, UK in 1992. He has been awarded personal

### In the Spotlight



**Captain Coenraad van der Schroeff**

decorations including the Legion of Merit (three awards), the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation and the Combat Action Ribbon.

During a period in his early career Mr. van der Schroeff worked for the firm of Pittsburgh Demoiné Steel Company where he was a project coordinator for the fabrication, installation and operation of a space simulator. After retirement from active duty Captain van der Schroeff joined the consulting firm Strategic Insight, Ltd. in Alexandria, Virginia, and four years later joined the Boeing Company to lead the Company's System Engineering support to the Navy's missile defense development. The ten years following while working for Boeing Captain van der Schroeff managed the Company's Missile Defense feasibility analysis for NATO, alternative missile defense sensor development, and the development of the European component of the Ground based Missile Defense System missile field planned for installation in Poland. He retired from Boeing in September 2007, and now consults, travels, sails, occasionally gets away to do a bit of skiing in the Rockies, and finally to spend time reading those stacks of books he's been wanting to read for so long.

The Captain now resides in Madison, Alabama with his wife Lesley of London, the United Kingdom.

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Al Meier

**Navy Coffee**

By Jim Sundahl



While thinking of words of wit to give to my shipmates, my mind was vapor locked and nothing came out except the rain and fog of Portland, Oregon. Then thinking of what use to get me going when I was young a good cup of Navy Joe, Java, Mud and not a pansy Starbucks blend. All this started after reading my copy of "YE OLD SALTS NEWS" April-June 2009, put out by North Pacific Chapter of Destroyer Escort Sailors Association. The article that got me thinking was about "Coffee and the Navy" by RADM Frank J. Allston, SC, USNR (Ret) and Captain Kathleen Jensen, SC, USNR and the following poem:

**NAVY COFFEE**

by CDR Rod Mooney, USN (Ret).

For Greeks, ambrosia was OK,  
But used up all a sailors pay.  
Tars worked for grog instead of wage  
But as for me I love to hug  
A good old Navy coffee mug.  
Its fragrance cuts the salty air  
And wafts me far away from there  
It's best when made so it can stand  
Without the mug, just in your hand,  
And crusted mugs from watches back  
Are germ free if your coffee black.  
Beware the canned milk on the bridge,  
It's likely never seen a fridge,  
And if it fails to pour or run,  
It's left from World War Two (or One).  
But don't spill coffee on your boots  
Yours socks will soon start growing roots,  
And if it penetrates the deck,  
The panicked crew could cause a wreck.  
Way down below, the engine crew  
Prefers an even stronger brew,  
And sometimes as they ply their craft,  
They use the stuff to grease the shaft.  
When Navy coffee's thick and black,  
It guards against a heart attack,  
And if it's strong enough, I'm sure  
It functions as a cancer cure.  
But best of all, it makes the days  
Pass quickly in a caffeine haze.

Those of us that live with a crooked finger, tattooed by Navy Coffee spills of past, forever retyping a report because of mug rings. Have a Good Day, damn spilled it again. Oh well, thank God the keyboard is spill proof. Honey what's that smell? Smells like burnt wiring.....oh.....no...



**From the Quarterdeck by**

CDR Jim Barrett (Ret)



**Ball caps may soon all but disappear**

Command ball caps have been a fixture around the fleet over the past four decades and one of the Navy's most popular uniform items—are dying a slow death.

The new Navy Working Uniform (NWU) features a Marine-style eight-point cover. Commanding officers can still allow the wearing of the ball caps with the NWU, but only while onboard the ship. If you step off the ship wearing the ball cap, you are out of uniform.

Many sailors are not happy with the new ruling. To them the ball cap represents an identity and a source of personal pride. In place of the command cap a unit patch can be worn on the NWU pocket. Among the sailors there are mixed feelings about the new eight-point cover. Some like it, some do not. And, some think the current ball cap goes well with the NWU.

The exception to the new rules is that ball caps will still be commonplace in boot camp. During basic training recruits will wear their recruit ball caps until they complete training and the "Battle Stations" graduation exercise. They are then issued their "Navy" ball caps. However, wearing the "Navy" cap will be short lived. Following the capping ceremony they will transition to the eight-point cap.

Source: Navy Times

**VA Home Loans Increased Up to \$729,000**

Effective immediately under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, the VA will use a locality-based approach to raise ceilings on its no down payment home loans from \$417,000 to as much as \$729,000.

This new law also improves the VA's Specially Adapted Housing Program. It raises primary grants from \$50,000 to \$60,000 toward constructing a new home or modifying an existing home to meet the adaptive needs of veterans or active duty service members with certain service-connected disabilities

E-mail: [Quarterdeck15@aol.com](mailto:Quarterdeck15@aol.com)

**Berkeley History April**

**40 Years Ago, 1969**

1-30, In Long Beach Naval Shipyard. C.O. is CDR Thomas M. Ward, Jr.

**30 Years Ago, 1979**

1-30, CNO Project 487, a coordinated effort between civilian and the military to test and evaluate the Block VI Missile, the latest update of the medium range Standard Missile. C.O. is CDR Kenneth R. Sydow.

**20 Years Ago, 1989**

1-6, Underway SoCal OpArea; refresher training. 7, Inport San Diego. 8-10, Underway enroute to Concord, California. 11-, Inport Concord for ammo offload. 12-14, Enroute to San Diego. 15-16, Inport San Diego; defuel. 17-30, Phased Maintenance Facility Continental Marine Shipyard, San Diego. C.O. is CDR Charles R. Girvin, III.

**10 Years Ago, 1999**

Ex-Berkeley in service with the Hellenic Navy of Greece.

**The Director**

(Continued from page 1)

1984, 1986/87 and 1989/90 cruise books available for viewing on the web site later this year in a "Members Only" sector. I would once again like to encourage the forwarding of USS Berkeley related digital photos for possible inclusion on the web site or in our historical files where they can be shared with former crew members and their families. You can submit photos taken aboard the ship, at our reunions or other gatherings to the following email address, [alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com](mailto:alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com)

## Ahoy Berkeley Beauties

By Pat Clark



I know many of you are experiencing extreme weather conditions where you live and hope that you have not been adversely affected. Spring has definitely arrived here in Long Beach.

Since the last edition of the Bright Penny, I became a Great Grandmother! This is my first great grandchild. Madison Nicole Clark was born on Valentine's Day. I was fortunate to be in the delivery room and see the beauty and miracle of life take place. Of course GG (Great Grandma) is in her glory with sewing for her.

Well I'm glad to see that the decision to have our 2010 reunion in Denver has been made. I've been to Denver once before and look forward to going there again. I also look forward to being of any help I can be to seeing that the 2010 reunion is a tremendous success. If any of you Beauties have a suggestion as to what you might like to do as a 'girl' thing that weekend, send me your idea at [pat\\_lilipad\\_clark@charter.net](mailto:pat_lilipad_clark@charter.net)

Now I'd like to introduce Joyce Landis, wife of Robert Landis Jr, RD3, 1966/68:

*My name is Joyce Landis and my journey to becoming a Berkeley beauty started some 40 years ago. I had just started working at RCA in Lancaster, PA as a screening processor. A production engineer had the responsibility to make sure all new employees in the screen room were becoming knowledgeable and proficient in the required procedures of the job. Turns out this engineer was Bob Landis. I remember him feeling sympathy for me because my job required lifting 25 pound crt faceplates continuously. He must have read the pain in my face. He was right because I only lasted about 4 months on the job when I left to accept a bank teller position. From the bank I moved on to an accounts receivable position with a local wholesale grocery supplier. I stayed in this position until I retired in 2002.*

*Moving ahead to 1994 I was shopping at a local antique consignment shop when who do I see but that production engineer from RCA - Bob Landis. We both remembered each other and after some brief reminiscing we decided to go out for*

*dinner. At dinner we discovered that we had a lot in common, not the least of which was that we both had been single for many years (me - 15 years and Bob - 8 years). That evening led to our marriage a year later and a combining of our six mature children, 17 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.*

*I love retirement! I am very active in our church and I joined the Red Hat Society (we 'old gals' have a ball). Also, reading, gardening, estate auctions/flea markets, and bingo keep me busy through the week. A must read for all of you is "The Shack". I've read it twice in the last six months and it left a lasting impression on me both times.*

*In our 14 years together we've had the times of our lives along with a sharing of down times (Bob's two battles with bladder cancer, the loss of our parents, the loss of a granddaughter, and my open heart surgery). All in all we've been great together. For sure, a highlight of our time together has been Bob's tales of his Berkeley days and the numerous Berkeley reunions we've been fortunate to attend (New Orleans, Las Vegas, Charleston, and Boston). I've met a lot of Bob's radar buddies and a whole bunch of other Berkeley shipmates and I can't emphasize enough how nice they've all been and how much fun we've had at the reunions.*

*I'm not sure I want to fly anymore (sorry Anita C.) but Bob said Denver, CO is a "for sure" in 2010. So we'll hopefully see all of you next year.*

*Berkeley Beauty - Joyce Landis*

We look forward to seeing you and Bob in 2010. Next edition I'll be introducing Shirley Wilkins, wife of Randy Wilkins of North Port, FL

Till next time, wishing you a blessed Easter! Pat

## Interesting Reading

*Scurvy Dogs, Green Water and Gunsmoke—Fifty Years in U.S. Navy Destroyers.* A series of short stories by officers and enlisted personnel who served in destroyer type ships from the late fifties to present. A lot of humor as seen in the eyes of a vast majority of ratings representing all areas of the ships. Many of the ship names mentioned will be familiar to those who served during the Vietnam era and later. Published in two paperback volumes and can be ordered from Amazon.com for about \$15 each. Both volumes about 180 pages each. Volume One ISBN 9781892343062. Volume Two ISBN 9781892343079.

"This book (Vol 1) belongs on every Navy man's shelf." — James D. Hornfischer, author of *Ship of Ghosts* and *The Last Stand of the tin Can Sailors*.

"Bravo Zulu (Vol 2) to these destroyer men scribes of the former black oil fleet." — Peter Huchthausen, author of *Hostile Waters*, *October Fury* and *K-19: The Widomaker*.

If you read these books, let us know your thoughts and we will publish your opinion.

## The passing of two legends

If you ever pulled into Hong Kong you will remember Mary Soo and her team of girls that would come along side and paint the sides of the ship. In exchange for her services she was allowed to take leftover food from the mess decks, sometimes referred to as garbage. Mary Soo passed away in 1987.

More recently, Jenny Bem, another legend with a long history of ship painting passed away February 18, 2009 at the age of 92. Initially she serviced ships of the Royal Navy and Commonwealth Navies in Hong Kong. But Jenny did far more than paint ships. Officers would often find fresh flowers in their cabins and newspapers delivered daily.

During her career Jenny received twenty-seven Certificates of Service from the British, among them a commendation by the Duke of Edinburgh for her work on the Royal Yacht during a visit to Hong Kong in 1959. Most treasured of all Jenny's distinctions was the British Empire Medal awarded to her in the Hong Kong Civilian List of the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1980.

Over the years Hong Kong was no longer being visited by the great fleets of battleships and cruisers, which gave Jenny and her team of girls their livelihood and she found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. To the end of the Royal Navy's presence in Hong Kong in 1997, there could be seen in the shadow of the towering Prince of Wales building within the naval base, a small round figure in the traditional baggy black trousers and high-collared smock, with a long pigtail and eternal smile who, regardless of time, remained it seemed forever — just Jenny.

<http://www.worldnavalships.com/forums/showthread.php?p=44261%20-%2065k>

## Peacoats -- One of God's Better Inventions

You remember them: Those ton and a half monsters that took the annual production of thirty-five sheep to make. Those thick black rascals with black plastic buttons the size of poker chips. The issue coats that drove shore duty chief petty officers stark raving nuts if they caught you with the collar turned up or your hands in your pockets.

"Hey, you rubber sock, get those damn hands outta them damn pockets! Didn't they issue you black leather gloves?"

So, you took your hands out of your pockets and risked digital frostbite rather than face whatever the Navy had in store for violators of the 'No Damn Hands In Peacoat Pockets' policy. There's probably a special barracks in Hell full of old E-3s caught hitchhiking in sub-zero weather with hands in peacoat pockets. As for those leather gloves, one glove always went missing.

"Son, where in th' hell are the gloves we issued you?" I don't remember this nasty, ugly so-n-so being at Great Lakes when the 'jocks and socks' petty officers were throwing my initial issue sea bag at me and yelling, "Move it!!"

As for the gloves, once you inadvertently leave one glove on a bar stool or on the seat of a Greyhound bus, the remaining glove is only useful if a tank rolls over the hand that fit the lost glove. In the days long ago, a navy spec. peacoat weighed about the same as a flat carload of cinder blocks. When it rained, it absorbed water until your spine warped, your shins cracked and your ankles split. Five minutes standing in the rain waiting on a bus and you felt like you were piggy-backing the Statue of Liberty. When a peacoat got wet, it smelled a lot like sheep dip. It had that wet wool smell, times three. It weighed three and a half tons and smelled like 'Mary had a little lamb's gym shorts. You know how heavy a late '50s peacoat was? Well, they had little metal chains sewn in the back of the collar to hang them up by. Like diluted Navy coffee, sexual sensitivity instruction, comfortable air-conditioned topside security bungalows, patent leather plastic-looking shoes and wearing white hats configured to look like bidet bowls, the peacoat spec. has been watered down to the point you could hang them up with dental floss. In the old days, pea coat buttons and grocery cart wheels were

interchangeable parts. The gear issued by the U.S. Navy was tough as hell, bluejacket-tested clothing with the durability of rhino hide and construction equipment tires. Peacoats came with wide, heavy collars. In a cold, hard wind, you could turn that wide collar up to cover your neck and it was like poking your head in a tank turret. The things were warm, but I never thought they were long enough. Standing out in the wind in those 'big-legged britches' (bell bottoms), the wind whistled up your cuffs and took away body warmth like a thief. But, they were perfect to pull over you for a blanket when sleeping on a bus or a bus terminal bench.

Every sailor remembers stretching out on one of those oak bus station pews with his white hat over his face, his head up against his AWOL bag and covered with his peacoat. There was always some 'SP' who had not fully evolved from the apes, who poked you with his Billy bat and said,

"Hey, you! Get up! Waddya think yer doin'? You wanna sleep, get a room!"

Peacoats were lined with quilted satin or rayon. I never realized it at the time, but sleeping on bus seats and station benches would be the closest I would ever get to sleeping on satin sheets. Early in my naval career, a career-hardened (lifer) first class gunner's mate told me to put my ID and liberty card in the inside pocket of my peacoat. "Put the sonuvabitches in that gahdam inside pocket and pin the damn thing closed with a diaper pin. Then, take your heavy folding money and put it in your sock. If you do that, learn to never take your socks off in a cathroom. Them damn dockside pickpockets pat 'cha down for a lumpy wallet and they can relieve you of said wallet so fast you'll never know you've been snookered. Only an idiot will clam-fold his wallet and tuck it in his thirteen button bellbottoms. Every kid above the age of six in Italy knows how to lift a wallet any fool pokes in his pants. Those little locals learned to pick sailor's pockets in kindergarten. Rolling Bluejackets is the national sport in Italy."

In Washington DC, they have a wonderful marble and granite plaza honoring the United States Navy. Every man or woman, who served this nation in a naval uniform, owes it to himself or herself to visit this memorial and take

their families. It honors all naval service and any red-blooded American bluejacket or officer will feel the gentle warmth of pride his or her service is honored within this truly magical place. The focal point of this memorial is a bronze statue of a lone American sailor. No crow on his sleeve tells you that he is non-rated. And, there are further indications that suggest maybe, once upon a time, the sculptor himself may have once been an E-3 white hat. The lad has his collar turned up and his hands in his pockets of his peacoat.

I'm sure the Goddess of the Main Induction laughs at the old, crusty chiefs standing there with veins popping out on their old, wrinkled necks, muttering, "Look at that S.O.B. standing there with his collar up and his damn hands in his pockets. In my day, I would have ripped that jerk a new one!"

Ah, the satisfied glow of E-3 revenge. Peacoats -- one of God's better inventions.

## The Goat Locker

HAVE YOU HEARD?: An old Navy Chief and an old Marine Gunny were sitting at the VFW arguing about who'd had the tougher career:



'I did 30 years in the Corps,' the Marine declared proudly, and fought in three of my country's wars. Fresh out of boot camp I hit the beach at Okinawa, clawed my way up the blood-soaked sand, and eventually took out an entire enemy machine gun nest with a single grenade. As a sergeant, I fought in Korea alongside General MacArthur. We pushed the enemy inch by bloody inch all the way up to the Chinese border, always under a barrage of artillery and small arms fire. Finally, as a gunny sergeant, I did three consecutive combat tours in Vietnam. We humped through the mud and razor grass for 14 hours a day, plagued by rain and mosquitoes, ducking under sniper fire by day and mortar fire all night. In a firefight, we'd fire until our arms ached and our guns were empty, then we charged the enemy with bayonets.'

'Ah', said the Chief with a dismissive wave of his hand. 'Lucky bastard, all shore duty, huh?'

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[www.ussberkeley.com](http://www.ussberkeley.com)