



## USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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*SHIPMATES! 2004 IS THE YEAR! USS BRADLEY'S FIRST SHIPWIDE REUNION!  
OCTOBER 7-10, 2004, RED LION HANAIEI HOTEL, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA!*

*ARE YOU REGISTERED WITH THE ASSOCIATION? REGISTERED MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE THE  
NECESSARY MAILINGS ABOUT THE REUNION AND HOW TO MAKE RESERVATIONS TO ATTEND.  
REGISTER ON THE SHIP'S WEBSITE!*

*DON'T MISS OUT ON MEETING AND SPENDING TIME WITH SO MANY OF YOUR FORMER BRADLEY  
SHIPMATES!*

### NOTES FROM THE RECOMM DETAIL

Orders to BRADLEY had come just before my first ship, USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) set sail for home from WESTPAC. On board, I had been the assistant CICO and Electronics Warfare Officer, but most of my time in Westpac was spent on CIC watch controlling AAW and ASW aircraft. We were on Condition 2 steaming in CIC for most of the time after the MADDOX and TURNER JOY were attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Orders for me to report to the PCO, DE-1041 in San Francisco, were welcome indeed after an 8-month cruise in GRIDLEY. I collected my wife in Long Beach and we reported to the PRECOMM nucleus crew in San Francisco Naval Shipyard in late 1964. We were assigned to "half a Quonset" up on the hill overlooking Giant Stadium. The housing was awful, the cockroaches unfearing but I could walk to work and my wife was with me for a change. I remember very clearly the first time I saw Bradley in the old Beth Steel Shipyard in San Francisco. Bradley was alongside the pier in the usual shipyard chaos, but looked really good even though we had months and months to go before we were scheduled for sea trials. This was almost shore duty.

My billet was a Lieutenant's billet, and I was about to come into the zone for promotion, so I was very gratified with the assignment. BRADLEY, designated as the second vessel in the GARCIA class of fast frigates, was mostly completed when I arrived. PCO CDR Robeson, PXO Howard Squires, PEO Zetterberg and PSO Wagner were already on board the PRECOMM detail although most of the crew was still in San Diego with the PXO. When I first went aboard the ship, berthed at one of the Beth Steel piers, she was probably 90% complete but filthy and full of construction equipment. CIC was almost complete and I was very pleased with what I saw. BRADLEY had been designed for a joint AAW/ASW mission (although how a Destroyer Escort or later a "Fast Frigate" with a top speed of 30 knots could survive a battle with a 50 knot submarine was a mystery to me) and was equipped with both an SPS 40 Air Search and SPS 10 Surface Search Radar. Her Sonar, SQS-25 however, was the crown jewel of the class. This equipment provided the advantage over most Soviet Submarines that would compensate for an engineering plant that was substandard for escort duty even 20 years before. BRADLEY's Electronic Warfare Suite was much improved from GRIDLEY's and I believed that she could more than pull her weight as part of a Carrier Task Force.

Most of the CIC crew were in San Diego for Precomm training with the "Balance Crew" but RD1 Blevins had been holding the fort (i.e., trying to make sure the BethSteel yard crew didn't screw up anything that had already been completed) and had done an excellent job. It was a lot of responsibility for a first class PO and usually an RDC would have been assigned with leading the Nucleus Crew. Blevins was totally qualified for RDC and, I hope, was promoted when he had enough time in grade. My ETC had a personal problem ashore and we had to transfer him before we left the shipyard.

I was ordered in as the CIC Officer and EMO/EWO--and it would have been the best duty I had in my entire 20 year career had I been able to remain aboard through our first deployment. There were four NESEP (scientifically educated enlisted guys) aboard; the XO, Howard Squires, OPS, Roger Nichols, my Assistant EMO, Jerry Menikheim and me. I had been a TD1 (Training Devicesman -- a blackshoe rating that served with the Airdales) when commissioned after 4 years studying engineering at MIT. My Assistant CICO, John Wales, had been a crewman aboard an America's Cup sailboat and had all of the knowledge about the sea that I had managed to ignore thus far in myline-officer career. John could always plot a course to intercept on the radar scope while I would have had to pull out the maneuvering board and do the calculations.

We had a great pre-comm and everything was going really well until our first (Builder's) sea trial. We left early in the morning, as usual for a single day at sea, and took Bradley through her paces out by the Faralon Islands. As most Pacific sailors know, the ground swell out there is absolutely atrocious. Garcia class DEs were the first ships (of which I am aware) to have "fin stabilizers". These were large fins installed at the turn of the keel on either side of the ship, amidships. These beasties were "digital". That is, they were driven by stepping motors instead of regular motors which are analog. These motors would move about (I'm guessing) 5 degrees at a time. When the port motor drove clockwise to raise the port side, the starboard side would step counter clockwise to drop the starboard side. We did pretty well until lunch time, and then the erratic motion of the ship in the ground swell started getting everyone seasick. I can't tell you how proud of myself I was (I was seasick a lot in Gridley) that I hadn't gotten sick until I went out on the port wing of the bridge where a signalman upchucked over the side right next to me. I carried a bucket with me everywhere after that until we got back into the bay. I can't tell you how I cussed those stepping motors.

There are many memorable events that took place during our Fitting Out period (right after Commissioning) with the crew (united now) tried to get the "sand crabs" to complete the work that had to be done before we were fully acceptable to the Navy. After we completed our yard period and transited to San Diego Naval Station (our first attempt at docking alongside the Destroyer piers with that huge Sonar Dome brought out a couple of tug --unusual for a Destroyer and unbelievable for a DE) and a very careful approach to the pier. CDR Robeson got used to calling out the tugs whenever we came back to port, but Lt. Wagner was always very nervous when we passed under the Coronado Bay Bridge.

We started our training in San Diego that culminated in our "Underway Training Problems" that required passing grades from shore-based inspectors before we qualified for a WESTPAC deployment. The Radarmen and Sonarmen competed mightily during these training period and Lt. Wagner and I would always had much to discuss when we went to the club for a short one after coming ashore. On one of these "quals" we had to pass an "Air Intercept" qualification. At that time I was the only qualified Air Controller aboard and thus had the full load of the intercept. The SPS-40 radar, that day, performed very poorly. I had had "paint" on the bogie at about 220 miles out and was able to determine his course and speed. Soon thereafter I lost

him and had to dead recon his approach seeing an actual radar return only occasionally. I never saw more than one radar paint on him until he passed over the ship at about 20 miles out where he was really really bright on the scope. The intercept aircraft was an A-3 and I'm pretty sure the intercept pilot never did see the bogie. He was nice enough, however, to report that he had "splashed" the bogie and the observer aboard BRADLEY gave us a passing grade. After that experience I made so many complaints about the SPS-40 (I had calculated that the lobes created by interference between the main radar beam and the reflection off the surface of the sea were much wider than they were supposed to be) that the decision not to test the antenna at a radar range went all the way to Washington. I have no idea how the 40 performed thereafter, and maybe some of my follow-on Air Controllers could comment.

Somehow, in the spring of 1966, I got the idea to try to influence my detailer in Washington to cut me a set of shore duty orders for after BRADLEY'S deployment. He misunderstood what I said and assumed that I was going to resign my commission. I had a set of orders within a couple of days for a 12 month "unaccompanied tour" for USS ANNAPOLIS (AGMR-1). Annaboat's assignment was to cruise "in the vicinity" of Yankee Station and help ships to communicate with Guam, the Philippines and Hawaii. There were 4 radarmen, an SPS-10, two SPA-4 repeaters and a DRT in my "command". Because I had been a "Destroyer Officer" the CO assigned me to be the leading Officer of the Deck for this 36000 ton oiler hull converted to an Aircraft Carrier (in 1945) and converted to a communication-relay in 1965. I think I scared him to death with my lack of skill in ship handling because he converted me to a satellite communications research officer soon after my arrival. After the Annaboat I spent my remaining seven years in that field, and my proudest accomplishments were in getting the Fleet Satellite Communications System defined and started.

LTjg Don Horner  
PCICO/EMO  
LCDR, USN Ret.

## **TRIBUTE to NAVAL SIGNALMEN**

### **Captain David L. Woods, USNR (RET)**

The near-inevitable loss to the U.S. Navy of the signalman rating represents much in the culture and lore of all naval

services. The accomplishments, triumphs, and failures of signal personnel and systems have been recorded for history by a number of dedicated naval officers. Among them ... myself ... and most notably Commander Hilary P. Mead, Royal Navy.

Perhaps the finest tribute to the signal breed and the often mysterious "systems" these "skivvy-wavers" mastered is a poem found in the annals of the British tabloid, *The Army and Navy Illustrated*, popular in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and first several decades of the 21<sup>st</sup>. This lengthy poem was written anonymously by a British signalman under the pen name "Flag-wagger". Somewhere in my files, I have the entire poem, but I fear it was shipped last summer with other papers to a collection of signal memorabilia gathering in my name at the new library of San Jose State University, my alma mater. Meanwhile, I cite the final two stanzas as an appropriate written memorial for this sad occasion. It is the conclusion of "The Lay of the Last Signalman":

To delete the human error, to erase a  
noble breed, We rely upon a relay, and  
we pin our faith to Creed.

So we press a button, make a switch,  
and spin a little wheel. And it's cent  
per cent efficient - when we're on an  
even keel.

But again I may be needed, for the time  
will surely come  
When we have to talk in silence, and the  
Modern stuff is dumb.

When the signal lantern's flashing or  
the flags are flying free-  
It was good enough for Nelson, and it's  
good enough for me.

In memory of the many glories of signals and signalmen!

(This article is reprinted from the February 2004 issue of **PROCEEDINGS**, page 26. Captain Woods is the author of several books and articles on signals, according to the article. I was personally unaware that the Navy was considering eliminating signalmen from Navy ships. I agree that it is a sad passing.)  
**Ed.**