

While conducting missile target operations near Okinawa, the Eastertide Offensive began as 200,000 North Vietnamese soldiers under the command of General Vo Nguyen Giap waged an all-out attempt to conquer South Vietnam. The offensive was a tremendous gamble by Giap and was undertaken as a result of U.S. troop withdrawal and the poor performance of South Vietnam's Army during Operation Lam Son in 1971. It was also thought that the strength of the anti-war movement in America would likely prevent a U.S. retaliatory response.

Giap's immediate strategy involved the capture of Quang Tri in the northern part of South Vietnam, Kontum in the mid- section, and An Loc in the south. North Vietnam's Communist leaders also hoped that a successful offensive would harm Richard Nixon politically during this presidential election year in America, much as President Lyndon Johnson had suffered as a result of the 1968 Tet Offensive. The Communists believe Nixon's removal would disrupt American aid to South Vietnam.

March 6 - April 2, 1972 Completed upkeep and maintenance at the Ship Repair Facility, in Yokosuka, Japan. Special visitors to the ship during this time included Rear Admiral Lacy , Commander Submarine Pacific, Vice Admiral Hoshino, JMSDF, Commander, Japan's Self Defense Fleet, and Vice Admiral Nakamura, JMSDF, Commander, Fleet Escort Service. On 23 March, Commander Joseph D. FAIRCHILD,USN relieved Commander Rodney L. STEWART, USN as Executive Officer.



During the next thirty days the war in Vietnam would continue to escalate but all was peaceful and quiet in Yokosuka. I still lived aboard ship so most of my free time was spent on the base. The weather was always wet, cold and gray this time of year and it was just easier to grab one of the many Japanese cab's that were allowed to roam the facility and visit the library, listen to music, dine at the Seafarer, (a restaurant that serviced the base hotel), or just explore the sprawling base on the rare sunny day.

When I had some money, my nights were spent down on the Honcho section of town. Some people referred to the area as the Ginza. It has also been called, "Thieves Alley" and back in World War II it was known as Souvenir Alley. This was an alley containing a strip of bars which ran several blocks long, situated just outside the main gates of the base. For a few yen you could catch a Japanese cab at the end of your pier and ride it to the main gate where a short walk led to the nightlife.

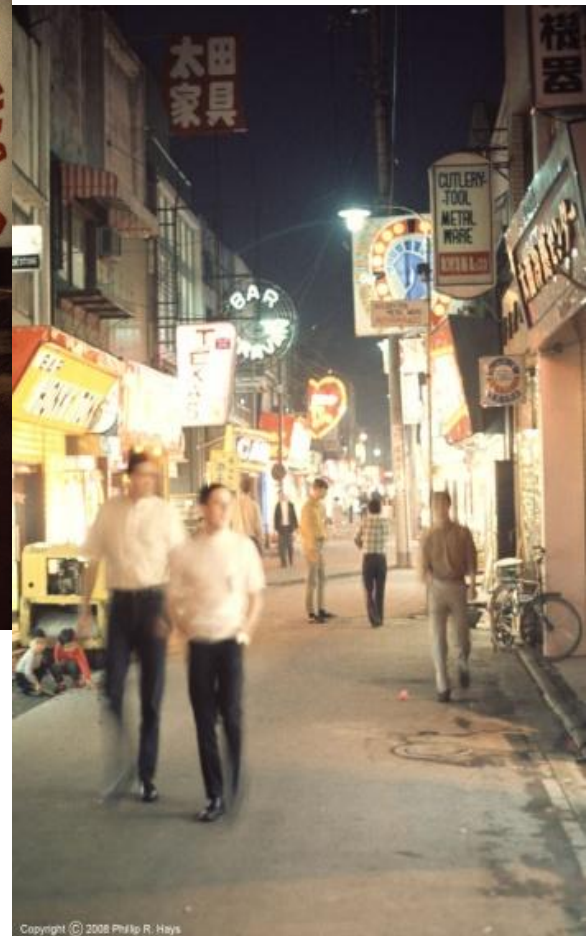
The Honcho was close to the base and heavily patrolled by local police and the Navy shore patrol. It was actually pretty safe to visit. Due to a small fraction of anti-American and "No-Nuke" Japanese citizens it was not recommended that we wander down any of the city backstreets at night unless we knew the area.



Even the communist sympathizers kept a regular schedule of demonstrations in front of the main gate which sometimes turned into riots. So I was content to shop or just stroll the main streets in daylight and drink my beer at night on the Honcho.



Now a night on the Honcho is like no other place I've ever been. All the tiny little bars are crammed together for blocks and are lit up like a circus. Music blares from each door as hucksters from each establishment compete for your attention by claiming that they have the coldest beer, cheapest prices and prettiest girls. Souvenir stands are crammed between the bars and carry everything of possible interest to the fool who is soon parted with his money. When a new ship is in port the activity reaches a fever pitch as sailors weave from club to club in a drunken haze, hollering and bragging about the girl they met in the last bar.





On the nights when most of the ships were at sea and the weather was cold and bleak, the icy wind would whip through the alley and you could hear a lone sailor quietly barfing in a corner before he wandered off in search of a cab. The bar doors were closed and music was muted as the owners stayed in their establishments and let the many signs and advertisements out front do their best to entice you inside. Such signs were a work of art and never failed to amuse. They are worthy of an in depth review and represent all that iswell, I

guess I'm not sure what they stand for but they always make me laugh !!

THE DINK PUSSYCAT

NOTICE

WELCOME TO THE PINKPUSSYCAT
BEFORE YOU GO UP STAIRS, WE
WANT TO AQUIANT YOU WITH THE
FOLLOWING THINGS.

① OUR GIRLS ARE NOT RICH, BUT
THEY ARE NOT GOLDDIGGERS EITHER
AND MOST OF THEM SAY THIS IS
A HELL OF A WAY TO MAKE A
LIVING, YOU KNOW ABOUT GIRLS, SO
USE YOUR HEAD, BE A GENTLEMAN
AND WE WISH YOU "GOODLUCK!!"

② DRINK FOR OUR GIRLS,
* 300. REGULAR AND JUST FRIENDS.
* 500. IN LOVE AGAIN.
* 1000. FOR THOSE WITH OVERNIGHT OR
BE "FISH.."

③ WE ARE BROKEN HEARTED ABOUT
CHARGING THE PRICES POSTED ON
THE WINE LIST.. BUT WE MUST DO
SO BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT
HARD TIMES. THANK YOU

GRADE



NO 25

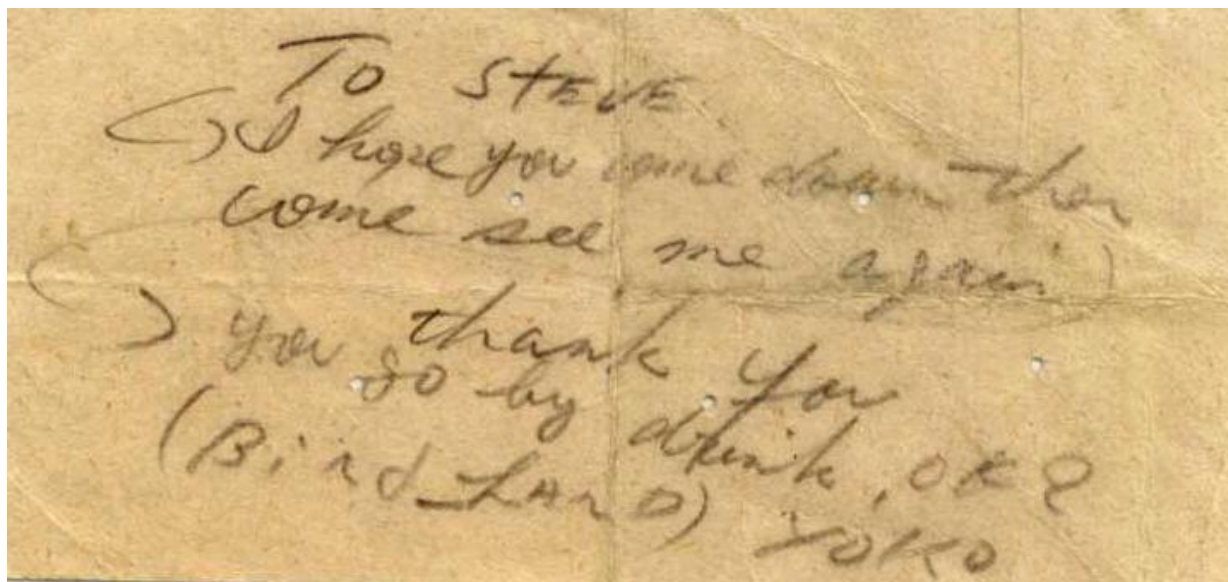
WELCOME
U.S. HERO
UGLY GIRL
LOUSY SERVICE
LET'S TAKE A
SHOOT THE SHIT!



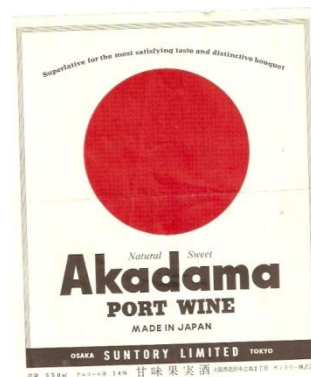


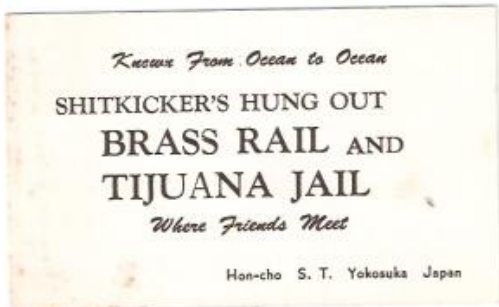
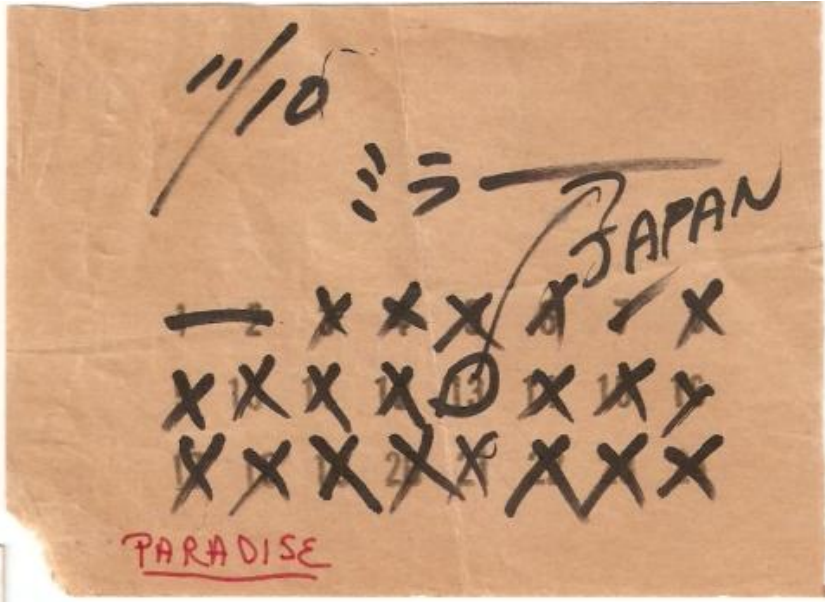


It was on just one such cold night I met my first steady “girlfriend” who worked as a hostess at the Bird Land Bar on the Ginza. Her name was Yoko, (it wasn’t until years later that I found out that this was a popular alias adopted by many of the bar girls and prostitutes near the base) and she was twenty six and eight years my senior. She still had her looks and was of medium build and height with long black hair that fell below her shoulders. She was also bossy and temperamental but I was the biggest “fish” in the bar. We had the standard Sailor-Yoko relationship....she would bring me beer and keep me company and I would spend all of my money on her. When the money was gone then I was gone until next week’s tender payday greetings of “Me love you no shit....you number one!”



Hard liquor at the bars were obtained by buying your own bottle and paying a fee to have it stored at the club for a certain amount of time. You were given a chit card which was marked off every time you ordered a drink from your bottle. When a sailor left port his abandoned bottle would be resold at a costly fee. Fortunately I rarely drank anything other than beer. The Bird Land bar became my home away from home for most of the month and most of my “Liberty Calls” were spent on the Honcho. The Bird Land Bar was eventually destroyed by a fire sometime in the 80’s after many years of operation.





BEER AND BOTTLE CHITS

My favorite Japanese brews in order of preference were Asahi, Kirin and Sapporo beer. Occasionally I would drink a Suntory Whiskey or some terrible tasting Akadama wine or Saki. I found the base clubs made a Sloe Gin mixed drink that went down like Seven-Up and was a passible substitute for beer on occasion. I rarely drank wine except for one night on base when I got into a drinking contest with a fellow crewman named Jack at the Seafarer Inn. We decided to have it out once and for all about who could drink the most in one evening. This was a competition that had existed ever since we had met and our drinking contests had been played out in many countries on numerous occasions. I was able to out drink Jack when it came to beer but he was the master of Rum and Coke and always bettered me if we switched to hard liquor. Now when I agreed to this latest challenge I had initially thought we would be drinking beer but much to my surprise the drink of choice was to be American fine wine.



The Contest...while I watch the camera my opponent pours out his glass under the table !!!

A long table in the restaurant was set up with a white flowing table cloth and 20 or so sailors lined up on each side while Jack and I sat at each end for the faceoff. Dinner was ordered by all and the betting became furious as we continued to down huge goblets of wine. As the evening wore on my head began spinning and I just couldn't believe that this little guy was acting so sober. The night wore on as I came closer and closer to oblivion. Like two gunfighters cheered on by a packed house of onlookers, we continued the contest far into the night. At last I could drink no more and while still able to function I conceded my loss and paid my bet. I just couldn't believe that I had lost the contest and went back to the ship a beaten man. While still nursing a terrible hangover the next morning my shipmates couldn't wait to tell me that Jack had a little help from the crew at the other end of the table during last night's event. When it was clear that I was no longer paying attention or otherwise engaged in conversation, Jack was pouring his drinks out into other glasses under the table which were then passed around to others for eventual consumption. "Fished" again !!



I should make note of the official base enlisted men's club while on the subject of alcohol consumption. The old "Club Alliance" was operated by the Navy and located just outside and down the street from the main gate. It was a large, multi-storied building that used to act as a one stop service and support system for the lower rated enlisted men. This place was a true throwback to the days of World War II where at one time it operated restaurants, clubs, a thousand seat movie theater, tailor shop, barber shop, steam room, massage service, book store and library while offering judo lessons, live music and Broadway shows among other things. At one time it served up to 25,000 military personnel daily from all over the world and was later sanctioned as a United Nations club.



However, by the time of my visit the place was just a crumbling shell of its former self. It offered little competition when compared to the bright lights and girls of the Honcho just a short walk from the club. The early 1970's. were considered to be the dawn of the "modern" Navy yet sailors were still using old ships and bases left over from an old war to fight a new war. The Navy led the world with new combat technology as it changed from cannon to missile but continued to struggle with its aging infrastructure when it came to ships and bases. By the time I started visiting Club Alliance, most of the interior was closed down and offered little in the way of extra services or entertainment.

Ah, but of course the bar was still open. It was a dark oversized room with too many tables and not enough customers. The dusty air smelled of stale cigarettes and beer from years gone past. The black and white ghosts of every old WW II movie still danced around the haze. After a few drinks one would begin to have haunting illusions of tables crashing, bottles flying across the room and whistles screaming as the Shore Patrol moved in to break up another brawl . But by the 70's the only reason to stop by were the cheap prices for a beer or mixed drink. It was a place to go when you were out of money. I drank many a cherry red Sloe Gin Fizz in that old dump. The old relic was finally demolished in the 80's to make way for a new hotel. The modern Navy Alliance Club now sits proudly at the main gate entrance to the Fleet Activities base in Yokosuka, still making memories for a new crop of sailors..

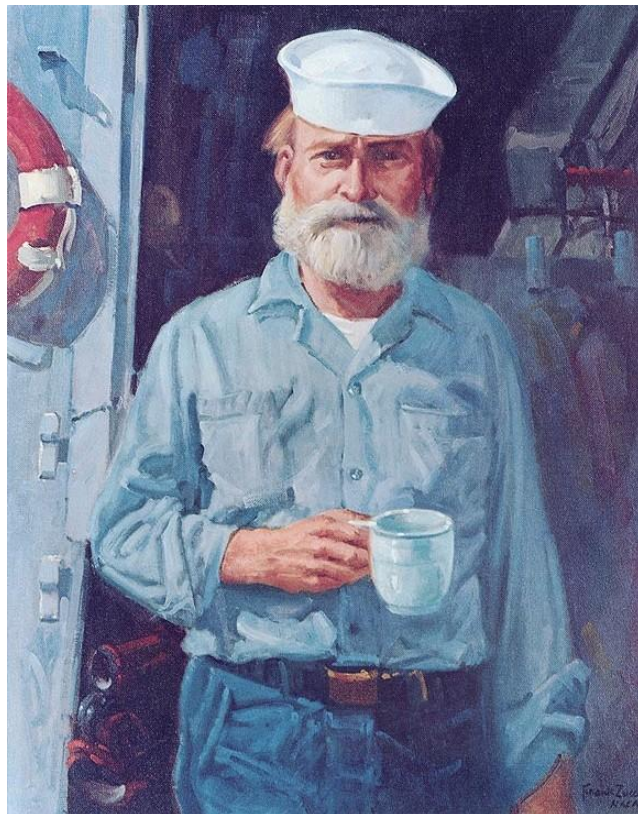


The new Club Alliance



The memories of the clubs, bars, and nights on the Honcho have faded with time but are best summed up by the writings of some anonymous old salt:

Art by Frank E. Zuccarelli, 1972



Our favorite liberty bars were unlike no other watering holes or dens of iniquity inhabited by seagoing men in West/Pac, (Western Pacific Deployments). They had to meet strict standards to be in compliance with the acceptable requirement for a sailor beer-swilling dump for a ship's hangout.

The first and foremost requirement was a crusty old gal or mama-san serving suds. She had to be able to wrestle King Kong to parade rest. Be able to balance a tray with one hand, knock bluejackets out of the way with the other hand and skillfully navigate through a roomful of milling around drunks and bar girls.. On slow nights, she had to be the kind of gal who would give you a back scratch with a fly swatter handle or put her foot on the table so you could admire her new ankle bracelet some "fish" brought her back from a Hong Kong liberty.

A good barmaid had to be able to whisper sweet nothings in your ear like, "Hey animals, I know we have a crowd tonight, but if any of you guys find the head facilities fully occupied and start urinating down the floor drain, you're gonna find yourself scrubbing the deck with your white hats!"

They had to be able to admire great tattoos, look at pictures of ugly bucktooth kids and smile or be able to help haul drunks to cabs and comfort 19 year-olds who had lost someone close to them. They could look at your ship's identification shoulder tab and tell you the names of the Skippers back to the time you were a Cub Scout.

They were one of the few people on the face of the earth that knew what you did, and appreciated what you were doing. And if you treated them like a decent human being and didn't drive 'em nuts by playing songs they hated on the juke box, they would lean over the back of the booth and park their soft warm breasts on your neck when they sat two Rolling Rocks in front of you.

The male staff acted as table wipe down guys and glass washers, trash dumpers, deck swabbers and paper towel replacement officers. The guy had to have baggy tweed pants and a gold tooth and a grin like a 1947 Buick with a name like "Ramon", "Juan", "Pedro", "Tico" or "Joe-San". He had to smoke unfiltered Luckies, Camels or Raleighs. He wiped the tables down with a sour wash rag that smelled like a skunk diaper and said, "How are choo navee mans tonight"? He was the indispensable man. The guy with credentials that allowed him to borrow Slim-Jims, Beer Nuts and pickled hard boiled eggs from other beer joints when they ran out where he worked.



The establishment itself had to have walls covered with ship and squadron plaques. The walls were adorned with enlarged unit patches and the dates of previous deployments. A dozen or more old, yellowed photographs of fellows

named "Buster", "Chicago", "P-Boat Barney", "Flaming Hooker Harry", "Malone", "Honshu Harry", Jackson, Douche Bag Doug, Capt. Slade Cutter, Ginney, Cracker and Snipe, decorated any unused space.

It had to have the obligatory Michelob, Pabst Blue Ribbon and "Beer Nuts sold here" neon signs. An eight-ball mystery beer tap handle and signs reading:

- > "Your mother does not work here, so clean away your frickin' trash."
- > "Keep your hands off the barmaid or take her upstairs"
- > "Don't throw butts in urinal."
- > "Barmaid's word is final in settling bets."
- > "Take your fights out in the alley behind the bar!"
- > "Owner reserves the right to waltz your worthless sorry ass outside."
- > "Shipmates are responsible for riding herd=on their ship/squadron drunks."

The bar had to have a juke box built along the lines of a Sherman tank loaded with Hank Williams, Mother Maybelle Carter, Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash and twenty other crooning goobers nobody ever heard of. The damn thing has to have "La Bamba", Herb Alpert's "Lonely Bull" and Johnny Cash's "Don't take your guns to town" in memory of Alameda's barmaid goddess, Thelma. If Thelma is within a twelve-mile radius of where any of those three recordings can be found on a jukebox, it is wise to have a stack of life insurance applications within reach of the coin slot.

The furniture in a real good liberty bar had to be made from coal mine shoring lumber and was not fully acceptable until it had 600 cigarette burns and your ship's numbers or "FTN" carved into it, (F*** The Navy). The bar had to have a brass foot rail and at least six Slim-Jim containers, an oversized glass cookie jar full of Beer-Nuts, a jar of pickled hard boiled eggs that could produce rectal gas emissions that could shut down a sorority party, and big glass containers full of something called Pickled Pigs Feet and Polish Sausage. Only drunk Chiefs and starving Ethiopians ate pickled pigs feet and unless the last three feet of your colon had been manufactured by Midas, you didn't want to get anywhere near the Polish Napalm Dogs.



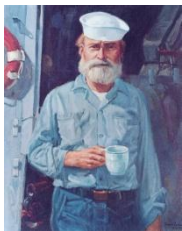
No liberty bar was complete without a couple of hundred faded ship or airplane pictures and a "Shut the hell up!" sign taped on the mirror behind the bar along with several rather tasteless naked lady pictures. The pool table felt had to have at least three strategic rips as a result of drunken competitors and balls that looked as if a gorilla baby had teethed on the sonuvabitches.

When you walked into a good liberty bar, you felt at home. They were also establishments where 19 year-old kids received an education available nowhere else on earth. You learned how to "tell" and "listen" to sea stories. You learned how to make a two cushion bank shot and how to toss down a Kirin beer and shot of Sun Torry or some Akadama wine or Sake known as a "depth charge."

We were young, and a helluva long way from home. We were pulling down crappy wages for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a-week availability and loving the life we lived. We didn't know it at the time, but our association with the men we served with forged us into the men we became. And a lot of that association took place in bars where we shared the stories accumulated in our, up to then, short lives. We learned about women and that life could be tough on a gal/wife. While many of our classmates were attending college, we were getting an education slicing through the green rolling seas in WestPac, experiencing the orgasmic rush of a night cat shot, the heart pounding drama of the return to the ship with the gut wrenching arrestment to a pitching deck. The hours of tedium, boring holes in the sky late at night, experiencing the periodic discomfort of turbulence, marveling at the creation of St. Elmo's Fire, and sometimes having our reverie interrupted with stark terror.

But when we came ashore on liberty, we could rub shoulders with some of the finest men we would ever know, in bars our mothers would never have approved of, in saloons and cabarets that would live in our memories forever. Long live those liberties in WestPac.! They were the greatest teachers about life and how to live it.

> Author Unknown



Oh, and a word about the great artwork by Frank E. Zuccarelli. (It's actually a painting of a 6th Fleet sailor) While every picture tells a story this great piece of artwork also started a mystery. The original painting disappeared from its rightful owner, the U.S. Naval Institute located on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. According to a blog from the USNI and Naval History & Heritage Command, "The recovery of this painting, which happened in early 2009, was a little unusual. Its last known location before it disappeared around 1998 was a high level Pentagon office. The office had moved, the administration had changed, the person who originally signed for it was gone, the staff had dispersed, and the one person left had no idea what I was talking about when I showed her the picture. Or did she? I wasn't convinced by her reaction, so I made a "Wanted" poster and passed it out in the Pentagon....Some remembered the painting but no one knew where it went. Finally, I was inspired to do some research to discover who was in charge of the office right before we believed it vanished. It was a well-known person, so well known that I was discouraged from making contact. Eventually, an opportunity presented itself and a co-worker who was a Naval Academy classmate of this person, called him up and asked about the painting. "Sure, I have it right here," he said. A couple of weeks later we had the pleasure of presenting him with a reproduction in return for the original. Score one for the ring-knockers. He said that his staff had given it to him as a going-away present."

- Lynn Zuccarelli Austin says: (August 23rd, 2010)

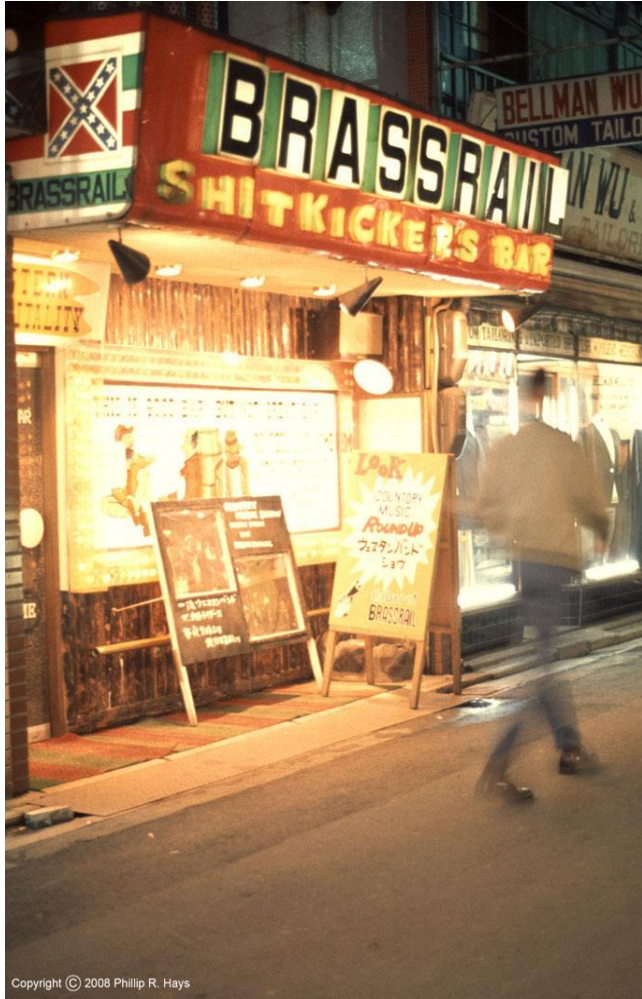
The Old Salt was painted by my uncle, Frank Zuccarelli. (Actually, my father's uncle). I have one or two framed copies on linen, and have always been interested in knowing what happened to the original. I'm thrilled that it's been found! I'd love to know (1) who had it and (2) where it is residing now (on display or in storage). I'm going to send Uncle Frank a print out of this web posting. He'll be amazed! Thank you for tracking down the Old Salt. Best Regards—

I can't end this section without a few more pictures of my favorite street in Japan.









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Not all of my time was spent on the Honcho. In the five months aboard the USS Oklahoma City, I had moved from the obligatory mess cook duties to the Deck – Weapons Division. Much of my free time was spent studying for another promotion and I soon completed the required training manual for the Boatswain's Mate rating. It wasn't long before I realized that my lack of mechanical ability would hamper any attempt to become an effective Boatswain Mate Petty Officer.

As I pondered my future, I noticed that job duties for Yeoman, Personal and Storekeeper ratings all looked interesting but it was the Postal Clerk rating that captured my attention the most. Navy Postal Clerks, (PC's) were treated like kings aboard ship. Everyone from the Admiral down to the lowest Seaman wanted to get their letters and packages from their sweethearts and family at home. Mail was the biggest morale booster on the ship and most servicemen believed that if you messed with the postal clerks that they had to be the cause for their missing package or undelivered letter.

This tradition continues today as one officer recently commented, *"In this age of instantaneous contact via email or, where accessible, the various pieces of social media our deployed, Sailors, Marines, Soldiers and Airmen can access, there is still nothing, and I do mean nothing, quite as satisfying as a letter or package that arrives in the mail. The whiff of perfume still tenuously clinging to the envelope with the distinctive cursive writing, or the smooshed package that nonetheless opens to homemade chocolate chip cookies regularly trumps the electronic media. Why? Because it carries an intangible – that somewhere along the long, busy process of delivery from Somewhere, USA to a ship or a dusty forward base, the hands of someone we love and who loves us touched it. And that is one of the reasons mail is so important for our deployed service members..."*





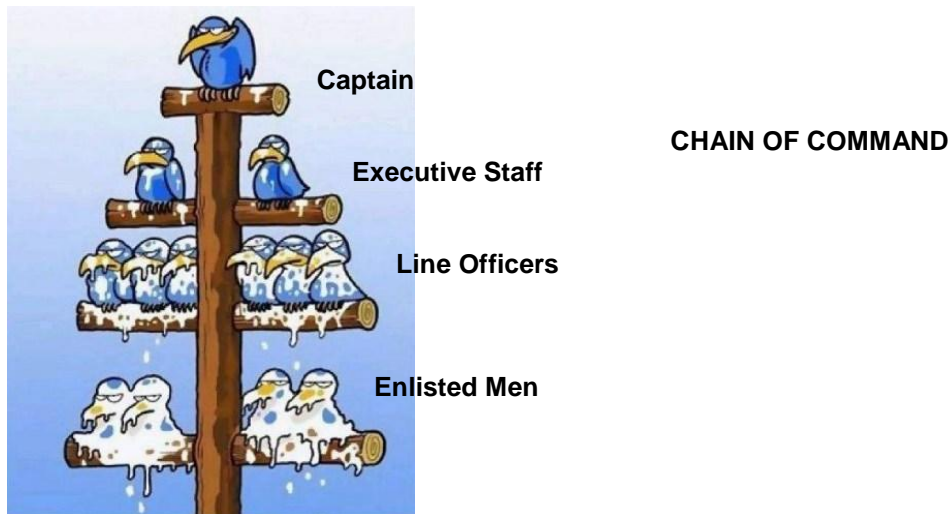
The post office aboard the ship was manned by only four clerks and it was considered a pretty exclusive club. The Petty Officer, PC2 in charge was not very encouraging of my efforts to promote in the PC rate. He was a career enlisted man and had little use for a reservist with such a short active duty period. My reserve status and remaining time on active duty would haunt me every step of the way as I tried to make rate. I continued my studies and passed all of the written courses and tests required to take the PC3 test. I was finally allowed to work in the ship's post office and receive on the job training as long as it was on my own time. I was allowed to hang around and gain work experience as long as I continued to relieve others for liberty calls and give up my weekends in port to hold mail calls.

After completing the written tests and gaining some work experience in my chosen field I decided to request the impossible and attempt to get permission to attend the formal Navy training School for postal clerks held in San Diego. This was called Postal Clerk, "A" School, ("A" for advanced training). Now in order for an enlisted man to request any form of action, such a transfer, shore leave, or training, etc. he had to fill out a written approval form called a "chit". The written "chit" request would then be approved or denied as it was sent through the chain of command. My "chit" for a school had to

start with my Deck-Weapons Petty Officer and proceed through the division officer and department head and in some cases, the ship's Executive Officer or Captain. My request for schooling was considered pretty ludicrous considering the fact that I was a reservist with about 18 months left to serve. It was even more implausible to expect a school due to the cost of the military returning me all the way back to California for several months of expensive training. Time spent in class would also further reduce time spent at an active duty station. Many of the 4 year regular Navy enlistees failed to receive advanced training at time of entry and some waited until their 2nd four year enlistment to receive formal "A" school training.



So, instead of filling out my "chit" and sending it up the chain I decided to adopt a different strategy. I put on my best set of dress whites and hand carried my "chit" through the chain of command. I made a personal appearance to each supervisor and reiterated my efforts and training to date and made a sincere case as to why I wanted to receive advanced training. I truly believe that it was the fact that I was standing there, looking that man in the face and stating my case personally is what led to each person to approve my request for training. I am sure each one thought that the next person higher up the chain would finally disapprove such a ridiculous request. I still recall the last officer staring at me for a long time without saying a word before he gave the final approval.



Even though my command structure had approved my request, the battle was still only half won. Upon approval of the "chit" it was forwarded to the ship's Personnel Office and sent back stateside through the training command structure for actual assignment or denial of training. My ship already had a full complement of rated postal clerks and could accept no more so there really wasn't any need for me to receive this training. I can only assume that the training command thought that the ship wanted another clerk