

# **KEAR SAGA** II

*The Newsletter of the KEARSARGE Association*

ISSUE 47

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Summer 2012



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## **Kearsarge Association Reunion, Pensacola, FL April 22-26, 2012**

I wish I could think of a better word to describe it but I simply can't so here it is **WOW!**

First of all no one could have asked for a better reunion site or weather. The hotel also was in a great location. It was clean, well kept and the staff, beginning with the manager, was attentive to our every need including the hospitality room which was ours exclusively for the entire time.

We began our day on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> with a driving tour of downtown Pensacola which was both interesting and informative. Our next stop was at the war memorial where we conducted a service honoring our deceased shipmates. Having the color guard from NAS Pensacola participate made the event even more meaningful. In fact, they were so impressive and professional we invited them to join us for lunch at the world famous McGuire's Irish Pub.



On Tuesday morning we were up and on our way to Mobile, AL to tour the USS Alabama, where we had lunch in the Wardroom. As a side bar, this tour was especially meaningful to me. Our shipmate and friend Dick Bullis was a gunners mate so as you can well imagine being inside a gun mount with a gunners mate takes on a whole new meaning. The area we were in is called Battle Ship Park which has several displays including old aircraft and an old submarine. To me personally, the drive over and back with a bus load of shipmates was more than worth the cost of the entire day!

Knowing you will not believe what we did on Wednesday, I have solicited the names of about 100 of my closest friends who will attest to our activities. We drove right through the gate at NAS Pensacola and on to the aircraft operating area! We were seated in bleachers immediately adjacent to the airfield. We watched the world famous Blue Angels take - off and perform for about 45 minutes. I get excited all over again every time I think about it! Following their performance we went to the Naval Aviation Museum where we had our own tour guide. Next we went to the Imax theater and had lunch in the Cubi Bar. The furniture and plaques there came from the Cubi Point Officers Club in the Philippines thus the name Cubi Bar.

Thursday was another great day. We went on a Dolphin cruise! The Captain of our boat knew exactly where to find the Pods of Dolphins and get them to follow the boat. Seeing them jump out of the water was almost as exciting as watching the Blue Angels. I especially enjoyed watching the young ones jump with their mom. We ended our day with a banquet dinner at the Angus Steak house. We decided not to have a band this year. Instead, Ed suggested we have a magician which I personally believe was just great and well received.

Lastly, we decided to try something different this year. We pitched a tent right in the parking lot of the hotel and had a fish fry one night and a Bar-B Q the next. I believe there is something to be said about cooking right outside your room and the food sure was good! An added benefit is that we could mix and mingle as long as we wished.

I believe most, if not all of you know that some gifted and talented ladies, make by hand, some pretty special things to be auctioned at each reunion. The proceeds go directly to the Kearsarge Association. We are remiss in not having recognized them. So, a warm and hearty thanks goes out to May Lewis, her sister Lorraine Newmann and to Elvia Lucero who all donated beautiful quilts. Also a big thank you to Gene Setula who donated an original USS Kearsarge coffee cup.

We also have a new member who is a professional auctioneer. His name is Bob Anstine. Welcome aboard shipmate and thanks for conducting the auction this year.

I realize our next reunion is two years away. I also believe prior planning can be a good thing. So, yes we do have our eyes on San Diego. We are in touch with someone there who we have known for over 40 years and has worked several events including the USS Forrestal reunion. We have a member who is associated with the Midway which has been a huge attraction there for years. We too have all of the contact information for the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Wishing you fair winds and following seas.  
John Starnes

### **Minutes of Kearsarge Association Business Meeting Held Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup> in Pensacola, FL at 4:00 pm**

Ed called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

Ed announced that he would be stepping down from the presidency of our association at the end of this reunion. John Bennett asked for the floor and nominated John Starnes, our vice president, for president. There were no other nominees and John accepted the position. John Bennett then nominated Ed for the position of vice president. There were no other nominees and Ed accepted.



Ed asked if there were any items of old business to be discussed. There were none.

Ed asked our treasurer, John Bennett, for a financial report. John said we are debt free and have \$13,466.93 in our account.

Charles Patton reported on our ship's store. He has a Charleston jacket, shirts and white T-shirts. Charles obviously has or can get any number of items. Please check with him for specifics.

The floor was opened for nominating sites to host our reunion following the one in San Diego. The following cities were named: San Antonio, TX, New Orleans, LA, Nashville, TN, and the Great Lakes area. The winner is - San Antonio.

Ed said he has boxes of papers and documents that were sent to him by our past historian who was moving and no longer has room to store them. Some are laminated, others are not. He also has a model of the Kearsarge. At one time it was water worthy and powered. It is now in a state of disrepair. Ed is in discussion with one of our members who believes it can be repaired. We really need someone to help us hold on to the past as we move forward. I believe it's called a Historian.

The meeting adjourned.

P.S.

In going over the minutes from our previous business meeting I noticed an item concerning developing a web site and having all of our members e mail address. This is another open item I believe we can and should resolve.

### **From the Past President, Ed McKee**

I would like to personally thank the ninety- seven members and guests who attended the USS Kearsarge Reunion in Pensacola. Some of you came as far away as California, Canada, and even Alaska. Without your support and attendance, the association would be without a purpose. Also, a big thank you to everyone who could not attend, but continue to show your support by sending in your dues and remaining an active member of the association. I'm sorry that you were unable to attend.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your association president for the past six years. Working on the last three reunions has been an enjoyable, and a large part, of my life. I have many fond memories of the events and of the people of who have touched my life. I have enjoyed meeting and visiting with those who attended the reunions; however, I've also enjoyed the letters, calls and emails from those who have been unable to attend.

John Starnes, your new president, pretty much said it all by giving you a short synopsis of the reunion. So I will just add a few things. John and his wife Paula kept the hospitality room running smoothly. Lois, my wife, was there to help. Charles and Charlotte Patton had many items available from the ship's store. The hotel was pleasant and clean. Anita and all the staff were very friendly and accommodating. They even furnished a wonderful arrangement of food and beverages for the "Meet and Greet" on Sunday evening. Tom, from Beach Bum Trolleys, did a wonderful job helping us with the transportation and the arrangements. (It spite of a few glitches.) The tours were fun and interesting. The memorial at Veterans' Park was moving and outstanding. The entertainment at the Angus was hilarious. The meals were exceptional. I particularly enjoyed the cookouts at the hotel. It was a nice way to relax and not have to go anywhere after a long day of tours.

On that note, when I asked for a work party from those USS Kearsarge sailors, they, along with their first mates, responded in true military fashion. They left the hospitality room immediately and quickly helped to set up, and tear down, the tables and chairs for the cookouts. I would like to thank everyone for their help. It was great to see so many pitch in. That memory was one of the highlights of the reunion for me.

Two years until the next reunion. It seems to be a long way off, but time does pass quickly. Particularly as we get older. So hopefully we can meet again in San Diego 2014.

Respectfully yours,  
Ed McKee

## **Taps**

### **Gary Ludlum, R Division, 1953-1956**

Gary Ludlum passed away December 27, 2011 at the age of 76.

Gary joined the Navy in Dec, 1952 and was honorably discharged in April 1956.

Gary and I were only married for 12 years, during those 12 years he gave me many wonderful memories. Gary entered our marriage with a boot box full of pictures, he'd tell me stories about this and that and then would say "I think I have a picture of it", so to the boot box he would go and sure enough find the picture, after always searching for a picture I decided to put them in albums. One album was full of Navy pictures. He was so proud to show it off. The movie "Caine Mutiny" was filmed aboard the USS Kearsarge and in one scene (if you don't blink) you will see Gary in the background.

Thanks to all of you for the many fond memories you gave Gary. Karen Ludlum

### **Richard Nemschick, V3 Division, 1952-1955**

Richard Nemschick passed away May 13, 2011

### **Russell Novak, VF-844, 1952-1954**

Russell Novak passed away Feb 9, 2011 at the age of 82. Russell was aboard the USS Kearsarge as a night fighter pilot with VF-884, the "Bitter Birds" flying the F4U5N Corsair. He received two medals for Meritorious Achievement in Aerial Flight and some of his exploits can be read about in the book "F4U Corsair Units of the Korean War.

Dan Lavelle, V-6 Division wrote he met Russ on the Kay in 1952 while on the flight deck in bomb disposal and rocket missiles. We were both born and raised in Cleveland. He was a very likeable person and dedicated to all.

### **Peter Nowakoski, LTJG, OA Division, 1953-1955**

Peter Nowakoski passed away May 12, 2012

### **Howard W. Ray, B Division, 1951-1955**

On Monday, April 30, 2012 our beloved Howard W. Ray passed away at Piedmont Mountainside Hospital after a truck accident. He was 79 years of age.

Howard was born December 20, 1932 in Tate Georgia. He was the only child born to Howard A Ray and Clara Boling Ray.

Howard spent his early years in Pickens County, graduating from Tate High School Class of 1951. He received an athletic scholarship from Georgia Tech. With the outbreak of the Korean War, he joined the U.S.



Navy, where he served on the USS Kearsarge. He was a member of the Trusty Shellbacks of the Ancient Order of the Deep (crossing the equator). Howard was a recipient of the National Defense Medal, the United Nations Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and the China Service Medal. During his service time he enjoyed playing on the Kearsarge basketball and baseball teams; winning the Far East Championship in basketball. Howard was a proud member of the American Legion Thomas M. Brady Post 45 Canton, Georgia.

After his stint in the service he returned home and signed a contract to play catcher with the New York Yankees. Upon leaving training he returned home to be with his family and work. From 1980-1998 he operated his own business, Ray's Foundations.

Left to cherish his memory is his family who loved him very much. His wife, Dr. Rebecca Ray, daughter Jorene Cleghorn and husband Billy.

#### **Allen Rollins, E Division, 1954-1957**

Allen Rollins 78, passed away April 24, 2012. Allen was born in St. Louis, Mo and joined the Navy in May of 1953.

The following is a letter from Paul Young.

Sorry to hear the passing of Allen Rollins. I met Allen in 1995 through the Kearsarge Association. At that time he and I were part of a "work Party" that put together a spectacular San Diego reunion to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the USS Kearsarge. Of all the Kearsarge reunions I think the 1996 San Diego reunion was the most memorable.

For the next couple of years Allen and his wife Lola along with other Kearsarge shipmates and wives from No. San Diego County would get together at different restaurants and talk about old times (usually about the Navy much to the chagrin of the wives).

Allen did a lot for the Kearsarge Association. For many years he compiled the e-mail list which was constantly changing.

After 18 years the Kearsarge reunion will once again be in San Diego. I'll be thinking of Allen when I volunteer again for the reunion "work party" which won't quite be the same.

#### **Ernest Speigner, Fox Division, 1952-1954**

It is with sadness and regret I inform you of the death of my father, a career US Navy man and a member of the Kearsarge (CVA-33) crew from October 1952-June of 1954. Ernest L. Speigner FTC, Retired, 91, died January 4, 2012 of respiratory and cardiac failure.

Chief Speigner was a member of the "Mighty Kay" crew (a CPO in Fox division) including the five month deployment in the Sea of Japan for air strikes against North Korea. He was also a veteran of World War II. He was survived by his son David, also a Navy veteran

#### **Gerald Urban, V-1 Division, 1952-1956**

Gerald Urban passed away January 13, 2012. He was proud of his service on the Kearsarge and was looking forward to attending the Pensacola reunion. Daughter Renee Alfaro

## Letters From Members

Enclosed is \$20.00 payment for two years subscription to Kear Saga. I would like to hear from any crewmember who served aboard from 1967-1970. I was in Second Division assigned to the side cleaners.

Earl Wilson (Buddy) [tugboatman48@yahoo.com](mailto:tugboatman48@yahoo.com), USN 1967-71 BM3, USCG 1972-90 BMC

\*

Enclosed is a check for one more year of dues. At my age of 85, it may well be the equivalent of a lifetime. Let's hope not.

Sorry I won't be able to make the reunion this year. It appears to be a real winner. I wish you all a good time.

Another incident comes to mind about this great ship. On our shakedown cruise, we had a brief liberty at Guantanamo Bay. After playing softball one hot day, some of us were sipping Cuban beer and watching an oiler service the Kearsarge. After fueling the ship, it started to pull away, but brushed against our carrier's antenna, which projected from the afterdeck. Instantly, a fire broke out aboard the oiler. A great plume of smoke rose in the sky. We could hear alarm bells ringing. Very quickly, the oiler moved away and the fire was controlled. This all occurred in a matter of minutes, but left an indelible impression on my memory.

Kenneth H. Wright, SN, V-1 Division 1946 (Plank Owner)

\*

Sorry for the delay in keeping current with my membership dues. Thanks to you and your fellow association officers for your interests and efforts in keeping the Kearsarge Association alive and well these many years.

I have many happy memories of my time aboard the Mighty K. I served in 1946, 1947 and 1948 in Air Group 3 in Squad VBF3 flying F8F Bearcats which was great fun for a 20 year old wet behind the ears ensign.

With the help of the GI Bill, on my separation from the Navy I went to school and became a Dentist and practiced in my home town for 37 years, retiring in 1991. My wife and I celebrated our sixty fourth wedding anniversary last year and feel pretty lucky with life in general. We have slowed down a bit but still getting around under our own power. Thank God for that.

On June 1, 1947 I had a barrier crash in an F8F on the Kearsarge (Faulty Hook). If anyone serving at that time may have taken pictures of the incident I would like to see them.

Take care, stay well and thanks again for your leadership.

Your Shipmate, John Votolato, Call name "Vote"

\*

Enclosed please find my check for \$20.00 for 2 years dues. I enjoy getting the Kear Saga, brings back a lot of memories.

As you can see this old sailor comes from an era that uses a pen and paper to send a letter. I remember that day in March of 46 when we tried to take CV-33 out of her mooring for the first time. The wind was so strong she could not be controlled even with the efforts of several tugs. They pushed her back into her slip and we took her out the next day on a short run to Bayonne to load ordinance. Best wishes to you and all the old shipmates.

George F Mann, S1C, #3 Barrier Operator



\*

Here's my dues for 2 years, been a bit tardy but I really enjoy your magazine. I am always looking for anything from my old shipmates from my 3 cruises of 1966, 67 and 69. Just today I found an old shipmate on Navy Buddies website. I've been looking for him for 43 years and he was my "best buddy" on my first 2 cruises. He was "out" on my third cruise. I've also found 3 others from this site so please tell other "Kear" sailors to have a look. Keep up the good work.

Walter J Dzubiak Jr, ABF2, V-4 Division

\*

I served on board USS Kearsarge from fall of 1967 to spring of 1968, attached to the Flag Division. I was a MU1 at the time and remember we had a very good 1<sup>st</sup> class mess. We did not eat there, but had coffee, game tables and a movie every night. We had head of the chow line privilege at the crew's mess as PO1's. Each member had 2 coffee cups with their name and rating and a 1<sup>st</sup> class crow on it hanging on a large board over the sink.

I don't remember a lot of the crew except for an EM1 named Foucault (Foxy) an RM1 named Bush, and an SM1 named Dixon. We had 4 easy chairs and I remember a man named Sam Usry would sit on the deck outside to be the 1<sup>st</sup> inside for the second showing of the movie so he could get one of the easy chairs.

We served on station off Viet Nam and our primary mission was Surface/Sub Surface Surveillance. We also picked up pilots who could ditch their wounded aircraft in the ocean. We had a 100% recovery rate for rescuing pilots who could get out over the water.

We thought we were going to turn around and go home from Yokosuka when we once again pulled into Sasebo, Japan. We were tasked to go on station off North Korea to see if we could rescue the USS Pueblo, captured earlier by the North Koreans. As you know that didn't happen and we were later relieved and came home 2 months later than the cruise had originally intended.

I was given a copy of your newsletter by shipmate Jack Shaw, who I met in the Lincoln Cribbage League. I would like to become a member and have enclosed a check of \$20.00

Sincerely, J.D. (Dan) Michaelson, CWO2, USN, Retired

\*

Time seems to pass so quickly. I have sent \$20.00 for subscription. If you can send me any back issues I would appreciate that, if not fine.

Keep up the good work with the publication. "60"+"61" aboard Mighty Kay were some good times.

Glenn W. Robinson, YN3, M Division

### **Kear Saga Editor Paul Czesak**

Our long time Kear Saga editor, Paul Czesak, has been dealing with some medical issues and has been unable to publish the newsletter. Until Paul returns to the helm of the Kear Saga we will do our best to keep the newsletter in circulation.

# KEAR SAGA

*The Newsletter of the Kearsarge Association*

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## Dues and Membership

The annual dues for the Kearsarge Association are \$10.00

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

To sign up a new member, send information to John Work, including  
**name, rate/rank, division, years aboard, address and phone number**

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Membership-Vacant

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President Emeritus - John Bennett

**Past President**

Ed McKee