

# KEAR SAGA<sup>II</sup>

## *The Newsletter of the Kearsarge Association*

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SPRING 10

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

1996

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### 1996 REUNION, SAN DIEGO

The Kearsarge 1996 50th Anniversary Reunion started officially on Wednesday, February 28th at the Hanalei Hotel. Unofficially many Kearsarge members began the celebration as they arrived in San Diego as early as the previous week.

A majority of the those attending the reunion, were present Wednesday morning, to enjoy the tour to the Stephen Birch Aquarium, as well as time shopping in La Jolla. Bruce Covington, President of the Kearsarge Association, started the reunion pool side Wednesday evening at the Hanalei Hotel. The hotel sponsored a Mai Tai reception and all present were entertained for 20 minutes by the US Navy Band from Naval Station San Diego. Festivities were highlighted by the launching and christening of a model *USS Kearsarge* built by Cliff Warwick and sponsored by Mr. Bob Renaud of Airtronics, Inc. Former Commanding Officer Captain Eugene Rankin and his wife, Eloise, were present to take part in the christening celebration. Mrs. Rankin christened the model Kearsarge with champagne as the Navy Band played "Anchors Aweigh" and the ship steamed around the pool. A number of "old salts" left this ceremony very moved and were surprised their emotions were touched by such an event. The festivities then migrated to the hospitality room for the remainder of the evening.

Thursday began with more members registering. Many attendees departed for a tour to Tijuana via the scenic Silver Strand. This tour included a Mexican lunch and plenty of time for shopping "South of the Border". After the return of the tour the hospitality room started to fill where we continued the "South of the Border" theme with tortilla chips, salsa, wine, beer and soft drinks. The sign Dan Deibert made, "Quiet, Sea Stories in Progress" was used until late that night. "Lights Out" had to be sounded in order to get the "salts" to vacate the hospitality room.

Reveille sounded early on Friday for those who had to make the 7:30 AM departure for the Marine base tour which started with the reviewing of the Commanding General's Friday Morning Colors Ceremony. This was followed by a visit to the Company Museum, a recruit graduation parade, lunch at Messhall 69(recruit messhall) and a tour of the recruit training facilities. The three busloads of members attending were impressed by the special treatment they received and many commented on how much they enjoyed this tour.

Those who chose to sleep a little later enjoyed traveling to Escondido for a tour of the Wild Animal Park and later enjoyed a tour of a winery and some sampling of the winery's vintage.

A third tour came together at the last minute. We had tried to make arrangements to visit the USS Kitty Hawk but were told we had to make group reservations two months in advance. We had given up on this tour, but at the Wednesday evening's festivities I was introduced to Cliff Weirick's friend, Commander Jerry Neuberger who graciously was able to accommodate us at the last minute. Due to the short notice we could only take 50 people and were unable to give advanced notice. Everyone had a wonderful time including the bus driver who was invited to go aboard rather than sit in the bus during the tour. This was the first time some of the guests had ever been aboard a ship.



Later that evening the business meeting was held for Kearsarge Association Members, and a new ladies auxiliary, the Lady Kays, was formed. (Details of both meetings follow in this newsletter). After the meetings, attendees were still checking in and the hospitality room was filled with those who wanted to make the most of their time with old and new friends.

Saturday was the last official day of the reunion, but certainly the busiest, with a tour of Point Loma, the Ft. Rosecrans Cemetery, Cabrillo Monument, and lunch at a restaurant on Shelter Island overlooking the bay. After enjoying a wonderful buffet luncheon we departed to meet our excursion boat at the foot of Broadway. After a two hour tour of the harbor we returned to get ready for that evening's dinner dance.

The evening began with a social hour held outside the Kearsarge hospitality room in the balmy weather of San Diego. The dinner dance was originally scheduled to be held in the Hanalei Hotel's banquet room, but as more and more members registered, it soon became apparent this would not be adequate. At the suggestion of the hotel staff the dinner/dance was held in a huge banquet tent so we could accommodate the 350+ people who finally attended. Everyone was served quickly, as there were four serving lines set up for the Hawaiian Luau buffet. The entertainment for the evening was provided by a organist, a vocalist and a roaming magician. Although the sound and heating systems left a little to be desired, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

After the dinner certificates were presented to the San Diego "Working Party" in appreciation for all their time and efforts in making the 1996 reunion a huge success. T.W. Smith and Paul Young were recognized for the number of former shipmates they located and who are now members. "Mighty Kay" awards were presented to John Bishop and Noel Binder for their service as past officers of the association. Diane Lewter was presented a lead crystal bowl in appreciation for the time and effort she has put into the Kearsarge Association. John Bennett was presented a beautiful brass nautical clock and bell in appreciation for all of his hard work and devotion towards making the Kearsarge Association the success it is today.

Captain Eugene Rankin, former commanding officer of the USS Kearsarge, and his wife Eloise were kind enough to join us for the evening in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the commissioning of CV 33. Captain Rankin spoke to the attendees about the history of the USS Kearsarge and of some of the major events that happened on board the ship and related some of his personal experiences while serving aboard the USS Kearsarge. We are printing Captain Rankin's speech in its entirety later in this newsletter so that all members can enjoy it. After Captain Rankin's speech a drawing was held to raffle off all the items that were so graciously donated.

Most people departed Sunday, though some members stayed to enjoy themselves a few more days. Most attendees left looking forward to the next reunion in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1998. The specific date has not yet been decided.

### **CAPTAIN RANKIN'S AFTER DINNER SPEECH**

**KEARSARGE SPEECH  
HANALEI HOTEL  
MARCH 2, 1996**

Thank you for the nice introduction. It is a pleasure to be here this evening to help you celebrate the 50th birthday of Kearsarge CV-33..also known as the Mighty Kay..and to have the opportunity to attend the third reunion of the Kearsarge Association.

When I became Commanding Officer of the Kearsarge CVS-33 on July 2, 1962, I knew very little about the history of our ship, and even less about the previous Kearsarges. I knew the first Kearsarge had been the victor



of a sea battle with the Confederate ship Alabama off the Cherbourg, France coast during the Civil War and that was her claim to fame. I also knew that a battleship had been named Kearsarge..actually was the only battleship that had not been named after a state. But I quickly learned that the term "Mighty Kay" meant courage, tenacity efficiency and "what is so hard about this mission? We can do it, easily." In other words, "Can do!"

Let me review a little history for you. The Kearsarge is named for a 3000 foot mountain located in the southern central part of New Hampshire. The nearest center of population is a small town named Warner that is a nice summer resort and Mt. Kearsarge is a fine skiing area in the winter. At this point in time, there was no historical significance to the name Kearsarge.

The Secretary of the Navy has the responsibility to name warships, and as might be suspected he receives a lot of recommendations from Senators, Congressmen and high government officials. Navy ships are named after famous events such as battles, important people, states, cities, etc., to fit the class of ship. For example, my wife's father was ComSubPac in the early days of WW II and was killed in an aviation accident. As he was an important person, the destroyer USS English was named for him. By supposition, it must be concluded that the Secretary of the Navy received a very favorable recommendation from Congressman Stanton, presumably from New Hampshire, as his daughter, Ellen Stanton, on 5 November, 1861 christened a 1,500 ton three masted sloop-of-war. By this christening, a mountain in New Hampshire would become historic and famous in the tradition of the Navy.

The sloop Kearsarge was a good ship. She was well built from live white oak, a very tough wood. As steam engines were replacing sails as the mode of propulsion, she was equipped with two 400 HP engines, one propeller and a full set of sails. She cruised European waters for a year and a half hunting Confederate raiders and capturing ships providing contraband weapons and ammunition to the Southern forces. Her turn for fame came when she found the Alabama in the port of Cherbourg, France making repairs and provisioning. When Alabama left port two days later on a bright, sunny Sunday morning, 19 June, 1864, Kearsarge engaged her in battle and sunk her. The ships were very evenly matched in size and armament and both fought well. However, the maneuvering tactics and better gunnery by Kearsarge was the difference. When the crew of Alabama was rescued by Kearsarge and boats from Cherbourg, the Captain of Alabama, Raphael Semmes, was missing. He and about 40 officers and men of the 170 crew that manned Alabama had been picked up by the English yacht Deerhound and taken to England. Kearsarge continued in commission for another 28 years until a careless navigation error grounded her on a reef and she was lost.

As an aside regarding the Kearsarge-Alabama battle, after our Kearsarge returned to Long Beach in Late October 1962, from rescuing Wally Schirra, I received a present from a gentleman in Springfield, Mass. It was a book published in 1893 entitled "The Famous Battle of Kearsarge" and written in verse by one of the original crew, H. B. Hobson. The book covered the commissioning, cruise in European waters searching for Confederate raiders and the battle with Alabama. My benefactor had found the book in a secondhand bookstore.

So outstanding was the career of the first Kearsarge that the Secretary of the Navy urged President Cleveland and Congress to name a battleship Kearsarge. Even though it violated the policy of only naming battleships for states, a battleship was christened Kearsarge in 1895. While she was a first line ship of 11,525 tons with all the latest improvements in armament and power,--she could do 16 knots--her career was not spectacular. She was part of the White Fleet President Teddy Roosevelt sent around the world in 1908. She became a training ship in WWI, and after the war was decommissioned and converted to a crane ship. After Pearl Harbor, she was towed to Hawaii and did noble duty in salvage operations.

An aircraft carrier, CV-12, under construction in Norfolk in 1940 was scheduled to be the next Kearsarge. However after WW II begun, the loss of the USS Hornet CV-8, in the battle of Santa Cruz Islands in the Guadalcanal area 26 October, 1942, resulted in a name change. The name Hornet is a revered name in the Navy



from battles in the early history of our country. This Hornet had also carried General Doolittle and his B-25 aircraft to the launch point to bomb Japan in the spring of 1942. A name change of aircraft carriers made CV-12 Hornet and CV-33 Kearsarge. CV-12 was commissioned April 29, 1943 and Kearsarge was commissioned March 2, 1946.

You know the events that happened while you were aboard. In brief, you participated in the Korean War, it got a hurricane bow and an angled flight deck, rendered aid to Nagoya, Japan which was heavily hit by typhoon Vera, rescued four Russian soldiers who were adrift in a disabled landing craft for 49 days, and picked up two Mercury astronauts.

The selection of Kearsarge to be the splash-down ship for Mercury 6 orbit flight was a wonderful surprise. It meant a nice 6 week vacation while the ship was in the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard having a high power antennae installed and tested, and the elimination of all electronic noise interference. Our training for the mission consisted of communications drills, rehearsals with our escort destroyers, and practicing the recovery of a dummy capsule. As the Operation Order prescribed that the capsule would be recovered by the helicopter of a destroyer, we put only a minimal of thought to how we would make a recovery. Our practice with the dummy capsule helped us formulate a plan using the motor launch to pull a line out from the deck edge elevator to the capsule, attach the line to the capsule, and personnel on the ship pull the capsule to a position under the ships crane. When the capsule was steadied and attached to the crane, it would be lifted and placed on a pallet on the deck edge elevator which was at the hangar deck level. We practiced this procedure about three times getting better each time, stowed our gear in position to make a recovery, and more or less did not think of it to any degree. We knew we could do it if the capsule came down near us. I knew there would be a struggle between designating us or a destroyer to make the recovery as my immediate boss riding Kearsarge was the squadron commander of the destroyers with Kearsarge. The plan for recovery placed Kearsarge at the designated landing sight and placed a destroyer at 25 and 50 miles up and down the track the capsule would be following as it descended. With all ships in position and Kearsarge cruising at 5 knots on an easterly heading scheduled to pass through the predicted landing sight right on time, we were ready for whatever to occur. About 15 minutes prior to scheduled landing, I launched the helicopters and announced over the 1MC circuit that has speaker outlets throughout the ship that we had been advised by Houston that Schirra had pushed the retrofire button one second late. I announced with some authority that the capsule would approach Kearsarge from the starboard quarter and would land off the port bow about 5 miles away. Following that announcement, all the correspondents, photographers (about 20 of each type were aboard), NASA personnel, and ships company rushed onto the flight deck. My prognostication was exactly on target as the capsule parachutes blossomed overhead at 10,000 feet and the capsule descended slowly to the ocean on the port bow. Now came a time of decision for Captain King. We knew that Schirra had requested to be picked up by Kearsarge if the capsule landed near the ship. Captain King now had a destroyer proceeding towards us at 25 knots. I requested permission to recover the capsule. He contacted Commander, Hawaiian Sea Frontier for instructions who in turn contacted Houston for instructions. The answer came back Affirm, Kearsarge make recovery. I already had the starboard side of the ship about 300 feet from the capsule, and the whaleboat in the water. The helicopters had dropped the doctor and personnel to attach a flotation collar to the capsule to prevent it from sinking if it sprung a leak, and to cut the 25 ft antenna off the top of the capsule so it would not interfere with the recovery. By the time I received formal permission to make the recovery, about 20 minutes after the landing, the whaleboat was halfway to the capsule. Everything worked like we had made recoveries a hundred times, and we had the capsule aboard about 20 minutes later. For the Cooper pickup in May, I assumed permission would be granted and made the recovery.

I have a little story to tell you about the antenna that was clipped off the capsule and tied to the flotation collar. We off loaded the capsule at Midway early the next day after the recovery to be flown to Houston. One of the senior NASA officials was having lunch with me. The communications messenger brought me a priority dispatch from Houston. It asked if the parachutes and the antenna had been recovered. The parachutes had sunk before the personnel attaching the flotation collar could reach them. I remembered a bent up piece of metal being detached from the flotation collar as the capsule settled in its crib on the elevator. In answer to my question



if any parachute or antenna had been recovered before, the NASA official said no. I called my Executive Officer and asked him with his Marine sentry to search along the starboard side of the hangar deck forward of the elevator for this piece of junk metal. If he found it, he was to take it to his cabin and let me know. Ten minutes later, he had found it, and it was the antenna. The antenna became a prize souvenir for a lot of people as it was cut into sections for the astronauts, my boss Captain King, NASA personnel, ship personnel, etc. With a one inch section mounted on a beautiful small cigarette box the Chief carpenter had made, I presented one to Admiral Felt, CINPAC, Admiral Sides, CINPACFLT, when we returned to Pearl Harbor. I also sent one to CNO and of course, the carpenter mounted a piece on a cigar box he made for me.

### **LADY KAYS ARE FORMED**

While the men of the Kearsarge Association were holding their business meeting at the 96 reunion the women met to see if there was enough interest in having a ladies association. The meeting was opened by Diane Lewter who gave some of the reasons a women's group would be an asset to the Kearsarge Association. The ladies were interested and the first order of business was to suggest what the group would be called. After a few suggestions it was decided by a large over-all vote to call the group the Lady Kays. Next, as to the first officers of the Lady Kays, volunteers were asked to take on this first assignment. Volunteers were:

Co-Chairwomen	Joyce Binder and Charlotte Patton
Treasurer	Gloria Covington
Secretary	Evelyn Hanson
Public Relations	Diane Lewter
Assistant Ships Store Clerk	Ursula Holman
Arts and Crafts (for raffles)	Evelyn Hanson

representatives for the various time zones are

Cleo Walton and Bobbie Bishop	Mountain Time
Caroline Valdez and Celine Guite	Eastern Time
Lola Rollins	Pacific Time

It was suggested by the Chairwomen that an amount for dues be set. It was agreed that dues would be \$5.00 a year and would be paid each March 1st. This money will be used to cover the cost of a Continental Breakfast at the reunions each morning before the tours and to improve the snacks in the Hospitality Room. This will also cover operating expenses of the Lady Kays. It was brought up if the Treasurer should be bonded and they decided that until the Lady Kays enrollment gets larger it would not be necessary. The cost of bonding will have to come from the dues and will be voted on again at the business meeting at the 1998 reunion.

The Lady Kays function is to relieve some of the burden of the reunion from the men who do an excellent and time consuming job of organizing and operating the reunions. At this time 63 ladies have joined the Lady Kays.

The meeting was adjourned when no other business was brought up. Anyone wishing to join the Lady Kays should contact: Gloria Covington, 4928 Admiration Dr., Virginia Beach, VA, 23464 (804) 467-1668

submitted by Evelyn Hanson

### **BUSINESS MEETING**

The 1996 Kearsarge Association business meeting was called to order by President Bruce Covington.



## OLD BUSINESS - No old business

NEW BUSINESS - It was brought up that Historian Steve Udell had open heart surgery and was recovering well  
-Local reunion committee member Ed Killner had a mild stroke and was doing well.

-The names of members who died since the last reunion were read.

-Bob Finley asked for permission to start a Plank Owners Association for 1946 and 1952 Plank owners. The vote was for.

-It was brought up and voted on whether or not we should have life memberships for the association. It was decided that until our membership reaches 1000 members for two years we will not do it. At this time we have about 700 paid members.

-A discussion was held on how we advertised for the reunion and if we were we doing enough. Twenty three different publications were used such as the VFW, American Legion and various retirement and military type publications were used plus various members ran ads in local papers. It was decided that the association was doing all it could but members could help by contacting shipmates and by running ads in their local newspapers. If each member will locate just one, we will double in size.

-A vote was taken on whether we should have a reunion every year and it was decided to stay as we are and have a reunion every other year. We will bring this issue up again at the 1998 reunion business meeting.

-It was suggested that a list of RV Parks in the reunion area should be made available.

-The Treasurers report was given and accepted. It was asked if the association had enough money to operate at the present \$ 10.00 dues. It was agreed that at this time dues will stay at the present rate.

-Bruce Covington suggested that the current By-Laws need updating and it was agreed to do this. One of the issues to decide is what to do with the assets of the association should it cease to exist. A team consisting of team leader Ken Cook, Ed O'Donnel, and Paul Young will look into the matter and present a report at the 1998 reunion.

-Suggestions for the location of the next reunion were asked for and the following were suggested: Corpus Christi, Texas; Galvanston, Texas; St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Missouri; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Nashville, Tennessee. A vote was taken and Corpus Christi, Texas won by a large margin. The year will be 1998 and the date has yet to be decided.

-It was suggested to keep the same officers for the next two years and was voted to do so.

Bruce Covington, President

T.W. Smith, Vice President

John Bennett, Secretary and Kear Saga Editor

-It was suggested to add a separate office of Treasurer and was voted to do so. Robert Finley volunteered to assume the position and was accepted.

-Art Killian will keep the position of Ships Store operator and Steve Udell will continue to be the Association Historian.

## LETTERS

### REUNION DUTY REPORT

Duty report from our recent reunion, held in San Diego! It seems from all reports everyone had a great time on all fronts. No personnel who took the tours fell overboard on any of the cruises around S.D. Bay or missed the bus back to the base (Hotel). All returned to quarters safely. No one was put on report for unbecoming conduct or inappropriate behavior. In general, all went well according to the ships log and everyone is invited to return to San Diego anytime (the chamber can use the money.) In true shipmate spirit, if we can be of assistance in charting your course...if you wish to return to our friendly waters, please contact me.

Our committee has had a post-reunion get together and are charting a course, with Corpus Christi our



main Port of Call in '98. For those who missed visiting our beautiful city, a professionally created VCR tape is available from Ship Store Keeper, Art Killian... next to the "gee dunk" stand. Send money along with your request as a limited number of these collector quality tapes are selling fast.

Respectfully, Dan Deibert, Crew Chief ...San Diego Reunion Organizing Committee, 1996.

### HAPPY CAMPERS

Hi John,

Please find enclosed my check for \$10.00- for my 1996 dues.

Also, we want to tell you how much we enjoyed this reunion and San Diego, and to thank you and all those responsible for one terrific time! For those of us celebrating 50 years, it was made very special. The accommodations were gorgeous, service excellent- The entire program, tours, guides, activities, "5 Stars" all the way! It was so nice to see that so many could attend, which added to the enjoyment of seeing and meeting old and new friends.

In addition to it being a most appropriate place to celebrate the 50th, San Diego was our first trip to the west coast- another plus for us- and we feel there couldn't have been a better place to start. It certainly is unique in atmosphere, filled with nostalgia, and much to see (You made sure we did!) The Harbor Cruise, of course, was a highlight for all of us.

We stayed over Sunday before making the long journey home to N.J. Took the Trolley tour- saw some more history of San Diego from a different view point. Returned to the Islands Restaurant for dinner to find that several had stayed over so we had a "Mini" Reunion dinner before saying "So Long"-

Again our thanks to all for a good time - Take Care- Keep Well! "See you in Texas"

Signed,

Ken and Barb Linzey

### ATTENTION ALL BUGLERS

I was a 2nd class bugler on the *USS Kearsarge CV-33* in 1946. We had one 1st class bugler, two 2nd class buglers, one marine bugler and a Chief Buglemaster. I started out with the *Kearsarge* as 2nd Class Seaman, N Division, Quartermaster Striker. All I did all day was chip paint and correct geodetic charts. I didn't mind the boring work since I was very proud to be one of the commissioning crew at Brooklyn Navy yard in New York. Because I lived in New York City it was great sea duty. I was home every weekend.

After a while, I found out that buglers were also in N Division as well as the band musicians. All of a sudden, they wanted to know who could blow a bugle since there was a vacancy. Boy did I jump at the chance. I had played a bugle in the Bronx Nautical Guard and the B.P.O.E. Elks in my teens, so I was accepted. It was my lucky day - WHY? Because buglers had one day on and three days off. The one day on was a 24 hour duty and the other three days were completely free. In addition, after the chief cook, the bugler was the first man off the ship when we reached port. One of the possible drawbacks was that at the end of your 24 hour duty, if you weren't relieved, you had to serve another 24 hours. This happened to me only once when, for some reason, my relief failed to return to ship. I had to stay at my post for another 24 hours.

I left the *Kearsarge* in September 1946, as I didn't want to sign up for a four year hitch. However, I look back on my tour with the *Kearsarge* with fond memories of lazy three day stretches.

Recently I heard that the Navy did away with buglers. They no longer exist. I was heartbroken. In my opinion, it was one of the most revered rates in the Navy (after Chaplain). We had open passes to the front of the chow line (carrying our bugles on our hips). We also sat in the first row at all movies and other events (always with our bugles along).

I'm very lonely now because I can't find another Navy bugler. Are any of you guys ex Navy buglers? If so, I would love to hear from you about your adventures with the 4-note instrument known as the bugle.

Please write to me. Don't blow it.

Warner T. Lundahl  
62-71 Douglaston Parkway  
Douglaston, NY 11362  
Tel. 718-279-8586

### CHAPLAINS CORNER

Are we faced with doubt, difficulty or decisions and we know not which way to go? Then let us hear the words of Isaiah the prophet. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left'."

Many voices urge us to follow a course of which we are not sure in our mind. Prudence will utter one advice and faith another, then let us be still, hushing each intruder, silently waiting for the presence of the Almighty to speak to our waiting hears. Let us determine to know only the pure light of His face, only the council of His spirit. We must move only when we have received the smile of heaven or the cloud of His refusal. You ask, how can I know for sure I am making the right choice? If you only go alone, where the lights and shadows of earth cannot interfere, an open heart---the will of God will be made known.

"BE STILL"---a deeper step in faith and rest. "Be still and know" thy Father knoweth best, the way to lead His child to that fairer land, where cool waters ever flow, and longing souls are satisfied to "know".

Always your friend,  
Bernie Butgereit  
Minister - Evangelist  
Might "K" '55-57

### MIGHTY KAY'S FINAL DAYS

Scrapping Information

Aircraft carrier historian and author seeking information on *Kearsarge* for upcoming article and book. Request information on final years of *Kearsarge* including details and photos of the actual scrapping of the ship. Also would like to buy *Kearsarge* Cruise Books. Chuck Self, 4437 Norway Drive, Shreveport, LA 71105, (318) 861-1629.

### USS KEARSARGE LHD-3

Dear Association Members,

1995 was an exciting time for KEARSARGE: From completing preparations for our maiden deployment, through the six month cruise, to our incident free return, earning a Navy Unit Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy and being awarded the Battle "E." No doubt the highlight of our cruise was the rescue of Air Force Captain Scott O'Grady. I believe we have carried on the outstanding tradition of the ships named



## KEARSARGE.

Following our return from the Mediterranean, KEARSARGE sailed to New York City to participate in the Veterans' Day "Nations Parade," signaling the end of ceremonies held over the past five years marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. As we honored our nation's veterans, we reflected on the selfless contributions and ultimate sacrifices so willingly offered by our forbearers. It is for this purpose that I am writing to you today.

Our first Command Chaplain, Commander Larry Hicks and his staff worked very hard to make the ship's Chapel a sacred space of reverence and dignity where the crew could worship and find time for reflection. To this end, it is our intention to have a service of dedication for our chapel and give it a proper name. We would like to honor the memory of a person or event that made a difference in the history of "KEARSARGE" and exemplifies our motto of "Proud, Trustworthy, Bold."

If your members know of any one (former crew member, aviator, etc.) or any event that would fit this need, please send all information and details to our Command Chaplain at the address provided. Thank you in advance for your help in this matter and continuing support.

Signed

CHRISTOPHER W. COLE

Captain, U. S. Navy

Send to Command Chaplain, USS Kearsarge LHD-3, FPO-AE 09534-1662

### Other awards

The Kearsarge LHD-3 also received the Golden Anchor Award for achievement in retention; Best Sales and Service Award; and the Commander Surface Force Safety Award.

### Change of Command

Captain Thomas Michael Wittkamp has relieved Captain Christopher W. Cole as Commanding Officer of the *USS Kearsarge LSD-3*. Captain Wittkamp was born in Richmond, Virginia and graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1970. His first tour of duty was as Chief Engineer on the *USS Force (MSO 44)*. Following that tour he reported to the precommissioning crew of *USS Robert E. Peary (FF 1073)* in 1972 as the First Lieutenant followed by a tour as the Communications Officer. After attending Department Head school in 1976, Captain Wittkamp reported as Operations Officer on board *USS Holister (DD 788)* a Long Beach, California based ship; that tour was followed by a First Lieutenant tour onboard *USS Juneau (LPD 10)* from 1978 until 1980. He then relocated to Washington, DC to the staff of Commander, Navy Recruiting Command as the Director of Information Systems for two years, followed by an Executive Officer tour onboard *USS Fort Fisher (DS 40)*. From 1984 to 1986 he served at the Pentagon on OPNAV (OP-60) as the Surface Warfare Officer for Plans and Policy. He then attended the National War College graduating in 1987. Captain Wittkamp reported to *USS Germantown (LSD 42)* as the Commanding Officer for a two year tour from 1988 until 1990. He then was assigned to the staff of Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic as the Plans and Fleet Introduction Officer until 1993 when he reported to Commander, Amphibious Group TWO as the Chief of Staff.

The Kearsarge Association welcomes Captain Wittkamp and wishes him well as he carries on the Kearsarge tradition of excellence.



(Submitted by Bruce Covington and LCDR Scott R. Thon)

## 1996 REUNION MEMORY BOOK

In case you have not ordered your 1996 San Diego Reunion Memory Book it is still not too late to order it. Just send \$10.00 to: MSP, 920 E. Orangethorpe, #8, Anaheim, CA 92801

## 1947 EUROPEAN CRUISE

One of the things that I never fully understood (there were others) occurred on our European Cruise in the Summer of 1947. We had a number of midshipmen from Annapolis (including the football team) on our ship. On our return to the U. S. We stopped at San Juan, Puerto Rico. We were there only overnight and during that time the midshipmen worked all night loading supplies on board, which seemed odd to me.

The next day they put live ammo on the planes and put battle curtains by all the ladders. The only explanation for this was that a gun boat from the Dominican Republic was headed toward Cuba. If that was true, the gun boat was a little over matched. We had two battleships and two aircraft carriers in our group. It probably gave the midshipmen a little extra training, but it made cowards like me a little nervous, since the Cold War was heating up at that time. After 50 years it's something I have never forgotten.

Robert H. Williams, Monterey Park, CA

## SHIPS STORE SALES

Golf Shirts, White, Association Logo:	3 X-large & 5 Medium	\$19.00 EA
Golf Shirts, Royal Blue Ships Name, silhouette and number	14 X-large, 5 Lg. & 1 Med.	\$22.00 EA
Sweat Shirts, 50th Anniversary, Ship Name (Embroidered)	3 XX-Large, 10 X-lg., 1 lg.	\$38.00 EA
USS Kearsarge Caps, 50th anniversary	Blue Navy, Red Marine	\$14.00 EA
USS Kearsarge Caps, White, CV,CVA,CVS 33		\$14.00 EA
USS Kearsarge Caps, Blue, CV,CVA,CVS 33		\$14.00 EA
Ties, Navy Blue, ship's silhouette CV, CVA, CVS 33		\$22.00 EA
Magnetic Ship's Crest 3" (for your refrigerator, etc.)		\$ 3.00 EA
License Brackets, CVA, CVS		\$ 6.50 EA
USS Kearsarge Coffee Mugs with CV 33 and LHD 3 Crest		\$13.50 EA
USS Kearsarge Tie Bars		\$10.00 EA

All Prices Include Shipping and Handling

Cachet (as described in last KearSaga) \$1.50 each, include self-addressed envelope with order

Make checks payable to the Kearsarge Association and order from Art Killian, 3632 Spring Hill Lake, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405, Phone (205) 553-2710.

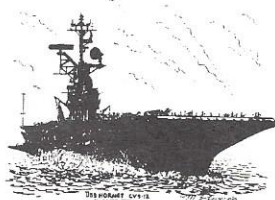
## TAPS

Captain Irvin Slepicka Jr. (Chic) died November 1995. Captain Slepicka was a 1946 plank owner and was an Ensign in E Division. He and his wife, Stormy, played an important role in helping at the 1992 reunion in Mobile, Alabama, at a time when our association was young and inexperienced.



## THE USS HORNET

CV-12, CVA-12, CVS-12



The USS HORNET (CV-12) was built during the dark and uncertain days of World War II by an America that was literally fighting to maintain its existence and way of life. This mighty aircraft carrier and her sister ships symbolized the resolve and strength of the American spirit as 3000 farm hands, delivery boys, and drugstore clerks came together from every state to form a vast team of sailors and air men to make HORNET function as fine precision instrument. Their youth and innocence gave life to this great majestic vessel, and she in turn imparted her indomitable spirit, which saw them through the horrors and uncertainties their time and place in history forced them to endure. She and her crew carried the war to the Japanese with unmatched ferocity and aggressive determination. HORNET with stood everything that the enemy could throw at her, and remained defiant as her air groups stung again and again at the very heart of Japanese aggression, destroying 1,410 enemy aircraft and over 1.2 million tons of enemy shipping in the process. When HORNET returned home triumphantly in July 1945 to a massive celebration at her home her at the Alameda Naval Air Station, many of her boys remained in the watery battlefields of the endless Pacific Ocean.

Following the critical war years, this legendary warship served on for another quarter century, playing a significant role in maintaining the hard-won peace, while protecting America's interests around a tension-filled globe during the Cold War. In 1969, while the whole world watched, HORNET once again made us proud to be Americans as she and her highly-trained crew flawlessly recovered the spacecraft and crews of the Apollo 11 and 12 moon landing missions.

Following her decommissioning in 1970, HORNET spent 24 years in storage at Bremerton, Washington. In 1991, she was officially declared a National Historic Landmark. As a world-class Naval Air and Sea Museum Complex, HORNET would be without equal on the West Coast, and would attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. As visitors walk HORNET's armored decks in quiet reflection, they will see carefully resorted aircraft, helicopters, Apollo exhibits, representing each era of HORNET's service to our country. The massive flight deck, enormous hangardeck, and hundreds of compartments provide ideal locations for aviation, naval, and historic artifact displays, as well as restaurants, movie theaters, and numerous other unique and outstanding attractions.

We invite you to join us in completing the saving of this famous ship and magnificent piece of AMERICAN HISTORY!

### PLANK OWNER INFORMATION

- Be a USS HORNET Naval Air and Sea Museum Complex "PLANK OWNER"
- You'll receive a lifetime ID CARD that identifies you as a certified Plank Owner of the USS HORNET Naval Air, and Sea Museum Complex.
- There will be special benefits according to your Plank Owner level, such as guest passes, special tours, previews, VIP receptions, dinners, and events.
- HERE'S HOW! The table below is your guide to a perfect match!

---

I want to SAVE the HORNET! ..... and become a USS HORNET Museum Complex "PLANK OWNER"

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check \_\_\_\_\_ I pledge \_\_\_\_\_ at the following level:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Ensign \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Lieutenant \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Commander \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 Captain

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 Rear Admiral \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 Vice Admiral \_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 Admiral \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 Fleet Admiral

Make check payable to: Aircraft Carrier Hornet Foundation, P.O. Box 460, Alameda, CA 94501

Office: (510) 263-2890

Fax: (510) 263-2891

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ I want to volunteer my services, please contact me. I can help with the following: \_\_\_\_\_



# KEAR SAGA<sup>II</sup>

*The Newsletter of the Kearsarge Association*

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**CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR DUES EXPIRATION DATE**

## DUES & MEMBERSHIP

The yearly dues for the Kearsarge Association is \$10.00. Check your label to see when your dues expire. To pay your dues send a check made payable to The Kearsarge Association to: Robert Finley, address below

To sign up a new member send information to John Bennett: Address below

**FIND A NEW MEMBER FOR THE 1998 REUNION**

Bruce Covington, President, 4928 Admiration Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23464 804-467-1668  
TW Smith, V-President, 1172 DeLeon Court, Clarkston, GA 30021 404-296-3317  
John Bennett, Sec., Kear Saga Editor, 815 Savannah Dr., Columbus, OH 43228-2944 614-272-6842  
Robert Finley, Treasurer, Box 155495, Bellmead, TX 76715-5495 817-799-4041  
Art Killian, Ships Store, 3632 Spring Hill Lake, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405 205-553-2710  
Steve Udell, Historian, 211 Northwest First St., Young America, MN 55397 612-467-3943  
Kenneth McDaniel, Honorary President (Deceased)