

KEAR SAGA^{II}

The Newsletter Of The Kearsarge Association

ISSUE 26

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

DEC, 2003

SCUTTLEBUTT KEARSARGE REUNION 2004

George Beam and John Bennett have made a trip to New Orleans, and have negotiated the following to date:
Where: Intercontinental Hotel, 444 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA. Phone 1800-445-6563

Our block of rooms will be held until February 6, at which time they will be turned back to the hotel and may or may not be available after this date!

Reservations must be canceled 72 hours prior to the reunion.

Dates: Wednesday April 7 through Saturday April 10.

Rates: \$79.00 per night, plus 13% sales tax and a \$2.00 per night occupancy fee. Good for 4 days prior to and after the reunion if space is available.

Thursday and Friday will be tour days, and Saturday will have tours plus the dinner dance

Registration forms and information about the tours and dinner dance will be sent out shortly in a separate mailing.

SHIP'S STORE

We are still looking for a new Storekeeper. Anyone interested, please contact Past President John Bennett (614-272-6842), President George Beam (816-364-0206), or Treasurer John Work (330-894-2660)

REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

This year marks the 62nd Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. CAPT Don Ross, former Main Propulsion Assistant of the KEARSARGE (first Korean War cruise) was a Chief Warrant Officer aboard the Battleship USS NEVADA. Although blinded by explosions he directed the Engineering Department to light off and answer bells for getting underway.

The NEVADA was able to clear Ford Island, while under attack, and was beached to avoid blocking the exit channel from the harbor. For his courage and leadership he was awarded the Medal of Honor. On December 7, 1991 CAPT Ross had the honor and privilege of introducing President George Bush at the 50th Anniversary commemoration at the USS ARIZONA Memorial in Pearl Harbor.

Seasons Greetings

The Officers of the KEARSARGE Association wish all the members of the Association and their families the best of health and happiness during 2004.

MEMBERSHIP

Treasurer John Work reports that our current mailing list includes 675 members. Of these, 85% are paid up to-date. If you are delinquent in your dues and wish to continue receiving the newsletter, please send a check to John as soon as possible.

TAPS

Willis Butterfield (4th Div 48-50)

11-18-03

To the Members of the Kearsarge Association;

This is to notify you that my dad Willis Butterfield (4th Div 48-50) passed away on December 9, 2001, at the age of 71. He had emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, The last 6 months of his life, he had been diagnosed with lung cancer. While he was undergoing chemo treatments which left him very weak, he spent a lot of time in his favorite chair and he put together a scrap book of his years in the Navy. He would show everyone that would come to visit his scrap book of fond memories.

Dad had spent the last 50 years as a bricklayer in North Dakota and Montana. He was to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary in May of 2002. He had 3 boys and 1 girl, and 13 grandchildren. His wife, Marilyn, is still in Great Falls, MT.

We would like to thank all crew members for his memories and to wish you well.

Yours Truly,

The Family of Willis Butterfield

John Laury (Air - 46)

March 7, 2003

John Laury proudly served in the United States Navy for almost five years. Before serving aboard the USS Kearsarge. John was sent overseas as an Aviation Chief Ordinance Man where he received a medal for his assistance in sinking a German submarine. Then he joined the shakedown cruise as a Plank Owner aboard the USS Kearsarge in October of 1945: five months before it was even commissioned in October of 1946. There he again proudly served as a Chief Petty Officer.

I first meet John during the 1996 reunion in San Diego. It didn't take long for any of us to realize what a special person John was. Those of you who attended that reunion will remember John and Stephanie, his wife, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary at the reunion. You will also remember how John and Steph stole the show when they got on the dance floor that night. My, how those two could dance! They again showed us their seemingly never-ending energy in Corpus Christy two years later.

John was a kind and gentle man who had many loves in his life. He loved his God, his country, his family, and his friends. John lived his life and had many passions besides dancing such as hunting, cooking, playing golf and telling stories, to name a few. Rest in peace, John. We will miss you at our next reunion.

Respectfully, Ed McKee

Gail Jose (R Div 52-54)

From: Ruth Young, September 03, 2003

Subject: Re Gail Jose

Paul, Gary, Bob:

I received this e-mail from Marilyn Jose Tuesday evening...Gail Jose was called Mickey in the family. Paul asked me to forward it to you.

Ruth

"I have some bad news for you. I am so sorry to tell you but Mickey had an accident Mon. (yesterday) He was working on our granddaughters house and was putting a ground rod in the ground and somehow was electrocuted. We're not sure what time it happened. I guess it was instant. I am so sorry to have to tell you."

Marilyn

On 11-24-03 Richard Farkus wrote:
Hi Paul,

When I got back from Florida a few days ago there was a letter from Paul Young asking me to write a few lines about our old shipmate Gail Jose.

Gail and I lived about 45 minutes from each other. We often went out to eat, and either went to his place or mine to play cards till late at night. We also went to fairs and tractor shows.

Gail had his business as a contractor and built homes. In his later years he quit drinking and smoking, and he and his wife Marilyn often went to church. I know this doesn't sound like the Jose we all knew on the KEARSARGE in the R Division, but we had good times together.

I sure was surprised to hear about his death in September. In the past 10 to 12 years we kept in touch with a few shipmates, Wes and Glenn Swick, Paul Blake, Matt Elchuck, James Oliver, Don Tatum, and Paul Young.

Well, that's about it for now.

Richard Farkus, 443 T.R. 391, Sullivan Ohio 44880

Don Tatum (R Div 53-54) Wrote:

Upon arriving aboard the KEARSARGE in 1953, I was assigned to the Paint Locker. That was where I met shipmates Gail Jose and Paul Blake. Seemed like we had known each other from childhood. Gail always had a smile on his face and a funny joke to tell. I never heard Gail complain about anything. He had a pleasant personality.

While we were in dry dock at Hunter's Point, San Francisco, Gail and I went on several liberties together. My home was in the San Francisco area, so I was one of the few to have access to my vehicle. Gail and I drove in my 1936 Ford sedan to Russian River which is 50 miles North of San Francisco. Another trip we took was to Santa Cruz, 70 miles South of San Francisco. Both places were scenic and lots of fun.

Back aboard ship we were given 2 heavy assignments. One was to remove the ship's ribbons, then strip and repaint. Mission well done. The other, requested by the Executive Officer, was to match the furniture in the Captain's Quarters. This was accomplished by using a technique referred to as "graining". It was time consuming and somewhat of an art.

The three of us were a team, and over the years we kept in touch by phone. Gail always spoke highly of his family and never forgot to mention how his dogs were doing. I shall always cherish my memories of Gail. He was a good man and he will be greatly missed.

Don Tatum (R Div 53-54)

Norman L. Van Prooyen (Mar Det - 56)

Norman L. Van Prooyen, age 67, died on June 18, 2003. Funeral services were held at St. Stephens Catholic Church and memorial services were conducted by the American Legion, Elks, and Moose

He enlisted in the Marine Corps on Nov. 24, 1954, and served as an admiral's orderly on the USS KEARSARGE. He was awarded the Good conduct Medal and was honorably discharged on Nov. 23, 1957 at Camp Pendleton. In addition to his wife Helen he is survived by two daughters, a son, a step daughter, a step son, three grandsons, two step granddaughters, one great granddaughter, and one sister.

Helen's address is: 4401 W. Gallistel Rd., Park Falls, WI 54552

Janet Keener, Ken McDaniel's Daughter wrote

From: "Janet Keener" <janet@mail.etsu.edu>
Subject: TAPS for the Kear Saga?
Date: Monday, September 01, 2003 7:28 AM

Dear Mr. Czesak,

I'm not sure if we met at the Virginia Beach reunion in '94 or not. I am Janet McDaniel Keener. My daddy, Kenneth McDaniel, was the founder of the association and is an honorary president. I'm an associate member and just received my recent issue of the Kear Saga. Even though he didn't serve aboard, my husband helped me out when Daddy was trying to organize the first reunion in Mobile and had his massive stroke. David, mother and I did all we could to get things organized from Tennessee and keep the membership going. My husband has died, and I was hoping that if you needed to fill some space in the next issue, he might be recognized for the efforts he contributed to getting the association started. The only reunion we were able to attend was the one in '94. Daddy died a week later. He and David were very close, and loved each other like brothers. Wherever they are now, I'm sure they're telling military stories - David did 3 tours in Viet Nam. If at all possible, could you use the following, edited to however you think is best? I would be most appreciative.

Respectfully,
Janet M. Keener, 145 Parkview St., Church Hill, TN 37642

L. David Keener

L. David Keener, son-in-law of the USS Kearsarge Association Founder Kenneth McDaniel, died at home in Church Hill, TN on May 15, 2003 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. David was instrumental in caring for "Mac" when he had his massive stroke and helped Mac's wife and daughter to organize the first reunion in Mobile. He is survived by his wife and associate member, Janet McDaniel Keener. She may be contacted at 145 Parkview St., Church Hill, TN 37642. "Gone but not forgotten".

KEARSARGE Shipmate Receives Award

John H. Starnes(V2 56-60) was selected to receive the 2003 SAFE Award for Career Achievement. This award is presented to a person who, throughout their career has made SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS in the field of safety. SAFE (survival and flight equipment) is an international organization with headquarters in Creswell, Oregon.

John, is an Aviation Safety and Occupational Health Program Manager at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston Texas. He is still going strong after more than 45 years of service in the field of Aviation and Aviation Safety. Recognized by his NASA peers as the finest safety officer on the planet, John began his career as an Airman Recruit in the US Navy. Thirty years later he retired as a Lieutenant Commander. John joined Johnson Space Center in 1987.

John was assigned to the catapults and arresting gear division aboard his first ship, the Kearsarge. This is where and when he began his journey of excellence. He was the crash, fire and rescue chief aboard the John F. Kennedy. On the Inchon, he was the aviation fuels officer. The ship made, among other cruises, a year-long cruise to Viet Nam and was involved with airborne mine sweeping operations - a first in mine warfare. While serving as a Division Officer in the Air Department aboard the Eisenhower he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal. He personally and specifically contributed to the Eisenhower being awarded the Admiral Flatley Aviation Safety Award and the Battle Efficiency "E" three consecutive years. The Ike was the safest, most combat ready and best aircraft carrier in the Atlantic Fleet.

His NASA awards include the Excellence in Achievement Award, A Silver Snoopy (presented by the astronauts to less than 3% of the total work force), the Exceptional Service Medal, the Exceptional Achievement Medal, Sustained Superior Performance Awards, Employee of the year 2001, Team member of the federal flight operation of the year 2002 and Group Achievement Awards. The SAFE Association also honored him in 1996 when he received the General Spruance Award.

MAIL BAG (LETTERS)

Richard M. Rice, 750 S. Pantano Rd., Tucson, Az. 85710, E-mail Add. Poorrice @Fox.net, August 29, 2003

Dear Mr. Works,

I am dropping you a line to update my membership (check enclosed) and make a couple of comments. I wish I could take over the ship's store operation, but my home here in Tucson, Al. is just a townhouse with no extra room at all. It would be a piece of cake for me as I am a Retired Masterchief Ship's Serviceman and could make it an easy process. I Served on Kearsarge from May of 1954 to June of 1956 in S-3 Div. Most of my time was working in the Tailor Shop.

I went to a reunion in San Diego and was dissappointed that I did not see anyone I knew. I thought after the fact that if we would have had some signs that located the different divisions it would have helped. I do at this time plan to attend in New Orleans If all works out, oh and I will bring a sign. I would like to thank you and all the folks that put so much time and effort into making the association work.

Sincerely

Richard M. Rice, MCPO, USN, Ret.

Homer D. Meeds, 2510 Forest Creek Road, Jacksonville, OR 97530 wrote on 26 September:

I went aboard the Kearsarge the 13th of February 1948 when she was high and dry in the Brooklyn Naval Shipyard and was aboard her until she was decommissioned in the Bremerton Naval Shipyard, again high and dry. I was pretty close to the last of the crew aboard as I was a Yeoman in the "R" Division, and inventoried and helped remove the Damage Control materials from the ship. I was also aboard when we lost the twenty seven (27) men at Norfolk, Virginia the night before we sailed for the Mediterranean for the six month cruise there. We lost three (3) men from the "R" Division that night.

I missed the reunion at San Francisco. I have photos and things I've kept through the years. I wrote a check several months ago for my dues but failed to get it sent off as I wanted to write a few lines along with it. Well today I decided I'd just get it done and send it off. I sure like reading about the other personnel. Not many write that were aboard when I was. My brother Sherman A. Meeds, SN, "A" Division, was also aboard, coming aboard in 1948 and was there when she was decommissioned in Bremerton, Washington.

Thanks a lot and keep up the good work. As I remember Captain Smiley was our skipper.

Sincerely,

Homer D. Meeds, YNSN "R" Division

Joe Houser wrote on Aug 25,03

I can recall when the KEARSARGE went to Bremerton in 56, my new ship was just coming out of drydock. I would remain on the HORNET till May of 58, at which time I was highlined over to the ammunition ship MT.KATIMA as the HORNET was patrolling the South China Sea. When the ammo ship reached Subic Bay I boarded the M.S.T.S. ship GENERAL SUTTON, which took 18 days to get to San Francisco.

Where is the next reunion going to be held?

All the best

Joe Houser (R Div 54-56)

From Harvey Danielson on 6 Nov 2003

To Kear Saga Editor

It was in the fall of 1945 that we were transferred from San Diego to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to be "Plankowners" of the new ship KEARSARGE. We spent time in the Brooklyn apartments, then aboard ship for the shakedown. Gitmo was a nice liberty spot, especially across the bay at Com-ah-nooch! A steak dinner with all the trimmings, plus a couple of beers (Cuban style) to wash it down, and a pretty senorita for company; all for a couple of dollars.

Anyway, it is probably on record that the ship was never hit by any shell in peace time or wartime. Well, to make a long story short, it was. This occurred during gunnery practice. It happened that a shell jammed on one of the 20mm anti-aircraft guns; big dent in the casing. The shell was no good now, so standard practice was to toss it overboard. Well, on this occasion the ammo loader tossed it too close to

the ship's hull. Just above the waterline the armor plating stuck out 4-5 inches. Guess what? The shell hit it on the primer end and exploded! That small shell made on helluva bang! Some flyboys on the flight deck walked over to see what had happened. Of course, no one knew. Everyone was acting as if nothing had happened. Everybody looked busy, and kept on loading and target practicing at a sleeve being pulled by some TBM piloted probably by some Ensign who had screwed up and got "volunteered" for the job. Anyway, little episodes like this helped to pass the time away. A trick a day kept the boredom away.

Semper Fi

Harvey E. Danielson (Mar Det 45-47), 9109 Newton Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55431-2221

P.S. Enclosed check, please keep me on the mailing list.

From Emery G. Murray, ABH3, 231 Virgil Ave., Las Animas, CO 81054, 719-456-2050

Editor, Kera Saga

I served on board USS Kearsarge CVS 33 from May 1959 to February 1963 in V-3 Division. On assignment to V-3, much to my surprise there were three guys that I had gone to school with in Las Animas, Colorado, my hometown. Their names were Ray Sanchez and Melvin Coats. Melvin is deceased and Ray may be also. Sam Dean, also from Las Animas, was in Personnel. All three soon left before we went on the Far East Cruise '59-'60. I did not see anyone else from my hometown while on board. Had a lot of great experiences: 2 Far East Cruises, picked up Wally Schera when he splashed down, collided with an ocean liner in Long Beach Harbor then had to go back into port for repairs. We were in Bremerton, WA, for yard period for several months in 1961-62.

John Starnes wrote a letter to Kera Saga recently and I remembered him. He was in V-3 and transferred to V-2. The only other person that I kept up with after my discharge in 1963, other than Melvin Coats, was Dave Jensen from Sioux Falls, SD. Every few years he would correspond but then would not hear from him for a long time. One time, the evening of Memorial Day, he called and said he was calling up veterans. One hot summer day about ten years ago, the doorbell rang and there he was.. much to my surprise. He and his wife visited for an hour or so and left. During the visit he explained that he had cancer but thought he was doing better. To this day, I have not heard from him so I assume he is deceased.

After my discharge from the Navy, I came back home and went to work for the Santa Fe Railway and ran into Melvin Coats, who was trainman for a while. He became a counselor for a college here in southeastern Colorado.

My wife's son is on the USS CARL VINSON; homeport Bremerton and currently in the Far East. They have been gone since January 15, 2003, and not expected back until November. He is an ENS, soon to be LTJG. He made chief in ten years and went to OCS in Pensacola, FL, to become an officer.

Sincerely,
Emery Murray

MAIL BAG (E-MAIL)

From: "bigallen" <bigallen@cox.net> December 11, 2003
Subject: E-Mail

I got to looking closer at the erroneous addresses I was getting and in reading the messages closer found that most of the returns was because the mail box was full or I was being blocked. So if you would put a blurb in the Kera Saga about not letting the mail boxes get so full that they can't get the list when I send them out. Also, if you would mention that they can't get any mailings from me if I am not on there accept list for e-mail. I would also mention that any one that did not get the latest list that I sent out in October will get one if they let me know. Be sure to put in my new e-mail address, bigallen@cox.net.
Allen

Editor's Note: Allen has done an outstanding job of compiling an E-mail directory. His efforts are being hampered by the problems he mentions in the above message. Please take note of his suggestions, which will benefit all.

From: Raymond E. Smith <rrsmith26@aol.com> on November 24, 2003

Dear editor:

I would like to have my email address listed in your Kera Saga Newsletter- my name is Raymond E. Smith my email address is rrsmith26@aol.com. I was on the KEARSARGE CVA 33 from 1952-1956 I was in the First Division and V-1 Division as a BM pulling wheel chocks on the flight deck. When I was in the 2nd division I was striking to be a Gunners Mate.

I was wondering if anyone remembers me? And I am looking for some Crew Mates I can remember-- they are Sparks, Rucker (not sure of name spelling) James T. Nelson and Pyle and Harker.

If anyone can tell me how to get a cruise book for those years that would be Great. Am looking forward to your response.
Best wishes and regards
Raymond E. Smith

THE LUCKY BAG

From: "Dick Stombaugh" <slipahoy@famvid.com> October 17, 2003 3:54 PM

Subject: Question

Ahoy Paul,

I have a question that I would like to post in a future issue of the Kear Saga. Does anyone know the procedure for claiming a piece of the "plank" that we Plank Owners are entitled to? I've tried a couple of different avenues without success and felt someone out there might know how to go about it. Thought it would be a great addition to my little 'shrine' of Kearsarge memorabilia.

Thanx,

R.D. "Slip" Stombaugh, 47 Fairview Ln, Springfield, IL 62707

Editor's Note: The U.S. Naval Institute has various certificates, including Plank Owner's Certificates available for sale. Information is available by calling 410-295-1053, or on the Web at www.navalinstitute.org. The U. S. Naval Institutes mailing address is: 2062 Generals Highway, Annapolis, MD 21402

From: Paul Czesak

Subj: 5 inch brass shell casing

Does anyone have a 5 inch brass shell casing that they wish to get rid of? The Destroyer Escort Historical Museum/USS SLATER DE-766 in Albany New York needs one to use as a container for holding the ashes of sea service veterans during memorial services aboard the ship. The USS SLATER is one of 563 Destroyer Escorts built during World War II, and is the only one still afloat in the United States. It is frequently used for memorial services by families of deceased sailors from across the country. A brass shell casing is a fitting container for holding the deceased's ashes during the ceremony.

If you have one that you are willing to part with, please let me know by E-mail -p.czesak@att.net, by phone 518-355-8646 or regular mail 1206 Oakleaf Hill, Schenectady, NY 12303.

Thanks

Paul

KEARSARGE ASSOCIATION ROSTER AVAILABLE

Treasurer John Work is making the Association Roster available to members for \$5.00, which includes the postage. If you want to find out if any of your former shipmates are members, you now have the opportunity to obtain a copy to find out. Write to John at 24611 Sandy Springs Rd., Minerva, OH 44657-9442. Don't forget to enclose the \$5.00, as well as any delinquent dues.

PENNSYLVANIA KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL

Mike Petti, AD3, (VF112 52-53) sent an article from the Beaver, PA Times regarding the Beaver County Korean War Memorial. The memorial is 9 feet tall, surrounded by a sidewalk and plaza. The goal for the memorial was \$70,000, which was exceeded by \$9,694.11. Beaver County in the western part of the Keystone State deserves a "Well Done".

Mike, also added a note that he had heard from T. W. Smith's daughter that he had suffered a stroke and was in a rehab center somewhere near Atlanta. We wish him a speedy and full recovery.

KEARSARGE HISTORICAL REPOSITORY

Charles G. Slater (53-56) visited the USS HORNET this past summer and spoke to their Chief Financial Officer, Bill Lewis, Bill, who served on the KEARSARGE during the early '60's showed Charles several compartments that are available for us to use for our memorabilia. Finding a home for our items will be discussed during our New Orleans reunion.

Our thanks to Charles for taking the time to inquire on our behalf.

KEAR SAGA^{II}

The Newsletter Of The Kearsarge Association

USS Kearsarge Association
24611 Sandy Springs Rd
Minerva, OH 44657-9442

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CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR DUES EXPIRATION DATE

Dues & Membership

The yearly dues for the Kearsarge Association is \$10.

Check your label to see when your dues expire.

To pay your dues, send a check payable to ***The Kearsarge Association*** to John Work.

To sign up a new member, send information to John Work.

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