

On September 14th I had the chance to catch up with Paul Barry, Secretary of the USS Beale Association in the club room of American Legion Post 18th where about 45 former members and their guests were enjoying great food and music for their annual reunion. The group chose Bay City as this year's reunion site to enjoy the legend and lore of the USS Edson courtesy of Legionnaire Michael Kegley, and the atmosphere of American Legion Post 18 courtesy of the Sons of the Legion and the Ladies Auxiliary.

The storied history of the famous destroyer USS Beale is one that even the most water-fearing landlubber could appreciate. NAVY LOG Commissioned in 1942, the Beale was deployed to the Pacific Theater where she sank a German U-Boat and fought in engagements at the Battle of Leyte Gulf and Siragao Strait (both in the Philippines), as well as the Battle of Okinawa in Japan. Beale was instrumental in the rescue of two US Naval warships off Okinawa, the USS Newcomb and the USS Leutz, both of which were hit by Kamikazes.

An interesting piece of naval trivia...after conclusion of hostilities in WWII, the Communications Officer Rudy Tichy who was also an architect built a club in Sasebo Japan.

Decommissioned in 1946, the USS Beale was recommissioned and returned to service in 1951 for the Korean Conflict. The Beale was subsequently involved in a clandestine operation for the Bay of Pigs Invasion (April 1961). Overpainting its hull number and camouflaging the Ensign (US Flag), Beale served as an escort to the Bay of Pigs landing area. During the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962, during which the United States stood down Nikita Khrushchev and the Russians, the Beale formed part of the naval blockade of nuclear weapons aboard Russian trawlers headed for Cuba. Beale is credited with having tracked and forced a Russian nuclear armed submarine B59 to surface as a direct result of the Beale's hurling concussion grenades in the direction of the B59 sub. There is a report that the subs skipper was prepared to launch nuclear weapons but couldn't get all three of the "key" officers onboard to concur. Close call, indeed!!!

In 1966 the Beale transited the Panama Canal from its homeport in Norfolk, VA and headed to Vietnam where it patrolled the Gulf of Tonkin as well as the South China Sea from Danang to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), firing several thousand rounds in support of ground operations. Beale served as "chase vessel" for the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid into North Vietnam waters, the purpose of which was to rescue errant pilots missing the flight deck during plane recovery operations. Fortunately, it is reported that none of Intrepid's intrepid pilots missed the flight deck. Other ports-of-call and sea service actions include: Singapore, India, Greece, Gibraltar, Red Sea, Suez Canal.

The USS Beale – DD 471 was decommissioned in 1968 and sunk as part of submarine target practice off the east coast where it rests as an artificial reef.

Sailors of the USS Beale have earned many decorations, in addition to the following distinctions: 1. Order of Magellan for global circumnavigation. 2. Sons of Neptune Shellback for crossing the equator. 3. Order of the Domain of the Golden Dragon for crossing the International Dateline. All Hail the Hardy Crew of the USS BEALE!

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