

USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER



Doug Sjoberg (Lt. Gunnery Officer '68 – '70) left, tells the story of the BRADLEY battle flag, held by Dave Burgmeier (SM 2 '78 – 83), Bill Barrett (GMG 3 '71 – '73). Read Doug's story below

President's Message

Shipmates!

I wish to convey my personal thoughts, as well as my hope that you and your family are well and remain well during this health crisis. This pandemic affects each of us in various ways! ie. NJ is not SD! We are on an extended cruise!

Regarding our next reunion (2021) the groundwork has been laid, right now TBD, hopefully March 2021. Secretary Bill Johnson has been above and beyond working on this! We owe him for his efforts! (I owe him a drink)

Lastly – be sure that Secretary Bill has your info – email address, mailing address, and phone number. More info to follow as we get it!

Steady as ya go!

Bill Barrett

2021 Reunion Jacksonville, FL March 26 – 29

NOTE:

Because of the ongoing pandemic, this is tentative. By early Fall 2020, Bradley Association Officers hope to have a better understanding of whether or not to proceed. The decision will be communicated to Association members at that time.

A Flag Flown Proudly

By Doug Sjoberg

At the Sept. 2019 reunion of USS BRADLEY (DE/FF-1041) shipmates in San Diego, I shared the 4x6 foot U. S. Flag that I've kept over the years from my tour aboard the BRADLEY in 1970.

I was the CIC Officer as a boot ensign from 1968-69 then moved to ASW/Gunnery Officer after a year to get the ship ready for ASROC certification and potential Vietnam gun line duty. I got to know the 1st class signalman and he did me a big favor after a particularly harrowing event on the gun line off the central coast of South Viet Nam in February 1970.

Our two 5 inch 38 cal. gun crews had trained a lot during our transit from the States to Westpac, but most of us never had any real experience in a combat role. After many days sailing slowly up and down the calm waters off the central coast town of Phan Thiet, with hardly a ripple of action, we were jarred from our reverie at about 1 a.m. one morning.

An infantry company of U. S. Marines (about 100-120 troops) had been caught in a surprise night assault by a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) unit estimated at battalion strength, perhaps 500-600 enemy fighters. The Marines were under a storm of vicious rifle, machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire. From the BRADLEY's close inshore position about 2,000 yards off the shoreline we could see and hear the exchange of red tracer rounds flying between the battling forces. The crackle of gunfire and the wild ricochets of thousands of rounds was an eerie and terrifying sound and sight!



Doug asked Association members present to sign the Header of the flag.

When General Quarters sounded, I had reported to CIC where I was part of the Naval Gunfire Coordination team (NGFS). My boss, LT. Dick Krapohl, Weapons Officer, went to the gun director to control our two guns in point blank fire support. With the call "Fire mission!" suddenly leaping from our NGFS radio link CIC became controlled chaos as our hearts were all pumping hard in hoping we could help the Marines. The beleaguered company was so close to the enemy that I could hear the NVA troops' yells and screams coming over the Marines' radio.

Since I had taken a Vietnamese language course during my Navy ROTC education in college, I understood some of the words I heard on that radio circuit.

What concerned me most was that if I could actually HEAR the enemy, then he was very close to the Marines and that was a problem for naval gunfire missions. It meant that friendly troops were "danger close" to any potential enemy targets, i.e. only about 100 yds. away from the enemy. That meant the BRADLEY had damn well better be accurate in shooting at anyone in the target area, otherwise, Marines could die by inaccurate "friendly fire."

BRADLEY gunners got the first round out just short of one minute after the call-for-fire. The first round was on-target and the Marines called back: "Fire for effect and don't stop!" We pumped out a

total of about 50-60 rounds in less than a few minutes, using Able-Able Common fused ammunition which had a radar fuse that enabled each shell to burst about 30 feet over the target: "enemy troops in the open".

"Cease fire!" came the Marines' call. "Target destroyed." We had hit the enemy so fast and so hard that they did not have time to drag their casualties off the battlefield before daylight. The NVA routinely did that so our troops could not determine how badly the enemy had been hit. The next morning, several Marines from the embattled unit, including the NGFS radio operator, flew by helo to visit the BRADLEY and debrief the night's action. We learned that about 45-50 enemy were KIA on the battlefield, most due to our gunfire support.

As the young sailors who manned the two guns and those in the director and CIC NGFS team listened carefully, the company sergeant told us in words burned into my memory forever: "You guys did a helluva job for us last night. Those rounds stopped that assault dead in its tracks and knocked the dogshit out of them! We had only three WIA (wounded in action) and no KIA (killed in action). You sure as hell will be letting a lot of Marines go home to their mothers alive because of your shooting!"



From that day forward, I never had to push our gunners and fire control team to do any training. They pestered ME to do more NGFS training and practice! Said one crew member to me: "Sir, we want the training. Those are my brothers on the front lines out there and we got their back. For them, we need to be the best!"



The leading signalman brought me the battle flag we had flying during that memorable night. I kept it for years and during a visit to San Diego by our XO at the time, LCDR Doug Menikheim, I had he and my lifelong BRADLEY shipmate, CAPT Frank J. Drdek, USN (Ret.) sign the edge of the flag. Frank was BRADLEY's Damage Control Assistant during our gun line tour. This was the banner and the story I shared with everyone at our San Diego reunion. The flag still proudly hangs on my Warrior Wall at my home in Rancho Bernardo, CA.

One day, I hope to share Old Glory's story with my grandson, Ben, now age 7. I will be able to tell him that though I was not a Navy hero, I served with a crew of gunners who were.

Doug Sjoberg
Former LT USN
USS BRADLEY (DE/FF-1041) Aug 1968 - June 1970

(Note – photos of ammo resupply and signalman above are frame grabs from 8mm movies taken by then QM3 Michael O'Connor during BRADLEY'S 1968 WestPac)

Auction Fundraiser

At the San Diego reunion, Dennis Walker and Randy Watkins apparently volunteered their wives (Nancy and Sheryl respectively) as auction coordinators. Below is a brief note from Sheryl Watkins about the auction.

Nancy Walker and Sheryl Watkins will be coordinating an auction at the Jacksonville reunion to raise money for the Association. Already, we've had donations of cruise books and a flag. Please be thinking of new or used Bradley or Navy-related items you can donate - or any items you think the sailors or ladies attending might want to buy. Just keep luggage requirements in mind.

Now that we've all become experts on using Zoom to keep up with the world outside our COVID-19 quarantine, we'll be planning a meeting in late summer to coordinate. Anyone who would like to participate in planning the auction, or with items to donate, contact Sheryl at: sheryl.watkins@gmail.com.

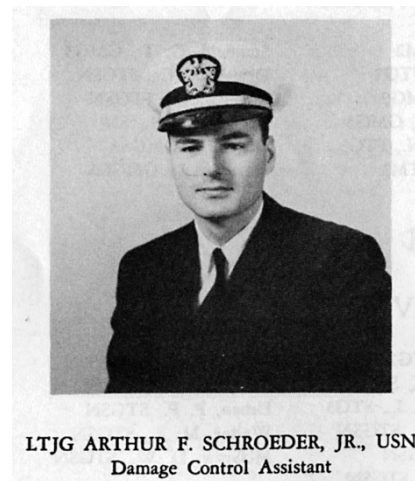
New Officer, New Ship

By Bill Jorgensen
(Reprinted from July 2004 Newsletter)

Not many officers get to begin their sea going career on a new ship. I was lucky enough to begin mine on the USS Bradley (DE 1041). It was late '64 when I reported "aboard" Bradley. Actually, she was still in the yards in Hunters Point and I reported to the XO, LCDR Squires, in San Diego. We had a few officers in a building on the Naval Base; from there the XO was getting us organized to go to San Francisco when the ship was ready for a crew. At the time I was newly commissioned Ensign and didn't have much of a clue what had to be done since I had most recently been a flight Radioman in MATS planes over the Pacific. Ships were new to me. I probably wasn't much help getting things together for the transition to San Francisco. The XO tried by sending me to a lot of schools, but it wasn't until we reported to Hunters Point that I acquired the appropriate "situational awareness."



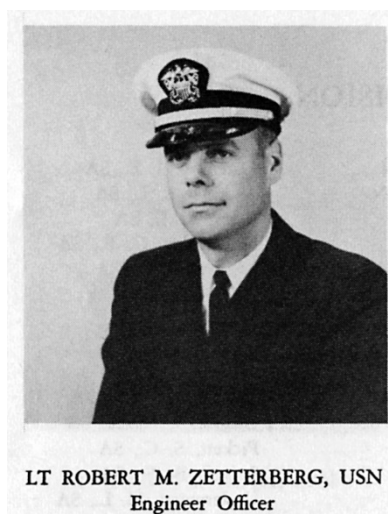
The ship was anything but a sea going entity then. She was still being outfitted. There were hundreds of things to be corrected, and there were workers all over her all the time. There were also air lines, steam hoses, electrical cables, (you name it) running from shore to ship all the time. And she was anything but clean! I can remember then LTJG Art Schroeder spending most of his time crawling in every space and void in that ship, large or small, and inspecting it for defects. He knew that ship better than anybody at that time, (or probably ever) did. I ended up going to DCA School at Treasure Island. I got more schools in the first 18 months than anybody.



LTJG ARTHUR F. SCHROEDER, JR., USN
Damage Control Assistant

I certainly can remember the first time out on sea trials. Now, I had been motion sick before. I had to get used to riding backwards (flight radioman station) bouncing along at 10,000 to 15,000 feet in a four engine, prop driven MATS plane. I did finally get over that and was able to cope. But the first time out on the Bradley was a real eye-opener for me on that little cruise. I eventually was able to "stomach" it, but some level of motion sickness was a constant companion for me while at sea.

Bradley gradually became a real Navy ship and she was really a nice-looking ship, with that high bow and rather low-slung superstructure. Being the second ship of the class to be commissioned we got a lot of attention. Underway training was a real challenge, but we were ready. We did extremely well on all exercises. I was Assistant DCA and spent my time in DC Central. We got through with no incidents, except for one. A plug in the fire main corroded away and dumped hundreds of gallons of



LT ROBERT M. ZETTERBERG, USN
Engineer Officer

seawater in the diesel generator room. That was a real challenge. Both automatic starters shorted from the salt water and started both emergency diesels. They just sat there and idled, with the generator coils splashing around and around in the salt water. Naturally they were both completely shorted out and useless. Then Engineer Officer LT Bob Zetterberg pulled out the trusty NAVSHIP engineering manuals and figured out how to put them both back in service without having to replace them. It took several washings with clean distilled water and hours of baking the coils with heat lamps. Then testing to be sure the salt was all out and doing it all over again. That went on for a few days, and finally they were ready for use. We never had any more trouble with them. Another incident that was a surprise was when most of the fluorescent light fixtures aft fell off the overhead from the vibrations during the test firing of the 5" 38 on the 01 level aft.

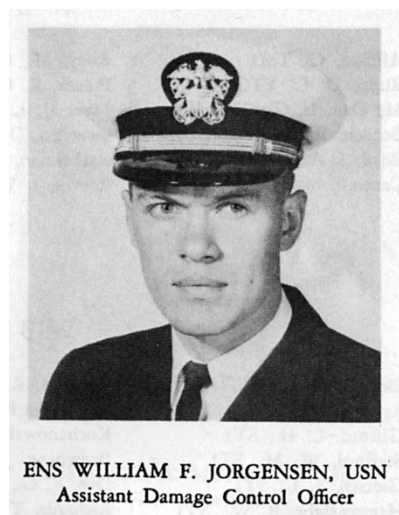
The first WESTPAC cruise took place in 1966, and CDR Whaley, second CO, ably led us. We left San Diego in Late May or early June and made it back in Late December. Before it was over, I ended by being the sea-detail JOOD, fueling officer (ask me about that sometime), qualifying as OOD Underway and ran DC Central during General quarters. There are many stories about that cruise. The wetting down Joe Todd and I had in Sasebo when we made LTJG was quite a time (what I can remember of it). I don't recollect getting back to the ship on my own, and I think Bob Zetterberg sort of carried me back. There were the port and starboard watches for a couple weeks in the South China Sea, where everyone was involved. There were four of us that stood bridge watches in pairs; i.e. eat mid-rats, stand watch from midnight to 0600, eat breakfast, sleep from 0600-1200, get up, eat lunch,

stand watch from 1200-0600, eat breakfast, sleep from 1800-2400 then do it all over again. There was another pair that did the reverse. Other than aching feet, we survived rather well. Since Bradley burned JP-5, we were asked to provide underway refueling of the helos as they hovered alongside the ship. That was always a bit exciting. We also refueled a few small boats. There was also the ship's party in Kaohsiung (I believe that's where it was). 'Nuff said about that!

I remember when I came aboard Bradley, I noticed that the deck in the aft officers' head was stainless steel plate. I wondered why it was different from the terrazzo in others. Then during firing of the aft gun I found out. The after officers head was the repository of spent 5"38 shell casings from the after gun on the 01 level. During shore bombardments that was a real trip when the head filled up with shell casings. I guess everybody else on the crew thought that was an appropriate use of the head. The cruise ended in a bit of a downer. Instead of going to Japan for our final WEST Pac shore leave before the states, the aftereffects of a typhoon forced us to go to Guam. We pretty much cleaned out the Navy Exchange. Almost everything of interest in the NEX (motorbikes, stereo sets, cases of spirits) ended up in our after-torpedo room for shipment home!

We arrived in San Diego a few days before Christmas. I took leave and went home to Michigan where I had a new baby girl waiting for me, born in November while we were off the coast of Vietnam. While I was in on leave in Michigan I was notified I was to be transferred to the USS Courtney to be the Engineering Officer. I was sorry to leave the USS Bradley. "Whatever it takes" was her motto, and that's what we did. I have never forgotten that great ship or the crew that sailed her on that first West Pac.

Bill Jorgensen



1964-1966



Insignia of the USS Bradley

*(From Commissioning Ceremony booklet,
15 May 1965)*

The design of the BRADLEY insignia was derived from ideas of personnel in BRADLEY's Crew and incorporates portions of the Bradley Family Coat of Arms.

The red shield, silver chevron and helmet, and gold boars' heads come from the Family's Coat of Arms and, together, denote boldness, daring, war, fire and blood - a burning desire to spill blood for God and Country.

The motto is taken from the Bradley Family also, and in translation means "Thou Shalt Be Free and Wise."





Passing the Nippon Maru somewhere in the Pacific, 1974 (I think). The Nippon Maru is a museum ship and former training vessel, built in 1930. She was replaced in 1984 by another training ship, also called the Nippon Maru.

