



NEWSLETTER

Of the USS REID Reunion Group

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It's a curious thing about nicknames. Most sailors aboard ship had one. Some nicknames are easy and come naturally with the given name, such as Jack, Bill, Jim, Don and Mike. Others are natural abbreviations of a given name, such as Joe, Dave, Don, Mike, Cass, Gil, Willie, Tony, EP, AJ, JV, Blackie and Nick. However, that didn't guarantee you would be tagged with the obvious one. Shipmates sometimes seemed to take delight in ignoring the obvious and conjuring up something contrary or unrelated to the given name, such

as Butch, Jocko, Tack, Doc, Stinky, Red, Ace, Bud, Flip, Buck, Bones, Yardbird, Major, Abe, Chex, Dick, Sunshine, Moon, Hank, Mack, Chick, Swede, Bo Bo and so on. There were many others, I am sure, that I haven't heard yet.

How many of these nicknames can you identify with a person you remember? And in the case of the unusual names, why were they called that name? One in particular I am curious about is "Yardbird." I don't even know what his real name was.



Willie Wilson's son James came across some vintage pictures of the pre-war USS REID sailors enjoying a party at Balboa Park, probably late 1940 or early 1941. Notes on the picture made by Willie identify five of the gang. In the left foreground is Walter Wendelken who was aboard late in 1940 and transferred about a year later. Directly north of him is Vincent Giantasio Yeo 3/c. He came aboard October, 1940 and transferred sometime in 1942. In the center is Leo "Major" Bowes. (Article on Major Bowes on another page.) To the right is Wilson Brown, Coxswain. He came aboard in May, 1940 and left a year later. On the right border, Willie wrote "Grove, I think." Howard Grove, ships cook, came aboard in 1937 and left in 1941. Can anyone identify others in the picture? How about the girls?

News from Shipmates & Their Ladies

(And Sons)

James Wilson III

Northampton, MA

My father was James M. Wilson Jr. (Willy), a shipmate of the USS Reid. He passed away in 1999.

I have in my possession numerous photos from 1940-1944 on the USS Reid. I would be glad to scan them for you for your very well-done NEWSLETTER.

[I had that surprise e-mail from James III recently and we have had several interesting exchanges since then. James is the son of Willie Wilson, fire controlman on the REID from 1940 until that fateful day in December 1944. And also the son of Ilva Wilson, Navy WAVE during the war years. James III is Dr. Wilson, a college professor.]



This is a nice clear picture I haven't seen before. Willie identifies them as himself, Lewis and Yardbird. This fellow Yardbird looks familiar to me, but I can't place him. Both he and Lewis appear to be fire control strikers, and Lewis has campaign ribbons. It must be Greg Lewis who reported aboard in November, 1942. So I speculate that this picture was taken in San Francisco in 1943 when we were at the Navy Yard in Mare Island for overhaul. Who can tell me what those two patches are on Willie's left sleeve?. And who "Yardbird" really is?

James sent in quite a few pictures via e-mail, some of which appear in this issue. Some Willie sent to me seven or eight years ago and have appeared in past issues.

I asked him for news of himself and his mother.]

My mother (Ilva Wilson) is just fine. She lives in Melbourne Beach and is spry as can be, zipping around in her VW Jetta. She has been very creative over the past years writing poetry, quilting, embroidering, and making sweaters for underprivileged and terminally ill babies. She misses my father, and is still so proud to have been a WAVE.

I teach entrepreneurship, economics, and quantitative methods and statistics at Bay Path College in Longmeadow, Massachusetts. I am also the owner and director of a software development firm Data and Decision Analysis <www.datadecision.com>. I live with my lovely partner, Sally Curcio, a visual artist, in Northampton, Massachusetts. It is a beautiful part of the world.

I miss my father. The USS Reid was such a part of his life. I love reading the newsletters when I visit my mom. The more I learn about

the Reid, the better I know my father.

You must have an amazing archive of photographs and stories about the Reid. What are the future plans for that archive?

Wilma Williams (Ron)

Clarks Summit, PA



Wilma and Ron Williams in 1945



Wedding day for Willie and Ilva

Thank you for sending the Reid Newsletter. I do enjoy reading it. I am enclosing a check to help a bit. Ron always liked to get the paper, even though we were never able to attend any reunion.

[And THANK YOU, Wilma, for being one of the very few who sent in a sweetheart picture. - Ed.]

I sent A.J. an e-mail asking how he fared in the Katrina hurricane. He lives just north of Lake Ponchartrain right in the path of that storm. His reply:

I am very lucky. We only had two trees down on our roof which did very little damage to the house itself, just to the overhang and the front porch. But we had 9 trees down on the property and I don't think I will ever get it all cleaned up. But I still thank GOD we were spared any more damage.



A.J. and Florence in less troubled times

Hank (Ace) Kolsom

Talk about not having enough news to fill your paper, let me tell you about what has been happening to me.

Back in May I walked out to the mail box to get the mail and when I reached the end of my driveway I pulled a complete pass-out, not fainted but pass-out.

Some of my neighbors saw me fall and called 9-1-1. The station is only about a half block from our house and by the time they got to me my heart was down to 38 strokes a minute. They loaded me up and took me to the hospital where I was completely out of it for two weeks and after I came to I was in for another four weeks before I started coming around.

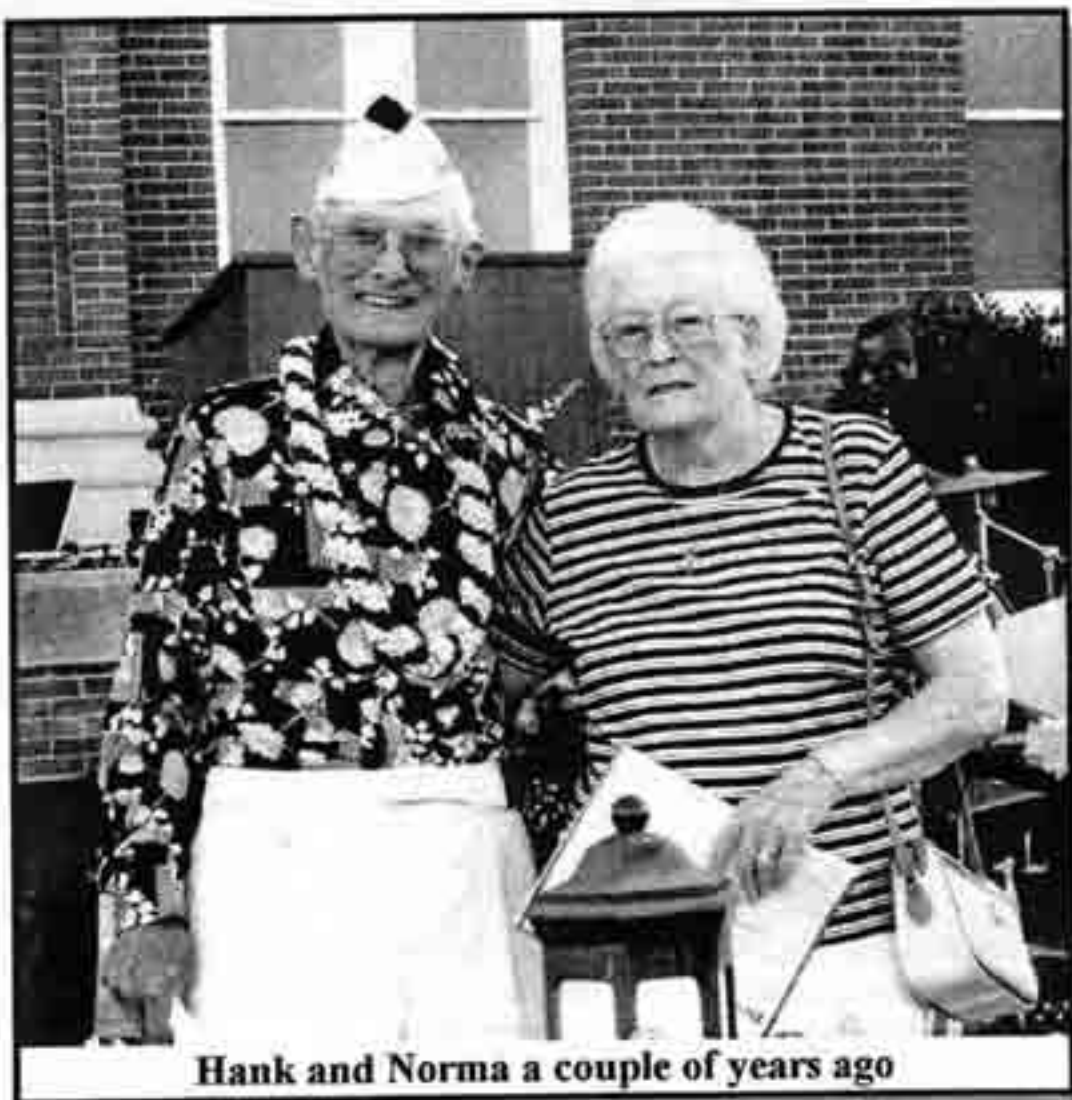
After I was released from the hospital and got home I spent another four weeks getting enough strength to try to get out of bed and try to walk. I finally made it and with my wife's help I learned to walk again. Then I got a wheel chair which I used until I could walk well enough to use a walker.

It turned out that some of my medication went against me and dropped my blood calcium so low and it caused me to pass out.

After all of that my heart began going out of rhythm and I am working on that now. Other

than all of that, I feel fairly good even if I have to be careful of what I do.

Guess I've bent your ear long enough. Thanks listening and my best to all of my shipmates.



Hank and Norma a couple of years ago

[Joe was one of the few who responded to my request for pictures of your wartime sweethearts or wedding pictures. The response I got to that request was a disappointment. I know you have the pictures, at least the wedding pictures.]

Joe not only sent in pictures, but he released a little information about himself as well. I have pieced that together with his brief bio statement given to Bill Alford back in the 1980's.

Joe Taylor was born in Clinton, Oklahoma in 1922. (I wonder if his ancestors took part in the land rush?) In 1941, he enrolled at the University of Oklahoma with the Naval Reserve Officers program. He shipped out a couple of years later and joined the REID in New Guinea in 1944 as an ensign.

On the way to the Pacific to join the REID, a young lady in San Francisco named Gerry caught his eye. Less than a year later, following the sinking of his ship, he was back



**Joe Taylor celebrates his 80th birthday with family at what he calls a "world class" restaurant in Berkeley.
("World class and no necktie?)**



I recognize Gerry in this picture, but Joe, you look different. Maybe it's the mustache.

in San Francisco and looked up that young lady and this picture was taken.

Joe and Gerry were married in 1946 and have lived in the San Francisco Bay ever since, where they raised their four children.

After leaving active military service, Joe returned briefly to the University of Oklahoma to finish his degree and later went to Stanford University to get an MBA in 1951. His civilian career was in marketing and sales. His hobby was sailing in San Francisco Bay. Joe says he gave his last sailboat to his son.

[I was in graduate school at Stanford in 1949 and 1950. I wonder if I may have run into him and not been aware of our common background?]

Remembering

Warren Law

Portland, OR

[I received the following message from Warren Law's daughter.]



Dad (Warren) died about 5 a.m. this morning... Friday, July 15. We knew the time was getting near but thought it would be several weeks yet. The funeral service will be held on Thursday, July 21st at 4:00 in the afternoon.

Since the last Newsletter came out, I had a number of e-mails from Warren's daughter Jane about his declining health and sent them along to shipmates with e-mail.

His condition had deteriorated over the past year. His circulation was poor, and at one time amputation of one leg was considered but rejected. He moved to a hospice where he passed away. He was 87.

Warren was born in Oregon and after 21 years of service in the Navy he returned to Oregon and stayed there.

Warren wrote up his biosketch which appeared in the June, 2000 issue of the Newsletter. Like all of us, he grew up in the tough times of the Depression. His parents moved around a lot following job opportunities. As a result, Warren said he attended 12 different schools in 10 years.

He enlisted in the Navy in 1938 and reported aboard the REID in 1940 as SK 3/c. He stayed with the REID until it went down. In his bio, he said that the ship had been his home longer than any other home up to that time. He left the REID as Chief Storekeeper and made one of those super chief grades before he retired in 1959.

As a civilian, Warren worked in several jobs in the industrial sector and ultimately retired to play golf until his health declined. His wife Gerry passed away a few years ago. They had one son and two daughters.

We shall all miss our Chief Storekeeper.



Leopold "Leo" "Major" Bowes Fremont, OH

would make the connection with that long ago radio program and understand why he got that nickname.

He came aboard the REID in June 1939 as a fireman and stayed with the ship until August, 1944 when he was transferred as a first class machinist mate. He left the Navy following the end of the war.

Bowes recalled the December, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor for Bill Alford many years ago. A few excerpts follow.

"I was asleep on this morning, at the home of friends in Pearl City, Oahu. I was awakened by the lady of the house and told the Japs were attacking Pearl Harbor. I dressed quickly and went out the back door, just in time to see a Jap plane (red marking balls and fixed landing gear) level out over the house.

I remember saying to her, "Yep, they sure are Japs." She worked at an office in the Navy Yard and had a pass, so she drove me back to the liberty landing near the Sub Base. Driving back home her car was hit by shrapnel through the motor hood, but didn't hit the engine or her.

A 50 foot motor launch crew was taking crew members back to all their ships. . . I rode . . . past battleship row, they were all down and burning. . . As we rounded Ford Island, I remember a Jap plane, which had just hit something on the island, leveled out over the 50 footer so darn close you could see the expression on the pilot's face."



Major Bowes' daughter, Jenny Gottfried, reported that her father had passed away June 2, 2005. He was 84. It was noted in his obituary that he was born in Fremont, Ohio and returned to Fremont to live out his years as a civilian. He is survived by his five children.

As a civilian, Bowes worked in the industrial sector where, he said in his bio, his training and experience was very valuable.

Major Bowes enlisted in the Navy in early 1939, following his graduation from high school the previous year. I expect it was his Navy buddies who gave him the nickname "Major." Probably only those as old as we are



Ken Newton

Frankfort, KY

I received a note from Sarah Newton, saying that her husband Ken Newton had died of an aneurism February 29, 2004. They were married 57 years and had three children, five grandchildren and one great grandchild. Sarah said that Ken was a successful salesman in civilian life, but his real love was the family farm in Kentucky.



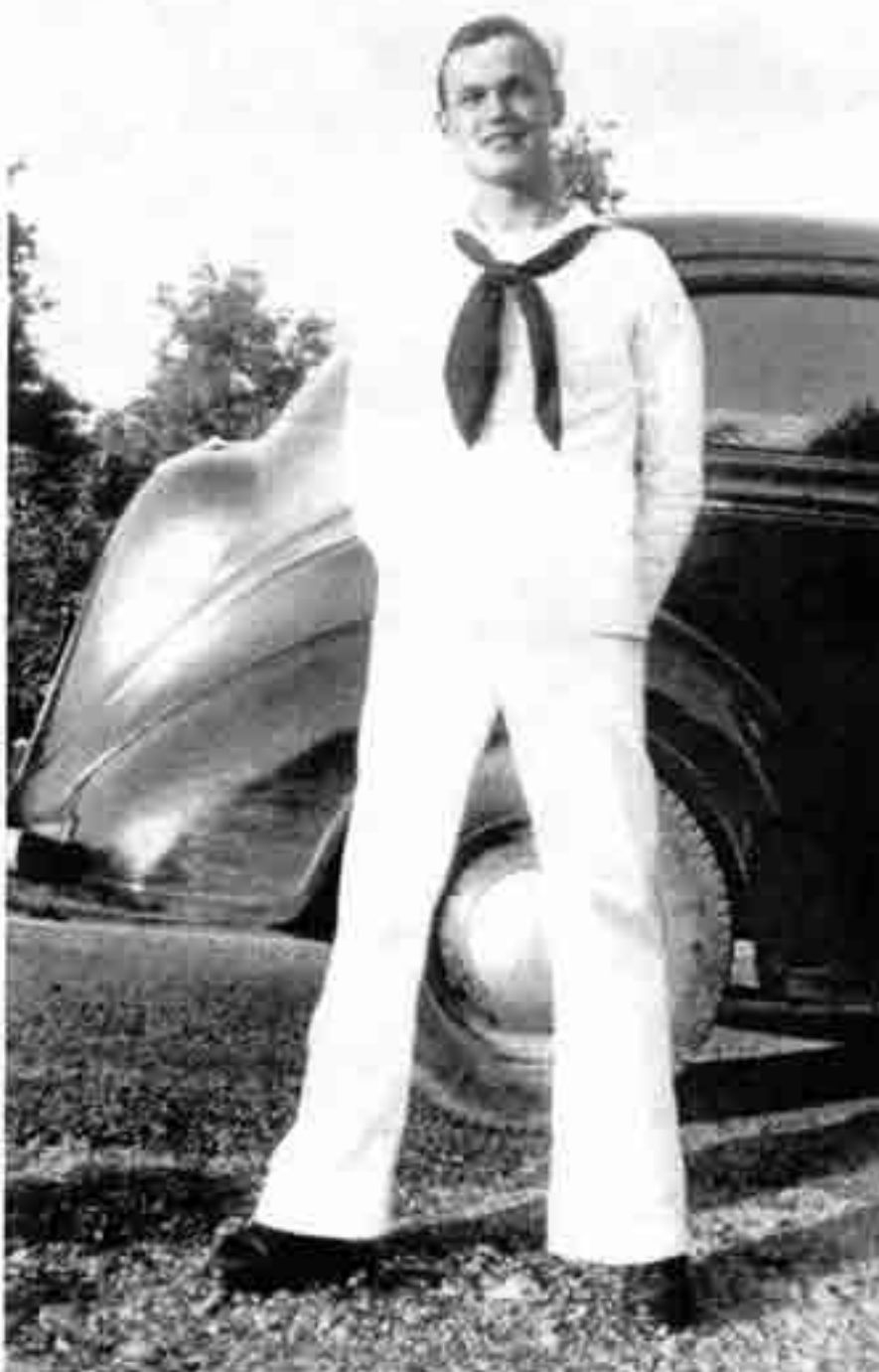
Ken & Sarah 2003

His bio sent in to Bill Alford says he was born in Frankfort, KY (probably on the family farm) in November, 1924. He joined the Navy in 1943 and reported aboard the REID in July of that year when we were in Mare Island for overhaul. He was Sonarman 2/c aboard and was wounded when the ship went down. As a civilian, he was a distributor in the wholesale bakery business for 45 years. In addition, he owned and operated a tobacco and cattle farm.

Sarah has moved to a new address in Frankfort, listed elsewhere in this issue.



Ken surveys his Kentucky fields



Ken Newton in 1943

A Graphic Account

by Hilliard Harless [Deceased 2000]

[I decided to dig into the archives for some copy to fill up the pages. You probably read this account twelve or fifteen years ago, but as old as you guys are getting to be, you probably don't remember it. So here is a recollection of the sinking by Hilliard Harless, Machinist Mate, Second Class. - Ed.]

I joined the Navy on February 12, 1942. *[He was born in 1919 in Maynardville, TN]* I went through boot camp at San Diego, California. I put in for submarine duty, and was waiting to go to New London, CT to submarine school when the Battle of Midway was brewing. They shipped us submarine prospects to Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii.

I went aboard the USS REID at Pearl Harbor, and from there the REID went to Alaska, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, and then to the Philippines.



Hilliard Harless about 1943,
from Dee Barber's collection

We made the landing at Ormoc, Leyte on December 7, 1944. We lost about four ships. As we were going back with reinforcements and supplies on December 11, we were at battle stations. My battle station was Starboard Throttleman in the engine room. Ken Schoening relieved me, and I went up to the port torpedo tubes and talked to Peterson. I got cooled off and told Peterson I believe I'll go down and let Schoening come up early and cool off.

Then the ship got hit, and the lights went off. I had the throttles all open at flank speed. The lights went out and knocked the dynamo out. Oliver Kusta was on the port throttle, and he left the engine room. Chief Kolsom was yelling, "Stay by your throttle, stay by your throttle!" I climbed up on the foamite can to turn the battle station light on to see my steam gauges. The gauge had dropped to zero.

About that time a big tool box on the port side broke loose. It weighed probably over 1,000 pounds. It came rumbling through to where I had just been standing before I stepped up on the foamite cans. It bounced against the bulkhead on the starboard side. I think I was one of the luckiest guys on the REID.



Kolsom several years
before he made Chief

I looked around toward the hatch and what little light I could see was coming from there. There wasn't anybody left but Updegraff and me inside. I told Updegraff that everybody was gone. They had not passed the word for us to abandon ship. So I said, "Updegraff, let's get out of here, they're all gone. There's nobody down here but us". We got to the hatch and Williams, the Engineering Officer, was standing there by the hatch. Williams reached and helped Updegraff up, then he reached to help me up. About that time the water poured into the hatch and hit us in the face. Williams evidently lost it, and he went up the hatch. I went up the hatch behind him.

The ship was keeling over, and the water on the steps caused me to lose my footing. I was holding the hand rails, swinging out there, and here came Barber and Ailport, who were down on the lower level. They came up between me and the steps and almost knocked me loose, but I held on. I got up far enough to push down on the top of the hatch and get my shoulders up above. I remember the suction was so strong that it was all I could do to hold on. If I had not been pressing down, it would have sucked me on down.

I had on a big pair of high-top Army shoes and had them tied up around my ankles. I remember the suction pulled the



USS REID in its death throes
Picture taken from one of the other ships in the task force



Barber several years earlier

shoes off at the same time. The good Lord got me out of there, but I made a joke about it saying it was those big shoes that held me down. I don't know how far I was under there, but it seemed like an awful long way. It took me a long time to get to the top. My lungs were about to burst. The ship was lying on her side. There must not have been 6 or 8 inches sticking up there. I hopped up on it, and was the

tireddest I had ever been in my life, and I thought I had to rest. I laid down there and looked around. The ship was still going forward, but it was going down by the stern.

I thought, "I've got to leave here". I got over the port side because I didn't want go down where the smoke stacks were. I was afraid I might get sucked down in there. I looked where the ammunition had blown up in the magazine. The keel of the ship looked like shark's teeth, where the metal had been blown up. I had played a lot of poker in there, and I thought, well I'm going to gamble. It can't be any worse under than it is on the top.

So I dived. I didn't hit anything down there and I came up. Up off the port bow was a mattress floating. I swam for the mattress, and got to it. I got on the mattress since I didn't have a life jacket. I looked around and saw Walter Norman, and he got on the mattress too. We started trying to get Winkler. Winkler didn't have a life jacket. Winkler was panicking because he couldn't swim in the oil. You had to get down under the oil before you could swim in it.

About that time a Japanese plane came through strafing in the water where we were. It just happened he didn't hit any of us. The plane dropped a bomb. Winkler said that if that bomb hadn't gone off he would have drowned before we got him. Winkler started swimming like a duck and came right to us.



I think this is Winkler, not sure. About 1943

Now we know what fish feel like when they get dynamited. We were wide open. The bomb blew salt water and fuel oil up into us. Then a big heavy-set sailor, who had a life jacket on, came over and

got on the mattress. I had to make him get off. We told him we didn't mind him staying with us, but we would have to hold on with our arms on the mattress for it to carry us. The mattress carried us until the landing craft picked us up.

Schoening pulled me aboard the landing craft. He was hit with a bunch of shrapnel and he had blood running down his face. Schoening had tears in his eyes. He said he didn't think he would see anymore. I said, "Don't you see blood running down your eyes? What are you worried about?"

It was getting dark and I heard somebody out there that sounded real pitiful. He was saying, "Some of you all please come out here and get me, some of you all please come out here and get me." I called him Henry Aldridge. Anyway, I pulled him aboard. He had two inflatable life jackets on and a kapok life jacket.

I said, "Aldridge, what are you worried about? You have enough lifejackets to last the duration of the war". Aldridge said, "Yeah, I know, but I am dark, the water's dark, and it was gettin' dark, and I was scared you all wouldn't see me".

That night we went on up to Ormoc. There were planes overhead. A guy was standing beside me with dark sun glasses on. It was dark as pitch, and he still had these sun glasses on. From then on, I started calling him "Night Fighter". We went on up to Ormoc on the landing craft that picked me up. The landing craft got stuck on the beach. I left the landing craft and got on another one, but it got stuck too. They had to tow it off. The landing craft had messed up one screw and one rudder. It could travel about half-speed - about 7 knots. The next day we were going back to the east coast of Leyte and they contacted a plane. We went to general quarters. The rest of the ships had to leave us because we couldn't travel as fast as they could.

I looked around the landing craft and found some crates full of ammunition. I called to some guys, and we started to throw the crates overboard. We just about got them thrown over the side when two planes came through strafing and dropped three bombs. I dove in a passageway. One bomb hit along the starboard side and one of the crates exploded. The projectiles went through four steel plates in the engine room.

I came on in and they put me on the NASHVILLE, which had been hit and was being sent back to the States. I rode her back to Bremerton, Washington. I got survivor's leave. I was in pretty bad shape. I didn't want to turn in to sick bay; I wanted to get home. I hadn't been home since I joined the Navy. I went home, but I wasn't able to stay out my whole 30 days.

I turned in to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I went to sick bay there. They gave me some aspirin and shipped me back to San Diego. I ended up in Industrial Command in San Diego, and I would go sick bay every day. They would give me some pills. One morning I went to sick bay and this four striper Captain was there. He wanted to know what they had been doing for me. He told them to get me to a hospital and not to even pack a ditty bag.

I went to Balboa Park Naval Hospital, stayed there four months, five days; then I got discharged. I received a medical discharge on July 12, 1945.

I retired from trucking in 1981. I was a trucker when I went into the Navy. I'm doing all right, my luck is still holding out. I would like to thank the old boys on the landing craft who took care of us. I know now how the HENLEY sailors felt the night we rescued a bunch of them when I was the engineer of the whaleboat.

[The HENLEY was just astern of the REID in 1943 in column off New Guinea, at dusk, when it was struck amidships by a single torpedo, breaking her in half and sunk in 2 or 3 minutes.]

Mail returned (No information)

- ✓ Wilbert Langlois
Gretna, LA
- ✓ Capt. Gare Wragg (FFG)
San Antonio, TX

Thought for the day - - -

Courage is doing what you are afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you are scared.

~Eddie Rickenbaker

Address changes

✓ Betsey Halsey (Ralph)
186 Jerry Brown Road
Apt 3504
Mystic, CT, 06355

✓ Dick Woll
199 Lorenzo Circle
Ronkoma, NY, 11779

✓ Sarah Newton (Ken)
18 Breckinridge Blvd
Frankfurt, KY 40601

New e-mail:

✓ Dee Barber (John)
<adeliabarber@yahoo.com>

Those of you with a computer can log on to our BLOG with <<http://ussreid.blogspot.com>>

Sea Story

By Bud Kautz

A few years back I needed some things to finish a project that I was working on. I decided to run over to Ace Hardware in town. I was wearing my Reid hat.

I couldn't find one of the items and approached a clerk for some help. He stared at me with a perplexed look on his face. What did I do wrong?

Finally he said, "I remember that ship". (I said to myself, 'Who is this guy, is he pulling my leg?') I asked him what he meant.

It turned out that he was in the Navy and stationed at a supply depot on one of the islands in the Pacific. When the Reid pulled in one day he and his crew brought a load of supplies out to the ship. After unloading the stuff, he said he needed an officer to sign him out and I located a young lieutenant for him.

He said he also remembered the lieutenant's name. I couldn't have guessed who it was.

The punch line of this tale is that it was Lt. Porter. I hadn't even mentioned any names of the crew to him. All I can say is that it "Shows to go you" that we live in a small world and I'm always surprised at some of the things that come around when least expected.

I brought this to Capt. Porter's attention, but he didn't recall it. I'm sure he had many other jobs on his mind at the time.

A BLOG

Never heard of a BLOG? Well, maybe you have if you have children or grandchildren around. But I'll bet none of you uses one. Am I right?

Professor James Wilson, son of Fire Controlman Willie Wilson, contacted me recently and suggested setting one up for the USS REID. I said I didn't know anything about BLOGs, but if he wanted to set one up, go ahead. So he did.

Now it's there in cyberspace and when I get through with this issue of the newsletter, I will put some stuff in our BLOG and maybe someone will read it.

I have looked at some of what is on the BLOG network, and it is certainly a mixed bag. Some BLOG's are instructive, some interesting, but of those I read, many seem to be ego trips for individuals, recording their diaries, their opinions on various topics and sundry disjointed ramblings. That is the nature of the internet. You can put anything you want out there in cyberspace. There is no "Hayes Office." (You do remember the Hayes Office?)

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