



# "LEAKY T" News

## The Newsletter of the U. S. S. Tolovana AO-64 "WE CARRY THE LOAD"



Dedicated to the deceased and living members of  
the best  
Fleet Oiler in the U. S. Navy.

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I will start this edition off with a sea story that includes not only the "T" but a few other ships as well. It was contributed by Nick Starace II, DCA and then Engineering Officer in 1957-1959, several years after I was aboard.

**Nick Starace, who served on the Tolovana 1957-59 as DCA and then as EO, has just had his memoir released titled, *WHITE SAILS BECAME ME: Memoirs of a Seafaring Heritage.***

**For an in-depth overview of the book please see his website, [\\_www.WhiteSailsBecameMe.com\\_](http://www.WhiteSailsBecameMe.com) (<http://www.WhiteSailsBecameMe.com>)**

**Nick devotes two chapters of his book to his tenure on board Tolovana. You will relive some of the memories with him including ship collisions, death of a seaman during a replenishment, man overboard (Bob Hensley), near-death accident of a seaman who had to be transferred at sea, a captain who took seriously ill and had to be**

**transferred at sea, the massive artillery attacks during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, and lots more. You'll also find several at-sea color photos of our ship.**

**If you'd like to order a personally signed copy of the book contact Nick at [NickStar2nd@aol.com](mailto:NickStar2nd@aol.com)**

**Or, if you prefer a copy that is not signed, go to the home page of his website and click on, Buy the Book Here.**

The following sea story is from Darrell Sage.

It was starry night with a medium swell in the Tonkin Gulf that early summer. We had been on Yankee station for a week or so and were riding high on our way back to Subic Bay. Those of us not on watch and who hadn't already seen Rosemary's Baby a dozen

times were topside watching it once again.

Night time and headed "home" was one of those rare opportunities for down time recreation, sleeping being number one followed by cards on the mess decks, reading in your rack, jamming tunes in the sports locker starboard side of the forward gun mount or writing letters wherever a sailor boy could find some privacy....like nowhere as I remember for me other than the air conditioned CIC transmitter room, or whatever it was called, I forget now after all these years.

We were cruising SSE with nary a breeze, gently surfing the medium swell coming from aft when suddenly we came down hard on something metal. BANG!!! and the Leaky T shuddered rather violently. I ran up to the bridge where the OOD had no idea what we hit. He was peering intently into the scope and visibly shaken. He was Lt. Lincoln, a supply officer. Blonde guy, very nice fellow, took the rap for when we touched aground during our ORI just off Coronado Island before we left for WestPac some months before. He had the con at that time as well. Anyway, I initially thought surely we hit a small steel hull fishing boat or freighter. But as I was running up to the bridge I was thinking, "no, we came down on something squarely amidships, just aft of the bridge." You could feel the way we rocked fore to aft when it hit. I hurried thru the Quartermaster's room and into CIC to grill "Blackie" who had the scope. He swears he didn't see anything and I saw no returns within the immediate area. Back on the bridge the old man and XO were in a dither and alternately staring into the bridge scope or interrogating every one on watch thru the sound powered phones. The XO was on Mr. Lincoln like a shark on bloody meat, but the Lt. was holding his own. Nobody saw nothing as I remember everyone saying the next morning eating breakfast on the mess

decks.

Back in Subic a few days later I was watching the two UDT divers looking over the hull fore to aft. They came up, crawled to the pier, pulled off the fins and chatted it up with Captain Gorsline but I wasn't privy to the conversation as they purposely walked some distance from where I was watching from the pier. I'm assuming no damage since we never went into dry dock and perhaps all we received was some scraped bottom paint, but I'm sure there had to be a big dent somewhere as we hit that puppy damned hard.

It wasn't till years later that I told this story to a Yankee Station bubble head who figured we had come down hard on a sub that was mere feet beneath us and sneaking out of the Tonkin Gulf as it was standard procedure to be cruising just below a large ship and using it as a sonar shield, either one of ours or one of the Russians. Makes perfect sense to me.

Darrell Sage RD2  
USS Tolovana '68-'69

Per Doug Lundell Supply Officer 1970-71.

I was the Supply Officer in 1971, until late August when I left the T while it was moored or docked in Thailand for a visit there.

My recollection (foggy though it is) is that we had a party at An Thoi. I believe that we had our brig full of booze just waiting for an appropriate opportunity, which An Thoi provided. An Thoi was an island that housed a POW camp. We went into Vung Tau a number of times, always overnight for security, since we would explode easily if fired upon & hit. We never went ashore there during my time, but Army tugs pulling fuel barges met us in the harbor & we offloaded fuel & more to the barges. Army, Navy & Coast Guard (I specifically remember the Coast Guard guy) personnel

who were stationed in-country would come out with the barges. We offered them meals, showers & sold lots of stuff to them from our ship store. Since they paid us (the Ship's Store) with MPC (Military payment Certificates), I remember having to get it changed back to cash at Subic or elsewhere.

We also had a number of swim calls in the waters off Vietnam.

I don't remember ever going into DaNang while I was aboard (1970 & 1971 deployments), although we steamed past it often on our Marketime runs.

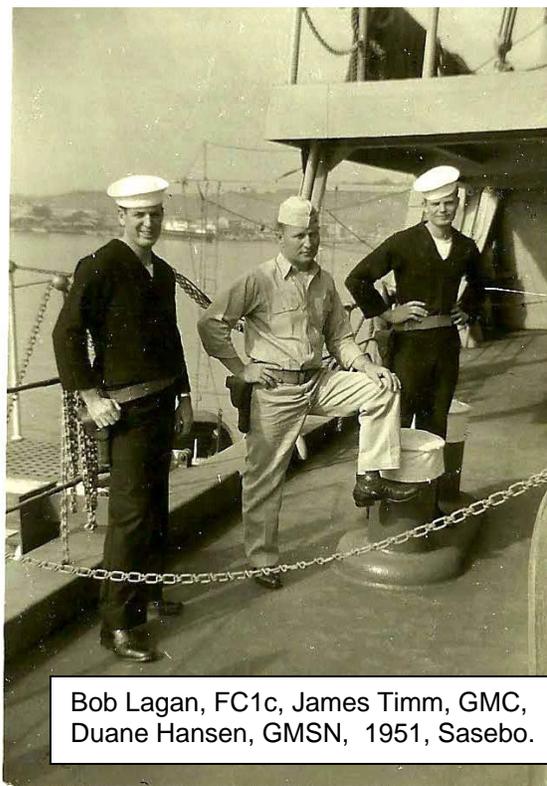
Doug Lundell, Supply Officer, 1970-1971  
803-326-7250

Dick Brewer died September 15, 2010.

Richard "Dick" Brewer was born in Lincoln, Nebraska. In 1930, his family moved to Glenrock, Wyoming. He was an only child. During high school, he worked in a grocery store. He initially delivered groceries then trained to be a butcher. He was given the nickname "Red Dog" for his reddish colored hair. He enlisted in the Navy on March 9, 1944, immediately after graduating from high school. All seven boys from his graduating class enlisted in the Navy. He went to Farragut, Idaho for recruit training. Shortly after Dick got out of boot camp, he joined the forces to occupy the Japanese Islands. Dick left the Navy in 1946, and after three months of very demanding work in the Wyoming oil fields, he reenlisted, "so he wouldn't have to work so hard."

His 28 years in the Navy were spent travelling "everyplace," especially the South Pacific and North Atlantic oceans. The first ship he served on was the sea-going tug U.S.S. Chetco and the last was the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. On one of his many trips he sailed around the world twice in one year. In 1958, when he was on the U.S.S. Belle Grove, he witnessed an amazing sight - an aerial atomic bomb test explosion near Johnson Island in the South Pacific. Dick began his service as a seaman, 2<sup>nd</sup> class, and retired as a Lieutenant Commander in 1972; then he and his family relocated to Bremerton, Washington where he worked at Harrison Hospital for 19 years before he retired again, this time for good.

Dick has been described as affable, witty, and easy-going. He never met a stranger and was quiet and soft-spoken. His hobbies included car racing, woodworking, gardening, square dancing and crossword puzzles. He enjoyed basketball, football and baseball. He was involved in the Masons, the Shriners, and church activities. He was a great influence on his children's lives and was an exceptional grandfather.



Bob Lagan, FC1c, James Timm, GMC,  
Duane Hansen, GMSN, 1951, Sasebo.

This picture, and the one below of bumboats in Keelung, came from John Sater, FC3c.



## **AGENT ORANGE**

When you served on the Tolovana, and, **if you went ashore in Vietnam** at any date or time you may have been exposed to Agent Orange.

**It is very important that you can verify you went ashore, “boots on the ground”.**

Veterans with the VA approved illnesses will be able to claim VA disability benefits and health care services without having to prove that their conditions are connected to Agent Orange exposure. This applies to veterans who served in Vietnam during the periods from January 9, 1962 to May 7, 1975. **It will not apply to Veterans who only served on “blue water” Navy ships in the region.**

Only “Vessels that operated primarily or exclusively on the inland waterways” have been approved by the VA. To date **the USS TOLOVANA AO64 is not on the VA approved list of ships.** However, the VA is working on their 3<sup>rd</sup> list of ships.

**To date two known shipmates have been approved for disability for their illness due to Agent Orange exposure from attending a 2 day picnic the Tolovana held at Vung Tau in 1971.**

The below is a list of known times when the Tolovana was in Vietnam and may have had shore parties where the ships crew went ashore. Those that served on the T during these, or other dates, may know of additional dates and events. If so please let us know and we will publish them.

May 19 & 20, 1971 in An Thoi Vietnam  
May 22, 1971 in Vung Tau Da Nang Vietnam  
June 5, 1971 in Vung Tau Da Nang Vietnam

If you have been diagnosed with any of the Veteran Associations approved diseases caused by Agent Orange exposure you may be eligible for benefits/compensation. **Visit the Veteran**

**Administration website for the continually changing list of VA approved Agent Orange caused diseases. In addition, contact your local VA representative for assistance.**

Anyone applying for benefits must have a letter of support by another shipmate(s) stating: for example, that on such and such a date the USS Tolovana held a two day ships picnic on the beach at Vung Tau in south Vietnam on May 22, 1971 and I personally saw ( so and so ) attending the picnic on the beach on such and such day.

This will establish the only thing they need that the man was boots on the ground in South Vietnam.

An update on Doug Habben’s VA status:

Doug Habben is now enrolled with the VA and will be getting tested for Agent orange soon. Joseph Smith and Alice Joseph worked diligently on this. Joe Smith went to the VA and got Doug put on “fast track” due to the severity of his health. The efforts of all concerned are much appreciated.

### **2011 USS TOLOVANA REUNION!**

Alice Joseph has received confirmation from the Military Locator and Reunion Services (MLRS) that the dates for the reunion is September 15 – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Holiday Inn near the Long Beach CA airport. You will receive the MLRS reunion package in the mail ~ 3 months before the reunion.

Alice wants to caution everyone to not discard or ignore the MLRS letter thinking it is junk mail.

There are numerous Leakey T shipmates that live in Southern CA therefore this should be a BIG one!

Hope to see you there.

**Skip Moore, F Div, 1951-1953**  
[anchorman1@bellsouth.net](mailto:anchorman1@bellsouth.net)