

# KEARSARGE

## USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

ISSUE 66

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

Summer 2018

### Presidents Message

by C.V. Lindley



Hello to ALL of my fellow KEARSARGE "Shipmates"/ Association members from Pensacola Florida. The "Cradle of Naval Aviation" and Home of The "World Famous U.S. NAVY "BLUE ANGELS". (I worked in the same hangar with the Blues for two years in the 70's and got to see their shows every week 2-3 times and never tired of them.)

A little recap on our 2018 Jacksonville reunion if you will. I, as well as all Association officers. had many-many attendee's come forward throughout the reunion (several with tears in their eyes) expressing their sincere appreciation for their great experiences. The tour of The USS THE SULLIVANS, (DDG 68) was very special as the crew was especially very welcoming to us in giving our group almost individual attention. As we were departing the young female LtJg. (in charge of the escorts) was talking to me with tears in her eyes in admiration and respect of ALL OF THE KEARSARGE Sailors that she had talked to that day. What a wonderful impression that you folks left on SULLIVANS!! For those unaware of their posture, they were in preparedness to deploy next month with the USS HARRY TRUMAN Carrier Battle Group to the Middle East war Zone as well as other unknown areas as directed. We ALL certainly can think back to our days on the KEARSARGE when we faced the very same situations as young Sailors.

The other tours went well also with excellent destinations and, except for bus PA system microphone malfunctions, they went as expected.

I had requested to all for any complaints on the hotel to

come to me and received NONE, ONLY COMPLIMENTS for ALL meals to include the great banquet Buffet, (3 entree's were great, don't you think) . As additional info, the hotel was generous enough to give free parking to our members that didn't stay in the hotel.

We had approximately 90 attendee's at our banquet to include the Color Guard and guest speaker. I thought that the Navy Color Guard (from Naval Station Mayport Fl.) gave a very nice touch to the proceedings and hope that those that were there agreed. I wanted to do something very special for our Sailors that had served on the KEARSARGE in the early years of her commissioning (1955 and pre), so we gave them a special table, a memento and head of the chow line). So if you fit the category, come to Milwaukee.

Our guest speaker was command Master Chief Petty Officer David Twiford who had been stationed on the USS KEARSARGE, LHD 3 twice. Ironically, he just got transferred to RTC Great Lakes Illinois and he's already promised to give us a good tour of Navy "Boot Camp" in 2020 as our reunion is in the Milwaukee area then.

In closing, here's a personal note. I "overheard" that I may have stepped on some members sensitivities by not speaking "gently/softly" enough or have spoken too loudly on occasions. TO CLARIFY: I HAVE LESS THAN 35% hearing, I wear the 2nd most powerful hearing aids available through the VA. (A LOT OF HELO/ ENGINE NOISE IN MY PAST, FACT-NO EXCUSES!!!) If you're sensitive to what I say, IT'S STRICTLY "GOOD NATURED-SAILOR BANTER" Nothing personal ever intended. I very strongly believe in telling someone if you have issues with them and getting a remedy right now. Rest assured we can and will do it. Have courage.

"IN OMNIBUS PINNACULUM"

C.V.



2018 Reunion - Jacksonville, FL in front of the USS The Sullivans DDC-68

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## Lawmakers May Extend Agent Orange to 'Blue Water' Navy Vets



An A-4 Skyhawk launches from the USS Coral Sea in March 1965, during operations in the South China Sea. Congress may extend VA benefits to "blue water" sailors who served on deep-water warships operating off the Vietnam coast. (US Navy photo)

Stars and Stripes 5 May 2018 By Nikki Wentling

Lawmakers are resuming an effort that stalled in November to extend health benefits to about 90,000 sailors who served in Vietnam and were potentially exposed to Agent Orange.

Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced a reworked bill Friday that now includes a method to pay for extending Agent Orange benefits to Vietnam War veterans who were located on ships off the Vietnamese coast, known as "Blue Water" sailors.

Republicans and Democrats on the committee wrangled five months ago over the cost of extending the benefits to these sailors, although they all are seemingly supportive of the measure now.

"Today is a great day for Blue Water Navy veterans," Roe wrote in a prepared statement. "We owe it to the brave veterans who served in the Vietnam War to provide benefits for conditions they may have developed because of exposure to Agent Orange."

The Department of Veterans Affairs already presumes that ground troops in Vietnam -- and others who served in the country's inland waterways -- were exposed to Agent Orange, a dioxin-laden herbicide that's been found to cause respiratory cancers, Parkinson's disease, heart disease as well as other conditions.

Blue Water veterans have been denied the same benefits. The VA has argued there is not enough evidence to link Agent Orange to sailors on board aircraft carriers, destroyers, cruisers and others ships.

In Congress, the fight stalled on multiple occasions because lawmakers have disagreed on how to pay for it.

Extending the benefits to Blue Water veterans for 10 years would cost \$1.1 billion, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated.

To pay for the extension, Roe introduced a proposal Friday to increase fees for service members and veterans who use the VA's home loan program. The increase would amount to \$2.95 each month for homeowners who made no down payment. The increase would average \$2.82 each month for people who made a 5 percent down payment and \$2.14 each month for people who put 10 percent down.

The fee rates have not increased since 2004, Roe's office said. Under law, fees are waived for veterans who have a disability connected to their military service. That would still be the case.

Members of the National Guard and Reserve incur slightly higher fees through the home loan program. Roe's proposal would bring their fee rates in line with other service members and veterans.

John Wells, an attorney and director of the group Military-Veterans Advocacy, has been fighting on behalf of Blue Water veterans since 2008. A bill to extend benefits to those veterans has never made it past committee, he said.

The bill now appears positioned to overcome that hurdle.

In November, Roe proposed paying for the Agent Orange benefits with a "round down" that would round the cost-of-living adjustment on veterans' disability checks to the nearest dollar amount.

Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., the ranking Democrat on the House VA committee, argued at the time that the cost should not be offset by taking from other veterans. He and Roe agreed to work with veterans service organizations and find another way to pay for it.

Walz said Friday that he would support the reworked legislation.

"This legislation is yet another example of the good we can accomplish when we work together on a bipartisan basis with veterans service organizations and reach across the aisle," Walz wrote in a prepared statement. "I am proud we will finally be able fix this broken promise to our nation's veterans."

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will meet Tuesday and decide whether to send the bill to the full House. 

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## Mediterranean Cruise 1947

By Robert Campbell (89)



We left Norfolk, VA and we went on a mid-shipmen cruise in 1947. We went to England, Edinburgh, Scotland, and Denmark where they said we would see beautiful blond heads, and that was true. In 1948 we were in the *Mediterranean* and there I was a nineteen year old out of the mountains from Asheville, North Carolina who had never seen the ocean before I went into the navy. We hit all the ports in the *Mediterranean*.

The one in France, Caen France, I was the ships driver who drove the commander around. We were driving down the beach and they had little changing rooms right on the beach. I was doing something when I saw everyone taking pictures and I stopped and looked and there was a gal in a bikini. I looked at that and I was really shocked. (Louis Réard, a French automobile engineer and clothing designer, introduced the modern two-piece bikini in July 1946.)

When I first went aboard they had F6F, TBM *Avenger* torpedo bomber, and SB2C aircraft (S ba two see's). Later on they got F8. While I was on leave, the Kearsarge lost its first jet, I think it was an F9F Panther.

In the late 40's all the guys started getting discharged from the navy. I was the ships driver, one of the oldest ships drivers, still an airman, and I had a run in with warrant officer Judd, but he did me a favor. I had planned on spending 20-30 years in the navy and warrant officer Simms had recommended me for third class aviation bosons mate. But Simms got transferred just before it happened and Judd was the one, who assigned me to become the captain's driver, and it was a damn good job, I guarantee you.

One time the Captain was going to Washington for three weeks and he asked me how long it had been since I had been home?

I said, "I don't know."

He said, "Well why don't you take off for home."

I said, "I will go down and get the paper work done for that."

He said, "You have a special delivery pass don't you?"

I said, "Yea, I got that."

He said, "Well you go on home and I'll take care of the paperwork." I went home to Asheville, North Carolina while he was in Washington and returned just before he got back. I was never charged for any leave time for that.

I had a run in with a warrant officer who took my liberty card away. I told the captain about it and he said that will not happen again.

When I was 14 year old (in the 1930's) I was riding a bicycle in Asheville, delivering drugs for the local drug store when a truck pulled out in front of me. I went between the fender and the bumper and got two of my teeth knocked out and other cuts and bruises. The drivers name was Judd and then the warrant officer that I had problems with was also named Judd. I went down to see where my name was on the list for promotions to the next rank and found out I wasn't on it.

I asked warrant officer Judd, "What's going on?"

He said, "You must have a 3.5 score on your quarterly report and you only have a 3.4"

I said, "Why is it only 3.4?"

He said, "Because that's what I put you down as, because I didn't know your work."

I said, "Sir, I chauffeured the captain when we were in port and I don't do anything in the division. I am on call with him 24/7.

He had done this to me several times and I felt that if the navy was going to do this to me I will just get out. It was about 1949. The navy was letting go of anyone who wanted a discharge, so I put my paper in for it. Judd wanted to know why I was doing this and I told him I had no future in the navy because of people like you. The captain offer to send me to the west coast, but I didn't want to do that because my family was on the east coast and I wanted to stay

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closer to them. In the end the captain chewed out warrant officer Judd for treating me the way he did. The marine orderly witnessed it and told me later.



On a landing approach the pilot missed the wire and his plane flipped upside down and I ran to the cockpit to try and rescue him. Blood was gushing out of his helmet. We got him out and down to sickbay. The last I heard he was still alive. I was one of the men underneath the plane trying to rescue the pilot. At this point I can't tell which one was me.

After the navy I got a pilots license and later became an air traffic controller in Jacksonville,FL. I have been retired now for 38 years. 

## 1945 Plank Owner By Walter Winning

My name is Walter Winning; I am now 90 year old. I was in K3; as a mailman 3<sup>rd</sup> class in charge of the post office at that particular time. There was a 2<sup>nd</sup> class too, but he didn't want the financial responsibility so he always let me do what I wanted to do. After a 30 day leave and after the war was over, I was in California in Camp Shoemaker outside of Oakland California. I was 17 at the time and I re-enlisted because I had not left the country during the war and I wanted to do something. I report to the receiving station in Brooklyn, New York, across the street from the Navy yards. I got put on this big, brand new, beautiful aircraft carrier. She was magnificent, the USS Kearsarge CV33 in December

1945 before the ship was commissioned.

Shortly after she was commissioned and we went on a shakedown cruise. We took a lot of workman with us to make various additions and repairs and adjustments in different parts of the engines and navigation and etc. Everything went well on that cruise. After a tune up on everything we went on a regular cruise in the Atlantic fleet. It was great! We went to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, called Gitmo city. Gitmo city was a beautiful base. I wanted to re-enlist, get married and see if I could get shore duty in Gitmo city and work in the post office there. But my wife with ten children did not want to be a Navy wife. Our captain was McKenna, an ace pilot in WWII.

Gitmo city was even better with the girls there. They girls were \$2.00 a throw. It was a great time. The base had terrific beer for only .25 cents. I flew in there a few of times with mail, when the Kearsarge was at sea. I did that when official mail was being transferred. When official mail was being sent or received, we also moved private mail. I loved the flying.

In 1946 we were taking on fuel with a navy oiler and the wind changed gusting on the right side and the two ships collided putting a hole just at the water line of the Kearsarge. They sealed that compartment and when we arrived back in Brooklyn it was repaired.

Another incident that I remember was a gunners mate was cleaning the barrel of one of the five in guns forward of the bridge. There were two of them and he was cleaning the one on top and standing on the lower one. About that time, the fire control man hit the control peddle and move the guns throwing the gunners mate into the ocean. Because the ship is so big, it could not turn around very quickly. A life boat was launched and the man was rescued and he was alright.

A carrier has quite a few accidents. I remember one time when I was in the dental chair four decks below the flight deck, as my teeth were being worked on I felt the chair shake. An airplane

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had hit the gun turret. As I remember there were quite a few crashes. More than the public ever knew. There were tail hooks that failed or pilots that crashed into gun tubs. The white foam was used several times that I remember. I do not remember any pilots dying in those mishaps.

We came back to Brooklyn, as it was our home base. Then they shipped us to Annapolis, in the spring of 1947 at the start of a world cruise for midshipmen training. The sophomore, juniors, and seniors were on that cruise. There was another carrier and two battleships on the same cruise. One of the battleships was the USS New Jersey. Also there were the destroyer escorts. All the midshipmen were required to make five flights from the carrier. Any midshipmen who participated in any sport were not required to make any flights.

It was a good trip and a good time. We went to Scotland where I was born. My parents brought me to America when I was seven months old. While in Scotland I visited Edenborough and took a train ride up to Glasgow the biggest city in Scotland. From there we went to England. After those liberty ports we went back out to sea in the Atlantic to perform more operations.

The best two year of my life was when we were in Gitmo with the .25 cent beer. But I got out of the Navy and raised a family and led a good Christian life. This is all the truth as best as I can remember.

## Special Reunion Guest

By Dale Maddy

On June 3, 1969, the USS Frank E. Evans was sliced in half by the HMAS Melbourne in the South China Sea during SEATO exercises called Sea Spirit. The USS Kearsarge Association reunion had as a special guest in May 2018, a survivor of that disaster, Del Francis. Del shared his photos and his story with the members after supper on Monday night. His connection to us is; the Kearsarge picked up all of the survivors later that morning.

Del said, "He was in the forward section of

the ship when all of a sudden he heard a loud crashing sound of metal on metal as the ship lay on the starboard side. He and his friends started to go down a passageway to escape and had to walk on the bulkhead to get there, only to find that it was blocked by a bulkhead that was curled around and blocked his exit. There was a hatch nearby that opened to the outside, but it was blocked by something on the outside and they could not get it opened."



Del told us about another sailor who was free from the ship. He had been on the bridge, was thrown clear of the ship, and then swam back to it, and opened a hatch from the outside that freed him and sixteen other men. That was more than 1/2 of the survivors off the front of the Evans. When Del asked the man, "why did you swim back," he said, "I heard a voice that told me to open that hatch." Del said, "I shouldn't be alive today, it was the hand of god who saved my life." The ship sank to the bottom of the ocean three minutes later."

Del has a mission to get his shipmates names on the Vietnam memorial wall in Washington DC. For more information about it contact Del at 303-906-7291 or just call your representative in Washington and ask for the names to be included on the wall. It is way past due. You can help make a difference

June 3, 2018 marked the 49th anniversary of the disaster.

It was an honor to have Del as our guest.

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## MAIL CALL

**Bob Bechtelheimer**  
El Cajon, CA

Thanks for the Kearsaga winter issue... CVA 33 was my first ship assignment after I graduated from Navy supply corps school in Athens, GA in 1955.

I remember sitting down at my desk and wrote a US Treasury check payable to me (R. R. Bechtelheimer) for One hundred thousand dollars and took over to the San Diego Bank of America to pick up the load of \$20 bills. It took 3 sailors to carry it aboard. 

**Richard Griffith**  
Weaverville, NC

My name is Richard Griffith. I was in the Navy from 1948 to 1953. I went aboard the Kearsarge after boot camp and 14 weeks in the machinist school in the base near Chicago. Then I went aboard the Kearsarge in the engine room soon after it returned from an overseas trip.

We stayed in the Rhode Island base for a while then went through the Panama Canal to the base in Washington, where the ship went out of commission. I was one of the last to be transferred, then I went on a destroyer and over to Korea several times where we did a lot of shore bombardment.

I have received several bulletins about the Kearsarge and enjoyed them very much, then I received your Kearsaga, which I should have answered before this. I have enjoyed the info each time but unable to attend any of the get together. I hope I continue to receive them. Thank you for this Kearsaga. Sincerely, Richard Griffith 



## NEW MEMBERS

### Welcome Aboard!

- 1479** is Howard Hartvickson 1630 N. Johnson RD. Turlock, CA 95382
- 1480** Marsh Blunt, NC, heard of us in FRA magazine
- 1481** Theodore Fett, MN, heard of us in VFW and American Legion Magazine
- 1482** Claude Isbell, TN, heard of us in American Legion Magazine
- 1483** Jack Hayes lives in Tennessee
- 1484** Kenneth Hawken saw ad in American Legion
- 1485** William Hayman heard about us from Fleet Reserve Association.
- 1486** is Steve Black OE Division, 1556 Capitancillos Drive San Jose, Ca 95120
- 1487** is, Robert Sullens, 4007 Floramar Terrace, New Port Richey, Florida 34652-3118
- 1488** Jerry Sikes on board from 1962 to 1966
- 1489** Elmer Hobson - FT3, Reno, Nevada 89506, served 1960 to 1980, aboard 1960 – 1961 Fox division



## TAPS

**Benjamin L. Winslow**

My father, Benjamin L Winslow, passed away on November 25, 2017.

I have been listening to stories of dad's experiences on the Kearsarge since I was a little girl. He was very proud of his time in the Navy and even got my daughter excited about possibly joining the Navy. I had planned on taking dad to the reunion and had planned on surprising him with the news as a Christmas present. Unfortunately, I never got the chance to give this gift to him. The Navy did a lovely job putting him to rest at his graveside services. We will cherish the flag that was presented always.

Sincerely, Jacqueline Winslow Hibbard 

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## Message from the vice president Barry Rittle

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who attended the 2018 reunion. C.V., Jan, Lynda and I hoped we put together a quality reunion with the best value we could obtain for the association members. However, the true metric of how successful we were at completing our task is how well the reunion is attended and enjoyed. From the comments we received it appears we were successful in meeting our objectives.

Once again it was great to see old friends we served with and new old friends we made at previous reunions. The comradery experienced at our reunions is unbelievable and I highly recommend all members consider attending a reunion if at all possible.

Remember we all have 3 things in common:

- 1<sup>st</sup> All of us were all in the Navy
- 2<sup>nd</sup> All of us sailed on Kearsarge
- 3<sup>rd</sup> All of us are Patriots

C.V., Jan, Lynda and I will work diligently to put together an as equally good or better reunion in 2020. Looking forward to see you there. 

## SHIPS STORE

### Golf Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Color: Navy  
Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$29.00

### Sweat Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Color: Navy  
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

### Hat



CV CVA CVS 33  
- Navy - \$14.00

### 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



Print - LHD 3 with inserts of previous ships - **“Dawn of Glory”** print available for free to any one who was interested in obtaining one.

## 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) 324-7174  
charlotteap@bellsouth.net

# KEARSAGA

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USS Kearsarge Association  
% Bill Hollywood  
3059 Crest Ave.  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

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### 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.

### Association Office Holders

**President:** CV Lindley, 9729 Shadow Wood Dr, Pensacola FL 32514, (850)477-0053 cvjan78@gmail.com

**Vice President** Barry Rittle 10 Valley Dr., Annville, PA 17003, (717) 673-6189 rittleskokomo@aol.com

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Bill Hollywood, 3059 Crest Ave., Ketchikan, AK 99901, (907) 225-6556 aknos@outlook.com

**Webmaster/Editor:** Dale Maddy 4409 Hastings Dr., Marion IA 52302, (608) 444-1783 dmaddy47@outlook.com

**Ship store:** Charles Patton, 9125 Live Oak Ave, Ocean Springs, MS 39564 (228) 8324-7174 Charlotteap@bellsouth.net

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