

# YANCEY MEMORIES

Volume 9, Issue 2

July 2005

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS YANCEY AKA-93



### Special Points of Interest

- The conclusion of the series on "Crossing the Line" is our cover story. We'd love to hear about your experience.
- Five newly located ship-mates are in the Welcome Mat on page three. Welcome aboard!
- George Rohrman has a rebuttal about the "sticky buns" story. He also has some memories of his time in the Navy. See Mail Call on page four.
- Do you remember any swimming parties? Harold Hegler and Ken Groom share some of their memories on pages four and five.
- Lyle Nelson sent in his story about a weekend "crow's nest watch" that helped make good sailors. Details on page 5.
- George Rohrman sent in the explanation of some Navy traditions. Check out pages five and six.

## CROSSING THE LINE—"RITUAL FOR ANCIENT ORDER OF THE DEEP"

Taken from the publication of the Yancey "Court of the Raging Main, Being the Good Ship Yancey's First Voyage Across the Line", dated 14 March 1945

Continued from April 2005 issue:

On the day of initiation when all is in readiness for the reception of Neptune and Party, the navigator reports the ship is on the "line." Davy Jones appears and reports to the Officer of the Deck that the Captain is to be informed that Neptunus Rex and Party have been sighted ahead. The Flag of Neptune is broken when Neptune and Court appear on the deck. When officers and crew fall in at quarters or where designated, the Royal Party proceeds slowly aft to meet Davy Jones.

NEPTUNE: (When he

meets Davy Jones): Well, well, what a fine ship and what a cargo of landlubbers.

Officer of the Deck salutes and reports with much dignity that the Captain awaits the Royal Party. Party proceeds.

CAPTAIN: A sailor's welcome to you, Neptunus Rex. It is a great pleasure to have you with us.

NEPTUNE: The pleasure is mine. Allow me to present Royal Navigator Shellback who will relieve you. I am glad to be with you again Captain, and have prepared for a busy day in order to make your landlubbers fit subjects of my great sea domain.

CAPTAIN: May I invite your attention to the fact that I have several young officers and members of the crew aboard who have not been in the service long enough to have had an opportunity to visit your domain and become Shellbacks. I beg you to be as lenient with them as possible.

NEPTUNE: Ah! Captain, I will be severe as I can—as severe as I can.

Captain then introduces officers who have crossed the line before. These officers converse with the immediate personal staff of Neptune for a minute or two.

(Continued on page 2)

*(Continued from page 1)*

**CAPTAIN:** Neptune, I turn my command to you for such time as you wish.

**NEPTUNE:** Very well, Captain. Thank you. *(Turning to Royal Navigator)* Royal Navigator, proceed to the bridge and direct the ship on the course assigned.

*Royal Party is then escorted to the throne. They ascend. Initiation commences with officers first.*

## SHARKS-EYE VIEW OF CEREMONY

The skull and crossed bones of the Jolly Roger whipped sprightly from the foremast as the bow of the Yancey dipped into the blue calm of the mid-Pacific Ocean. King Neptune, with flowing beard and ancient garb, was seated close to his buxom and gracious Queen. All was ready in the Royal Court for the righteous torture and cruelties to be inflicted upon that sordid crew of Pollywogs, landlubbers and drug store cowboys, who soon were to be reborn as good and loyal subjects of Neptune.

Davy Jones sat comfortably, red sash bright with the blood of former infidels, shining earrings, four inches in diameter, swaying in the gentle breeze. A black patch adorned his left eye on an equally black face. He stamped his ornated pegleg in approval as the Royal Police emptied their nets on the hot deck, revealing as pitiful a lot as the sea had ever seen.

Such creatures the eyes would never want to behold again. Little bilge rats with enormous legs, oversized sea lawyers with burning eyes, paunchy cavalleros, the San Pedro type. An indescribable variety of crawling, slithering bodies all desperately trying to escape the fate which was so close at hand.

Miracles of Miracles! The vile species seemed to multiply before the eyes. Soon there were hun-

dreds overrunning the decks. Old and veteran shellbacks looked askance at the almost impossible task of overcoming the black mass before them. Although outnumbered three to one, they realized the mean task must be done. The sea must be forever rid of these foul Pollywogs.

Beating and driving, yelling and threatening, they gradually began herding their victims back into the No. 1 Hold, from which there was no escape. The Royal Police singled out the especially rebellious leaders and instigators, setting them aside as "special cases."

The black rogues were no match for the inspired shellbacks. Soon they were encased in the hold. Had one the courage, however, to peer into the black cavern, one might have belched at the nauseating sight of the shining, slick, twisting bodies heaped one upon another.

Angered beyond the point of reasoning, the Sons of Neptune commenced their initiating proceedings, releasing their captives slowly in order to maintain control. Pollywogs began dancing along the decks as the oars of the ancient Viking whips of the ruthless galley masters showered blows upon their soft bottoms.

It became apparent now, that the black rumps were changing to a light pink and soon began to glow with a furnace-like fierceness—the first evidence in the birth of a Shellback.

The Sons of Neptune were gay once again. The gaily costumed sea farers hurled their insults and oaths of the deep at the unfortunates now parading before them. One by one they were brought before Neptune to answer the charges against them, then to be led off and dealt with accordingly.

First the Royal Barber, who caressed their hair with his well sharpened shears, aided by the Royal Electrician administering gentle prods with his specially designed volt applicator. An adequate dose of castor oil and a potion of ground sea shells and bilge water were forced by the Royal Doctor, upon the palates of the fast weakening lot.

Constantly beaten at the least sign

of resistance, well greased and doctored, and their wild hair appropriately trimmed, they were then rushed to the Royal Undertaker for encasement in the Royal Coffin. Here their souls were cleansed with the pure salt water of the sea flooding the oblong encasement.

By this time a change was coming about. The blows, the shocks, the grease—all were having their effects in the transfiguration. No longer crawling, but staggering across the deck, these once arrogant feather merchants had reached the depths of submission.

The Electric Chair suddenly became alive as eager Pollywogs seeking momentary rest, deposited themselves into the "hot seat", only to find their wet seats a mass of positive charges. Well greased again while twitching in the Chair, they suddenly found themselves revolving through space into the Royal Tank, where two of Neptune's Bears eagerly immersed them, awaiting their first cries of "Shellback." Few proved difficult, but those who were, unhappily repeated the whole procedure, and were dealt with harshly. Anointed by the Royal Chaplain with his electrically charged rod, and encouraged through the Slop Chute by blows on their raw rumps, the newly initiated then were welcomed into the Domain of Neptune Rex.

The Jolly Roger was lowered. King Neptune had returned to this Royal Domain to await the arrival of a new group of landlubbers, bilge rats, feather merchants to be given as food to the sharks, whales, frogs and all living things of the sea. All was secure on the Yancey as she continued on her missions of war throughout the far flung Pacific. Her bow slid nobly through the peaceful seas, free from the wrath and vengeance of that mightiest of sea lords.

*This concludes the series from "Court of the Raging Main"*

## STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The YANCEY MEMORIES is the official publication of the USS YANCEY AKA-93 Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the YANCEY. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of article submitted for publication. It would be a monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the submitter to re-search each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space and grammar limitations.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

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## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance remaining after 04/05

**\$440.81**

Funds received since 04/05

**\$25.00**

Funds available for 07/05

**\$465.81**

Funds expended for 07/05

**\$336.80**

Remaining balance for 10/05

**\$129.01**

**Funds will be needed for the next newsletter.** Contributions to the Yancey Memories can be made to ML&RS at the address below. Be sure to state that the donation is for Yancey Memories newsletter.

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*"Our Reunions Work So You don't  
Have To"*

## PEARL HARBOR FACTS

Killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor were 2,001 people from the Navy, 109 Marines, 231 from the Army, and 54 civilians. Twelve ships were sunk or beached, and another nine damaged; 164 aircraft were destroyed, 159 damaged. The attack began at 7:55 a.m. local time.



## WELCOME MAT

The following shipmate has been located since the last newsletter. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

*Everett Jones (1947-50) ET3*  
714 Buffalo Hills St  
Buffalo, MN 55313  
763-684-0428  
[David.jones@bwig.net](mailto:David.jones@bwig.net)

*Sheldon Gotesky*  
(1966-69) SN 3rd Div  
1089 Berkshire Pl  
The Villages, FL 32162  
[gotesky5@aol.com](mailto:gotesky5@aol.com)

*Jim Mathis (1944-46) Boat Div*  
1171 Octonia Rd  
Standardville, VA 22973  
434-985-3166

*Miles Meadows (1967-71) BM3*  
1385 Mt Torrey Rd  
Lyndhurst, VA 22952  
[Mike\\_alene@msn.com](mailto:Mike_alene@msn.com)

*Dennis Brooks (1967) FTG3*  
37 Charles St  
South Dennis, MA  
508-394-1687  
[papadeny@yahoo.com](mailto:papadeny@yahoo.com)

## 2005 USS YANCEY REUNION

# NOVEMBER 11-13

## NORFOLK, VA



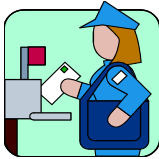
## TAPS

The Yancey Memories was notified of the following shipmates' deaths. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families of the deceased. Anyone who knows of a deceased shipmate, or learns of one, please notify ML & RS, Inc so their names can be included in TAPS and be added to the Honor Roll.

*Edgar M. Glenn, Jr.  
Died January 24, 2005*

*Leland Piper  
(1953-55) BM 1/c 1st Deck  
Died December 31, 2004*

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## MAIL CALL

ML&RS, Inc.,

I was astounded to read an article about me sniffing "sticky buns" from Jack. I never did that and would not have sent in an article about having done that even if I did do that, which I did not. I do remember the Baker well because the bake shop was near the Boat repair shop which was a part of the Engineering Repair division. One member of that shop was Sid Owens, a well known fixture aboard the Yancey. I do not believe that baker's name was Jack, but I do remember that he had red hair and wore white bakers' clothes so the dusting of flour would not have shown up on him. He was an extraordinary baker and did a great job. The bakery always did smell good.

Also, no one called me to let me know about the northern lights, and since I stood Damage Control

watches and toured the entire ship four times each watch to take soundings of the bilge tanks and assure that hatches were closed for water tight integrity and that there were no fires or that no one was selling unauthorized newspapers, so you would think that I would have seen the lights. But no, I just am not very observant. Maybe I was in ME School.

Now Botello I remember. Every ship needs at least one man like that. I guess that I was not on the same USS Yancey AKA 93. I was in Company 93 in boot camp in San Diego and was first sent aboard a ship named Yancey as a deck hand in the First Division. While on my first trip to Sasebo, Japan in 1951, I was notified that I had been accepted to Metal Smith's School, and so I rode a train from Sasebo to Tokyo and flew in a DC-3 cargo plane to Guam and Hawaii and San Francisco and another train to San Diego where I learned welding, sheet metal work and how to be a blacksmith. My most disappointing memory during the four years (January 1951 to December 1954) that I spent in the Navy was that I never did get a chance to shoe any horses. My blacksmith education was not entirely wasted however, because there are a lot of horses in Texas where I went to school before and after my cruise with the Navy.

Ken, you and I have a great deal in common. I too have a hard time trying to separate the fact from the fiction, but I do remember that anything that you hear about those four years could very well have happened. It was a ship filled with a compliment of men who were memorable to say the least, and some did have very active imaginations. I have not told of too many things that I remember happening because I am not sure that anyone would believe me if I did tell some of them. Some of the things could not be told anyway unless there is a statute of limitations on being held accountable for some of the activities.

George Rohrman  
Metal smith 2nd Class, USN

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To all the sailors my husband was in the service with,

I'd like to say he really enjoyed all the newsletters he's received through the years of the ships he's been on.

Sadly to say, he never had the chance to go to any of the reunions, in the end he'd been too sick for over 4 years to enjoy getting up each day.

My husband, Leland Piper (USS Yancey AKA 93) passed away December 31, 2004.

Please keep him and all his shipmates in your prayers.

Thank you,  
Pauline Piper

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## YANCEY IN THE SWIM OF THINGS

*Harold Hegler sent this story to me (Ken Groom) and asked if I could add something to it. It brought back memories of a photograph I had taken—he had sent me a similar photo. The photo showed several sailors in an M boat. Someone had arranged for the Yancey crew to go on a swimming party in "99 Islands." Here is his story:*

In Sasebo Ko, we'd load up in an M boat—it was really loaded. I don't know how many, but looking at an old slide or two, it was a bunch. As I recall, we'd head out of Sasebo harbor, thru the submarine nets and turn north for a short ride to "99 Islands." This was a group of coral encrusted islands and very pretty. The water was so clear you could see down to the bottom. We'd anchor the M boat and stay for some time. Someone decided it was time for a contest. You were supposed to dive down the anchor chain (which Dave Chestnut remembers as being on the stern) and tie a piece of cloth to the maximum depth that you could go. Then the next in line would try to retrieve it. The object being who could dive the deepest. I remember I couldn't go nearly as deep as some of the guys, but did go deeper than I ever had before,

*(Continued from page 4)*

the pressure was something down there! I don't know how deep the "record" was, but somebody may remember.

There were plenty of refreshments. How they got these to the M boat, I don't know, but there was no shortage. It was a popular place and a few sampans were pattering around the area with quart (liter) bottles of ice cold beer (Hoppy's favorite?). The big bottles were the only type used back then in Japan.

I don't remember who was the coxswain of the M boat, my best memory says it was Whitney. Those were the good times!

Harold Hegler

The Yancey had other swimming parties. The one I remember happened one sunny day in Sasebo. One of the hills surrounding Sasebo had a swimming pool (I am a bit hazy on this) near the top of the hill. There were small beer stalls along the path to the pool. Some, like myself, never made it to the top. But, as I am told, some also made it back to the ship. What I remember may be a different incident. As some of the swimmers returned to the ship, they decided that they would like to finish off the party with some diving contest. My recollection and hearing from Edwin Booth and Gayle Ellis is that they would watch the OOD on the quarter deck move along the quarter deck from the Port to the Starboard side and then the diving would start from the main deck railing into a sea of ?? Gayle Ellis moved to first place by going to the flying bridge and making a beautiful swan dive. I tried to get the full story from Gayle at one of the reunions, but never did hear the full story. I wish some of you could correct and clarify this story.

Ken Groom, Yancey Historian

*I first met my shipmate, Lyle Nelson, when I joined the Yancey after boot camp. Lyle had been on board about two months. I had just been assigned to the 2nd division to work with him. He was introduced to me by a leading seaman who said, "When Lyle came aboard he didn't know anything, now he knows 'everything.'" Lyle had on his faded dungarees and his 'seaming hat' and had that steely look smoking a cigarette. I realized later that he must have seasoned that hat by tying a line to it and casting it over the fantail for a trolling of about two days. Lyle later moved into the ship's office as a Yeoman striker. A few months later, I was asked to strike for Yeoman in the same office. It became a lasting friendship. This is his story he sent to me for the Yancey Newsletter*

Ken Groom, Historian

## LYLE NELSON'S STORY

We were returning to CONLUS after our first voyage to Sasebo and were approaching the Farallon Island area which is notorious for high swells and rough water. All of us who were SAs (60-80-100? in number), who just got out of boot camp and came aboard prior to the first sailing felt very salty with our new-found sea legs and were anxious to dock at Oakland and experience stateside liberty.

Little did we know that probably some of the CPOs and junior officers had schemed to instigate a "crow's nest watch" of only 15 or 30 minutes to provide sadistic entertainment and test the mettle of the first and second deck divisions...and so a watch list was posted for (as I recall) the daylight hours of that Saturday and Sunday. Because of the topside conditions—winds that blew the breaking waves' spray to coat the decks and probably halfway up the ladder to the CN and with the ship rolling, a climber was nearly on all fours as Yancey rolled to starboard and hanging on for one's life as she returned to port, and below one was a stormy sea that held sure death if our grip with wet hands on wet ladder rungs failed (that probably is just a per-

sonal assessment). However, more than one sailor gathered around the watch list was offering a cash reward to any man who would stand in for him. With white hat brim pulled down and foul weather jacket collar turned up, who on the bridge even with binoculars could positively identify the imposter.

Upon reaching the top of the ladder it was necessary to step onto the platform, open the CN door, enter and close the door. With the ship's extreme port to starboard yawing a slight tipping of the CN was discernable, and it was then that we noticed that rust had rendered the nest still welded at some points and not welded at others. After all, with the advent of radar, what BMC would ever think about chipping, scrapping and painting that outdated and unused appendage.

All watches were stood by the majority of those so assigned without one incident, accident, man overboard or loss of life. After descending the ladder and with our feet once again on deck, we felt very good about ourselves and so those responsible for this weekend lark, knowingly or not, helped to mold us "boots" into what we eventually would become, good sailors and true shipmates with memories of a half-century ago that are still with us.

Lyle Nelson YN1 (1951-54)

*(The writer's trepidation of heights "possibly" affected his viewpoint of events as they actually happened.)*

## NAVY TRADITIONS EXPLAINED

Submitted by George Rohrman

**MESS DECKS:** It comes from the Latin term "mensa" meaning tables. "Mesa" is Spanish for table and "mes" in old Gothic means a dish. The English word originally meant four, and at large meal gatherings diners were seated in fours. Shakespeare wrote of Henry's four sons as

*(Continued from page 5)*

his mess of sons." The word "mess" that suggests confusion comes from the German "mischen", meaning to mix.

**CUP OF JOE:** Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, scandalized by reports of drunkenness aboard ship, issued an order in 1919 banning the serving of wine in the wardroom and any consumption of alcohol aboard ship. Daniels, a teetotaler, decreed that only coffee or tea should be served. This was not a popular order and sailors promptly dubbed a cup of coffee as "cup of joe." The rest of the story of Navy Coffee. *MMCM (SS) Greg Peterman USN Retired*

**CATHEAD & COCKBILL:** Catheads are projections on the bow of a ship for rigging the tackles to raise or lower the anchor. Indeed, the term "to cat and fish" was used as early as 1626. A cat's face was often carved on the end of these beams for good luck; hence the term, 'cathead.'

To cockbill the anchor is to suspend it from the cathead preparatory to letting it go.

*Greg Peterman*

**DISBURSING OFFICE:** This comes from the medieval word, "bursar" who was the nobleman's keeper of the cash. Hence the word, "disburse," when referring to payments or salaries to the crew.

**SHADOW BOX:** The tradition of presenting a shadow box to a retiring sailor is born of early British custom. In the days of sail, when Briton ruled the sea, it was considered bad luck for a sailor, upon final departure from a ship, to allow his shadow to hit the pier before he himself departed the ship. In order to ensure no such misfortune would befall their shipmate, the crew would construct a box of the finest timber and place within it all things that reflected his accomplishments, only then could the man, with the

"SHADOW" of himself in hand, safely depart the ship and go ashore once and for all.

*Greg Peterman*

**TOASTING SOMEONE:** This term for drinking to one's health, or in one's honor was coined in early days along the waterfronts, when it was customary to place a small piece of toast in the hot toddy and the mulled wine which was popular with seamen of the day. Know what the daily Navy Toasts are? The daily toasts are:

Mon — Our ships at sea

Tues— Our men

Wed — Ourselves

Thurs — A bloody war and a sickly season

Fri — A willing foe and sea room

Sat — Sweethearts and wives— may they never meet

Sun — Absent friends

**FORECASTLE:** The appropriate pronunciation for this word is fo'ksul. The forecandle is the forward part of the main deck. It derives its name from the days of Viking galleys when wooden castles were built on the forward and after parts of the main deck from which archers and other fighting men could shoot arrows and throw spears, rocks, etc.

#### Thoughts:

Look at the Spanish galleons and the ships that preceded them. The intent was to make the ships a floating castle. The History Channel has an excellent series on the various major era of ship construction throughout the centuries. The galleon had a forward and after "castle" from which arches, spearmen, etc. could fire down upon boarding parties. Hence the now used to describe those parts of the ship.

In the centuries prior to cannons being an effective weapon of war, the warring ships would grapple against each other and go hand to hand. The forward castle and after castles (hence their eventual names) was the high ground from which the invading men could be shot at (by whatever weapon available at the time).

This made older ships that pro-

ceeded galleons, top heavy and difficult to control in certain conditions. The galleon was developed as an amalgamation of the best of several ships' designs that preceded her. This design was later copied by the British and refined to produce a faster albeit less "armed" ship.

I believe the series is available to purchase from A&E or History Channel.com The later episodes go into transitions from wood to sail, and ends with the Dreadnaughts.

I learned more in those three hours about the designing history of ships than I did in the entire 8 years in the Navy.

## NEW PAGES ON MLRS WEB SITE

Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc is pleased to announce a few enhancements to our web site. We invite you to take a look at a couple of new pages we have recently added. The page titled Sentimental Journal gives a detailed explanation of the great reunion book we publish after each reunion. (An order form is mailed to everyone on the mailing list a few weeks after the reunion for the SJ and other memorabilia items). There are links to sample pages to give you a better understanding of what is contained in the SJ. Also new is an on-line version of the questionnaire we send out when a new person is added to the mailing list. Many of you have never filled out this form and submitted your photos for the **Sentimental Journal!** Here is a great way to remedy this!!! You can access this form from the page titled Reunions (link is on the left side of our home page). Please take a few minutes and check out our updated web page, and please, if you haven't already, fill out and submit the questionnaire! Your buddies would love to know what happened to you since you left the Bryce Canyon.

CHECK US OUT AT **WWW.M L R S I N C.COM** (please note, spaces and caps for clarity!!!)

Dina Coffey  
Office Manager, ML&RS, Inc.