



# USS BRADLEY ASSOCIATION

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## USS BRADLEY (DE/FF-1041) REUNION

As most everyone knows by now, the first ship wide reunion for those who served aboard the **BRADLEY** will be held from 7-10 October 2004 at the Hanalei Red Lion Hotel in San Diego, California.

A mailing recently went out to all registered association members from ML&RS, the company planning and running the reunion for the association. Members should have returned both forms as well as two pictures of themselves...one from their days aboard and the second a current photograph of themselves. Name, address etc should have been written on the back of the photographs. There's still time to get these materials mailed in to ML&RS. They are going to put together a great memory book for us but we have to get them the stuff they need!

If **ANYONE** is having any difficulty with any of this, please contact me. A couple guys have already contacted me and we've been able to solve their problems.

Registered association members will receive their next mailing from ML&RS in early summer. This is when we will register to attend the reunion, make hotel reservations, and sign up for local tours, if desired.

We're still trying to locate more former **BRADLEY** shipmates. Remember, new members can register with the association on the ship's website at: [www.ussbradley.com](http://www.ussbradley.com) or by e-mailing me with their information.

Sure hope we have a terrific turn-out in San Diego for the reunion. I really want to get to meet many new shipmates, especially those I've 'gotten to know' via the world-wide web. Of course I also want to spend some time with those shipmates I served aboard with too.

# **A "BOOT" REMEMBERS LONG BEACH NAVAL SHIPYARD LATE 1971- EARLY 1972**

Like many other **BRADLEY** sailors I spent time in Long Beach, California while the ship was undergoing a major overhaul. The most noticeable physical change to occur to the **BRADLEY** during this particular overhaul was the removal of the original hanger and its replacement with a new larger one. A new sonar dome was also included in the changes. Many other jobs were undertaken but I wouldn't even try to name them all. While most of the work didn't involve my comrades and work place I still have many memories of this time. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

It was a warm day in late November 1971, the 8<sup>th</sup> to be exact, when I arrived at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Naval Station, a new PNSN, and made my way to the **USS BRADLEY** tied up at one of the piers. Boot Camp had been at Great Lakes, Illinois with Service School at NTC, San Diego. The day I arrived at NTC, Great Lakes in April, it was snowing and it was hot as Hades on the day I left there in early July!

My arrival at the **BRADLEY** was naturally stressful enough for a young rated Seaman, without having to show up without my sea bag, thanks to a foul-up by American Airlines. For some reason, I've always hated that airline ever since! My immediate supervisors in the Ship's Office, were none too happy to see me 'the new guy' arrive aboard with only the dress blues he was wearing and his orders, thank God. Soon I was sent off to the small stores on base to buy a working uniform. It would be a couple weeks before my sea bag finally arrived at the airline's office in downtown Long Beach. It was better traveled at the time than I!

This was when I met the man who was going to have the greatest impact on my time aboard **BRADLEY**, and the U.S. Navy for that matter, PN1 (later Chief) Bill Hall. Bill was Leading Personnelman and taught the new PNSN what that job was really all about. Later I had the good fortune to meet PN1 Hall's wife Rose and his family. It was with great sadness that I learned of her passing in April 2003. In years to come I would spend a lot of time at their home, including several Thanksgiving dinners. Mutual respect led to a long time friendship that I am very proud of to this very day.

YN1 Bob Little, Leading Yeoman and PNSN Tom Vierhuff, an Alaskan, also worked in the Ship's Office at the time. Tom later left us to join the Supply detail and didn't return to **BRADLEY** until shortly before we left the yards. Bob and I had a bit of a rocky start. I was a college boy (another story) and didn't find out until six or eight months later why he and many of the other career sailors seemed somewhat uncomfortable with me. It seems they feared that I was a Navy plant, perhaps from the Naval Investigative Service, sent aboard to check out and clean up. I've been told that this had been done at various commands, from time to time. Several months later, when I learned of their apprehension my initial reaction was to think it quite amusing. But I was still very new to the Navy and its ways.

Several days after my arrival aboard, **BRADLEY** was towed (over-night) to Long Beach Naval Shipyard and dry-docked. The entire operation was of great interest to me. I considered it a real marvel and indeed it is. To this day I have a wonderful sets of slides of **BRADLEY** in dry-dock on a couple different occasions. Seems I can vaguely remember a discussion between then PN1 Hall and the PN2 I was replacing about my taking the 1JV on the bridge during the towing detail. Needless to say the PN2 wasn't too happy about having to be phone talker for the trip because the new rookie wasn't up to it. After we left the yards and beginning with refresher training the bridge was to become my GQ and Sea Detail phone talker assignment through the first cruise and until I became Leading Personnelman. I'll always remember those midnight UNREPS with the carrier or a fleet oiler on those beautifully warm, star studded nights.

We stayed in that dry dock for several months. Most of the younger, non-rated and single crewmembers lived aboard during the entire shipyard period. I've been told that this was not the practice in later years. A select few were sent to barracks on the adjacent Naval Station to work with the Supply Dept. My most vivid memory of those months in Long Beach was of it being constantly dirty and noisy. Later experiences would impress upon me that the **Bradley** was one of the cleanest places I've ever lived! The shipyard workers, affectionately termed 'yard-birds' were another matter. I had never really appreciated the significance of the term before. They did their jobs but made our life more uncomfortable and didn't seem to care too much about it. After all, they were able to go home each day after their shift was over.

Much of my time and that of the non-rated personnel was occupied with fire watches. Dragging a large CO2 Fire Extinguisher around the ship following a group of welders and then standing by while they first got prepared to work and then actually did the job. There was a lot of cutting of metal going on all around the ship. They even cut several holes in the overhead in the Ship's Office for tie downs on the future Helo Deck. Before our time in the yard was finished we had retiled the deck and painted out the office. The yard personnel painted the passageway outside our office later.

Working parties were another frequent part of my duties while in the shipyard. As I think back at it, post deployment transfers had significantly reduced the crew and I can't remember many new crewmembers arriving while the ship remained in Long Beach. This meant that those of us who were E-3's and even the PO3's could expect to spend part of our workday on working party details. I didn't particularly like these details but I realized I wasn't essential to my workspace. Years later when I became Leading Personnelman and LPO for NIX Division I was the one assigning people to such details. What goes around comes around?

After the dry-docking period the ship was moved to a nearby pier. Later, I can't remember exactly when, we moved to a pier in the Naval Station at Long Beach, which is no longer in existence.

We in the Ship's Office worked directly for the Executive Officer, the Exec or XO and through him the Commanding Officer (CO). The XO spent quite a lot of time in our office and most of us were in and out of his stateroom/office many times as well during the workday. He even had a buzzer in our office to call for our presence when necessary. His stateroom/office was directly across the passageway from the Ship's Office. Later during my time aboard, the office on the deck above, near the Wardroom used by the Commodore's Staff, was taken over and became the Ship's Office and our office was renamed the Personnel Office.

I mention this because it put us in the somewhat unusual situation of getting to know Executive Officers better than most of the crew, at least the non-rated and lower rated guys. Now I don't mean we were familiar and we certainly didn't fraternize. But working in such close proximity to the second in command enabled us to develop a unique relationship. I'm struggling here to put something not-so-obvious in words.

When I arrived LCDR Robert A. Peterson was the XO. In the beginning I didn't have that much to do with him since I was very new to the ship and pretty useless due to my lack of knowledge about things that went on. And of course, I was frequently off on fire watches or working parties, since I was the only non-petty officer working in the office. However, before LCDR Peterson left the ship, sometime after March of 1972, I had become an important part of the office team. I enjoyed my work and always had the opportunity to learn something new and, as time went by, was given more and more responsibility. We handled all the ship's administration, maintained enlisted service records, officer's records and nearly everything else. Later LCDR Richard T. Vallin would take over as Executive Officer before we left the yards. I would have the opportunity to work with him during refresher training and my first deployment to WESTPAC. LCDR Robert Sisson would be the last XO I worked for aboard Bradley. In fact, he and I both left Bradley on the same day, April 11, 1975.

What I remember most fondly about those days in Long Beach were the many places I traveled to on liberty via public transportation, which was really amazing or by hitching rides with shipmates who had a car. Public buses could be boarded at both the shipyard gate and the Naval Station gates. I learned you could even get to Disneyland and many other destinations via the buses. Downtown Long Beach was a frequent destination and we all got to know the restaurants and other haunts of that city. Seems to me that the Denny's was a particular favorite. The Queen Mary was just recently arrived as well. Port-o-Call Village in San Pedro was another place to pick up some civvies or have a good meal and a couple drinks and was only a short bus ride from the gate. We'll hear more about Ports-O-Call Village and San Pedro later.

Shortly after arriving I had the good fortune to meet a fellow New Yorker, from upstate Syracuse, Dave Hoskins. Dave was **BRADLEY'S** Navy Postal Clerk and a member of our division, which also included the corpsmen and the quartermasters. We became fast friends and have remained so to this day. Largely as a result of this I became the Assistant Navy Postal Clerk. He was nearing the end of his enlistment and would leave the ship in WESTPAC. However, those months spent in Long Beach and later back in San Diego before leaving on the cruise were made more enjoyable for me not only by his friendship but also because Dave had a car...of sorts. It was one of those cars with a name and personality...The Red Ranger, a 1958 (I think) red Ford Convertible. It wasn't exactly in the best

of condition but it got us all over Southern California. I'll leave it at that. Perhaps Dave might like to write more about the Red Ranger himself.

One day I can remember pretty clearly was Christmas Eve, 1971. Dave and I were both going to be aboard but did not have the duty that day. Once again, I can't remember whether we were scheduled for duty on Christmas Day or not. At any rate we decided we were going to go and find some Christmas cheer. Although it started to rain heavily and the convertible roof of the Red Ranger was leaking we made it to Ports-O-Call Village in San Pedro. We dried out near the roaring fireplace of The Whaler Restaurant. The City of San Pedro itself was a heavily industrialized and a somewhat depressed area. It was a real sailor town in many ways and there were always sailors from merchant ships to be found as well as the U.S. Navy variety. At any rate Dave and I had a couple of good drinks followed by a great lunch in the New England themed restaurant in the village. We definitely felt more cheerful when we returned to the **BRADLEY**!

For at least part of our time in Long Beach, Dave and I were in the same duty section so we were usually free the same weekends. Weekend duty commenced at 16:00 on Friday afternoon and expired at 08:00 on Monday morning for the duty section. This duty plan worked out well for those shipmates with families in San Diego. I think we were on four-section duty so you could count on having 3 out of 4 weekends free each month, so we went many places and did many things. Some of these things were the typical things most sailors do. Others were actually educational and even cultural.

On New Year's Day 1972 a group of guys from the ship took in the Tournament of Roses Parade in nearby Pasadena. I had seen a flyer about it at Special Services on the base and signed up. Dave didn't make this outing and, unfortunately, I can't remember who went along. We left very early in the morning by bus and were on the street by 7am. We were in the downtown part of the city. It was a wonderful experience. Each year since when I watch that pageant on television I can remember the fragrance of the flowers on those floats.

While the ship was in Long Beach I took a week's leave and my folks flew to LA to join me. My Dad had spent some time at Camp Pendleton, as a U.S. Marine, during World War II but neither of them had seen any of California. The four of us, Dave included, drove the Pines to Palms route from LA to Palm Springs and back. It was an introduction to a state I would visit many times in later years. A few days later my parents and I flew to San Francisco for a couple days then onto Las Vegas before returning to LA. It was a really great leave and an opportunity to see my folks since I knew we would be leaving in a few months on a six-month deployment.

Soon the overhaul would be over. **BRADLEY** would sail back to San Diego via Seal Beach for ammo. Refresher Training would be a grueling experience but one at which the crew would excel. But that's another **BRADLEY** story.

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