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BRIGHT PENNY

April - June 2024

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

2025 Reunion In Bremerton, Washington

Director's Update

It's springtime, and hopefully warmer days are on their way! Hope all is well with you and your families.

Our association had a successful reunion in Corpus Christi last September, and we are beginning the planning process for our 2025 reunion in Bremerton, Washington. Bremerton was a unanimous choice beating the second choice of Jackson Hole. The Berkeley has some history with the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton and an article, "Bremerton Naval Shipyard" is featured in this newsletter.

We will begin a search for our host hotel in April and hope to have the hotel and reunion dates (September/October time frame) selected by the time our July 2024 Bright Penny newsletter is available. The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard is off-limits, but the Puget Sound Navy Museum just outside the shipyard's gate is open to the public and will be considered as part of our reunion tour. Future newsletters and our www.ussberkeley.com web site will provide updated information for the 2025 reunion.

2024 USS Berkeley Association membership renewals are looking good, but we are still not over the 100+ level required to fund our web site, master roster and newsletter mailings, and future reunions, etc. If you have not yet joined or renewed your association membership, please consider doing so soon! Dues pay-



ments (check or money order) can be submitted to the USS Berkeley Association, c/o Gerry Hansen, 6318 S. 20th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53221.

Updates to the USS Berkeley Association master roster are in process, and the master roster will be sent to 2024 association paid members in late April. If you have not updated your contact information in the past two years, please do so through the "Quarterdeck" page on our web site by mid-April.

The Year In Review - 1977

The first day of 1977 saw the Berkeley in port at San Diego Naval Station under the command of Commander Clifford F. Homan. Berkeley's Command Action Plan (CAP) was promulgated on January 13th. The purpose of the CAP was to identify individual programs which would support the initiatives established in the Navy's Human Resources Management System.

On January 27th, Commander Jack E. Helmann relieved Commander Homan as Commanding Officer.

On February 1st, Berkeley was underway as Senior Officer Engineering School Ship. Aboard the ship were Captains Lacy, Sigsworth, and Roach, accompanied by the instructor LCDR Callahan. Returning to port on February 2nd, Berkeley was evaluated by the senior officers who rated the engineering plant satisfactory with no major discrepancies.

Berkeley was underway again on February 7th for ASW exercises in

company with USS Wahoo (SS-565) and USS Lynde McCormick (DDG-8) in addition to various ASW aircraft. On board for their annual 2-week active-duty training were 14 Naval reservist from Waterloo, Iowa.

In port on February 10th, Berkeley was berthed at Broadway Piers in downtown San Diego and served as Navy Public Visit Ship for the weekend. Over 2,300 civilians toured the ship.

Underway again on February 15th for exercises in the Southern California Operating Area, Berkeley first unloaded ammo at LaPlaya Pier, San Diego. The next four days witnessed a surface gunnery exercise and plane-guarding for the USS Constellation (CV-64). In port from the 18th through 21st, Berkeley was underway on February 22nd for Naval Gunfire Support qualification with four NJROTC Sea Cadets embarked. On the 24th, a burial-at-sea was conducted. The ship returned to San Diego on the 25th with two daylight exercises remaining to complete NGFS qualification.

In port for the week of February 28th, Berkeley was visited by Surface Warfare Officer School (SWOS) students, U.S. Marine gunfire liaison officers, and a group of students from Escondido High School. On March 4th, the ship was visited by RADM Christoph, Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group Three.

From March 10-25, Berkeley was
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Ship's History: April 2024

60 Years Ago, 1964

Dates not specified in Command History log

50 Years Ago, 1974

01 - 30 Refresher Training, SOCAL Operating Areas

40 Years Ago, 1984

01 - 06 Inport Subic Bay, R.P.
07 - 15 Enroute North Arabian Sea
16 - 30 OPS North Arabian Sea

30 Years Ago, 1994

In Service with the Hellenic Navy of Greece as the H.S. Themistokles

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underway for PHIBLES/MAULEX E-1-77 (Operation Varsity Eagle). Termed a Specific Performance Validation Operational Evaluation (SPV-OPEVAL) designed to test the capabilities of USS Tarawa (LHA-1). Varsity Eagle pitted an amphibious task force against a surface aggressor force. Comprising the amphibious force were Tarawa, USS Denver (LPD-9), USS Ogden (LPD-5), and USS Frederick (LST-1184). Providing escort and gunfire support along with Berkeley were USS Gridley (CG-21), USS Hepburn (FF-1055), and USS John R. Craig (DD-885). During this at-sea period, Berkeley completed its NGFS requirements and fired one missile while conducting its annual training surface-to-surface missile exercise. The ship also passed the ULM-4 range test for electronic warfare systems.

In port March 25th, the ship berthed outboard the USS Dixie (AD-14) for repair availability. The staff of Destroyer Squadron Thirteen embarked and conducted a 3-M inspection on March 28th.

The beginning of the second quarter of 1977 was dominated by extensive preparations for Berkeley's move to Bremerton, Washington, for overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. An advance party was sent to Bremerton to arrange for housing and coordinate the details of the overhaul. On April 8th, LCDR Dennis C. Blair relieved LCDR Donald R. Hess as Executive Officer. COMDESRON Thirteen debarks.

Although underway time for this period was limited, Berkeley did steam out of San Diego for five days of Type Commander training on May 9th. Embarked for this at-sea period were two NJROTC Sea Cadets. One MK44 exercise torpedo and one MK46 exercise ASROC torpedo were fired during operations

with USS Wahoo (SS-565). Both shots being evaluated as hits. Before returning to the Naval Station on May 13th, Berkeley hosted family members and guests for a day-long dependent's cruise. On May 16th, a Ship's Manning Document (SMD) Validation was conducted by the Naval Manpower Analysis Center, Pacific Fleet (NAVMACPAC). A Human Resources Availability (NRAV) follow-up survey was conducted on May 19-20.

In port for the remainder of May, Berkeley departed San Diego on June 1st enroute to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) for one year's regular overhaul. Also, on June 1st, Berkeley's homeport was officially changed to Bremerton, Washington. On June 2nd, Berkeley off-loaded all ammunition and missiles at Seal Beach and arrived at her new homeport of Bremerton on June 6th. At this time she was assigned to TU 31.6.1.

Immediately upon mooring at pier 6 PSNS, pre-overhaul work began in earnest. On July 6th, the crew moved from the ship to two barges, leaving all the ship's spaces available for overhaul work. the pre-overhaul period ran until July 12th and regular overhaul commenced on July 13th when Berkeley was guided into Drydock #4. Major repairs and additions included new ship's service turbo-generators, a sophisticated satellite communications system, a collection holding and transfer system for waste products, and the Model 4 Tactical Data System Program.

On August 1st, Berkeley adopted its Affirmative Action Plan.

In September, Berkeley was recognized by Commander, Naval Surface Force Pacific for outstanding performance during

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the January 76 through July 77 competitive cycle by awards of the Operations "E", Communications "C", Missile "E", ASW "A", and Gunnery "E".

October 17-19 saw the first of three assist visits by COMNAVSURFPAC Mobile Training Team (MTT) in preparation for the Light-Off Examination (LOE) scheduled for the first quarter of 1978.

On November 16th, the ship and all living and storage barges were floated out of drydock after four months on the blocks. Two days later on November 18th, Berkeley was moved back to drydock for additional work on the sonar domes. MTT was onboard again on December 12-13 for the second pre-LOE training visits.

On December 15th, Berkeley celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of her commissioning (December 15, 1962). Floated out of drydock again on December 16th, the ship was moved to pier 5 PSNS, and remained pier side for the remainder of 1977.

Bremerton Naval Shipyard

Established in 1891, Navy Yard Puget Sound was the only West Coast facility equipped to dry-dock battleships and aircraft carriers when Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor fifty years later. In wake of the attack, five of Battleship Row's six survivors limped in for repairs, towing a new era for Bremerton, Washington - a quiet navy town located an hour west of Seattle by ferry.

A small, greasy town burst into a lively city that proudly repaired or modernized more than 350 vessels for the wartime Pacific Fleet. The tree-lined walkways, tightly packed rows of glass storefronts, and flashy theater marquees remain largely as they were during the war. Bremerton

is lacking the one thing it had in surplus in the early 1940s: people.

Bremerton's shipyard, nestled by the deep-water inlets of Puget Sound, has always been the city's economic anchor. Weary of sending Pacific ships to Canada for repairs, the Navy sought a location for its own maintenance facility and purchased 190 acres of Bremerton's shoreline the same year the town was platted. By 1940, the shipyard boasted more than 6,000 employees and the unemployment rate in the sound-side burg of 15,000 was about 10% lower than the national average.

The attack on Pearl Harbor destroyed two of the nine battleships in the Pacific Fleet and left six in need of repair. The USS Tennessee was the first to arrive at Navy Yard Puget Sound on December 29, 1941, with simple instructions: mend the badly damaged aft section and return to service as quickly as possible. It steamed away an impressive 53 days later thanks to the engineers, shipwrights, machinists, painters, and others from around the country who were joining the shipyard's payroll at a rate of 60-70 people a day.

A tall wrought iron fence separated the shipyard from the city, but the effects of the shipyard's staggering growth rippled beyond it. As Bremerton's population climbed rapidly toward an estimated peak of more than 80,000. The Black Ball ferry line made 29 trips a day carrying commuters to and from Seattle. Bremerton High School introduced factory-style shifts to accommodate a student population that more than doubled.

Anti-aircraft guns, bunkers, and barrage ballons were installed all over town for defense against a possible Japanese attack on the vital shipyard. Bremerton sent hundreds of its young men to war, and nearly

300 with ties to surrounding Kitsap County did not return.

The still-active shipyard is off-limits to visitors. The best peak inside is offered by the Puget Sound Navy Museum, housed within the original administrative office building located just outside the yard's east gate. Exhibits tell of how the war birthed incredible innovation and patriotism from shipwrights who freed up steel by pioneering the use of resin and wood laminates, to overall-clad women who made up 15 percent of the yard's workforce at the height of wartime operations.

When Japan surrendered, 32,000 people were employed at the shipyard. Operating five dry docks 24 hours a day, they had repaired 26 battleships, 18 carriers, 13 cruisers, 79 destroyers, and built 53 new vessels. After the war, the shipyard converted ships to troop transports that brought servicemen home, and then transitioned to retiring and upgrading war vessels. By the end of 1946, Bremerton saw its population shrink to a fraction of its former might.

After WWII, the shipyard also engaged in an extensive program to modernize aircraft carriers, including the conversion of conventional flight decks to the angled decks used by the new jet aircraft. During the Korean Conflict (1950-53), the facility activated many of the ships in the reserve "mothball" fleet, deactivating them again in 1954. During the 1950s the shipyard entered into a new era of construction with the building of two new guided-missile frigates. In 1961, the shipyard was designated as a submarine repair facility and in 1965 it was established as a nuclear-capable repair facility. In 1992, the shipyard was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.