

USS Reuben James visits West Coast

Sailors take part in Portland's Rose Festival



OS2 Chris O'Donnell photo

AWCS(AW) Randall Gillet shows off Easy Rider 61 from HSL-37 to the people of Portland.

By Lt. j.g. Brian Donohue
United States Naval Reserve

USS Reuben James (FFG 57), along with 18 other naval ships, arrived in Portland, Ore. on June 7 for the city's annual Rose Festival. The arrival of the Navy launched a weekend of parties, parades and fun.

Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light Thirty-Seven (HSL 37) Detachment 4 deployed with Reuben James and also took part in the Rose Festival tours.

The city of Portland is approximately 75 miles inland and resides on the Willamette River. Although it is Oregon's largest city, it is relatively small compared to other cities on the West Coast.

This fact, coupled with the hospitality of the people of the Northwest, made USS Reuben James' visit one of its best port

calls in the ship's history.

Early on the morning of June 7, USS Reuben James made its way up the Columbia River escorted by two fireboats spraying plumes of water over 100 feet into the air. Thousands of onlookers lined the waterfront and watched as the crew of USS Reuben James cast over its lines to moor. The crowd cheered as the fireboats fired off dyed red, white, and blue water. USS Reuben James moored in the middle of all of the festivities with the downtown area only blocks away and the carnival only yards away. "I could not believe how many people were out to see us moor. It is wonderful to see that kind of support for the Navy. You could tell right from the start that Portland really wanted to show us a good time," said Lt. j.g. Scott Kozink.

Thursday evening began with

a reception hosted by the Portland Rose Festival Association for invited officers from all the ships to get together and mingle with the people of Portland. Other events, such as "meet a Sailor night" at various clubs, were being heavily advertised on local radio stations. Admission into most establishments was free for those in uniform. There was a tremendous amount of fanfare and excitement over the Navy's arrival - a most warm welcome to the Sailors of USS Reuben James who had been underway for the previous eight days transiting the Pacific. "It was great to be in port. The Rose Festival was a perfect way to relax and have some fun," said Seaman Tomas Willis.

USS Reuben James did its part in welcoming the people of Portland by hosting guests for

tours of the mighty warship. The ship's crew managed to conduct tours of the frigate for over 8,000 people in just two days' time. One tour group even included a radio announcer from a local radio station who broadcasted the tour live.

"Giving tours to the people of Portland was a definite highlight for me. I had a lot of fun showing off the ship and teaching them about what we do," said Sonar Technician Third Class William Bubash. The people of Portland offered a similar program with their "host a Sailor" trailer which paired host families with Sailors for tours of their beautiful city and outlying areas.

One of the largest events was the Rose Festival parade through the city on Saturday morning. The parade, which began mid-morning and continued into the afternoon, included a wide variety of participants. Local high school bands performed along with the Marine Corps band from Camp Pendleton who transited up to Portland from San Diego on USS Mount Vernon. The highlights of the parade were the winners of the rodeo beauty pageants from each of Oregon's counties. The winners rode beautiful rose-adorned horses coupled with a western style of dress rarely seen in Hawaii.

Some of the Sailors from USS Reuben James had an opportunity to visit the Rose Gardens at

Washington Park where an annual rose contest is held every year during the festival. The Rose Garden features hundreds of different roses grown by local citizens; the flowers are on display at the gardens year round. "I was amazed to see how much and how many different types of roses there were. It was spectacular," said Electricians Mate First Class Ronald Taganas.

The people of Portland were excellent hosts and the festival was outstanding. The crew of USS Reuben James was disappointed when it was time to get underway on Monday and leave the friendly city of Portland behind. The crew pulled in the lines and continued with its training cycle while transiting to San Diego for additional in port training. Many of the crews hope the visit will become a permanent addition to the ship's schedule.

"This trip to Portland afforded our Sailors the opportunity to see that there are many citizens in our great country who truly appreciate their day-to-day sacrifice in the service of their nation.

In addition, it afforded them the opportunity to see just how beautiful the Pacific Northwest can truly be. It was a superb port visit and I have never been more proud of how a group of Sailors presented themselves ashore," stated Cmdr. Carl Cramb, commanding officer, USS Reuben James.



OS2 Chris O'Donnell photo

A Kiss cover band poses next to the 76mm gun while taking a tour of USS Reuben James.

Sailors match wits with Canadian Navy at annual trivia challenge



OS2 Chris O'Donnell photo

USS Reuben James High-Five Challenge Champions. (Left to right) Ens. Gerardo Talamo, Ens. Tyler Ross, OS3 William McKeever, MS3 Russell Allison, OS1 Frankie McCurley and SN Randy Mejia.

By Lt. j.g. Scott Kozink
USS Reuben James

USS Reuben James Sailors defeated Sailors from the Royal Canadian Navy at the annual High-Five Challenge trivia contest held recently during the ship's visit to the Portland Rose Festival.

The High-Five Challenge is a trivia show in the Portland, Ore. area where local high school teams compete throughout the school year. For the last several years, the show has aired a special Rose Festival show between a team from the Canadian Navy and a team from the U.S. Navy. Last year, the U.S. team was beaten handily by the Canadian team.

Upon hearing about last year's loss, the Reuben James team started studying and drilling each other during the ship's nine-day transit from Pearl Harbor to Portland. The hard work and training resulted in victory for the six members of the Reuben James team who brought home the trophy.

The U.S. team was down 100 points going into the final category of questions that was worth a total of 200 points. The Canadian team stumbled, missing two questions that the U.S. team eagerly scooped up.

Before you could blink, the score had shifted from the U.S. down 100 to being

up by 60 points with only one question to go. The game was still on the line with one 40-point question left to be asked. If the U.S. tried to answer and missed it, they would have lost 40 points. Fortunately that was not the case and USS Reuben James team answered the question to win by 100 points.

"It was a close match all the way to the end. We hung in there and never counted ourselves out. It was a great win for the Navy. It is great to have been part of it," said Ens. Tyler Ross.

Ens. Gerardo Talamo answered the majority of the questions for the U.S. team. "I was lucky that I knew the answers to the questions that came up and I was quick enough to be the first to buzz in," said Talamo.

Despite the quantity of questions answered by Talamo, the team's most valuable player was Operations Specialist Third Class William McKeever. But in truth it was probably his three-year-old daughter Serena who helped the team. McKeever cleaned up in the children's

literature category, but the question he answered in the final round was the biggest of the day.

"I did not know what type of questions to expect under the category of monsters. I knew the answer as soon as I read the question. I guess I was not quick enough though and the Canadian team had the first chance to answer the question. I knew they were not going to get it right though; I could see it in their faces," said McKeever.

McKeever started to jump with excitement as the time ticked away for the Canadians to answer the question. He finally had his chance to buzz in and steal the 80-point question with an emphatic, "Elmo, the friendly monster."

"If it were not for my beautiful daughter, there is no way that I could have answered this question," said McKeever.

The Navy team from Reuben James won the challenge, but in the end, they owed it to a special little girl who was sitting at home in Hawaii and missing her father.

Junior officers attend MSI ship handling simulator training



US Navy photo

By Lt. j.g. Scott Kozink
USS Reuben James

The surface Navy prides itself on its ability to safely maneuver and navigate ships over the high seas. Part of this involves the ability for the ship to navigate into port and alongside the pier. To improve the proficiency and ship handling skills of the

junior officers aboard USS Reuben James, the ship's bridge watch standers went to the MSI ship handling simulators in San Diego, Calif. to practice pier landings, underway replenishments and bringing the ship in and out of port.

The MSI simulators consist of a mockup of both a fully operational bridge and a bridge wing.

The simulators are computer driven and can be set up for any type of ship in the Navy. They can also place the ship in any port in the world and under any type of environmental conditions.

"It's not often we have the opportunity to focus our attention entirely on teaching junior officers how to properly handle the ship. In these trainers, we were able to do six underway replenishment approaches and break-aways, bring the ship into port three times and bring it alongside the pier five times in one day.

"We sent four groups on four different days allowing each person ample opportunity to handle the ship," commented Lt. Adam Welter, Operations Officer.

"These simulators allowed as many junior officers a chance to handle the ship alongside a pier as can normally do so in five underway periods," said Lt. Jose Fikes. "It's a tremendous training opportunity.

Training is the key to success and is the driving theme on USS Reuben James. The future of the Navy is in the hands of its junior Sailors and officers.

"We were very fortunate to obtain the MSI trainers for four days while we were in San Diego. The opportunity to allow our junior officers to practice pier landings and underway replenishment approaches is limited. These trainers are terrific and provide this invaluable training," said Cmdr. Carl Cramb, Commanding Officer, USS Reuben James.

"In addition, they are plain fun. Our junior officers are given the opportunity to perform these important seamanship evolutions without repercussions and under varying degrees of difficulty. It improves

their knowledge, overall performance and gives them the confidence they need to successfully conduct these evolutions safely when called upon to do so. Every junior officer is a much better Sailor as a result of this training," added Cmdr. Cramb. Training is the key to success and is the driving theme on USS Reuben James. The future of the Navy is in the hands of its junior sailors and officers. However, the safety of each ship lies in the hands of its commanding officers and junior officers. Reuben James continues to lead the way in the Pacific Fleet.