

# KEAR SAGA II

*The Newsletter of the KEARSARGE Association*

ISSUE 48

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

WINTER 2013

## **Aircraft Carriers Then, Now, And In The Future**

It is not at all uncommon for aircraft carriers to become a topic of interest during our reunions. Discussions usually occur in the hospitality area and on buses going to or returning from scheduled events. I was thinking about this just the other day and realized we have members who were aboard when our ship was a straight deck open bow carrier with wood covering the flight deck. By the way, the flight deck was made of steel. The wood covering was to protect aircraft propellers. Often times, particularly when landing, the tail of an aircraft would come up causing the nose to go down and the propeller to strike the deck.

I checked aboard November 18, 1956 in Bremerton, WA. The ship was going through a major conversion which included an angled flight deck and enclosed or hurricane bow. I will assure you I did not know the difference between straight and angled deck or hurricane and open bow. I later gained a lot of appreciation for both. Seriously, the enclosed or hurricane bow made it much easier for us to endure heavy weather which we were often subjected to. Having an angled deck enabled us to launch and recover aircraft simultaneously. In addition, it created a safer environment for the air crews. For example, should an airborne crew declare an emergency the angled deck could be cleared very quickly whereas on a straight deck more aircraft would have to be moved and a barrier rigged.

Sad but true the Kearsarge was decommissioned January 15, 1970. She was sold for scrapping in March 1974. I am sure glad I was not there or had knowledge of either event!

The next innovation, and one we never benefited from, was the steam catapult. The USS Hancock, CVA 19 was the first Essex Class ship to be so equipped. Not to worry! We were converted from a CVA to a CVS where our mission was to seek out submarines. Our H-8 hydraulic catapults were more than sufficient to launch aircraft associated with our new mission. Regardless, many of the 24 Essex class carriers were converted to steam as were all three of the Midway class carriers, specifically the Midway, FDR and the Coral Sea.

Moving right along takes us to a new class of carrier - the USS Forrestal CVA 59. It came from the builder with a hurricane bow, angled deck, steam catapults, and a 12 hundred pound steam system which was later reduced. I was told it was simply too hot to handle. I bet one of our BT's can explain it. I am sure there were numerous other advancements that I am not aware of. Ships in this class include the Saratoga, Ranger and Independence.

Next came the USS Kitty Hawk CVA 63 and the USS Constellation CVA 64. Now to our stand alone nuke the USS Enterprise CVN 65. For some reason, and I have heard a million of them, the next two carriers, the America and the Kennedy, were boiler fired ships. By the way, I was in the pre-commissioning crew on the Kennedy and served aboard for three years following commissioning. The JFK as it was called had one distinct feature, the exhaust stack was canted out to starboard. I believe all others were directed aft which heated the air behind the ship thus causing turbulence which made it more difficult for the pilots to land.

Our next class of carriers began with the USS Nimitz CVN 68. Examples of ships in this class include the Eisenhower, (which I served aboard), Carl Vinson and the Stennis.

Some folks are still against nuclear powered ships, power plants or anything else and I respect their right to an opinion. I also have one. I'm for it. The advantages are endless!

Did you know that a nuclear powered carrier can go for about 20 years before refueling? It can carry at least twice the amount of jet fuel as a boiler fired carrier-would you believe three and one-half million gallons - yes I said MILLION. Additional space that would be dedicated for fuel tanks is freed up for other uses such as provisions, rockets, bombs, missiles and many other items.

So far we have covered the past and present. Shall we take a look at the future? The next generation aircraft carrier, the Gerald R. Ford, is under construction in Newport News, VA. It too will be nuclear powered, however other choices were considered. Examples include gas turbine engines and steam produced by state of the art and more efficient boilers. The design and other technology also makes this carrier very difficult for the bad guys to detect. Who ever thought we would someday have a stealth aircraft carrier?

Steam catapults will be replaced by electromagnetic induction drive components much like the equipment used to power high speed trains. I was told the arresting gear engines are much improved but I do not know the particulars.

Changes throughout are too numerous to cover, so I'll mention a few: improved communications, bridge equipment, missile systems, living conditions including heating and a/c, materials handling systems including weapons, aircraft, refueling aircraft and general stores.

In closing, I want to leave you with this thought. The Navy will always employ new weapons and techniques but it is the crew that makes the ship what it is, good or bad. I am so thankful for my time on the Kearsarge and especially for my time in V-2 Division, port catapult.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you in San Diego.

John Starnes



# The Wall

A little history most people will never know.

## Interesting Veterans Statistics off the Vietnam Memorial Wall

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010. The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 36 years since the last casualties.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass. Listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.

39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.

8,283 were just 19 years old.

The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old.

12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.

5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.

One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam

1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam

31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.

Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.

54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. I wonder why so many from one school.

8 Women are on the Wall. Nursing the wounded.

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.

Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.

West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.

**The Marines of Morenci** - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

**The Buddies of Midvale** - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam . In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths.

The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.

## **TAPS**

### **Bob Garney, Marine Detachment, 1954-1955**

Bob died on 10/23/12 at his home in Pearland Texas. Semper Fi

### **John Paul Konczyk, A Division, 1948-1949**

John was born June 26, 1930 and worked for American Cyanamid for a few months before he decided he hated factory work and snuck off during his lunch break and joined the Navy in 1948. John served aboard the USS Kearsarge, USS Piedmont, and the USS Dixie during the Korean War.

In later years Johnny captivated friends and family with colorful accounts of traveling in and around Korea, Okinawa and different ports in the west coast of the United States. His stories included nighttime mine sweeps in a pontoon boat with nothing more than a rifle and flashlight, guarding supply lines in forsaken jungles as the enemy stared him down, and once flying home on leave in the cargo hold of a military airplane during horrific weather – eventually wearing his lunch on his shirt. His tales brought laughter and cheer to everyone.

His daughter, Marjanna P. Garvin, said he loved keeping up with his Kearsarge shipmates through the newsletters.



## **James R. Brown, X Division, 1954-1955**

My father was a member of the Kearsarge Association and has now passed away. He was a very proud Veteran and a member of your association. He shared many great stories with me of the times he had while on the Kearsarge. He attended a couple of reunions and enjoyed those very much

James R Brown passed away on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Thank you for all of the enjoyment you allowed my father for so many years. James R Brown Jr.

## **San Diego 2014 Reunion Planning**

We are including this article to keep you in the loop as we progress in the planning stage for our next reunion. Thus far we have determined the fall of the year will be the best time. Following are some of the reasons and rationale: The folks at the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau suggested we come during the fall because of the weather, not very hot and the chance of rain will not be likely. The peak season for tourist and beach goers will have passed so lines will be shorter and hotel rates lower. Many years ago I learned the value of a Ronald Reagan phrase "Trust But Verify". We have spoken with long time friends, former shipmates who held reunions in San Diego and others – all of whom have verified our rationale. We are looking forward to seeing you in San Diego!

John Starnes

## **Past and Future Reunions**

**1992** – Mobile, Alabama – The first reunion was put together by Ken "MAC" McDaniel and we attended the christening of the USS Kearsarge LHD-3 at Ingalls Shipbuilding, Pascagoula, Mississippi. Mrs. Alma Powell was the sponsor and christened the ship.

**1993** – Pascagoula, Mississippi – This was a mini reunion and we attended the commissioning of the USS Kearsarge LHD-3.

**1994** - Virginia Beach, Virginia – Virginia Beach is the home port of the Kearsarge and Captain Montgomery allowed us to tour the ship and have lunch aboard.

**1996** - San Diego, California – This was the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the commissioning of USS Kearsarge CV-33 where we commissioned a model Kearsarge in the hotel swimming pool and

had 300 at the dinner dance.

**1998** – Corpus Christi, Texas – We visited the King Ranch and had our dinner dance aboard the USS Lexington

**2000** – Newport, Rhode Island – Who could forget the clambake that Ted Edington set up for us.

**2002** – San Francisco, California – Visits to Napa Valley, Muir Woods National Park, Alcatraz, the USS Hornet and rides on the cable cars.

**2004** – New Orleans, Louisiana – Visits to the cemeteries, Bourbon Street and the mansions on the Mississippi River

**2006** – South Carolina – Fort Sumter National Park, Historic Charleston, Plantations Charleston

**2008** – Bremerton, Washington – The Space Needle, riding the Bremerton Ferry, Pikes Market

**2010** – Branson, Missouri – Music, Music, Music, Dinner Cruise, Bass Pro Shop and lunch at Lamberts

**2012** – Pensacola, Florida – Tour and lunch on the USS Alabama, watch The Blue Angles practice, dolphin cruise

**2014** – San Diego, California - ?

**2016** – San Antonio, Texas - ?

### **Sea Stories to Share**

A large part of Kearsarge reunions are spent telling sea stories and reminiscing about those people, places and events former crewmembers recall. We are asking that you put these stories in writing to share in the Kear Saga. No matter the size of your article please share it in the Kear Saga as you can be sure there is another former Kearsarger who will really enjoy reading it.

Please submit to: John Work, address and email on back cover.

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## SHIPS STORE LIST

<b>Golf Shirts</b>	Blue or White	Med, Large, X Large, 2X Large	\$29.00
<b>Sweat Shirts</b>	Blue or White	Med, Large, X Large, 2X Large	\$36.00
<b>Hats</b>			
	CV,CVA,CVS 33	Navy	\$14.00
	Marine	Red	\$14.00
	LHD-3	Navy	\$ 7.00
<b>Watch Caps</b>	Navy	CV,CVA,CVS 33	\$11.00
<b>Ships Crest</b>			
	Cloth	CV,CVA,CVS 33	\$ 5.00
	Magnetic	CV,CVA,CVS 33	\$ 2.50
<b>Zippo Lighters</b>			
	CV,CVA,CVS 33	Chrome Ships Crest or Ship	\$15.00
	LHD-3	Chrome Ship	\$15.00
		Brass Ship	\$15.00
<b>50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary First Day Covers</b>			\$ 1.50
<b>Dawn of Glory Print</b>	Watercolor print of LHD 3		\$20.00
<b>Jackets</b>			

The Port Authority jacket has a Teklon nylon durable water repellent outside with a poly-filled body with heavyweight fleece lining. It has rib nit cuffs and waistband, zippered pockets outside and one zippered pocket inside. It comes in Navy with a Navy lining with USS KEARSARGE, CV,CVA,CVS 33 and the ship silhouette on the back.

Sizes- Medium, Large, X Large \$57.00, 2X Large \$61.00 3X Large \$65.00

A light weight nylon jacket with a mesh lining is also available in Navy with the same stitching on the back

Sizes- Medium, Large, X Large, \$52.00 2X Large \$54.00 3X Large \$55.00

**The jackets are a special order item and all sales are final.** We have to order 6 at a time so when I get 6 orders I will place my order.

All prices include shipping and handling

Make checks payable to The Kearsarge Association

Charles Patton, 9125 Live Oak Ave, Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Home Phone 228-875-7572 E-Mail charlotteap@bellsouth.net



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## CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR DUES EXPIRATION DATE

### 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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John Work's Cell Phone numbers: 1-330-205-8056 and 1-330-205-0129

Membership-Vacant

Ship's Store Charles Patton, 9125 Live Oak Ave., Ocean Springs, MS 39564, Ph228-875=7572, Email:charlotteap@bellsouth.net

Honorary President Kenneth McDaniel (Deceased)

President Emeritus –John Bennett

Past President – Ed McKee