

KEARSAGA

USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

ISSUE 60

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

Fall 2016

Presidents Message

by C.V. Lindley



Hello to all fellow KEARSARGE Association members. It's been a long, "very Hot" summer here in Pensacola Florida and from what I've seen the rest of the USA has also had some extreme heat. I hope that all of you and your families have enjoyed the season and experienced good health and prosperity.

While contemplating this column I thought about the importance of service to our country. On different occasions I've heard several individuals say that they were "just another guy/girl" doing their duty but what they did wasn't very important. Other comments like "I was only a PO3/2 or non-rated" and didn't do anything important also. I WANT TO DISPEL ANY SUCH THOUGHTS RIGHT NOW. NEVER MINIMIZE your service to our great country no matter what your job/duty entailed. You should ALL TAKE GREAT PRIDE and consider yourself as great a PATRIOT as any American citizen that ever lived. Every task and duty whether at sea or ashore is important no matter how trivial or major it may seem at the time. During my thirty years of active duty (I know, I was a "Lifer") I was privileged to serve with almost every rating in the Navy to include Navy "Seabee's", (Construction Battalions, (CB'S)) Submariners, cryptologist, (They're different for sure), all Aviation, General Service, Engineering, Hospital Corpsman and any that I might have missed. I found early on that ALL USN branches, rates and ratings are vital to the success

of our great NAVY. I also had a "joint duty tour" with The U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, while I take nothing from them, they just don't measure up to the great Sailors of The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. Going to sea just sets us apart.

Well, I probably wore that subject out but it was in my heart and on my mind. Actually, a conversation that I had with, and, the untimely death last year of my close friend, a Great American Patriot, ADJ 3 Kent Weiser (V6 Div. 59-61) from Hazleton North Dakota prompted me to address the subject.

"IN OMNIBUS PINNACULUM"

C.V.



Lcdr Lewis, Skipper Of Torpedoes

From 25 May 1945 KEARSAGA

Lcdr F.G. Lewis, USNR, served aboard the USS Pennsylvania BB-38 from 1940 to 1942. He was in Pearl Harbor at the time of the Japanese attack.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war he applied for flight training and was designated a naval Aviator in April.

In August 1944 he went aboard the Rudyerd Bay CVE-81 as executive officer of VC-77, serving as such until November 1944.

He next became commanding officer of VC-78 aboard the Saginaw Bay CVE-82, staying with that vessel until Feb, 1945. In March he returned to the States to become the commanding Officer of Torpedo Squadron 153.

He holds the American Theatre, the American Defense with one star, the Asiatic-Pacific with three stars, the Philippine Liberation with two stars and the Victory Ribbon.

His home is in Springfield, Mass. 

Being a Sailor Makes Childhood Dream Possible



By Donald O. Norris
Swansboro, NC

I was a PN2 on the Kearsarge from Feb 1952 to Feb 1953. My most memorable moment in the Navy was when I was on the carrier USS Independence CVA-62 when it pulled into Lebanon. As an amateur Egyptologist, I took advantage of this opportunity by taking a leave of absence. I got myself a flight from Lebanon to Cairo so I could go see King Tutankhamun's Museum and the Great Pyramids.

The Egyptians had a fascinating history. They could grow four crops in one year, where other countries struggle to get one crop per year. The reason for this was the Nile River would flood every year leaving a rich top soil behind when the water receded. They could grow anything which made food very abundant. That made it possible for them to have a standing army. Agriculture made them a powerful nation as they could feed the troops.

The great pyramids are an engineering master piece. A lot of Egyptologist do not believe they were built by the Egyptians because to do so would require they have knowledge of pi. I don't believe those people on the banks of the Nile had any knowledge of pi. Some Egyptologists believe the people who built the pyramids may have originated from northern Europe because Europeans had knowledge of advanced mathematics and science. The thing about the great pyramid is, it is 756 feet square, 481 feet high, and has 122 layers of stone blocks. The big question is how did they get them up there? They put polished limestone all the way down to the bottom as they came down. The ramps that were used to build it were taken down afterword. When you build something that size, you must have a level foundation.

They did this by digging trenches that they filled with water and when it was level that was their guide for making a level foundation.

I wrote a book about King Tut, "Who Killed Tutankhamun". In my book I wrote that Horemheb, the general in the Army had killed him. Now, a professor in Egypt says he was likely killed by a hippo bite. When the mummy was unwrapped, his chest

was crushed, his ribs were broken and it was said that he fell off of a chair. A hippo which is a vegetarian has the largest mouth in the animal kingdom and is very territorial. If a person gets into their zone they will attack. They surmised that Tut was bitten by a Hippo and it crushed him.

It was my childhood dream that when I grew up I would one day go to the Pyramids. Being in the Navy made it possible for me to live that dream.

Act Of Courage

By Dale Maddy

Most young men who joined the Navy were from 17 to 19 years old. They had just finished high school. They come from large and small towns from all over America. Most were from a typical American family, being neither rich nor poor, but average. On the day they took their oath they had no idea what fate laid ahead of them. Some served their 4 or 2 year commitments and others re-enlisted to make it their life's career. Some even went on to become naval officers. Most are proud of their service and would do it all over again. Some never made it home alive. Some went through some very horrific ordeals that they seldom talk about. When asked about it they simply reply, "I was just doing my job." They are Heroes, but they never call themselves one.



Sonny Richardson - Gary Vencill

This story is about two such men from the USS Kearsarge. Sonny Richardson (21) and Gary Vencill (19) were called upon to extinguish a fire in the O2N2 plant. On the morning of December 23, 1967 just as the Kearsarge was entering the port of Sasebo, Japan for a ten day Christmas R and R, when only about 50 feet from the dock, general quarters

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rang out. The tugs pulled the Kearsarge back away from the dock into the harbor and the captain announced there was a fire and when all was secure we would come back in.

The fire was caused by a leak in a liquid oxygen line. Pure oxygen is highly flammable. Because of the high concentration of oxygen in the compartment the smoking lamp was out throughout the ship. One of the men who had little concern for the rules, lit up a cigarette anyway and instantly the compartment was engulfed in flames. The fire was so hot that it buckled the bulkhead. Courageous, Fireman DC3, Sonny Richardson took the lead on the fire hose, along with Gary Vencill holding a 24 volt wet cell lantern throwing a beam over his shoulder in smoke so thick they could not see the flames. Visibility was less than two feet as they headed straight into the compartment to extinguish the fire. They both stayed for about 20 minutes until their OBA ran out of oxygen. They both replenished their OBA and returned to the scene.

Three men who were in the compartment lost their lives and two others were badly injured. After the fire was out, Sonny returned to the compartment to retrieve the bodies. They were burned beyond recognition and dental records had to be used to identify them. As Sonny picked them up from the deck, their charred skin fell off in his hands. It was a horrific thing to experience. Putting things into perspective, as this took place, Sonny asked another sailor to put on his gear and help out, but that sailor never got into the action and later made excuses for not doing so. Some men take action and get the job done, and that is why we call them Heroes.

It was later reported that on the other side of the buckled bulkhead is where nuclear weapons were stored, so this could have been much worse if it weren't for the work of these men.

Over the years, many men just like Sonny and Gary, fought many fires on board an array of U.S. ships, and all of these men did heroic acts of bravery. They are to be commended for it. Just a couple of years earlier they were playing football or basketball at their local high school. A boy becomes a man very quickly in the Navy. Thank you, Sonny and Gary. 

Ahoy, the Panama Canal Zone!

From 25 May 1946 KEARSAGA

In a few days the good ship USS Kearsarge will turn her bow toward the Panama Canal Zone - and a week of liberty liberty and recreation for all hands.

To better enable everyone to enjoy the advantages of our holiday the "KEARSAGA" prints a supplement, this week. The last two pages of this issue are maps of interest to sight-seeing folk who journey in either end of the Zone. Tear off those maps and keep them for your personal use. 1500 of them have been printed: please do not waste any. There will be no extra copies available.

Here are a few facts of more general interest, concerning the Zone.

The Panama Canal Zone is a strip of land, 10 wide - or five miles on either side of the center line of the Panama Canal, Colon and Panama are in the Republic of Panama: they are not part of the Zone. The Zone is in effect a government owned reservation set apart for the operation, maintenance and protection of the canal. Administration is vested in a governor appointed by the President of the United States: all other offices are also appointed. The administration offices are located at Balboa Heights.

We shall be chiefly concerned with the Colon-Cristobal area. Colon in 1944, had a population of 31,000, Cristobal's population was 10,000. Points of interest are: Hotel Washington, Peace del Contonario with the statue of Columbus, The Third St. Gatun locks, and the various army and navy posts.

Excursions listed in the "Seaman's Handbook for Shore Leave are: Potto Bollo, ruins of the old Spanish fort, church and statue of the Black Christ (25 miles). Hombre de Dies (40 miles), San Blas Islands, El porvenir, capital (120 miles) - home of the San Blas Indians, and the Fort San Lorenzo ruins (8 miles). 



This photo of the Kearsarge has been reduced to 1/2 inch to mark the end of each article. 

Kearsarge Association Vice President Joins Ride For Recognition

By Barry Rittle

Kearsarge Association VP, Barry Rittle, joins 74 year old Del Francis, a Frank E Evans DD 754 survivor, on the last leg (approx. 45 miles) as he rode his bicycle from Sulfur Springs, TX to the steps of the Capital in Washington, DC, 1,569.6 miles, in 74 days to gain recognition for our 74 brothers lost to the sea when the Frank E Evans was cut in half by a collision with HMAS Melbourne.

During the 1969 Wespac Cruise, in support of the Vietnam War, Kearsarge, Frank E Evans as well as other ships from the United States, Australia, Japan and Korea were tasked to conduct a South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) exercise. During this exercise, at approximately 3 A.M. the morning of June 3, 1969 the Evans, who was operating with the Australian aircraft carrier Melbourne, was ordered to fall astern as plane guard for flight ops. It was confusion during this maneuver that resulted in the Evans turning across the bow of the Melbourne, resulting in a collision which cut the Evans in half. The forward section of the Evans sank in less than 3 minutes and the collision resulted in the loss of 74 Evans sailors.



Del Francis (74) left Barry Rittle 3 from left 

Submitted by Ray Holm YN1

One of the worlds famous ship captains died, having long been admired by his crew and fellow officers. They remained puzzled, however, over a strange ritual he performed daily.

While at sea he would lock himself in his cabin and open a small safe, take out an envelope with a note inside and read it. After locking the paper back in the safe, he would return to his duties.

For years this went on, and his crew became very curious. Was it a treasure map? Was it a letter from a long lost love? Everyone speculated about the contents of the strange envelope.

After laying the captain's body to rest, the first mate led the entire crew back to the ship and into the captain's quarters. He opened the safe, got the envelope and read the words aloud to an astonished crew: 'Port: Left, Starboard: Right' 



The names of the lost 74 are not included on the Vietnam Memorial. The "Ride for Recognition" is Del's attempt to gain more recognition and hopefully, enough support to rectify the situation.

Journalist Louise Esola has written the book "American Boys" which fully documents the events surrounding the collision and also joined us on the steps of the Capital on August 15, 2016.

Kearsarge Association, Web Master and Kearsaga Editor, Dale Maddy, also describes the collision in his book "Million Dollar Experience."



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Once I Was A Navy Man

By John O'Neil, Captain USN (Retired)
Jacksonville FL

I liked the Navy. I liked standing on deck on a long voyage with the sea in my face and ocean winds whipping in from everywhere, the feel of the giant steel ship beneath me, it's engine driving against the sea. I liked the Navy. I liked the clang of steel, the ringing of the bell, the foghorns and strong laughter of Navy men at work. I liked the ships of the Navy, nervous darting destroyers, sleek cruisers, majestic battle ships, steady solid carriers and stealthy submarines.

I like the names of the Navy ships: Saratoga, Midway, Hornet, Enterprise, Sea Wolf, Canberra, Iwo Jima, Wasp, Shangri-La, and Constitution all majestic ships of the line. I like the bounce of Navy music and the tempo of a Navy Band, "Liberty Whites" and the spice scent of a foreign port. I like shipmates I've sailed with... the kid from the Iowa cornfield, a pal from New York's eastside an Irishman from Boston, and of course a drawling friendly Texan. From all parts of the land they came, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England and from the cities, the mountains, and the prairies. All Americans, all comrades in arms. All men of the sea. I liked the adventure in my heart when the ship puts out to sea, and I liked the electric thrill of sailing home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting on shore.

The work was hard, the going rough at times, but there's the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the devil-may-care philosophy of the sea. And after a day of hard duty, there is a serenity of the sea at dusk, as white caps dance on the ocean waves. The sea at night is mysterious. I liked the lights of the Navy in darkness-the masthead lights, and red / green sidelights and stern lights. They cut through the night and look like a mirror of stars in darkness..

There are quiet nights and the quiet of the mid-watch when the ghosts of all the Sailors of the world stand with you. And there is the aroma of fresh coffee from the galley. I like the legends of the Navy and the men who made them. I like the proud names of Navy Heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut and John Paul Jones. A man can find much in the Navy - comrades in arms, pride in country. A man can find himself.

In years to come, when the Sailor is home

from the sea, he will still remember with fondness the ocean spray on his face when the sea is angry. There will still come a faint aroma of fresh paint in his nostrils, the echo of hearty laughter of the seafaring men who once were close companions. Locked on land, he will grow wistful of his Navy days, when the seas belonged to him and a new port of call was always over the horizon.. Remembering this, he will stand taller and say, "ONCE I WAS A NAVY MAN"

MAIL CALL

Ed Gloyd V-1, AE3

Here is my dues for this year. Should have done it sooner. Hope to see everyone in Jacksonville.

Roger White

I'm doing OK for a old man, 80 in Sept. Health up and down. The Dr. And pills keep me on track. Maybe 2018 reunion. Most of the buddies I kept in touch with , now gone. That's life. God bless.

Melba R. Edington

Happy 4th! Another month has gone by and I haven't mailed you my dues. I'm sorry. The time just goes by so fast. Please find my check for another year. I really enjoy reading the Kearsaga newsletter. I can still relate to many, but see some new names which is great. I have many wonderful memories of the reunions that we went to.

Kenneth Durkee

Sending the \$15.00 for membership dues. Sorry this is late. Ken has dementia and I didn't know they were due until we got a letter from Dale Maddy. I now take care of all correspondence. Sincerely Margaret Durkee (wife)

Roland Frary

Looking forward to Jacksonville Fl. Reunion. Thanks for all the hard work keeping the Kearsarge Assc going.

Lt Darryl Peralta

Hello again after many years. Strange to see so many OE guys on the staff. I served with Bill Hollywood, Barry Rittle and Dale Maddy 67-69. God Bless.

Ralph Evans IC2

Enclosed is a check to cover my Kearsaga newsletter for 2 years. I enjoy the Kearsaga very much. I served aboard the Kearsarge from Feb 1952 until June 1955 when I was discharged. My 39 months aboard the Kearsarge are most memorable and rewarding. You folks put out a very good newsletter. Thanks.

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TAPS

Eugene Nelson

Eugene La Verne Nelson 'Gene', age 86, passed away on May 5, 2016 in Jacksonville, Florida. Since 1987 Gene made Baker County, Macclenny, home before moving to Brookdale Avondale in Jacksonville. Gene was born on



January 27, 1930 in Stoughton, Wisconsin to parents Ellis and Margaret Nelson. He had deep roots to the family dairy farm in Wisconsin which fostered his extreme love for ice cream. He also loved the Green Bay Packers. After graduating High School he enlisted in the United States Navy as a Seaman Recruit and advanced through the ranks retiring as a Senior Chief Aviation Electrician. He spent an immeasurable amount of time training young men entering the electrical field, impressing upon them the vital importance of good craftsmanship in the maintenance of Navy aircraft. After 22 years of honorable service in the U.S. and overseas he retired at Cecil Field, FL. One of his most memorable assignments included duty on the USS Kearsarge that was sent to retrieve the Mercury Astronauts from the Pacific Ocean. Gene soon began a second career working another 21 years for Southern Bell, 'Ma Bell' as he called it.

Gene was devoted to his church and did extensive volunteering; always helping with maintenance, church suppers, driving friends to appointments, and did church visitation. He was a chairman of the church trustees, active in the Methodist men and was an Adult Sunday School teacher until he was no longer able. He spent hours making all sorts of woodcraft projects for the church bazaar and annually staffed the pumpkin patch.

Gene loved to travel and over the years owned several campers that he would hook up and just go, especially, back to Wisconsin to the farm and to see his family; He enjoyed the challenge of doing crossword puzzles, playing solitaire, and often shared his 'Trivia' knowledge with you. In all aspects of his life he was extremely dependable and competent. To quote a friend, "Gene was a good man."

Eugene is preceded in death by his first wife, JoAnn Nelson and his second wife, Mary Nelson. JoAnn was the mother of his son, David (Lorraine) and daughter, Donna Nelson and Mary was the mother of Michael and Benjamin Carter. He is survived by his children and his brother, Rollie (Judy) Nelson., his niece, Kris Willis; and his nephews, Randy and Mark Nelson all of Wisconsin.

The funeral service will be held on Monday, May 9, 2016 at 1:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 93

North 5th Street, Macclenny, FL 32063 with Pastor Don Thompson, Jr. officiating. Interment will follow at Riverside Memorial Park, 7242 Nonnandy Blvd. Jacksonville, FL where full military honors will be rendered. The family will greet friends an hour prior to the service at the church. Memorials may be made in Gene's name to the First United Methodist Church. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services, 250 North Lowder Street, Macclenny, FL 32063, (904)259-5700.

Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family's guest book. Please Sign the thiestboak@jacksonville.ccon

Clifton Shewmaker

I would like to let you know that Clifton has passed away October 15, 2015. I will keep his membership for one more year.

Sincerely, Geraldine Shewmaker

Don Hamilton

This is to inform you of the passing of Don Hamilton. He served on board the USS Kearsarge in 1954-1955. He was in the Marine Detachment. He passed away on August 10, 2016 in Overland Park, KS. Semper Fi Don Erdmann



Photo by Eric Oxendorf



Photo by Eric Oxendorf

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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome Aboard!

- 1452 David E. Grandchamp BT2
- 1453 Vance B. Lamee EM2 1967-1970
- 1454 Richard E. Takahashi LTJG 1958-1960
- 1455 Charles W. Brown MM2 1969-1970
- 1456 Eugene D. Feit PO3 1960-1964
- 1457 Thomas W. White ETN2 1968-1969
- 1458 Larry Rauchut EM3 1955-1956
- 1459 Donald O. Norris PN2 1952-1953
- 1460 Ron Davis 1968-1970
- 1461 Kenneth S. Schwegler ETR2 1963-1967
- 1462 David M. Thomas RD3 1968-1972 



Photo by Eric Oxendorf

SHIPS STORE

Golf Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Navy or White - Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$29.00

Sweat Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Navy or White - Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$36.00

Dress Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Short sleeve - Navy only - Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$29.00

Hats



CV CVA CVS 33 - Navy - \$14.00



Marine - Red - \$14.00



LHD 3 - Navy - \$7.00

Watch Cap



Navy - CV, CVA, CVS 33 - \$11.00

Ships Crest

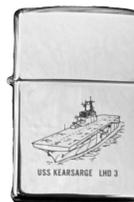


Cloth - CV, CVA, CVS 33 - \$5.00



Magnetic - CV, CVA, CVS 33 - \$2.50

Zippo Lighter



Chrome - LHD 3 - \$15.00



Brass - LHD 3 Ships crest - \$15.00

Dawn of Glory



Print - LHD 3 with inserts of previous ships - \$20.00

50th Anniversary



1st Day Cover Envelope - \$1.50

Jackets



The Port Authority Challenger jacket has a Tekon nylon durable, water repellent outside with a poly-filled body with heavyweight fleece lining. It has rib knit cuffs and waistband, zippered pockets outside a zippered inside pocket. We are offering it in Navy with a Navy lining with USS KEARSARGE, CV,CVA, CVS and the ships silhouette on the back.

Small, medium, large and 1X large for \$57.00
2X large for \$61.00 - 3X large for \$65.00



A light weight nylon jacket with mesh lining is also available in Navy with the same stitching on the back.

Small, medium, large and 1X large for \$53.00
2X large for \$55.00 - 3X large for \$57.00

They are a Special order item only and all sales are final. When I have 6 orders I will place the order with the supplier. We need a minimum of 6 to be eligible for the above mentioned prices.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING AND HANDLING
Make checks payable to the Kearsarge Association and send order to:
Charles Patton
9125 Live Oak Ave
Ocean springs, MS 39564
(228) 875-7572
charlotteap@bellsouth.net

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USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

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% Dale Maddy
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Lodi, WI 53555

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CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

If it has been highlighted in yellow please renew immediately



DUES and MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership dues are \$15.00
Check payable to the: **Kearsarge Association**
Mail to: **Bill Hollywood**
3059 Crest Ave.
Ketchikan, AK 99901

New members, send your information to include:
Name, address, phone number, E-mail address,
rate/rank, division, and years aboard.

If you are interested in receiving your Kearsaga via E-mail go to our web page and leave a message stating "Send KEARSAGA via E-mail." For those who do not have a computer we will continue sending via U. S. Postal service.

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Honorary President Kenneth McDaniel (*Deceased*) Association Founder
John Bennett "President Emeritus", John Starnes Past President
