

# KEAR SAGA<sup>II</sup>

*The Newsletter Of The Kearsarge Association*

ISSUE 21

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

SEPTEMBER, 2001

## SCUTTLEBUTT

First, let's get to the reunion news. The next reunion that we are working on, which will be located in San Francisco, is tentatively set for the month of September 2002. Our local coordinator thinks this will be the best time of the year, since both the weather and prices are usually better after Labor Day. As soon as a firm date is set and the hotel site approved, a card will be mailed out with all the info on it.

I am always hearing stories about members running into other members or former shipmates somewhere, but it had never happened to me. This was until recently, when I attended the Ohio HOG Rally (Harley Owners Group) at Dayton, Ohio. I was sitting in the IMAX Theater at the Air Force Museum, waiting for a movie on the Blue Angles to start, when someone who was sitting down next to me turned out to be member Frank Comeriato from Ravenna, Ohio. Frank had rode his 1974 Harley to the rally, which I thought was pretty good for someone 70 years old. Later that evening, I ran into Frank again at the flat track races. Frank has been to all of the reunions we have had and said he is looking forward to attending the next one, as well. I guess you will never know when a former shipmate will pop up.

Art Killian is still waiting for that special person to step forward and volunteer to take care of the Ships Store. Our editor, Paul Czesak, suggested that this would be a great job for one of you former Storekeepers. What a match! Art and Betty have been working the store since the start of the association and are looking for a well-deserved break from it.

Don't forget to send your articles or stories to the Kear Saga editor, Paul Czesak. Paul has promised to put out as many newsletters as it takes, to get out all those stories you send in. Everyone enjoys reading these stories and it only takes a few minutes to sit down and write them down. All or part, of most the letters Paul receives, will be used.

*"(see back of the newsletter for Paul's address)"*

Our web site has been down for several months because some kind soul hacked into it and pretty well wiped it out. Our webmaster has been working on bringing it back up, as well as making the site more secure. Unfortunately it can no longer be reached at its old address, due to problems with the domain name company which provides the web address name. Although it is still being rebuilt, most of the old information is currently available and can be reached at <http://24.95.76.174/kearsargeassoc/> for the meantime. The webmaster has also informed me that as the site is continually being restored and refined, there may be times of temporarily outages. The Kear Saga will continue to provide updates, as the address changes, as well as when the address becomes more permanent.

John Bennett

## The History of the KEARSARGE

From the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships

The third *Kearsarge* (CV-33) was launched 5 May 1945 by the New York Naval Shipyard, New York; sponsored by Mrs. Aubrey W. Fitch; and commissioned 2 March 1946, Captain Francis J. McKenna in command.

*Kearsarge* arrived at her homeport, Norfolk, 21 April 1946, and for the next year engaged in training operations along the East Coast and Caribbean. She cleared Norfolk 7 June 1947 on a midshipmen training cruise to the United Kingdom. Upon her return to the United States in August, the carrier engaged in maneuvers for 10 months before departing Hampton Roads 1 June 1948 for duty with the 6th Fleet. During her tour in the Mediterranean, units of the 6th Fleet were placed on alert to insure peace in the Arab-Israeli area. *Kearsarge* returned to Quonset Point, R.I., 2 October, and operated along the Atlantic Coast and the Caribbean until 27 January 1950 when she sailed for the West Coast. The carrier arrived at Puget Sound Navy Yard 23 February, and decommissioned there 16 June 1950 for a modernization overhaul that would enable her to handle new jet aircraft.

*Kearsarge* recommissioned 15 February 1952, Captain Louis B. French in command. Following shakedown, the carrier cleared San Diego 11 August for intensive flight training in the Hawaiian Islands. Her readiness complete, she sailed for the Far East to engage in combat missions in the Korean War. Arriving Yokosuka 8 September, *Kearsarge* joined the fast carrier Task Force 77 off the east coast of Korea 6 days later. For the next 5 months the carrier's planes flew nearly 6,000 sorties against Communist forces in North Korea, unleashing considerable damage on enemy positions. She completed her tour in late February 1953, returning to her homeport, San Diego, 17 March. While serving in Korea her classification was changed to CVA 33.

*Kearsarge* sailed again for the Far East 1 July 1953 and operated with the 7th Fleet fast carrier force during the uneasy truce in Korea. The "Mighty Kay" also kept watch over the Formosa Straits to prevent the Communists from interfering with the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan. *Kearsarge* returned to San Diego, 18 January 1954, to resume training operations off California. Clearing San Diego 7 October, she steamed toward her third deployment to the Far East. While operating with the 7th Fleet, the carrier stood by to assist the Nationalist Chinese in the evacuation of the Tachen Islands. From 6 to 13 February 1955, *Kearsarge* supported units of the fleet in the successful evacuation of 18,000 civilians and 20,000 military personnel from the islands. Her cruise ended at San Diego 12 May and for the next 3 years operated on the annual deployment schedule to the Far East and training operations off California.

During the summer of 1958, *Kearsarge* was fitted out as an antisubmarine warfare support carrier and reclassified CVS-33. Following intensive training in her new role, the carrier sailed 5 September 1959 for 7th fleet operations in the Far East. Early in her tour, Japan was hit with a violent typhoon, and *Kearsarge* played an important role in providing relief to the victims. Her planes landed parties of medical and supply units, while her crew and air group donated clothing and money to the distressed people. After participating in SEATO exercises and 7th Fleet operations, she cleared Yokosuka, 3 March 1960, for her homeward voyage. Three days later in stormy waters 1,200 miles off Wake Island, four Russians were rescued after drifting 49 days in disabled landing craft. They were flown back to their country after *Kearsarge* arrived Alameda, Calif., 15 March; and the carrier received thanks from the Soviet Union for this gesture.

A year of training operations preceded her next deployment from San Diego which began 3 March 1961. The antisubmarine carrier steamed to Southeast Asian waters as the Communists intensified their effort to overthrow the government in Laos. The power and determination of the 7th Fleet was observed by

the enemy and the crisis eased. Peace prevailed. After 6 months in the Far East, *Kearsarge* arrived Puget Sound 1 November for the second phase of her modernization.

Upon completion of repairs and training, *Kearsarge* departed Long Beach, 1 August 1962, to station herself in the Pacific missile range as a recovery ship in the Mercury orbital space flight of astronaut Walter Schirra. In October, after a flawless flight, the carrier played her role in the "Space Age" by retrieving Schirra and his capsule and returning him to Honolulu for flight back to the States.

*Kearsarge* resumed training exercises, continuing these for 6 months before arriving Pearl Harbor 29 April 1963 to once again take part in the space program. The carrier repeated her earlier recovery by plucking astronaut Gordon Cooper on 18 May 1963, after he orbited the earth 22 times in his capsule "Faith 7." She returned the space hero to Pearl Harbor, then departed 4 June on her eighth cruise to the Far East. Operations with the 7th Fleet included keeping watch on the unsettled problems in Southeast Asia. *Kearsarge* returned Long Beach, 3 December, for training exercises off California.

## **I like the Navy**

Reflections of a Blackshoe by VADM. Harold Koenig, USN (Ret)

I like standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe - the ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drive her through the sea.

I like the sounds of the Navy; the piercing trill of the boatswains pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the IMC and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I like Navy vessels - nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries, sleek submarines and steady solid carriers. I like the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea - memorials of great battles won. I like the lean angular names of Navy tin-cans: Norris, Dahlgren, Muilnix, Myles C Fox - mementos of heroes who went before us.

I like the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pull away from the oiler after refueling at sea. I like liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even like all hands working parties as my ship fills herself with the multitude of supplies both mundane and exotic which she needs to cut her ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there is water to float her.

I like sailors, men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trust and depend on them as they trust and depend on me - for professional competence, for comradeship, for courage. In a word, they are "shipmates."

I like the surge of adventure in my heart when the word is passed, "Now station the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port", and I like the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pierside. The work is hard and dangerous: the going rough at times, parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea is ever present.

I like the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flit across the wave tops and sunset gives way to night. I like the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and join with the mirror of stars overhead. And I like drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that tell me that my ship is alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch will keep me safe.

I like quiet midwatches with the aroma of strong coffee- the lifeblood of the Navy - permeating

everywhere. And I like hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed keeps all hands on a razor edge of alertness. I like the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations", followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transforms herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war - ready for anything. And I like the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I like the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I like the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones. A sailor can find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent can find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods - the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm—tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and messdecks. Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, they will stand taller and say. **"I WAS A SAILOR ONCE. I WAS PART OF THE NAVY & THE NAVY WILL ALWAYS BE PART OF ME."**

*Dateline June 3, 2001*

## **Kearsarge Participates in Exercise Trident D'Or**

By J01 Bob Conn

Mediterranean Sea - With the coast of Sardinia as a backdrop, the Marines of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable (24 MEU SOC), launched from the flight deck and well deck of USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) to begin Exercise Trident D'Or, a joint military exercise involving nearly 20 ships from Spain, France, Italy and the U.S as well as special units from each country.

"The purpose of the exercise was to conduct an amphibious assault using multinational forces," said LT Tim Cronk, Kearsarge's Combat Information Officer.

The 10-day exercise, led by the Italians and their San Marco Brigade, simulated one country invading another with the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coming in to save the day. The Marines of 24 MEU (SOC) landed on the beach and secured specific objective areas. The French Foreign Legion and Spanish Marines also made up the landing force during the exercise.

"We were able to exercise our ship-to-shore movements, precision anchoring, multiple onloads and offloads, and practice operations with our NATO allies," said Capt. Steve Schlientz, Kearsarge's commanding officer. "Working with our allies in this type of an environment is something that Kearsarge would likely encounter in a real-world situation."

Before arriving on station, Kearsarge was put through the rigors of maneuvering through a hostile naval force. "We steamed in formation on the way to the objective area, avoiding submarine attacks and air/surface opposition," said LT Cronk. "The beach was softened with Naval Surface Fire Support prior to the Marines landing and then we conducted an amphibious assault using LCACs and helicopters."

While anchored in the harbor, Kearsarge provided an airfield for the helicopters that were providing air cover for the Marines ashore. For the U.S. Marines ashore, the best part of the exercise was working in a joint environment and practicing missions that could be used at a moment's notice somewhere in the world.

"It's interesting to see that we can learn from the other joint forces and in return show other nations better ways of doing some things," said CPL Bruce Boyington of BLT 2/8. "Cross-training with other nations was the best part of the training," said LCPL Jonathan Narvaiz of BLT 2/8.

Mid-way through the exercise, AGI(AW/SW) Doug Pearman, Kearsarge's Sailor of the Year, had the opportunity to cross-deck to another ship for a day. "We went to the Italian ship Garibaldi and had a three-course meal and toured the ship," said Pearman. "The ship was extremely clean and everything looked sharp. The Sailors and Officers on board were very friendly and they were interested in telling us about their job and learning what I did on board Kearsarge."

Next up for Kearsarge is Exercise Alexander the Great in the Aegean Sea with Greek military forces, before heading to a Greek port visit. In late June, Kearsarge will be the host platform for the annual USO Gala in Naples, Italy.

## **Information Gleaned from Letters to the Editor**

We thank our former shipmates for taking the time to send us their personal reflections on their service aboard the *Mighty KAY*. Keep the letters coming.

### **Life on the KEARSARGE**

(By Bernie Rubalcava, 1957-58)

The two years I was assigned to Ship's Company, V-6 Division, Aircraft Maintenance, I met my share of characters throughout the ship. But, I will reserve this space to relate an amusing happening in our division. There was Glenn C., who was determined to be a career military man by sampling the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines. When Glenn came on board, he had completed four years in the Army and four years in the Air Force. He seemed to be a happy-go-lucky, likable type.

It seems that every time we pulled out of port and were out at sea, Glenn woke up with blood shot eyes. Most of us swore it was a case of him hitting the bottle night after night. Trouble was, we could never catch him with the goods after searching his personal locker. Of course, he swore on a stack of bibles that his red eye condition was not due to a night cap, or two, or three.

One night out at sea he woke up in the middle of the night and went to his locker for some reinforcement in the way of a brown medicine bottle. It was a prescription from Sick Bay - cough medicine. Our First Class Petty Officer in charge of the Aviation Repair Shop insisted on sampling the cough syrup. It was 80 proof bourbon supplied to him by his friend in Sick Bay. Mystery solved.

He was reprimanded. No more red eyes, and no more Glenn. He left us at the end of our West Pac Cruise to - you guessed right - the Marine Corps.

P.S. if any of you out there have similar stories about "Life on the KEARSARGE", please send them on to the Editor of the Kear Saga. We would like to hear from you.  
Bernie

### **KEARSARGE SAVES PROM**

(from the June 1966 Kear Saga)

A non-nautical "SOS" signal reached KEARSARGE May 21 as the distraught mother of a teenage girl placed a phone call to Ensign Paul C. Gard, Public Affairs Officer. No ship was sinking, but unless a substitute ballroom was located within 48 hours for students of her daughter's Torrance South High School their Junior and Senior Prom would have to be scuttled.

Interpreted as "Save Our School", the plea came from Mrs. Jean McClung whose daughter Katie, Prom Committee Chairman, had received word of a last-minute cancellation of Saturday's dance by Los Angeles' International Hotel. Premature strains of "Blues in the Night", the upcoming event's ironic theme, might very well have been heard as that distress signal was flashed.

Although KEARSARGE was busily preparing for other weekend social activities, such as, Johnny Grant's "Operation Star-lift" and Memorial Day Ceremonies, South High was informed that all systems were GO for the floating prom.

## A DECORATED HANGAR BAY

The students wasted no precious time in transforming Hangar Bay One into a brightly decorated watusi and frug arena. Signal flags and pennants were left hanging from the lofty overhead — colorful reminders of KEARSARGE's Long Beach Night celebrated earlier that week. High heels, normally taboo on an aircraft carrier due to tiedowns and steep ladders, could be worn for Saturday's prom after students lugged aboard a rented 50 X 80 foot hardwood floor as a dance area.

As part of the emergency defense operation, the ship's crew aided students by lending a hand in setting-up tables and chairs. Electrician's Mate Third Class Robert Hannson could be seen arranging paper floral decorations beside a beaming Katie McClung. Almost 1,000 new friends of KEARSARGE promenaded onboard their rescue ship that historic Saturday evening from eight until midnight. The SOS of a hopeful mother was received by the electronic and newspaper media around the world, from California to New York to London. Air Officer, Commander John Cover, Command Duty Officer the night Mrs. McClung hailed the Navy, believes that CVS-33 was the logical choice for their floundering affair. "We sent people to march in Torrance's Armed Forces Day Parade (the date of the prom), and we've had Torrance tours aboard before," he commented. It was learned that nearby Compton High School had first grabs on International's ballroom for its own graduation dance, leaving Torrance's school colors at half-mast.

## BEST POSSIBLE

Dr. John A. Lucas, Principal of South High, was highly appreciative of the life-line that KEARSARGE cast to his students. He remarked, "We felt this was the best senior prom anybody's ever had."

Indeed, the ship's popularity with that school can be measured by the student body's 7-1 vote to accept KEARSARGE for the dance site. The vote seemed necessary after South High received an offer from the commercial vessel, S.S. CATALINA. In recognition of the carrier's good will gesture, South High students have promised the crew a plaque of appreciation. They also promise us this: that when we return from our current Far East cruise, a Torrance Welcome Home Committee will be standing on Pier ECHO to greet some favorite bellbottom heroes.

## The Typhoon

James R. Brown (PSN - Ship's Company, Admin 54-55) writes:

. While the ship was underway in a typhoon near Manila. I was on board assigned to the personnel office. We were sailing as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet and had just arrived in Manila Bay in company with the Bon Homme Richard and both ships were anchored in the Bay. After we were there a few days, a typhoon was spotted headed directly for Manila so the ships were ordered to get underway immediately to ride out the storm.

Many of the crew were ashore on liberty, so mostly just the duty section remained aboard. When we headed out to sea, we left a good portion of the crew ashore due to our rapid departure as we could wait no longer if we were going to beat the storm.

The salty old Chief Warrant Officer in charge was among those left ashore, but he was also one the first to return to the ship. He hitched a ride back to the ship aboard an Avenger bomber and flown out to the ship after the storm had subsided.

Those few days riding out the storm was really an experience. It was a wild ride, but not nearly as bad as that experienced by the tin cans which had to accompany us through the storm. They literally disappeared from our view behind and beneath the huge waves as they struggled to stay with us.

Jim Brown

(Jim had sent photos, which unfortunately, could not be reproduced due to the printer's specifications)

## **The first KEARSARGE Marine Detachment**

**(Submitted by Harvey Danielson, Marine Det 1946-47)**

Howdy,

Am finally getting around to sending to you some "stuff" in regards to the original Marine Detachment that was formed in the fall of 1945 at San Diego. From there, we traveled via a so-called troop train, circa 1945. We rode in box cars (really) which had bunks installed. As I remember it was colder than hell. We, upon arriving at N.Y., i.e. Brooklyn Navy Yard, were billeted in some apartment complex that the Navy had taken over. Had to walk (march as Marines must do) to chow at some other building. We were also assigned work details aboard ship. Did a lot of cleaning up

Also had some darn good liberty in N.Y. Times Square and Central Park were our frequent haunts. We could get free tickets to live Broadway and off-Broadway shows, from the Times Square USO. We sailed out on our maiden (shakedown) cruise the early part of 1946. Went to "Gitmo" several times.

In 1947 we went on a midshipman cruise, with stops in Weymouth, England; Edinburgh, Scotland; and Gottenburg, Sweden. It was there I took a 3 day pass and visited my father's birthplace. After one day in his birthplace town, about every relative from miles around came in to see this American Marine. Unfortunately, my grandmother had passed away a few months earlier and I missed out on seeing her.

From Sweden I think that we headed for Panama, and then returned to the States. I was transferred off in October 1947 and went to California to Camp Pendleton and joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division I was discharged in August of 1949. On 25 June, 1950 (my birthday) the Korean War started. Away I went and re-joined the Division in Korea. I was there until the spring of 1952 and was then rotated home.

Several of the Marines who were "plank owners" served in Korea as well as stateside. Some were K.I.A. and several were wounded, including myself only slightly. I saw some of them guys (plank owners) over there myself.

Harvey "Danny" Danielson

## **Cruise Book Wanted and Making a Movie**

27 April 2001

My name is Richard Morrill. I was on the KEARSARGE from around July 1965 thru February 1967, in the Signal Gang. I have one request and one story I want to share with you.

The request is that I am looking for a cruise book for 1966. The one I had was destroyed in a flood shortly after I got out of the Navy after I got out in 1967. If by chance, anyone out there does have an extra one I could buy, I would greatly appreciate it. Thanks

For my story, the Bob Hope Chrysler Theater made a one hour T.V. show on the KEARSARGE in 1966, with Robert Young in the starring role. It was a story called "The Admiral", in which Robert Young was the Admiral. It was set during the Korean Conflict.

I was an E-3 at the time, in the Signal Gang. They made several shots in the bridge area, in which almost everyone was trying to get into some of the scenes. At the beginning of the movie, it called for the Admiral's flag to be hoisted. A task normally assigned to someone such as myself. But at the particular time, several of the leading petty officers decided that they should hoist the flag. When the show finally aired all you could see was 2 or 3 pairs of hands pulling on the signal line. No faces.

In another situation, I had just gone on watch, and I was assigned to the port side. Shortly after I assumed my watch, the camera crew came up to the port side of the signal Bridge, and asked me if I wanted to be in the movie. I, of course, said yes, and then signed a release form stating that I would basically do it for free.

I was the only one on watch at this time and the Director (at least I remember him to be the Director) told me they needed to hoist up the signal "Turn Nine". I called down to the Signal Shack and informed the SM2 that a second person was needed. He came up himself. When he came up I was standing by the flag bag, along with the camera crew. The SM2 came to the flag bag, told me he would bend on the flags, and told me to go the uphauls. Me, being an E-3, and with everyone there doing the filming, I said yes and went to the uphaul lines, which were about 30 feet from the flag bag. The camera crew followed me. The Director told me what he wanted me to do, and all the while the SM2 was standing there looking a little disgruntled, but going with the flow of the situation. As it turned out, I was the only person, I remember, who got into the movie.

Anyway, that's one of my stories, and I am sure that I left out some details, but it was a great time for me. The KEARSARGE will always be with me. I did get out of the Navy in February 1967. I re-enlisted in 1974 and stayed in until July 1990. I retired as an SMC(SW), off the USS Princeton (CG-59).

Go Navy!

Thanks,

Richard L. Morril SMC (SW) Retired  
836 N. Country Plaza  
Gilbert, AZ  
Phone: 480-497-6958

### **Note of Thanks!**

For the Kear Saga - many thanks to CWO3 Alabado for the article on (sinking of) USS Frank E. Evans. Evans made the WESTPAC deployment in '66 and '67 with the KEARSARGE. She was one of our cans out of Long Beach. The Chief Radioman in Evans was a good friend of mine from previous duty. As I remember it Evans was a smart ship with a very able crew.

I was retired when Evans was lost. I always wondered about the circumstances beyond what was reported in the media.

Thank you Greg for the info.

Robert Wixon, RM1, USN Retired (OR Div - 66-68)  
5655 Dyke St.  
Onkama, MI 49675

# TAPS

## HM1 Donald Malone

Mrs. Annie L. Malone has notified us that her husband, HM1 Donald Malone, H Division 56-57, passed away on 26 March 2000. Some of his fondest memories were those of being in the Navy.

## Captain Rankin

Ginger Scuba  
P0 Box 1735  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067  
858-756-1543 \* Fax: 858-759-3438 \* Email: [scubagin@aol.com](mailto:scubagin@aol.com)

April 1, 2001

USS KEARSARGE Association  
John Bennett, President  
815 Savannah Drive  
Columbus, OH 43 228-2944

Re: Capt. Eugene P. Rankin

Dear John,

I just received the Kear Saga from you. I am Eugene Rankin's daughter. He died this past year at age 85. Please remove him from your mailing list.

My Dad was CO of the USS KEARSARGE CVS-33 in the 1960's out of Long Beach, CA. He had both a famous and infamous year with the aircraft carrier. While he was in command the USS KEARSARGE was the principal retrieval ship for two astronauts when they landed in the Pacific early in the space program. Also while he was in command, the USS KEARSARGE collided with a luxury liner in heavy fog in Long Beach harbor.

My Dad loved his entire military career. Being CO of the USS KEARSARGE was the high point in his career. I have fond memories of dinners in the state room, the friendly crew and the immense size of the ship.

Warm regards,

  
Ginger Scuba

## **From the San Diego Union - Submitted by Paul Young (FP3, R Div 52-55)**

Navy Capt Eugene P. Rankin's 30 year military career spanned an era from World War II flying boats to orbital space flight. His most notable achievement, though, was in the role of co-pilot of the Truculent Turtle, a stripped-down patrol bomber that in 1946 flew a record 11,235 miles without refueling. The flight, from Perth, Australia, to Columbus, Ohio, earned Capt Rankin the Distinguished Flying Cross. He died of complications from surgery Aug. 27 at Sharp Memorial Hospital in Kearny Mesa. He was 85.

A 1937 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Capt Rankin became a commanding officer in World War II of a squadron of PBY patrol planes known as flying boats. Capt Rankin's efforts with the squadron, from August 1943 to June 1944, earned him the Legion of Merit. His legacy in aviation also resulted in admission to the Golden Eagles, an organization of elite naval aviators.

After his record postwar flight in the Truculent Turtle, Capt Rankin began specializing in carrier aviation in 1947. His first assignment was commanding officer of a F4U Corsair squadron aboard the carrier Midway. In July 1962, he was assigned command of the carrier KEARSARGE, the recovery ship for astronauts in NASA's first man-in space program, Project Mercury.

In 1941, Capt Rankin earned his wings in Pensacola, Fla, and married Virginia Watson, who died in 1991. With his second wife, Eloise Davies, Capt Rankin enjoyed traveling throughout the world. Capt Rankin retired from active duty in 1967.

Survivors include his wife, Eloise; daughters, Betty Marshall and Mary Lou Herter of San Diego, Peggy Kopec of Austin, Texas, Gene Diaz of Cambridge, Mass., and Ginger Scuba of Rancho Santa Fe; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandsons.

(Editor's note: Captain Rankin was the principal speaker at our San Diego reunion.)

### **Clifford Weirick**

April 25, 2001

Enclosed is an obituary for Clifford Weirick. This notice appeared in today's edition of the North County Times paper. I don't know if you remember Cliff or not, but he built the radio controlled model of the KEARSARGE that was launched in the swimming pool of the Hanalei Hotel, in San Diego, Ca during the 1996 KEARSARGE Reunion.

I thought you could put a notice of his passing in the next Kear Saga.

Yours Truly,

Allen L. Rollins (IC2 E Div - 54-57)  
2249 Medford Place  
Escondido, Ca 92027 - 1741

## **From the North Country Times**

Clifford Weirick, 73, was born Oct. 27, 1927 in Wooster Ohio, he entered the U.S. Navy and worked on many ships, notably the USS KEARSARGE where he was responsible for missile security. After 22 years he left the Navy and worked locally for Kraft Systems in Vista, CA as manager. He was an

avid pilot and was a world champion in radio controlled competition. He built many scale models of aircraft in his home workshop, including a ½ scale F4U Corsair. "Cliffie" had a disabling stroke on Christmas day and on April 12, 2001, he flew west for the last time.

(Editor's note: In addition to building the model of the KEARSARGE, which was Christened by Mrs. Rankin, Cliff was very active in planning the 1966 Reunion. He also arranged for the group tour of the KITTY HAWK, and obtained many of the gifts for door prizes.)

## SHIPS STORE

<b>Blue Watch Caps CV, CVA 33</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, White CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, Blue CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, Blue with "The Mighty Kay" CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, with "50th Anniversary" CV 33</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, Red with "Marines"</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, Blue with Gater and Ship LHD 3</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, Blue with Ship LHD 3</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Hats, Blue with Ship Crest LHD 3</b>	<b>\$14.00</b>
<b>Magnetic Ships Crest 3" (for you refrigerator, etc.) CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$ 3.00</b>
<b>Seventh Fleet UN Patch</b>	<b>\$ 6.00</b>
<b>Ships Crest Patches Cloth, 41/2" CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$ 5.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Tie Bars</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Ships Lighters (Zippo) 3 color, straight and round design</b>	<b>\$21.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Golf Shirt, White, M-L-XL CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Golf Shirt, Navy Blue, M-L-XL CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Sweat Shirt, White, M-L-XL CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$35.00</b>
<b>USS Kearsarge Sweat Shirt, Navy Blue, M-L-XL CV, CVA, CVS 33</b>	<b>\$35.00</b>

**ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING ANT) HANDLING**

Make checks payable to the Kearsarge Association and order from Art Killian, 3632 Springhill Lake, Tuscaloosa, AL 34305, Phone (205) 553-2710

Editor's note:

My sincere thanks to Mrs. Ruth Young, wife of Paul Young, for proof reading the copy of this newsletter.

# KEAR SAGA<sup>II</sup>

*The Newsletter Of The Kearsarge Association*

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### *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 Bennett.

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

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