



Ready Eddie Reader!!!

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

SPRING, 2000



Coming Together Again

Editors Notes & Stuff

Yes Folks, the countdown to St Louis and Reunion 2000 continues to tick away. Please make your plans and reservations as soon as possible to insure there is availability and that you get the best price. The sooner we have a good head count the more opportunity we have to plan the best reunion possible. Everyone should have received a reunion package from Tom Petersen and a reunion registration form. Reunion details are on pages 5 & 6.

I can't even consider starting this newsletter without taking some time to thank all of those who have contributed time, effort, and donations over the last few months.

Tops on the list continues to be Jim Rasbach (Roz) and Rob Dege (Rob), our webmasters. The web sites continue to bring in new people every week, and offer an opportunity to share and communicate with each other. We wouldn't be at the point we're at without them.

The lion's share of the reunion committee work over the last few months has been performed by Tom and Peg Petersen. The advertising, mailing and reunion documentation has gone incredibly smooth thanks to their efforts.

Don Farrar, Jim Kress, Carl Dege, Dan Hayward, and Skip Minks continue to steer the reunion efforts.

Many thanks to those who have contributed time and effort in helping to grow the photo album site. The work by Roz and the contributions of your fellow shipmates have earned our sites much praise. The unique concept of combining the new,

current pictures of crew members and family with the ones from days of old has kept people coming back for more. Keep those photos coming. Those of you with Internet access should check the Forum site for the latest news on free camera and web processing. It's a limited time offer so check out the Forum at www.dd950.cjb.net NOW!!!

In particular I would like to thank (GMG 74-76) John "Possum" Pitts. John had well over 100 photos scanned to disk, and essentially created a '74 cruise book. Something the ship didn't have done. John's work in preserving this and pulling it all together, with Roz, has served to preserve a piece of RSE history that for some reason was overlooked. John has also donated a ships lighter and belt buckle, new, in the original boxes, as raffle items for the reunion. These are truly gifts from the heart.

My thanks also to those who have taken the time to send in current membership forms. Our membership year runs from July to July and a yearly update is necessary for our records. The "gala" post-reunion issue will be the last sent out to everyone on the mailing list, which at this time is over 270 people. The membership form in that issue will need to be returned for you to continue to receive the "Reader". Our postage costs alone are well over \$800/year and we need to know that this is something you want. We've only had 50 or so returned this year (since July, '99).

Bob Tuttle



FLASHBACK!!!

The following are in response to, or additional info for, previous articles in the Reader. Most people have noticed the lack of “real” info in the official command history. The different views and opinions of the “facts” are what make these recollections so much fun to share. Feel free to share yours.

(This first is the command history as remembered by Jim Meuleveld. Jim was an RM1, '64-'65.)

Here are some of the events RSE participated in while I was aboard from 64-65. The facts and their dates of occurrence are my best recollection after all these years.

JUNE 1964- RSE attended the Portland Rose Festival along with the cruiser St. Paul and a couple of other ships. The trip up and down the Columbia River was spectacular. The ships were open for public visits all weekend and the liberty was great.

AUGUST 5, 1964- Got underway with USS Columbus and the rest of CRUDESFLT 11 for deployment to Westpac. We were scheduled for a leisurely 20-odd day transit to Subic Bay in company of USS Ranger with a stop at Pearl for a round of conferences and additional training.

The attack on the the Maddox and Turner Joy happened 3-4 August, the Sat/Sun before we left. When we got ready to get underway on Monday morning (Aug 5th) the radio traffic was still pretty normal. Everyone knew the attack was a major event, but still things hadn't gotten rolling yet. That soon changed. We had barely cleared Point Loma when the bells started ringing on the teletype and Flash messages started coming in one after the other.

Within a few hours Edwards was detached, along with USS Coontz with Comdesron 17 embarked, and two other destroyers to rendezvous with Ranger near San Francisco and proceed with her best speed to Subic Bay with a quick stop in Pearl Harbor. It took only 12-13 days to make the transit, which placed RSE in Subic about the 17th or 18th of August. Not the 23rd stated in the command history. The 23rd is about the day that the rest of the flotilla, that we had left in the dust, arrived.

Stayed in Subic a few days, then left for local ops with Coontz. While we were inport, the Maddox came in for the first time since the “incident” and tied up alongside RSE. Of course the RSE crew was buzzing about the ship that had been in battle, and was in the news headlines.

Some of us talked with Maddox crewmen asking how it was that night. There was some evidence of the fight. A few bullet holes in the stack and a couple of other places. Otherwise the ship looked normal. Edwards was ordered back to Subic to prepare for special ops with Morton, arriving about 28 August.

The Edwards remained in Subic until about 7 Sept.,



making final preparations for the Desoto Patrol. USS Morton (DD948) was designated to be the flagship, with Comdesdiv 172 embarked, which was fine with the RM's on RSE. A Security Group detachment of 3 or 4 CT's and their communication hut were embarked. The hut was placed in the open space between the stacks and aft of radio central. There was one hitch in our preparations, though, that delayed our departure by a few days. Edwards was directed to communicate with Morton and other commands using scrambling machines that we didn't have on board. Com7thflt assumed all ships had this latest and greatest equipment and wasn't very happy to hear that RSE didn't. It was not the Edwards fault. The new equipment was being installed as ships went through overhaul and Edwards did not have a yard period that year. We just fell through the cracks. The equipment was hastily installed in Radio Central by SRF Subic personnel and we were finally set to go. We got underway from Subic for Yankee station about 7 Sept. and arrived about 12 Sept. The patrol was for 3 days and began on or about the 15th (not Aug 31) and ended on the 19th.

The first two days were routine and uneventful. On the last night, the 18th, a lot of the crew were watching a movie on the mess deck. Suddenly you could hear the engines rev up and feel the ship increase speed. Thirty seconds later GQ sounded. We would be at GQ for a few hours.

(Still Flashing, from page 2)

The battle began not long after reaching battle stations. The gunfire was intense and didn't let up for some time. Morton called for air cover and joined in. The 900 class destroyers packed awesome firepower having 3 automatic loading mounts, and our firepower was on display that night.

On the 19th, at daybreak, we began looking for debris but never found any evidence of a destroyed torpedo boat. Both ships left the Gulf later in the day and returned to Yankee station.

Following the plane guard duty off of Vietnam described in the command history, RSE and a couple of other cans spent most of Nov. 64 on perimeter guard duty protecting the amphibious ready group that was sitting a few miles off of Danang. The Marine BLT was embarked in the ARG and was awaiting orders to land. They didn't go ashore while RSE was there.

(the remainder of the cruise was routine)

In the last paragraph of that section of the command history it says, "there was a brief time out for....gun fire support of inland military operations in the vicinity of Danang." I honestly don't remember gunfire support at any time on that cruise. I don't believe we had any troops ashore until early '65 and hadn't begun offensive operations yet. The above paragraph would seem to bear me out.

I hope this makes that period of the command history a little more interesting.....Jim

From RMCS Bill Simpson ('64-'65)

"I was a member of the crew from '64-'65. I've read some accounts of the Tonkin Gulf affair, Sept. 18, '64 and don't believe they do justice to the RSE.

It was our third day in the Gulf, along with Morton and a carrier that was supposed to provide air cover if we needed it.

In the evening the Edwards and Morton began registering blips closing. Both ships were constrained by the Rules of Engagement. "No firing unless ship placed in jeopardy. Naval Regs also state that if a CO allows his ship to be placed in jeopardy, he can be brought up on charges!!! Both ships attempted to contact the closing "blips" who continued their threat. Then a warning shot from each ship. With no veering off, the ships, Morton and Edwards, opened fire and attempted to get air cover (had already tried).

The Edwards fired approx. 110 rounds of 5" and, I think, 3 rounds of 3". They stopped shooting the 3" because they thought they had a "hang fire". Turned out that in the excitement they had loaded in a practice shell used in loading drills. The Morton fired approx. the same amount. We also attempted to illuminate using the 5"54's. Neither ship had any luck. With no air cover, both ships were hauling out of there as fast as they could make it. Our carrier did not get aircraft in. Another carrier sent aircraft approx. 35 minutes after the attack started.

During our speed run out, one of the boilers started panting and the Chief BT, Briskey, did an impossible job and shifted to another fuel supply without losing the boiler, dumping about 350 gallons of contaminated fuel. We did quite a bit of maneuvering at over 30 knots getting out.

Next day they sent in 6 DD's. Four dropped off just inside and the Morton and Edwards continued the patrol. Couldn't see any wreckage, but there was also no sign of the fuel spill. Strong tides.

We were detached and sent back to Subic where numerous people from Secdef began questioning us-Radio, CIC, Fire Control and Bridge personnel. Two days later they stopped. That might have been because we convinced them that we were attacked or because the Russian News Agency confirmed that we had sunk 4 PT boats. At any rate, the SecNav awarded commendation medals to both CO's, the Edwards XO and Ops officer. On the ship we had been told not to tell anyone about the incident. One of the engine room or boiler department people wrote their mother who subsequently passed out the info.

At another time we had discovered a sub and chased it all over until the CO of the Amphibious units ordered us to stop. Said there was no sub. We sent the tapes back to San Diego and were told it was a definite sub. On another occasion the Edwards tested an ASW torpedo against the SS Snook who was (cont. on page 4)

The Ready Eddie Reader is the official publication of the USS R.S. Edwards Association, Inc. Published as often as time permits. The views expressed are those of the individual contributor.

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Simpson (continued from page 3)

to allow acquisition and then try to evade. After a period of time the Snook requested that the torpedo be called off. It had hit 4 times!!!

The 5"-54 illumination shells turned out to be faulty. A test of over 800 produced 18 flares. As a result, the Morton and Edwards were put in different patrols, and each had a DD with 5"-38 shells.

The CO and XO were the finest officers it was my pleasure to serve under. CDR Evans and LCDR Asmus instilled loyalty and respect in all hands. I believe we had either 18 or 22 Chiefs when I was aboard, and all worked together. Great crew and ship.

W.M. Simpson RMCS-Ret.



Mary Soo & girls in H.K.



CSSN Ready at MT32

Another View.....

(Don Dodson was an ETR2, '64-'65. He started the cruise aboard USS Coontz DLG-9)

"The Turner Joy/Maddox incident took place while the squadron (Desron 17) was in transit from San Diego to the Phillipines. I was transferred, while underway, to the Edwards for Crypto repair, because RSE didn't have a Crypto ET aboard. I had no idea that we were going to the Gulf of Tonkin to relieve the Turner Joy/Maddox. When we got to Subic Bay we tied up on the same pier as the Turner Joy and Maddox. I pulled Shore Patrol duty. When we walked past the two ships there were LARGE canvas tarps hung, trying to cover the sides of the ships. As the wind would blow the tarps, we could look between the divides and see superstructure damage to the ships. Possibly of the 5" or 3" variety.

When we got over into Olongapo the crews of the Maddox and Turner Joy were getting plastered on San Miguel beer, and arguing over who shot who first. The Fire Control radar of both ships just locked onto one another and did each other in. They covered their asses by blaming it on N. Vietnamese PT boats. There WERE PT boats around, but not at that time. It was a bad situation for those of us who pulled Shore Patrol. Didn't take anyone in, just worked to calm the situation.

Both ships had simultaneously left Yankee Station and were replaced by the Edwards and Morton. Desron 17 had moved aboard DD950.

I would normally sit in CIC while underway for Radar Repeater adjustments, as I was a Radar ET with Crypto training. It was at night when I noticed the surface search radar (AN/SPS-10) picking up the white caps of the waves, normally referred to as sea clutter. I knew what I had seen was sea clutter or possibly the glass fishing balls that the Vietnamese used to hold up their nets. The CO of the Coontz used to give extra liberty to those who spotted the balls. We used to scoop them up. The overhead of the Bridge was strewn with balls in little net baskets made by the CO. I was about to go to the Radar Room to make an adjustment when we went to GQ over what was evaluated as PT boats on the radar. The Radio Room was my GQ station.

I reached the Radio room, the crypto gear being my duty station, and we reported manned and ready. At that point all 3 5" guns opened up in rapid fire. The ship shoot furiously. The Commodore, in bathrobe and flip flops, was told by the RM that ComPacFit wanted to know what the target was evaluated as. The Commodore hadn't been in CIC and there had been no communication between CIC and Radio, nor had there been any ECM verification of any PT boat radar, but he said "Umm....tell them it's PT boats". The Radioman told him that he couldn't send the message because the Crypto gear was down. He turned to me and asked what the trouble was. I told him that the gunfire was causing a fuse to pop out. He said "Give me that screwdriver" and proceeded to stick the screwdriver in the fuse holder, shorted out the fuse, and said, "Send the message".

The Edwards, Morton, and aircraft searched but found no evidence of a sinking. After 6 months I was transferred back to the Coontz. I saw the Edwards in action one other time.

I was on the Coontz when a pilot was coming in with his damaged aircraft, to be rescued at sea. The Coontz stayed out at sea far enough from shore where we would not be fired at by shore batteries. The pilot had gone down about a 1/2 mile from shore, and the sampans were going after him. No one was allowed to fire on the sampans. The Edwards took zig-zag maneuvers to avoid shore battery fire and went after the pilot. All the while the Edwards looked like a smoke factory from all the firing she was doing while dodging the shells that were being fired at her from shore. Those shells, when they hit the water, were splashing as high as the flying bridge. The Edwards blackened the coast with her fire. The sampans got there first and got the pilot. The Edwards got the hell outta there."



REUNION, 2000

The Richard S. Edwards reunion is the premier event of the association. It is meant to be a fun time to get together with old friends and shipmates. It's an opportunity to reminisce about the past and share our present lives with those who shared our past.

The reunion also has it's serious side in that it is the "when and where" we decide the association's future.

At every business meeting we will vote for the site of the next reunion and, hopefully, put together a reunion committee with a chairman. If you have suggestions, comments, ideas for the next reunion, please contact Marshall Minks. "Skip" Minks has been gathering your preferences for a report to the association at the reunion. He can be reached at;
PO Box 590
Umatilla, FL 32784-0590
mdmcompany@aol.com

Our "New Business" will include elections to fill open spots on the Board of Directors. The members of the board and a description of their duties is outlined in the association by-laws. If you do not have a copy but would like one, please contact Jack Sanders at;
111 E. Commercial St.
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
Doyce@big-z.com

The most important spot to fill this year will be that of Secretary. When 18 people attended the reunion, and we had a mailing list of 70 or so, it was thought that the position of Treasurer and Secretary could be handled by one person. We quickly grew to 100, then 200, and now are closing in on 300 people on our mailing list. Our email list includes about 200 addresses. Keeping track of that information, and keeping the Crew and Members lists updated at the web site, has become a position that requires the dedication of a lot of time. Hopefully, we can split that up amongst a few people, with the right coordinator. The plan is to have one database, on the Net, that will include all of the necessary vital stats, and have one person handle the email, one handle the snail mail, and one do the updates to the web site. All under the watchful eyes of the Secretary who will keep an eye on all and assist/fill in when needed. Taken to the extreme, the Secretary is pretty much the pivotal person in the everyday workings of the association. For one person, the record keeping and correspondence necessary to keep the association going and growing is a task that requires an hour or two of work a day. Split up, it will be a bit more manageable. If you think

you can help out in any of these areas, please contact Jack Sanders or Bob Tuttle. We can accept volunteers for the assistant's positions, but the Secretary must be voted in at the reunion. I don't think the By-Laws require a person to be present at the reunion to be voted in as a board member. They are all positions that require a computer and Internet access. The Secretary should have a software system capable of maintaining the mailing list and outputting labels for mailings. None of these tasks are extremely complicated or involved. All are being done right now (mostly by Bob Tuttle), and would be passed off to you. No one is expected to recreate the wheel here. Microsoft Word and Microsoft Access are currently being used.

The position of Treasurer is also looking for new blood. Jack and I plan to continue as "Prez" and "VP" until the next reunion.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

A detailed "Order of Business" will be available at sign in. We had intended to print the entire proposed Order of Business in the newsletter but opted, due to time and space, for a summary of the agenda.

We plan to add a certain level of ceremony and decorum to the meeting this year and could use a volunteer to man a Bosn's pipe for the "Passing of the Word" for the opening and closing of the meeting. An official Master At Arms will close the doors to the meeting and a chaplain will offer an opening prayer and lead us in the closing prayer. Volunteers???

We will recite the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence for the POW/MIA's. The President will then declare the meeting convened. We will have;

A Roll Call of Officers to determine if a quorum is present (we need 4 elected officers to be present).

A reading of the minutes of previous meetings.

Secretary Report

Treasurer Report

Committee Reports

Sick call, relief, and unemployment (do you know of any employment opportunities for veterans?)

Unfinished business

New business (Elections, next reunion, and amendments to By-Laws that need a two-thirds vote by members present.)

Memorials to departed Association Members

The good of the association (Those present shall be permitted to make any suggestions of any kind, character or description, save religion or partisan politics)

The President shall have the option to limit remarks, and to keep the meeting moving at any time. Some of the items listed are optional and may be omitted. The intention here is to get the business out of the way and continue the PARTY!!!

REUNION, 2000, TOO.

B-Ball Game in St Louis

Jerry Beck has volunteered to organize a trip to the ball park on Friday night, June 2, for anyone interested in that adventure. The Twins game. at the last reunion was a fun evening for small dollars.

It's a great way to explore the city and local view of "The Grand 'Ol Game". Contact Jerry if interested and he'll do his best to set things up. You can find Jerry at;
246 Main St.
Red Hill, PA 18076
scarlette71@hotmail.com

Bus Tour and Dinner

By the time you receive this, the first bus will be fully booked for the Saturday morning tour and we will be working on the second. This is a great way to get a taste of the local flavor and spend some quality time

(CO, XO, and Dept.Heads at recommissioning) L to R
CDR Deal, LTCDR Sudholz, LTs Turley, Haslett, Berning, Lang



Official Command History

(This is a continuation of the Navy's abridged story of the Ready Eddie. Please feel free to share the "rest of the story" as YOU saw it during your time aboard)

Having completed her ASW conversion at Long Beach Naval Shipyard, USS Richard S. Edwards was recommissioned on 15 January 1971 by Rear Admiral Horace V. Bird, USN, Commander Naval Base Los Angeles/Long Beach. Commander Walter C. Deal, USN, assumed command as the ninth skipper of DD950

As a result of the extensive modernization, the design characteristics of the Edwards were altered as follows; full load displacement, 4100 tons; maximum navigational draft, 15 feet; compliment, 17 officers and 270 men, with accommodations for 22 officers, 315 men. With installation of quick-reload ASROC (anti-submarine rocket) and the associated handling and stowage spaces, the destroyers battery was reduced to two 5 inch/54 caliber fully automatic rapid-fire gun mounts. Six 21 inch torpedo tubes in two triple mounts were retained as additional ASW armament. The depth charge track and projectors were removed to allow for installation of a variable depth sonar at a later date. Additional changes

with shipmates.

The buffet diner has over 70 people confirmed so far. Should be a fun time.

All should have received a reunion package and registration form a month, or so, ago. Please send the registration form in as early as possible so we can plan the reunion we deserve to have.

Accommodations

The block of rooms reserved for the association has been taken for some time. If you can't get reservations at the Drury Convention Center outside of the group, your best bet is to call 1-800-325-7962 for the free St Louis Info Guide. It will give you a list of alternative places to stay, or numbers to call for accommodations. General reunion info, and reunion registration forms are available from Tom Petersen;
4044 Highway AA
Halfway, MO 65663
pegleg@ipa.net

accomplished during the overhaul included installation of a high power, hull mounted sonar, modernization of electronic equipment and spaces, installation and rearrangement of living and messing areas, addition of air conditioning to accommodate all living spaces and most working spaces, improved replenishment at sea capability, enlargement of the pilothouse and near complete replacement of the deckhouse.

Outfitting and underway operational testing were completed in Long Beach, and on 4 March Edwards put to sea enroute to her new homeport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The ship made port calls in San Francisco, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C. before arriving in Hawaii on 29 March as a unit of Desron 25, Desflot 5.

Shakedown training commenced 10 May but was interrupted by a search and rescue mission on 13 June that sent the destroyer 700 miles south of Hawaii in search of survivors from a downed Air Force C-135. Only floating debris was recovered at the scene of the disaster, and the ship returned to Pearl on 19 June. After completion of Shakedown training on 24 June, Edwards remained in Pearl conducting local operations. The ship and her crew became more familiar with their new new home. making a dependents cruise to Hilo, on the big island of Hawaii, from 16-19 July.

Richard S. Edwards was awarded the Comcrudespac Gunnery "E", ASW "A", and Operations "E" for excellence during the period 31 October 1971

SHIPS STORE!!!

World Famous Ready Eddie Ball Caps

These great (Navy) blue hats have "USS RICHARD S. EDWARDS DD-950" embroidered in gold, and underneath "the Ready Eddie" in a subtle (haze) gray. A limited number are usually available for immediate shipment. When supplies are depleted it may be 5-6 weeks for delivery. Please make checks payable to Jim Kress and mail to Jim at: 3090 Keokuk St., Dubuque, IA 52001

Prices are:1. ___\$25.
2. ___\$45.
3. ___\$65.
4. ___\$85.

Prices include shipping, which is subject to changes in Postal rates.

LOOK FOR REUNION SPECIALS!!!

...T-SHIRTS...T-SHIRTS...T-SHIRTS...T-SHIRTS...T-SHIRTS...

The Ready Eddie T-shirts are white Hanes Beefy T's of 100% pre-shrunk cotton. They show the silhouette of the Ready Eddie, in black, gray and red, stating she is "Just another proud old war veteran", "Serving America from 1959 'til 1982". Please make checks payable to Jack L. Sanders, and mail to Jack at: 111 E. Commercial St., Broken Arrow, OK 74012. Not all items are available for immediate shipment.

Please specify pre-1971 or post-1971 silhouette.

T-shirts	Mid-weight (7oz) Sweatshirt	Heavyweight (9oz) Sweatshirts
Small to XL ___\$15	Small to XL ___\$19	Small to XL ___\$22
XXL ___\$16	XXL ___\$21	XXL ___\$24
XXXL ___\$17	XXXL ___\$23	XXXL ___\$26

Prices include shipping, which is subject to changes in Postal rates.

All items for sale include a small mark up for the association. All labor and handling are done on a volunteer basis by your fellow shipmates. As we grow, prices and shipping times should get better. Thank for your support. Any help for, or feed back about the Ships Store will be greatly appreciated

Command History, 1972

On 6 January, USS Edwards completed the final phase of her ASW modernization with a successful test of the variable depth sonar system installed by Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. The ship immediately began underway operations in the Hawaii area. On 11 January, during routine steaming off Oahu, Edwards rescued a pilot of the Hawaii Air National Guard who had been forced to abandon his F102A aircraft when its engine failed.

Training operations at sea continued into February, highlighted by COMPTUEX 4-72 from 31 January to 4 February. In this exercise, R.S. Edwards operated as a member of a task force defending an inter-island passage against mock enemy air and submarine attack. Leaving Pearl Harbor on 19 February, the destroyer steamed to the island of Maui, carrying dependents and guests of the crew for a very special week-end vacation. Returning on 21 February, she remained pierside until 13 March, when another round of local training at sea began.

On 20 March, R.S. Edwards was called upon to perform a special duty. Mrs. Dorothy Herron was visiting Pearl Harbor and requested that a wreath of island flowers be placed on the sea in memory of her son, Radarman Seaman Apprentice Paul Thomas Lane. He was lost at sea on 26 June 1972, when he fell overboard while the USS Ernest G. Small (DD-838) was engaged in high speed night maneuvers in the mid-Pacific. The wreath was cast over the side by four of Edwards' radar men as the destroyer steamed out of Pearl Harbor on a training exercise of her own.

R.S. Edwards participated in only one more local evolution, a convoy exercise on 6 April, before being designated for early deployment in direct response to the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam. With only 72 hours notice, Edwards left Pearl on 10 April in company of USS Davidson (DE-1045), nearly four months ahead of schedule.



Two brief refueling stops--Midway on 12 April and Guam on 19 April--led to Subic Bay, PI, on 22 April, where final preparations were made for combat operations.

As a unit of Seventh Fleet, R.S. Edwards departed Subic Bay on 25 April, arriving on the gunline near the DMZ the following day. Her two five-inch gun mounts fired their first rounds in the early morning hours of 27 April. Later in the day Commander, Desron Nine, embarked as CTU 77.1.1, Freedom Trail strike unit, and R.S. Edwards moved north into the Gulf of Tonkin.

Working with numerous other destroyers, the ship participated in naval gunfire missions against targets in North Vietnam, including a daylight raid near Hon Mat in company with USS Berkeley (DDG-15) on 8 May. The next morning, R.S. Edwards and three other ships steamed to the mouth of Haiphong Harbor to provide suppression gunfire against coastal defense sites while US planes began the first aerial mine laying operation. All ships emerged undamaged despite heavy hostile fire. Later on 9 May, Edwards retired to a notification line station to warn foreign merchants of the mines.

On 12 May, task unit 77.1.1 became TU 77.1.2, a Linebacker strike unit, and night raids against the North took on a regularity matched only by the underway replenishments that occurred during daylight hours. When detached on 16 May, R.S. Edwards had participated in sixty-seven naval gunfire strike missions, twenty of which were opposed by hostile fire. But the gun barrels cooled as the ship steamed to Sasebo, Japan, arriving on 20 May. A short seven days later, with much needed maintenance accomplished, R.S. Edwards headed back to the combat zone.

ComDesRon Nine debarked on 31 May, and the destroyer tasked with escort/plane guard duty for USS



Saratoga (CV-60) from 2-13 June. On 14 June, the ship began a fifteen day stint providing 5,754 rounds of five-inch ammo in support of the 22nd ARVN Division in Binh Dinh Province. A brief upkeep period in Subic, 29 June - 4 July, was only an intermission as Edwards returned to the same area as a naval gunfire support asset for allied ground offensives, amphibious and vertical envelopment operations until 29 July. Returning to the DMZ area, Edwards gunners supported a coordinated South Vietnamese Marine battle near Quang Tri on 1 August. On this day Big Sal (MT 52) and her sister pumped out 1,179 rounds in less than eighteen hours.

R.S. Edwards left the gunline the following morning for an upkeep period in Subic Bay from 4-14 August. Her next line swing began in Da Nang Harbor on 16 August when Commander Lloyd K. Rice relieved Commander Walter C. Deal as the tenth Commanding Officer of USS Richard S. Edwards. Naval gunfire support duties which occupied the ship from 17 - 28 August, were interrupted briefly on 26 August, when COM-CRUDESPAC, Rear Admiral Woods, visited the ship while she steamed on station near the DMZ. On 28 August, the destroyer was ordered north into the Gulf of Tonkin for a second tour as a part of TU 77.1.2. In company with two other destroyers R.S. Edwards conducted 27 night raids on such military targets as petroleum storage areas, coastal artillery sites, troop encampments and material storage areas in North Vietnam. Additional duty as a merchant surveillance ship was accomplished in daylight. Between 1-4 September, R.S. Edwards was forced to evade Typhoon Elsie, and as a result, the ship received a short lesson in heavy weather seamanship.

Upon completion of her assignments in the Gulf on 11 September, R.S. Edwards returned to the DMZ for three days of naval gunfire support before leaving for Hong Kong, where she moored on 16 September. The welcome rest and relaxation concluded on 22 September, when the ship departed for Subic Bay. There the ship was placed in drydock for hull, rudder and screw repairs. This was her longest stay in Subic, from 23 September to 5 October. A final gunline tour from 11-25 October, as a naval gunfire support ship, brought the total number of rounds fired by the R.S. Edwards to 21,625.

The ship made her final visit to Subic Bay from 27 - 30 October, and she was rejoined there by USS Davidson (DE-1045) for the trip home. One quick stop for gas in Guam on 2 November was all that Edwards needed to reach Pearl Harbor, where crowds of family and friends greeted the returning sailors on 10 November 1972.

1972 Cruise KUDOS

170805Z MAY 72, From ComDesRon Nine: "A proud, confident, well trained, informed and high spirited crew...fired 3,417 rounds in 19 days...averaged one gun up 100% time...02 guns up 95% time...never failing to deliver required rounds in target area...engaged three firing CD sites in a single mission, firing 484 rounds of counter-battery fire during retirement...never on water hours...R.S. Edwards is among the very few."

242040Z May 72, FROM ComDesRon Two Five: "We all are extremely proud of Richard S. Edwards and crew...Congratulations, Jack Deal, to you and your crew for this outstanding performance. We always knew you could hack it."

30030Z May 72, FROM ComDesRon Nine: "You have left nothing to be desired as a squadron flagship and combatant. I will be holding a front line slot for you."

FROM Commander, Task Force Twenty Seven: "You displayed great determination and resourcefulness in maintaining your combat readiness at high level. Big Sal and her sister will be missed in Westpac."

292332Z October 72, FROM Commander in Chief, US Pacific Fleet: "Your officers and men can reflect with pride on the splendid record of Richard S. Edwards. Your efforts on the gunline and short notice participation in Linebacker strikes have been followed with interest here...the challenge each task presented you has been met in an exemplary manner. Well done."

011334Z November 72, FROM Commander, Seventh Fleet: "Another outstanding Westpac deployment...Let me extend to your fine crew my commendation for a job well done."

210305Z October 72, FROM ComDesRon Two Five: "Aloha. Although I have not had the privilege of being embarked and serving with you these past seven months, I am intimately familiar with your distinguished accomplishments in the Seventh Fleet. Many Commanders and ships have praised your performance. Your officers and men have done an outstanding job. As the navy's finest, I am deeply proud of you...Well done and Aloha."



Command History, 1973

During the year 1 January 1973 to 1 January 1974, USS Edwards, under the command of CDR Lloyd K. Rice, USN, was homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and assigned to Commander Cruiser Destroyer Force, US Pacific Fleet, as a unit of DesRon Twenty-Five.

USS R.S. Edwards began 1973 by enjoying the remaining days of post-deployment stand down. On 15 January, following a five day upkeep period, Edwards returned to normal operations with a week of gunnery and anti-submarine warfare exercises in the Hawaiian operations areas. This was followed by a week of upkeep in Pearl Harbor and another week of engineering, gunnery, and ASW exercises. A little more than a month of upkeep and training in Pearl Harbor followed a Navy Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI) on 16 and 17 February, on which a grade of outstanding was received.

During the month of February, Richard S. Edwards also learned that she would be the first Pearl Harbor based destroyer to receive the newly formulated 1200 PSI Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). The remainder of 1973 was devoted to training and preparation for the satisfactory completion of this examination.

On 13 March, Edwards was underway for four days of engineering training with the NAVSEC Mobile Training Team (MTT), followed by ten days of upkeep and OPPE preparations and another week of MTT training beginning on 27 March. On 31 March, the destroyer entered Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for continued upkeep and OPPE preparations and remained there until 1 May. The Propulsion Examining Board (PEB), US Fleet, arrived onboard on 1 May and the destroyer underwent an OPPE between 1 and 3 May. Although the Engineering Department personnel performed well, the overall grade on the examination was unsatisfactory.

On 3 May, Richard S. Edwards again entered the shipyard for a period of upkeep and OPPE re-examination preparations. During this period, on 5 and 6 July, the destroyer received a Technical Standardization Inspection (TSI), passing with a grade of satisfactory.

On 13 and 14 December, Edwards underwent her second NTPI of the year, passing with a grade of satisfactory. This inspection was followed closely by the destroyers last underway period from 19-21 December, devoted to MTT training, gunnery exercises and general shipboard drills. The remainder of 1973 was spent in upkeep and OPPE re-examination preparations at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

Command History, 1974

On 11 January USS Richard S. Edwards (DD 950) departed her home port at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for her first underway exercise of the new year. For three days she steamed independently in local Hawaiian operating areas while conducting various shipboard training exercises as a prelude to an impending deployment to the Western Pacific (WESTPAC). Another period of independent steaming between 28 January and 5 February was devoted to sharpening the skills of all hands at General Quarters and at Engineering Casualty Control drills. On returning to Pearl Harbor attention focused on the upcoming Operation Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) conducted by CINCPACFLT Propulsion Examination Board (PEB). The inspection was held on 13 February and resulted in a failure of the examination.

Lieutenant-Commander Alan E. Witham, USN, relieved Commander Lloyd K. Rice, USN, as CO of USS R.S. Edwards (DD-950), on 16 February 1974. Following change of command more independent steaming occurred. A second OPPE was held on 5 March and this examination was evaluated as satisfactory. Final preparations for the WESTPAC deployment began on 11 March when USS Edwards took part in Naval Gunfire Support training at Kahoolawe, Hawaii. Five days later, on 16 March the ship departed Pearl Harbor for a six month deployment as a unit of the U.S. Seventh Fleet with COMDESRON 25 embarked. The days transiting the Pacific were spent conducting NGFS training and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercises. On 30 March the Edwards arrived at Subic Bay, Republic of the Phillipines. After a short upkeep period the ship got underway on 8 April in company with USS Oriskany (CVA-35), USS Halsey (DLG-23), USS Morton (DD-948), and USS Callahan (DE-1051). During this cruise several underway replenishments and vertical replenishments were conducted under the direction of Commander Task Group 77.5.2 embarked in Halsey. On 11 April R.S. Edwards was assigned plane guard duties while USS Oriskany conducted flight operations. After a brief two-day respite in Subic Bay, Edwards got underway on 15 April in company with USS Morton, USS Halsey and USS Callahan. On 29 April the Edwards crew sharpened their ASW skills while conducting exercises with the nuclear attack submarine USS Sculpin (SSN-590). Upon return to Subic Bay, Edwards entered AFDM-6 for repair to her port rudder. Five days after leaving drydock, Edwards steamed to Kaosiung, Republic of China, for a two week Tender Availability alongside USS Samuel Gompers (AD-37).

A Sea Story

"It was mid West-Pac '74 when we pulled into the harbor at Kaoshiung, Taiwan. Moored starboardside-to, to a tender for a brief stay. All hands set about their daily chores until liberty call. First order of business was to bring on stores, which took the better

part of the day. Must have been some maintenance going on with engineering because we went cold-iron, pulling steam off the tender. As so many times before we had to breast out to let a can with a senior skipper in.

About day three we set sea and anchor detail to let a ship out. Quite a few of us were sick from the night before, not sure why at the time. In the process of mooring back to the tender, the tug pushing us in got carried away and pushed a little too hard. We crunched into the side of the tender and damaged our starboard screw-guard and put a little wrinkle in the fantail deck. We had to pull off again to assess damage, and that took quite a while.

Finally got tied back up and by now a bunch of us were really getting sick. I had lost everything out of both ends and went down to crawl in the rack for a while. Berthing was full in Second Division when I came aboard in P.I. so I was stuck in a bunk forward of First Division. The forward diesel was lit-off and it was hot and noisy in there. Don't know how long it was 'till Doc Miller came up and woke me, stuck a thermometer in my mouth and told me I was going over to the tender's sick bay. I didn't want to go but was in no shape to argue. When I rolled out of the center rack I collapsed to the deck. Couple of the Boatswains Mates half carried me over to the tender and they locked a bunch of us in a quarantine berthing area.

Seems we all had Typhoid. It had been brought aboard ship in the stores, we figured, because one of the guys there was a LTjg who had not been ashore. I honestly don't remember how many of us were locked in that hell-hole or for how long. Corpsmen came and drew blood several times a day but no medication was given. We were left to crawl back and forth to the head and water fountain, eating was out of the question cause no one could keep water down, less solid food. I was told the ship was delayed because so many of us were sick. After what seemed like an eternity we were allowed back on the Eddy. I was down to 107 pounds and weak as a kitten. GMG Tommy Suter and one of the snipes got so bad they flew them to Yokosuka to the hospital. Heard that someone saw Tom back in Pearl. He had lost a lot of weight but was OK.

Finally had enough crew back to shift colors and get underway. Cleared the harbor mouth and secured from sea and anchor detail mid-morning. Second Division had lines Five and Six, aft, so we were faking out the lines to stow for sea. About that time smoke started puffing out of one of the fantail vents. Couldn't raise

the bridge because the detail had secured so we yelled up to the aft lookout. Now black smoke started pouring out of the vents and the open scuttle on the fantail hatch. General Quarters sounded and the call came down, "Fire aft", no frame number was given.

Well my GQ station was MT 52, so I was standing right there. We dropped the aft scuttle and tried to go around to get to the carrier room. Damage control was dropping the big double scuttle hatch to engineering berthing in after battle dressing and breaking out OBA's. The smoke was thick and black and smelled like rubber burning. First team pulled the lanyards on their OBA's and went down the scuttles before their canisters had warmed up enough to put out oxygen. They came back up coughing, blinded real quick.

What we were carrying in the ASROC launcher was common knowledge so they were not real keen on us going back in port on fire. Nothing to do but point her to the open sea and light the fire.

Five minutes into this mess and charged hoses were out and ready on the fantail and in the midships passage. Teams were below decks now but could not locate the source of the fire because of the pitch black smoke. After a little discussion I got permission to go down to the carrier room of MT 52 to check the bulkheads for heat. So, I slipped past the cradle screens into the gun pocket and onto the carrier deck. Couldn't tell much from there so I dashed out of the hatch and down the scuttle to the magazine. Screwed the magazine scuttle shut behind me and established communication with the gun mount. I climbed up into the projectile bins and put a hand on the aft bulkhead. It was hot. By now the DC team had located the fire in a storage locker, deck 3, aft of MT 52 magazine. The source of the fire was lifeline lights that had been laid in on top of some used batteries from the after diesel generator. The wire cages on the lights had shorted the batteries and started a smoldering fire. A very liberal dousing of PKP and the fire was out. None too soon because the paint on the magazine side of the bulkhead was starting to blister.

All of the bedding in engineering was stunk-up from the smoke and PKP was ground into the tile halfway up to the mess decks. They had pulled off the extinguishers in the aft grease locker and a lot of the cans had ruptured. Needless to say, a serious field day effort was undertaken to put things back ship-shape for the remaining cruise. The rest of which was pretty quiet, except for a near death experience at the hands of a barmaid in Pusan....but that's another story.

GMG John Pitts ('74-'76)

Where were you in the summer of '69?

If you have any info on these photos, or current pictures for then and now shots, please send to Bob Tuttle. Thanx!!!



How was
YOUR cruise
of 1969.
Share your
memories
and /or sea
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