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BRIGHT PENNY

January - March 2026

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

Happy New Year 2026!

Director's Update

Hello shipmates,
Looking forward to the new year and hoping you all enjoyed the holiday season. Voting is still open for the 2027 reunion. Please go to our website <https://ussberkeley.com/> and cast your vote for your choice of host city.



As we move into the new year, you will be seeing changes to the website as we add information for the new association board members. We look forward to hearing from you with any ideas you may have for the next reunion.

I would again ask everyone who receives the Bright Penny newsletter to share it with any Berkeley shipmates who have not joined the association, and encourage them to join us at the 2027 reunion.

Watching the daily news, I see our US Navy involved in operations world wide. Please keep those who are serving in your thoughts and pray for their safe return.

The Year In Review - 1984

USS Berkeley, under the command of Captain Robert W. Reighley, started out 1984 in San Diego making final preparations for the 1984 WESTPAC cruise. The cruise began on January 13th with Berkeley getting underway for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Enroute, AIREM, SHAREM, BGAREM and ASW operations kept the crew busy until the ship steamed into port on January 30th.

Berkeley then got underway for Subic Bay, R.P., and participated in NGFS 84-5 on the Tahbones Range in the Philippines. The Berkeley firing team received extensive compliments from the spotters on the range for their gunfire accuracy. Following NGFS was a relaxing 12-day port visit in Subic Bay.

In early March, Berkeley got underway once again enroute to Pusan, South Korea. During this underway time frame, Berkeley participated in a memorial to the USS Spence, a DESRON 23 ship which was lost in a battle in World War II.

After a four-day port visit in Pusan, Berkeley participated in "Team Spirit 84", a joint exercise with the South Korean Navy. On March 30th, she participated in MISSILEX 84-3 at Poro Point, R.P., before making another port visit to Subic Bay.

On April 7th, BERKELEY got underway for the North Arabian Sea, and commenced operations, often at PIRAZ Station, upon arrival. After a month in the North Arabian Sea, the ship underwent a Tender Availability with the USS HECTOR off Masirah island, Oman. After TAV, operations were again conducted in the North Arabian Sea.

On June 1st, BERKELEY steamed enroute Diego Garcia to repair a material casualty. Another TAV took place upon arrival, this time with USS PROTEUS.

On July 9th, Berkeley sortied from Subic Bay bound for Pearl Harbor.

After two days in Hawaii, the ship steamed for San Diego. During this, the last leg of the 1984 WestPac, she embarked relatives and friends of the crew for a dependents "Tiger Cruise." BERKELEY returned to homeport on August 1, 1984, after a long and successful deployment.

BERKELEY spent the month of August in a leave and upkeep period. On 28-29 August she got underway for a SOCAL-Self Assessment. She returned to San Diego for a Type Commander Inspection from 4-7 September. From 19-20 September, she underwent a Material Inspection and MTT (Mobile Team Training)/OPPRE Phase I in port.

On September 25, BERKELEY got underway for San Francisco. Enroute, the ship underwent TYT SOCAL/NORCAL, before arriving in San Francisco on September 27th. A week after the October 4th arrival in San Diego, BERKELEY was assigned PMTC RECON, conducting surveillance on a Soviet A GI operating off San Clemente Island.

On November 13th, Berkeley underwent an OPPRE SOCAL. A week later she headed for Seal Beach to offload ammunition in preparation for the scheduled SRA period. She returned to San Diego and was underway for a last ISE SOGAL before returning to port and beginning the SRA period on December 3rd.

Friendly reminder: renew your 2026 Dues and vote for the 2027 reunion host city!

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**Ship's History
January**

60 Years Ago, 1966

01 - 31 Gulf of Tonkin SAR Station

50 Years Ago, 1976

01 - 05 In Port, San Diego
05 - 08 Underway, NGFS Qual, SCI
08 - 15 In Port, San Diego
16 Underway, Sea Trials, SOCAL Op Areas
16 - 26 In Port, San Diego
26 - 28 Underway, MTT, SOCAL Op Areas
28 - 30 In Port, San Diego
30 - 31 Transit to Pearl Harbor, CTG 37.0

40 Years Ago, 1986

01 - 13 In Port, San Diego
14 - 22 Weapons On-load, NGFS
23 - 31 In Port, San Diego

30 Years Ago, 1996

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

**History of the U.S. Navy
Part 6**

Technically, the Civil War began on April 12, 1861, when Confederate soldiers in Charleston Harbor fired on the Union garrison in Fort Sumter. However, the roots date back to at least the nation's founding.

British privateer, the White Lion, arrived at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 with about 20 captured Africans. Buying the slaves wasn't a planned decision. It was a decision based on the colony's desperate need for manpower to clear the forests and build shelter for the upcoming winter. By the 1830's, the number of slaves in the U.S. had grown to more than two million, and attitudes about slavery had both diverged and hardened.

As the country divided, the Navy underwent a technological revolution. The biggest change was the adoption of steam power. In 1843, the USS Princeton, the first propeller-driven warship in the world, was commissioned.

In 1854, Congress authorized the construction of six large steam-powered frigates. The lead ship of the class was the USS Merrimack. The Merrimack-class frigates were followed by five Hartford-class steam sloops. Between 1854 and 1859, the Navy added 24 major new combatant warships. All these ships were steamers and all armed with the latest naval ordinance.

For nearly 200 years, naval guns had changed little. They were muzzle-loaded iron tubes that fired solid iron balls using black powder. The size of the guns had been determined by the weight of the iron ball they fired. Improvements in metallurgy meant that guns were now so large that they were categorized by the diameter of their muzzles as in 6-inch or 8-inch guns. The most common naval gun during the Civil War was a 9-inch smoothbore cannon. Another

change in naval ordinance was that some barrels on naval guns could be rifled - that is, have grooves cut in a spiral pattern on the inside of the barrel so that the projectiles emerged spinning, which increased both their accuracy and their range. The projectiles also changed. While new naval guns could still fire solid iron balls, they also fired explosive shells. These innovations gave war-ship ordinance much greater range, accuracy, and destructive power just as the Civil War began. Naval battles in the age of sail often took place at a range of 100 yards or less, the newer guns could fire a mile or more.

The Civil War was triggered by the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Lincoln ran for president on a platform of halting the expansion of slavery into the western territories. Southerners believed that limiting the growth of slavery would lead to its demise. After Lincoln was elected, seven Southern states announced their secession from the Union. Several months later, Lincoln refused to withdraw the Army garrison from Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, and Confederate artillery opened fire on the fort.

One of Lincoln's first decisions was to order a naval blockade of the Southern coast. Although most of the Navy's warships were fairly new, there were only 42 of them in 1861. According to international convention, no nation had to respect a blockade unless there was an actual naval force offshore to enforce it. Therefore, the first task was to get a lot more ships. The Secretary of the Navy ordered all ships in overseas squadrons home and contracted to have 23 new steam warships built. This still didn't provide enough ships for the blockade. The shortfall was mostly made up by buying many steam-powered merchant ships that were modified to carry a few guns.

continued on page 3

Eventually, the U.S. commissioned more than 400 of these substitute warships.

The Union blockade was divided into four squadrons, and because nearly all of the blockading ships were steam-powered, each squadron required a base where they could resupply. Three of the squadrons had bases, but there was no place for the South Atlantic squadron - arguably the most important one - to safely operate. So, the first major U.S. Navy effort of the war was to capture Port Royal Sound on the South Carolina coast. The expedition led by Captain Du Pont attacked the forts in Port Royal on November 7, 1861. In only a few hours, the Confederate forts surrendered and the navy now had a base on the South Atlantic coast.

The Confederate navy, starting from scratch, embraced experimental technology. An example is the transformation of the Merrimack into the ironclad CSS Virginia. After the standoff between the Merrimack and the Monitor in Hampton Roads in March of 1862, both sides built more ironclads. Due to its weaker industrial base, the Confederacy couldn't match the North's production or challenge its' naval superiority.

The Confederates employed commerce raiding carried out by commissioned warships, many of which were built in England. The most successful of them was the CSS Alabama that captured and burned 64 Union merchant ships. The Alabama and her sister ships caused great alarm among Union shippers but did not damage the Northern economy as much as the blockade damaged the Southern economy.

America's rivers were either barriers or avenues for land armies. Eastern rivers such as the Potomac run from west to east and therefore lay across the line of advance by a land army. However, in the west, rivers such as the Mississippi run north to south or south to north such as the Cumberland and Tennessee. These rivers were avenues of advance for the side best positioned to take advantage of them, which was the North.

When the war started, neither side had warships on the western rivers. However, both sides soon began preparing for control of the western rivers, and the Mississippi was the center of the competition. Early on, the North purchased three civilian river steamers and bolted timbers on them for armor. They also put a few guns on board these boats that were called timberclads. In the early days of the war this small squadron dominated the Ohio and upper Mississippi rivers.

It was obvious early on that the timberclads were unlikely to overcome any substantial Confederate shore fortifications. An engineer and inventor named

James Eads proposed building a few ironclad river gunboats. In a mere five months, Eads produced seven flat-bottomed ironclads for the river war. Eventually, 30 of these boats that could operate in shallow water were built. The Confederates sought to build ironclads as well, but their effort lagged due to a lack of skilled manpower and a shortage of armor plate.

The river war was characterized by battles between Union ironclads and Confederate forts. The first such battle occurred when Rear Admiral Andrew Foote steamed up the Tennessee River and began bombarding Fort Henry with his gunboats while Brigadier General Ulysses Grant led an army over land toward the fort. The Confederates returned fire but most of their shells glanced off the gunboats' iron plating. Although one gunboat was crippled and forced to withdraw, fire from the other gunboats eventually forced the fort to surrender before Grant's army arrived.

The capture of Fort Henry gave Foote's gunboats control of the Tennessee River. This allowed Grant to move his army, by river, further south to Pittsburg Landing near a little church called Shiloh. The Confederates had unified all of their western armies there to attack the Union army on April 6, 1862. The Union army might have been forced into the river and annihilated if not for two Union gunboats anchored in the Tennessee River. The gunboats fired over the heads of the Union army and into the ranks of the advancing Confederates. That in addition to the Confederates' decision to stop and ransack a Union encampment instead of continuing their pursuit probably saved the Union army from destruction. On day two of the battle, a reinforced Union army counterattacked and won back all of the ground lost on the first day of the battle and resulting in a Union victory.

The Union attacked Confederate defenses on the southern end of the Mississippi River below New Orleans. Seventy miles down river from New Orleans were Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip. If the Union managed to get a squadron past those forts, they could cut off their line of supply. That is what Navy Flag Officer David Farragut did. Farragut commanded the West Gulf Blockading Squadron which was mainly deep-draft ocean warships. Those ships were steam-powered and heavily armed but were not armored. Farragut had to steam into the mouth of the river from the gulf and then upriver to Fort Jackson, which he took under fire with what were called mortar rafts.

These unique vessels lobbed 13-inch shells into the fort and stayed beyond the fort's gun range. However,

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

this didn't force the forts to surrender. So, in the pre-dawn darkness on April 24th, Farragut led his ships up the river to attempt to get past the forts. However, the Confederates anticipated that and erected a barrier composed of small ships linked together with heavy chains. It took Farragut some time to breach the barrier, and then he engaged in a furious battle with the forts and a squadron of Confederate gunboats. There were two unfinished big ironclads that the Confederates had hoped to use to defend the lower river. One, named the Louisiana, was moored near Fort Jackson, but she was missing her engines. She fired on Farragut's wooden steamers, but once they passed her, she was helpless. Cut off, the Louisiana and soon the forts surrendered. Farragut's ships continued up the river and anchored off Jackson Square in the middle of New Orleans.

However, not until 5,000 U.S. Army troops arrived in May, could the Union take possession of the city.

Navy gunboat squadrons also played a key role in the Vicksburg campaign in April of 1863 by assisting General Grant's army ferry across the river below Vicksburg. Grant then marched to the northeast, brushing aside a defending Confederate army, and captured the Mississippi state capital of Jackson. Grant then turned west and came up behind Vicksburg. Eventually, with the navy commanding the river and Grant continuing his siege on land, the Union's capture of Vicksburg gave them control of the Mississippi River.

From the beginning of the war, South Carolina - and Charleston in particular - had symbolized Southern rebellion and defiance. Fort Sumter, which was nearly in the center of Charleston Harbor, was where the war began. It was the main component of the Confederate's harbor defenses. The Union efforts to recapture the fort had been delayed for nearly 4 years. One reason it took so long was the unhelpful competition and rivalry between the Union army and the Union navy.

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles was to have the blockading navy sail into the harbor and bombard Fort Sumter. However, Rear Admiral Du Pont, who had captured Fort Royal at the beginning of the war, suggested it wouldn't work. He suggested that it would be better if the Union army captured one of the supporting forts first. Then, the heavy guns of those forts could batter down the walls of Fort Sumter, and then this would allow his navy ships to sail past it and into the inner harbor. The Union army had a chance to do so early on but the commanders on the scene muffed the chance. So, Welles renewed pressure on Du Pont

for a purely naval attack and sent eight of the Union's new ironclads to join Du Pont's blockading fleet. Du Pont had a much larger new type of ironclad with four and a half inch thick plates.

Du Pont was still skeptical, but he had to make the attempt. On April 7, 1863, a column of ironclads sailed into the harbor. It went wrong from the start because the Confederates had placed a line of mines across the shipping channel opposite Fort Sumter. To deal with the mines, John Ericsson had developed a mine-sweeping device called a devil. It was attached to the bow of the lead monitor, but the devil got tangled up in the rebel defenses and the column of monitors came to a stop right under the guns of Fort Sumter which pounded them mercilessly. One of the monitors was sunk and Du Pont ordered the ships to withdraw.

Welles replaced Du Pont with Rear Admiral John Dahlgren. Dahlgren also didn't embrace Welles strategy and instead teamed up with Army Major General Quincy Gilmore for a joint operation against Fort Sumter. This time, Union soldiers worked their way toward Fort Wagner, a supporting fort for Fort Sumter. With the ocean on their right and a swamp on their left, the soldiers had to attack on a very narrow front. The regimen that conducted that attack was the all-black 54th Massachusetts, and it was nearly annihilated in the effort.

After that, Gilmore and the army began an old-fashioned siege, with soldiers blasting their way toward Fort Wagner. After enduring horrific punishment for nearly two months, the Confederates evacuated the fort. That allowed Union gunners to begin a concentrated bombardment of Fort Sumter. Dahlgren's monitors added their 15-inch shells to the bombardment. By September, Fort Sumter had been pounded into dust.

After the fort's commander, Colonel Stephen Elliot, refused Dahlgren's demand for surrender, the Union army and navy renewed their bombardment. The fort and city held out for another year and did not fall until February 1865, when William Sherman approached it from the west in his famous March to the Sea.

The city of Mobile, on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, was nearly as challenging. On August 5, 1864 Farragut fended off a Confederate naval squadron and took control of Mobile Bay, with Sherman's capture of Atlanta a few weeks later. Then, the winning of the Wilmington Campaign led to the eventual end of the Civil War.

The navy that once had a mere 42 active warships had grown to 671 warships. Nearly all were steamships, and more than 100 were armored.