# KEAR SAGA"

## The Newsletter Of The Kearsarge Association

**ISSUE 33** 

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

**FALL 2006** 

# HOLIDAY GREETIAGS

#### **SEATTLE REUNION 2008**

President Ed McKee has started the process for having the next reunion in the Seattle area. His initial research indicates that having the reunion in downtown Seattle may be too expensive, but that there are several suburban sites that look promising.

Ed and John Bennett will make a joint visit to the Seattle area this coming spring to thoroughly explore the opportunities for not only the motel/hotel choices, but great tour opportunities as well.

Seattle area members are welcome to submit information regarding the area to Ed so that he and John will be able to take maximum advantage of their visit. Our goal is to make this reunion one of the most outstanding to date.

#### **TAPS**

**Jimmy R. Craig** (AMM3, B Div '46) Jimmy Craid died on March 3, 2005

**Donald Busch** (S-2 Div) Donald Busch passed away on October 10, 2005.

**Albert Neitzke** (SN, V-1 Div '46-'48 Mrs. Neitzke wrote to John Work:

Dear Sir,

My husband, Albert Neitzke, passed away on July 28,. He was proud to have served on the USS KEARSARGE.

I just thought you would like to know. Yours Truly, Virginia Neitzke

Frank Rodi (ABMC V-2 Div '46, '62) Chief Rodi died in August 2005

#### **LETTERS FROM SHIPMATES**

8/31/06 John:

Due to my health problems I am no longer able to attend the reunions, but am sending my dues for another year.

A small story about my tour aboard the CV33. Reported aboard anchored off Newport, RI in Narragansett Bay. It was too rough for the 50 ft. boat, so they took us out on an oil barge and we climbed a cargo net to get aboard - late 1948.

In 1949 - operations in the North Atlantic, really rough. Took spray up on the bridge level. DD escorts sent to Halifax, Nova Scotia. CV33 arrived a day later and stayed in port a few days.

C.O. CAPT Smiley went into NYC, Pier 88 with no tugs available. Respoted planes on the flight deck and used the planes for entering and docking.

1950- Went to Bremerton, WA after being jammed in the Panama Locks. Lived on an APL-7 till June, then to Piedmont AD17 for 5 years.

Shore duty in Watertown SD 1/56-6/58. Then to AGB-4 GLACIER, an Ice Breaker. That's when I found out why I had been sent to shore duty in South Dakota.

Served 7/15/48 through 11/30/69. Retired as CWO2, Chief Ship's Repair Technician, with Permanent Disabilities.

Never forgot Ken McDaniel, the organizer of the USS KEARSARGE ASSOCIATION, originally started as an "E" Division Reunion, but response was so great that it was changed into a ship's reunion. Shipmate

Frank Zeigler, CWO2, USN Ret

Dear Paul

the following is my file on the article I wrote for Stars and Stripes. Feel free to use what ever you want. Best of Luck - Cas Welch (Continued)

To: Cas Welch

Subj: Help with Stripes Korea Project

Sir:

I'm a reporter with the Stars & Stripes, working out of Yokosuka, Japan. We're putting oout a special section for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War. I checked the Korean War Project web site and found your name on one of the ship bulletin boards.

I was hoping you might be willing to write down some memories of the war, and of Yokosuka and Sasebo. Believe me, both have changed a lot in the last half century.

Steve Liewer - Stars and Stripes Yokosuka Bureau Chief.

#### Cas's Article

On Nov. 1951 I was assigned of the USS KEARSARGE located in Bremerton, WA. The KEARSARGE was a World War II class aircraft carrier that had been in moth balls since the end of World War II. She was recommissioned and sent to operate off of Korea during the Korean War. I was a Third Class Aviation Ordinanceman whose duties included; belting 20 mm ammunition, installing fins on 5inch rockets, making napalm using Japanese Zero belly tanks. Most of the time while operating off Korea we worked 12 hours on and 12 hours off. The main mission for our planes was to help with close air support. We had prop planes and jets to carry out this mission.

Some of the planes returned to the carrier damaged by ground fire. I remember one time one of the jet's bomb rack broke off and almost hit the Landing Signal Officer (LSO), who was directing the pilot's approach to land on the carrier from the end of the flight deck. His comment about this experience was described as "only God and the laundryman knew how scared I was".

Another exciting moment during my tour of duty was when our jet pilots had a dog fight With some North Korean Migs over our Task force. The planes were mere specs in the sky. But the ship's Captain put the pilot's radio transmissions over the ship's loud speakers. Needless to say it was exciting to listen to, and it was filled with a lot of descriptive, colorful expressions about the North Koreans.

The Battleship USS MISSOURI was part of our Task Force. We were operating behind the MISSOURI as she was bombarding North Korean strategic

locations. MISSOURI's 16 inch guns fired a shell that weighs about the same as an old Volkswagen. You could actually see the projectiles flying out of the barrels of the turrets.

I guess the most vivid memories I had was how damn cold it was during the winter months, with ambient temperatures well below zero (operating above the 40<sup>th</sup> Parallel), with a wind chill factor seveal degrees below zero. On the flight deck you had to wear a mask to keep from getting frost bitten.. However, the mask would freeze to your lips and, and when you inside the ship you had to rub your lips before you could take off your mask.

End of article

August 20, 2006 Dear Paul,

My name is Tim Labadie. I was stationed on board the KEARSARGE from "67 to '69, with the Marine Detachment. Within aweek of being aboard the ship, I was to meet the girl that I was to marry. A local girl from Long Beach, at a spot called "Marine Corner", by the police station on Ocean Blvd. We dated during the year, and upon returning from my WestPac cruise we married in July 1968 and just celebrated our 38th anniversary this year.

During my WestPac cruise in '67-'68, my twin brother, Rick Labadie, who enlisted in the Navy, put in for "brother duty" to be stationed with me on board the KEARSARGE, and was assigned to V-1 Division. Being in different branches of the service, they allowed him to do this, and we enjoyed being able to visit different ports of call together.

Unbeknownst to us, while we were overseas, my sister contacted the show "Truth or Consequences" with TV host Bob Barker, and they agreed to fly my parents to Hollywood for a surprise reunion with my brother and me after we returned from overseas. Being on the show, and being reunited with our parents after so long of not seeing them, was a true surprise, and a memory that we will never forget.

Serving on the KEARSARGE had a lifelong impact on me, with memories of having my twin brother serve with me, meeting my wife while on board, and being on TV - all while serving on the ship. Being able to acquire two pieces of the flight deck, for my brother and me, will have a special meaning for both of us.

Tim Labadie, Marine Detachment ('67-'69) 1512 13<sup>th</sup> st., Wyandotte, MI 48192 August 12, 2006

Paul Czesak, Editor The Kear Saga

Dear Paul

If available I would like a piece of the flight deck planking. I am not a "Plank Owner", but spent many hours working on the flight deck from June 53 to January 54 as a Plane Captain in VF-112. I had intended to ask the Japanese workmen replacing damaged sections in Yokosuka, Japan for a piece of scrap, but didn't.

Two of my aircraft were lost, including my Z14 in a launching accident off Barber's Point, which killed Ensign Crutchfield from Dallas.

I also have a close friend in Tuscon whose father worked on CV-33 in Brooklyn Navy Yard and he recalls his Dad taking the family down to see her inaugural sail out of the East River. His Dad is 102 years old, and still alive and active.

John Bishop and I were shipmates. Bill Corkran, AD3, VF-112 '53-54 154 Greenwood Circle, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

The following is another unique look at how the "Mighty Kay's" Main Battery, it's Air Group, was armed for close air support of the ground troops.

22 October 06

Hi Paul,

I am sending you sworn copies of stories that took place in USS KEARSARGE CV33 in the time frame of 1951-1953. A long time ago. I want our shipmates to know about our work in that period of time. First, I want all to know how proud I am to have served with such a loyal group of sailors in trying times. We shipboard company of combat sailors worked around the clock on the "Bomb Line" performing arduous tasks that only true combat sailors do. CAG and all hands were magnificent in their combat duties. We enlisted men, ship's company, with CAG expended more ordnance onto the enemy in Korea than any other aircraft carrier in the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet, and certified by Admiral Clark, USN. Admiral Clark took a medal from his chest and presented it to Gunner W. G. Peterson, USN, a friend of his since Pearl Harbor days.

Anyway, I have written many stories about our nine months in combat in Korea and I just wanted to tell

them to my shipmates. I know there are more stories from my buddies to be told, ask them to write to you of any incidents that they seem appropriate during our combat cruises or even after.

When the ship returned to Long Beach, CA I was sent to the Naval Hospital in Corona, CA, where I recovered from my kidney stone attack.

I was then sent to the USS ESSEX CV9 for bomb disposal duties. My team leader was W. W. Wakefield, AO1, EOD, USN, a real fine sailor. We also had our work cut out for us.

I was not pleased with the way the ship's company officers treated their enlisted men on the KEARSARGE. I won't lie about any event - I've written as I saw it. The truth is stranger than fiction. As ever,

Buck

LT Loren O. "Buck" Sorenson 10582 Sycamore Avenue, Stanton, CA 90680

#### **Buck's Article**

Korea, winter of '52, USS KEARSARGE CV33, and CAG 101 in Task Force 77.

A black velvety night, stars so bright they twinkle, and it is cold at 0400 on the flight deck of this gray ghost. Nothing slips through the dark waters as quietly as this huge water borne battle station. We are going up the east coast of Korea to launch our aircraft to attack the enemy build up area by Saji-dong, and while there we will deliver bombs, rockets, and bullets. I am Aviation Ordnanceman First Class Loren O. "Buck" Sorenson, USN. My job is Explosive Ordnance Disposal and on this cruise I have been busy.

On this particular night I am just completing a tour of the flight deck, starting aft and working my way forward, looking at the loaded, fuzed ordnance - rockets and bombs. Everything seems fine. The wings of the aircraft are folded and locked, some with struts that keep the wings from bouncing that could cause hinge damage from the weight of the bombs and rockets.

One of the AEW Ads spotted next to forward portion of the island is completing mag and all systems check. I continued forward and looked at the two Panthers, CAP, aircraft on the catapults and the two backups.I made my way around the starter jeep then I went into Flight Deck Control. The eerie red night lights made the faces of the Flight Deck Officer, LCDR Fedanzo and the "Yellow Shirts" look somber, older than what they were. (Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3) They were rechecking the spotted aircraft on the board for any aircraft that may have been "downed" since the "UP" aircraft had been fueled, ordnance hung, guns loaded, and tied down in their assigned spots. Also, special ordnance had been loaded for this particular mission. Over by his ordnance status board was my boss, the Air gunner, Warrant Officer W.G. Peterson, talking to the Flight Deck Chief. I turned to the Gunner and we exchanged greetings. I made my rounds report and asked him "if there had been any load changes to our UP aircraft". He said "No, everything looks like a GO" We had a cup of coffee and made small talk as the crew of the KEARSARGE was coming awake and moving to their assigned stations, preparing for the first flight operations of the day, a predawn launch with the strike going deep into North Korea.

In this Strike force is a night fighter group of F4U5Ns Corsairs commanded by LCDR Kanze, C.O. of VC3 and attached to VF884. Our night fighters and hecklers make things very unpleasant for the enemy at any time, day or night. The Commies really hate this group of fighters that can see in the dark, and are able to pinpoint the enemy and kill him in his own environment. The VF884 fighters take on anything that flies or moves on the waters and they are magnificent in close ground support.

On this night our ordnance load for VC3 aircraft has a real special surprise for the North Korean and Chi Com troops. We are going to deliver a mixed load of 500 lb General Purpose bombs that have antiwithdrawal fuzzes and time delay fuzzes that detonate at random times. The pilot releases the bombs over the target area and after the bomb falls a safe distance the fuzzes become fully armed by small propellers on both nose and tail that are geared to the inner arming mechanism of each fuze aligning small charges of explosives so that the fuze can detonate on impact or by delay. The nose fuzzes are instantaneous, and there are two types of tail fuzzes for this mission. The pilot has the choice of using the nose fuze for instant detonation, or delayed detonation with the tail fuzzes. The tail fuze may also include an anti-withdrawal device, which makes life real exciting.

After the aircraft are loaded the squadron ordnancemen insert the fuzzes, hook up the arming wires into the bomb rack solenoid, run the arming wires through the nose and tail fuze arming vanes, install the two fahnstock clips, and cut off the excess wire. They are now ready for flight. (Continued)

Earlier this evening Gunner Peterson, myself, a chief ordnanceman with two highly trained ordnance men assembled these special bombs. Then we keep close track of them, and on which aircraft they are loaded by squadron ordnancemen. Complete data is recorded on a card and is kept by the Gunner for emergency reference. The two types of tail fuzzes look identical and can not be extracted from the bomb after "tender" installation. Only in rare instances and in a surgical type area utilized by explosive ordnance disposal personnel can this be done. Then again you may have the fuze that just won't cooperate.

As we were talking, the Air Boss, CDR Forkner, gave the order over the bull horn "Man your planes". Pilots and crewmen started arriving on the flight deck from their ready rooms. Blue shirtted plane handlers check their wheel chocks, untie tie downs, stowing them properly as no one wants articles flying through the air on turn up. Serious injuries and aircraft damage could happen or worse. Everyone is busy with his assigned job getting the flight deck and aircraft ready of launch. Pilots are being assisted by their plane captains, some of whom have been in their aircraft the whole night, watching, waiting, sleeping, ready for this moment in time to get their plane and pilot ready for combat.

"Start your engines" comes over the bull horn. The flight deck is now alive with the aircraft engines running up and the CAP aircraft on the catapults are readying, the electronic warfare ADs are next to be launched. At this time a Blue Shirt in foul weather gear came into Flight Deck Control and said "This thing hit me on the head and my goggles" and held out an arming stem and vane of a time delay fuze. I'd rather he handed me a rattlesnake. I asked him where he was in the pack, and he said he was in the ADs, center flight deck aft. I turned to Gunner Peterson and as he was looking at the device he took out the list of aircraft numbers with the special ordnance. He asked LCDR Fedanzo if the aircraft were still spotted in the same spots. He looked at his flight deck board and said "the aircraft are still in the same spots, and only the electronic warfare birds were run up for systems checks and they are opposite the front of the island.

We looked at the numbers of F4U5Ns that had the special ordnance hung and looked at the spotting board, saw where they were spotted, then we went out of Flight Deck Control and walked aft. By now, there was lots of noise, from the engines turning up, with winds and cross currents (continued on page 5) (Continued from page 4) We both tripped on arresting gear cables. I got close to the Gunner and shouted "we each take a row of F4Us and go from starboard to port and feel for missing arming vanes, then use our flashlights to signal the other to come and assit the one who finds the bomb" We both walked aft of by the island as close to the bulkhead as we could get as one could feel the the crackle of air coming from the tips of the propellars. The flashlights made the yellow painted tips of the big props appear as giant circles hanging in the air, and knowing that a wrong move of a few inches you would kiss a prop. Towards the end of the island was the first row of Corsairs. The Gunner took this one. I walked. back one row of F4U5Ns, got down on my hands and knees and started my search. The first thing I did was scare hell out of a Blue Shirt who was tending a starboard wheel chock (As aircraft engines are running the blue shirts hang onto the wheel and wheel chock, usually lying face down with the feet pointing aft during turn up by the pilot. If the plane jumps the chocks the aircraft will roll forward away from the blue shirt.).

I crawled over his legs and reached up to feel for the bomb on the starboard center station bomb rack. I had a flashlight with a red and white lens cut out of a Lucky Strike cigarette pack and saw that the nose fuze was properly introduced into the bomb, arming wires in place and fahnstock clips affixed.. Then I moved to the aft end of the bomb and felt more than saw the tail fuze. As these are WW II fat bombs with large box tail fins. I had removed my gloves because I needed the fingers to touch the fuze and did not want to have anything that would hang up or bend an arming vane or pull loose an arming wire from the bomb rack solenoid accidentally. With the dim light I could see the tail fuze and it was intact perfectly. Thank God this one is OK. I then moved under the aircraft to the number bomb on the center port bomb rack and repeated my inspection. Number two was OK. By now, a lot of prop wash was hitting the aircraft making them shudder, giving you the feeling of aircraft movement with the roll of the ship and all. I crawled to the next plane and started my inspection, it seemed like an eternity to me.. I'm sweating like mad in my foul weather gear and it's cold as ice. I finished number two aircraft and crawled over to number three aircraft. I also scared this Blue Shirt hell I was running scared myself. I started my bomb check on the starboard bomb, nose fuze, arming wires OK. I was kneeling and directly aft of the bomb fin trying to look in, feeling and seeing at the same time. I could not see any arming vanes or long stem. Then I stuck my face as far into the box fins as I could, held my hands over two of the front fin openings to cut off the blast of air and then I smelled the chemical odor. A shudder of anxiety ran through my body. Adrenalin made my heart race. This is the one! This 500 pound bomb is arming itself, getting ready to detonate and I don't know how long it has been arming. I lay down looking to see the Gunner. I whistled and wigwagged my flashlight at the Gunner who luckily was looking in my direction. He made up and down motions with his flashlight in recognition and he then had to crawl back under the aircraft and make his way without getting chopped by a prop, as most aircraft were now turning and burning. After what seemed an eternity of waiting I felt the Gunner's hand on my back.. He knelt down and I shouted"this is the one". He looked into the aft end of the bomb fin with his flashlight, tried to press his face into the box fin, and I could tell when he smelled the acid. He jumped a little as if shocked. I said "I'll go get a mark one bomb skid". He shouted "move fast". I crawled crabwise under the two planes and to the aft end of the island where we keep one skid for any emergency for an emergency off load.

I found the skid, but no handle. Someone had removed the handle, damn it! I used the bomb straps to pull it along behind me hoping that it would not wander into a prop. I tugged and pulled the bomb skid, bouncing over arresting gear wires and managed to hit two blue shirts' legs. I know I had hurt one because these skids are heavy and have sharp edges and corners

I finally got to the aircraft and we positioned the skid under the bomb, but backwards as we had to push down use the bomb fins like reverse handles. We had to push down on the fins so as to release the friction brakes off the wheels. We would use the two man push-pull method. The Gunner was center station, under the belly, and I was outboard of the bomb. I pulled the nose fuze arming wire from the solenoid and twisted it around the nose fuze. We grasped our arms, my left to his right, pressed our shoulders hard against the bomb, got set for the weight, then I reached up and with my tool unlocked the bomb rack. In a flash movement my right arm went under the rounded nose of the bomb. I grabbed the Gunner's fingers, but no grip. The bomb came down hard on the skid, bounced and the adrenaline was pumping in both our bodies. We were lucky because we had only two arms locked under the bomb at the junction of the bomb fin to the bomb body. (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) There was space so our arms were not crushed. So far - so good! The wing flaps were in the down position so I got one foot on the wing and Gunner pushed me up so that I could grab hold of the handhold and pull myself up. The ship was turning into the wind for launch. I slapped the canopy on the starboard side. No joy! I pounded on the canopy harder , then the pilot, who I believe was Ensign Kovak, slid back the canopy. I grabbed his shoulder harness and shouted "I'm taking one of your bombs". He shouted "what" I screamed "I'm taking one of your bombs, it's arming itself". He shouted something, I let go of his harness and handhold, falling back on the Gunner. We placed the two straps over the bomb and locked them. We then started for the Island moving under two F4Us bellies moving the chockmen out of the way. We finally reached the Island and turned forward moving over arresting gear and cables, bouncing and bumping and wondering if these shocks would make the fuze function. CAP was in the air and the ADs were with electronic warfare gear were being harnessed for their shot. I thought to myself; Are we ever going to get rid of this bomb? How long has it been arming? How long is the delay element?

We passed the hatch going into Flight Deck control and some Yellow Shirt came out and bumped into us. We were pushing and shoving this heavy load and it seemed that as if everything got in the way. The aircraft/jet deflector shield was up and an AD was turning up for launch. The engine roared and the wind that came around the shield buffeted us. The AD was catapulted into the dark, and the shield dropped into its housing. We moved forward and around in front of the Island stopping at the edge of the flight deck.

Editor's Note: There is a lot more to this heroic action by Buck Sorenson and Gunner Peterson that we will continue to tell in our next newsletter.

#### **NEWS FROM THE PAST**

John Greenlaw (DM3 '64-'68) had sent me copies of 9 KEARSAGAS from '65 and'66, and copies of four other KEARSARGE publications. John was interviewd twice by the KEARSAGA, once regarding women aboard ship. Here are his comments:

"It would be nice, but there would undoubtedly be many problems, the majority of which I don't think could be overcome. The stationing of WAVES aboard ship would cause too much confusion to be of value, especially during an emergency". (Continued) Well, John, it has come to pass and every class of Navy ships, except for submarines, have women as crew members.

Also received for our future Memorial Room four KEARSAGAS from 1965 sent by Thomas Hill (ADJ3, HS-6, '64-66) These KEARSAGAS, along with those from John Greenlaw will be added to our Memorial Room memorabilia sometime in the future,

#### WELCOME ABOARD

Since our last newsletter two new Association members have joined our crew. They are:

#1277 Marion Handley , Collins Mill Creek, Milton , FL 32570. (TE3 OR Div, '54-'56)

#1278 Jerry McCullought , 1050 Baugh Rd, Ardmore, TN 38449 (MM3 M Div, "67-'68) Part of the Decommissioning crew.

#### **USS INTREPID CV11**

On November 6, 2006, the INTREPID Sea, Air & Space Museum was scheduled to be towed from its home at Pier 86, NYC to Bayonne, NJ for a two year, \$60,000,000 drydocking and restoration program. Unfortunately, huge amounts of silt had accumulated underneath and around the hull during the past 24 years. As I write this the USS INTREPID is stuck in the mud after having been moved about 15 feet astern by four tugs. Although much of the silt had been dredged from under the hull prior to the move, the four 16-1/2 foot propellers dug into the silt bringing the move to a halt.

The Navy is assisting the INTREPID Foundation by dredging around the stern to free the ship to continue on its way. It is anticipated that the move will take place by 15 December. While the ship is undergoing its restoration work Pier 86 will also be rebuilt.

#### SHIP'S STORE

Our Ship's Store Keeper, Charles Patton, has done a great job taking photographs of the store items and preparing a one page brochure. The original is in color, which unfortunately has to be reprinted in black and white. Some prices have been reduced 50% for CVA and CVS items, which will no longer be stocked. Call Charles before ordering to assure that the CVA or CVS item you want is still available.

#### SHIP'S STORE



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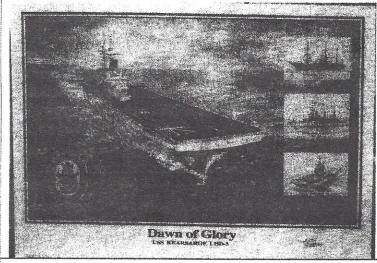
Navy



Magnetic Ship's Crest \$2.50



CV, CVA,CVS 33 Cloth Ship's Crest Patch \$2.50



17 ½" X 24" \$20.00



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Zippo Lighters CV,CVA,CVS 33 \$21.00 Reduced to \$15.00



USS Kearsarge 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1<sup>st</sup> Day Covers \$1.50



Watch Caps CV &CVS 33 only Reduced to \$6.00

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Make checks payable to the Kearsarge Association and order from Charles Patton, 9125 Live Oak Ave., Ocean Springs, MS 39564, 228/875-7572, e-mail charlotteap@bellsouth.net.

# KEAR SAGA"

The Newsletter Of The Kearsarge Association

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

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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 Work.

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

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