

KEAR SAGA

The Newsletter of the KEARSARGE Association

ISSUE 37

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

July 2008

Seattle Reunion Update

September 28, October 2, 2008

The 2008 Kearsarge Reunion in Seattle is fast approaching and the reunion is going full speed ahead. Applications for the reunion and hotel reservations are starting to flow in. If you are planning on coming to Seattle and haven't made your reservations, or sent in your application, please don't delay. The sooner we can get a head count, the earlier we can make final plans. **When you call, please tell the hotel that you are with the Kearsarge Reunion.** The total rate for the hotel is \$94.00 per night.

Silverdale Beach Hotel 1-800-544-9799 or 1-360-698-1000.

Come join your former shipmates and renew your old friendships. Meet new shipmates and make new memories. This promises to be four fun filled days in Bremerton and Seattle.

For those who are renting a car from SEA-TAC airport the directions to the hotel are:

1. Start out going EAST on S 156TH ST toward AIR CARGO RD. (go 0.0 miles)
 2. Turn LEFT onto AIR CARGO RD. (go 0.2 miles)
 3. Turn RIGHT onto S 154TH ST. (go 0.6 miles)
 4. Turn RIGHT onto INTERNATIONAL BLVD/TUKWILA INTERNATIONAL BLVD/WA-99/PACIFIC HWY S. (go 0.2 miles)
 5. Merge onto WA-518 E via the ramp on the LEFT toward I-405/RENTON/I-5. (go 1.2 miles)
 6. Merge onto I-5 S toward TACOMA. (go 21.8 miles)
 7. Merge onto WA-16 W via EXIT 132 toward GIG HARBOR/BREMERTON/SPRAGUE AVE.. (go 27.2 miles)
 8. WA-16 W becomes WA-3 N. (go 8.6 miles)
 9. Take the NEWBERRY HILL RD exit. (go 0.4 miles)
 10. Turn RIGHT onto NW NEWBERRY HILL RD. (go 0.2 miles)
 11. NW NEWBERRY HILL RD becomes SILVERDALE WAY NW. (go 1.0 miles)
 12. Turn RIGHT onto NW BUCKLIN HILL RD. (go 0.1 miles)
 13. End at 3073 NW Bucklin Hill Rd Silverdale, WA 98383
- TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME: 1 hour 13 minutes DISTANCE: 61.49 miles

Shipmates,

Escalating fuel prices can and probably will have some adverse impact on attendance at the Seattle reunion. Many, if not most of us, who have been in the association for a number of years view our gatherings as a "family reunion" that should not be missed. While we can't do anything about the current and predicted fuel prices; we can do something about the manner in which we respond and ATTEND!

Following are some suggestions. I am sure many of you will have more and ever better ones. Please share them with all of us.

If you are driving perhaps you can tag up with shipmates along your route and car pool. This is nothing new, many of us drove cross country together in the 50's and 60's when we made about \$150.00 a month. You may want to consider Amtrak, other rail services or a bus. If you plan to fly there are numerous cost savings considerations. Certain times of the day and the day of the week, for example, are much cheaper than others. Fares from carrier to carrier can vary by as much as 50%. Purchasing tickets in advance usually result in huge savings. Free (accrued) airline miles can often be transferred from one family member to another, so if someone in your family is a frequent flier they may share their miles with you. For me personally, missing this reunion would be about like missing ship's movement - No Way! See you in Seattle.

John Starnes, Vice President

LETTERS

Paul

Two years ago I sent a story to someone at the Kearsarge Association about her last WestPac. I was a member of HS 6 in the Air Group aboard for a tour off VietNam in the Tonkin Gulf. I've been a member of the group for a few years (hope I'm not lapse on dues! Let me know.), and thought this would be an important part of the crews history. I don't care if it's published or not, just so it's in a folder somewhere as part of her personal history.

Sincerely,

Eric Oxendorf

USS Kearsarge CVS 33 - Memories of her last WestPac.

As a member of HS 6 from NAS Imperial Beach, CA, we went on three 'short cruises' to get acclimated to life aboard the Mighty Kay before what was to be her last WestPac cruise as a CV.

The seas off California can be awesome! I never lost my lunch, but got close many times. The ride on the fantail was great, with fifty foot swells! Before we departed Long Beach for WestPac, I tried to celebrate my 21st birthday in a few bars. Actually, my birthday was the first day out at sea and I was still 20. I was allowed in the bars with my squadron mates, but wasn't allowed to drink anything but Coke.

First, was Hawaii. We picked up munitions for the ship and torpedoes for our SH-3A/D's helicopters. Next stop, Yokuska where I met my a hometown pal Greg Grunwaldt. He was on his ship, the USS Park County (LST-1077). They had just finished a tour on Operation Market Time in Viet Nam. With his help, I discovered nearly every bar in Yokuska, as well as a few 'hotsi-baths'. One night I lost control and fell laughing and drooling into a benjo ditch. This is where the SP's found me. Thanks God they were from my squadron and the poured me into a cab to take me back to the ship.

On our last night there we got word the North Koreans had attacked the USS Pueblo AGER-2 and taken the crew captive as 'spies'. The entire ships crew was alerted and we were underway in less than hours! The next day we were in Korean waters showing our strength, if needed.

Subic Bay was our next stop. I had no idea heat and humidity could get that high! There, I bought my first of many Nikon cameras, and relaxed before our first tour 'on the line' off the coast of North VietNam. I remember the sandy beaches, the sweet San Miguel beer and of course Olongopo.

On station our routines consisted of numerous patrols of all shipping and sampan movement, as well as rescue missions for attack missions by A-4 Skyhawks, F-8 Crusaders and F-4 Phantoms launched by larger CVA's like the USS Kitty Hawk. Occasionally a Soviet "Bear" bomber would fly close and bring us to General Quarters. Daily launches of our S2F Stoofs and our helicopters kept us busy.

On the dark moonless night of 3 June 1969, while I was working night shift, we were called to GQ and the Kearsarge suddenly poured on the speed. We hurriedly launched all our crews to start what became an international tragedy. One of our helicopters was the first on the scene where the HMAS Melbourne cut the USS Frank E. Evans DD-754 in half during a SEATO exercise. If you've never been to the Tonkin Gulf, it's full of sharks and Sea Snakes. By the time daylight broke, it was a horrific scene that will always live in my memory. This action and the rescue of numerous lives gave the Kearsarge her last Unit Citation.

(for photo, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Frank_E._Evans)

After a few weeks on Yankee Station, we went to Hong Kong for eight days. There, the Kearsarge had some cosmetic work done on her hull. We pulled out to sea, and three hours later Capt. Nierman came on the IMC and informed us that we would be rendezvousing with the USS Kitty Hawk, and heading home. President Nixon decided to use this as a diplomatic move and recalled numerous ships and troops. The next day we met with the Kitty Hawk, and they challenged us to 'a Great Race' across the Pacific. Capt. Nierman came to us again and asked if we could stand a week of rattling and shaking. No objections were heard, the ships lined up about 500 yards apart-a whistle was blown and we were off! And did our ship SHAKE!!! There was stored junk, pipes and all sorts of debris that was shaken off every overhead in the boat! I believe we sustained 31 knots all the way to Long Beach and got there three hours before Kitty Hawk. If it was planned-I don't know. But it was great for moral, and made it a bit tougher to get our land legs when we got ashore!

We were told the Mighty Kay would go into the Mothball Fleet, HS 6 went back to NAS Imperial Beach and I went to the Mexican Border on Shore Patrol for three months. I then volunteered and went back to Viet Nam with HC-7 and the infamous 'Big Mothers'-Det 110.

While with Big Mother, I recognized Kearsarge's former CO, Captain Nierman walking on the deck of a CVA we were aboard for a few days (I don't remember the ship). He was now an Admiral. I wrote a short letter to him mentioning I remembered him from the Kearsarge.

A few days later he sent his adjutant down to our work space and I was escorted to the Staff Cabin for tea. We talked about the Evans Incident and the Great Race and that CVS-33 was now living a retired life in Bremerton, Washington.

Eric Oxendorf (AE2 HS-6 1968)

June 1, 2008

Dear Paul

I just renewed my dues to John Work for the umpteenth time but this is the first time I have written to the Kearsarge Association about my problems. I am 81 years old and suffer from CRS (Can't Remember S__t) and just wonder if any of my equally old shipmates are in the same boat (no disrespect to the USS KEARSARGE).

I was drafted into the Navy in 1944, a fresh kid out of high school when I met Marlow Cook at the induction station. We went to boot camp together at Great Lakes, Illinois and Marlow was elected our squad leader. After graduation, the Navy tried to make an electrician out of me but failed rather miserably. They sent me to schools in Newport, R.I. and Gulfport, MS before being assigned to the brand new USS KEARSARGE CV-33 as an Electricians Mate Striker for its three month shakedown cruise to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. My friend Marlow and I were split up as he went to New London, CT for submarine school.

Now back to my problem, which is I don't remember any of the names of my shipmates except for Marlow, Randy Williams who is deceased and some nice guy from Madison WI who had a Polish name (He may be dead now).

Marlow had a very successful career later in politics. He was a county judge in Louisville, KY before serving several terms in congress as a Republican Senator and now lives in Sarasota, FL.

Before I die, I would love to hear from anyone who may remember me. Regretfully, I have never attended any reunions because they were always too far away for my pocketbook and I figured I wouldn't know anybody anyway.

I have fond memories of my "vacation cruise" to the Caribbean watching flight deck operations with the old prop planes. The Navy offered me Electricians Mate 3/c if I re-enlisted in 1946 but the war was over and I decided to take the honorable discharge and go to college on the G.I. Bill.

Please write or call me at 216 Gibson Road, Louisville, KY 40207 Ph:502-895-0291 during the summer; or 866 Carriek Bend Circle #103, Naples, FL 34110 Ph:239-593-8643 in the winter. I know it's a long shot but I may get lucky.

Sincerely, Dick Barnett

Dear John

Here is a check for my dues for the next five years. Just a thought, while I can't make the reunion this year, if the committee has any thoughts of having the reunion on the East Coast in 2010 I would be happy to help set it up. I live about 40 minutes east of NYC and would love to see the reunion to see the reunion here in the city. The INTREPID should be open again by then along with the other ships on display. Of course I'm sure you know of all the other amenities NYC has to offer. I have several contacts in the tourism industry in NYC that will help me.

If you could bring this up at the business meeting this year I think you might get a good response. I am retired and have plenty of time to devote to the project. Also we have a fantastic "Fleet Week" here in mid-May. The new KEARSARGE has been here several time for it.

In closing I wish you and yours Smooth Sailing
Brian C. Blakeney (S3 Div '67-69)

John, I would like to sign up a friend and shipmate for the Association: James Touchstone, FN M Div. '65-'68. Jim is dying from mesothelioma. I was at his home a few days ago and I don't believe he has long to live. It would do him good to have a membership card and a few old copies of KearSagas. He didn't know about the Association but it was through the Association that I was able to find him after 40 years. His address; James Touchstone, 129 Summitt Dr. SW, Adairsville, GA 30103.

Warm Regards, Jerry McCullough, 1050 Baugh Rd, Ardmore, TN 3844

Hi,

Thanks for the publication. I remember it was 60 years ago next month we were scheduled for the Mediterranean 1948 when we had a launch swamp in Hampton Roads.VA. I lost a fellow QM Striker, Dollard. We think of our Navy years more as we age. I often think of the time I spent on the bridge while at sea, those many years ago. Those memories are priceless.

Thanks again, Jackie Olinger QM2 "Old Navy"

Hi John,

I just got your letter today. The \$50.00 was for the past five years dues to bring me up to date. I will send you another check in June. I have 3 original copies of Kearsarge (Dec 1966, Sept 1967 and Oct 1967) I don't know how complete the collection of Kearsarge are for the Association. Would you like copies of them? I would make copies and send them to you, if you want them. They just happened to survive all these years.

Oh by the way, CR Division was where all the radio communication equipment was at. I guess that the Radioman rating became the ComTech rating today. It looks like there are only 2 sparkys left in the sheet you sent me. Oh well, I guess we are a dying breed. Thanks for the help

Best wishes, Gary Marentis, 110 Haydon St., Hollister, CA 95023 Ph: 831-637-0947

P.S. The Dec 1966 issue has pictures of the Nov 1st 1966 initiation at the Equator. 2400 of us went from pollywogs to shellbacks.

Hello to all,

Hope you'll have a great time out West. We can't make it this year, Just too far! We plan to go to the convention on the USS LONG BEACH this time.

God Bless, Ray and Kitty Ramsey, 2127 Holt St., Augusta, GA 30904 (LI3 X Div '54-'56)

Dear John,

Enclosed please find my check in the amount of \$30.00 as payment for extending my membership for another two years. I appreciate your listing of plank owners. I am also a plank owner from the Bremerton commissioning of Kearsarge in February 1952. In fact I had the OOD Watch for the commissioning. As a result I had the privilege of 'passing the long glass' at the commissioning of the current Kearsarge (LHD-3) in October 1993.

I was also the OOD when Kearsarge was redesignated from CV33 to CVA33. Kearsarge was operating off the coast of Korea at the time and I remember the XO, CDR Peter F. Boyle, bringing the notice of change in designation to the bridge to show the CO, Captain Louis French, and sharing this information with those of us on watch at the time.

Sincerely, William Waller, Jr., LCDR, USN Ret. 3100 Shore Dr. Virginia Beach, VA 23451

From Lawrence Puccini (BT3 B Div)

I was in Fireroom #1 with Joseph B. Lucas, (B Div, 1952-1956). Sorry to hear that he passed away. I was in Boot Camp with Paul Young (R Div, 1952-1955). I was also on the boxing team with Ben Youton.

Lawrence Puccini, 647 W. Beverly Dr. Clovis CA 93612-2376, Ph. 559-299-3335

TAPS

Raymond Irving Ayers (AB3 V2 Div '52)

Dear Ed,

I am writing you for two reasons first Maxine and I cannot make the reunion in Seattle Sept. My high school is having our 60th reunion on very same day in Sept. You only get one chance for a 60th. We are planning for the one in Branson in 2010.

The second thing is the passing of a shipmate Raymond Irving Ayers AB3 V2 division. Ray was raised in New Jersey as I was. Our time together in the Navy was the same going to AB school then to CA for duty at PT MUGU then on to the Kearsarge. Both getting discharged in 1953. I settled in CA he in New Jersey. Some years later he and his wife came back to CA and we renewed our friendship. Ray died at home May 4th, 2008,

Your friends Dick and Maxine Talbot reach me at dickt9@verizon.net

John Hamack (MD 52-56)

USS Kearsarge Association

This is to inform you of the passing of my husband in December 2007. He was Cpl John L Hamack. Getting your newsletter meant so much to him. His membership has ended with him

Sincerely, Lorraine Hamack

WELCOME ABOARD

New members as of June 19, 2008

NAME	DIV	RATE	DATES	NAME	DIV	RATE	DATES
Richard Backus	M	MM3	??/??	Jevne K. Lamoyne	V1	E4	52-??
Donald E. Bentley	Air Dept	PO2	48-50	Martin K. Mathison	VF113	AM2	52-56
Herbert O. Bostrom	VT153	ARM3	3/46-6'46	Joseph M. Neary	V4	AMS3	9/65-10/68
Ed R. Christoferson	OR	AO3	9/43-7/55	Anthony Neltner	A	EN3	9/60-7/64
Aubrey W. Coleman	V2	AN	2/48-5/52	Daniel Preece	1 st	E3	9/55-8/59
Floyd E. Engle	B	BT3	10/62-9/66	Dell (Rusty) Sanders	V6	AMH2	9/56-12/59
Donald E. Furman	A	PO3	60-64	Robert H. Saxby	F	FC1	2/46-6/50
Edwin D. Gloyd	V1	AN	2/59-8/62	Glyn E. Steiner	F	SIC	5/45-7/48
Tom L. Goodman	B	BT2	2/51-3/55	James Touchstone	M	FN	?/65-?/68
Phillip D. Harris	B	BT3	6/57-9/?	Jerry D. Van Dalsem	VS-21	AE3	?/59-?/60
Billy P. Hearon	F	GM3	6/52-6/56	Larry Wilcox	?	?	?/?-?/?
Marvin L. Johnson	HS6	ADR2	9/60-12/63	Roland Willadsen	G	GM3	?/50-?/54
Roger L. Johnson	E	EM1	54-58	John R. Wyatt	OI	RDSN	9/52-11/55
J. Paul Klyn	V6	AN	10/52-10/56	Guy L. Young	E	EM3	?58-?/63
Donald A. Ziebrath	OE	ETN3	64-?/68				

2008 REUNION REGISTRATIONS AS OF 6/29

John and Dianne Bennett – B Div, BT2, 9/59-12/62
 Kenneth and Wanda Best – V2 Div, AE3, 12/49-6/56
 Earl and Shirley Brandt – A Div, MM3, ?/52-?/54
 Aubrey and Zofia Coleman – A Div, MM3, ?/52-?/54
 Charlie and Marjorie Crookshanks – V7 Div, LTJG, 12/53-5/56
 Paul Czesak – ENG, LTJG, 6/53-6/56
 Paul and Penny Davis – S1 Div, AK2, ?/52-?/54
 John and Sue Elko – VAW11, ATR2, ?/88-?/87
 William and Barbara Hollywood – OE Div, ETR2, 6/68-9/69
 Louis and Maria Leon – V6 Div, AMS3, 7/56-9/59
 Calvin and Janice Lindley – V6, ADR3, 12/59-9/61
 Edward and Lois McKee – V6 Div, AMS3, 10/56-5/69
 Charles and Charlotte Patton – A Div, MM3, 4/64-12/69
 Bernardo and Salud Rubacalva – V6 Div, AMS2, 1/57-1/59
 Gene R. Setula – V2 Div, LT, 11/53-7/55
 John and Paula Starnes – V2 Div, AB2, 11/56-8/60
 John and Louise Work – VS29, AE3, 10/63-9/67

Attention all Kearsarge Association Members:

Registration for the reunion must be in to John Work by August 29th.

Hotel registration must be in by August 27th to guarantee your room.

Many of you voted for a reunion in Seattle during the New Orleans reunion. I know these are uncertain times, but we need to keep the reunions alive! If you talked about attending this reunion, or visited with shipmates about it, call them. Then please get your registrations to John Work and make your hotel reservations as well. We need to have a head count as soon as possible so we can make this a successful reunion. Don't miss out on an opportunity to attend. We have a fantastic hotel (at a reasonable price) and lots of wonderful tours planned. See you there!

Ed McKee

USS KEARSARGE Association Reunion Registration

Seattle, Washington

September 28, 2008 - October 2, 2008

(PLEASE PRINT)

Member Name _____

Guest Name _____

Guest Name _____

Guest Name _____

Number of Attendees _____ x \$5.00 \$ _____

Monday, 9/ 29 All Kitsap Tours and Lunch at Kiana Lodge

(PLEASE SELECT CHOICE)

Salmon _____

Chicken _____

Manicotti _____

Number of Tickets _____ x \$40.00 \$ _____

Welcoming Buffet at Hotel

Number of Tickets _____ x \$32.00 \$ _____

Tuesday, 9/30 All Seattle Tours and Lunch at Spaghetti Factory

(PLEASE SELECT CHOICE)

Spaghetti w/ Meat balls _____

Lasagna _____

Number of Tickets _____ x \$40.00 \$ _____

Wednesday, 10/01 Museum of Flight and Lunch at Gordon's

Number of Tickets _____ x \$35.00 \$ _____

Thursday, 10/02 Pike Street Market and Lock's Tour

Number of Tickets _____ x \$35.00 \$ _____

Dinner Dance (PLEASE SELECT CHOICE)

Prime Rib/Baked Potato Number of Tickets _____ x \$40.00 \$ _____

Chicken/Wild Rice Pilaf Number of Tickets _____ x \$35.00 \$ _____

Vegetarian Number of Tickets _____ x \$35.00 \$ _____

Grand Total \$ _____

Mail to: John Work, 24611 Sandy Springs Rd., Minerva, OH 44657-9442

Make Checks Payable to: KEARSARGE Association

Please Return Registration by August 29th!

Lawrence Crane, a shipmate, sent me this wonderful clipping from a San Francisco newspaper dated April 24, 1952. I plan on bringing it to Seattle, but would like to share part of it with the Kearsarge readers. It has some great old pictures of our "Lady". The following is the news article as written by George K. Thompson:

The USS Kearsarge among first of U.S. Aircraft Carriers reconverted for use of planes carrying atom bombs, is shown at Alameda Naval Air Station pier today. She stopped here en route from Puget Sound to San Diego where she will pick up planes before joining fleet.

Lying quietly at an Alameda Naval Air Station pier today was a great mass of fighting ship which Moscow considers sinister and Americans regard as reassuring.

She is the USS Kearsarge one of the Navy's few atomic age aircraft carriers and the first of her type to visit the bay area.

The big 27,000 ton carrier stopped off here en route from the Puget Sound to San Diego where she will take aboard her complement of war planes and engage in "under way" training before joining the Pacific fleet.

It cost Uncle Sam \$43,000,000 to make the Kearsarge ready for possible warfare, but today she stands a deterrent to any hostile actions which might develop behind the Iron Curtain.

The potential enemy will think twice before he makes any moves which might unleash the terrible retaliation which the Kearsarge is capable of delivering, her officers and the crew are convinced.

The Navy doesn't say much about the fighting possibilities of the big carrier, but 1,000,000 man days of labor have gone into broadening and strengthening her flight deck so that atom bomb planes can operate from it.

Recommissioned in February, after a period in mothballs and in the shipyard, the Kearsarge today is in the process of molding her crew into a closely knit team.

Her skipper, Captain Louis E. French is a happy man these days as he goes about the job of training his co-ordinated, 2100 man crew.

"I couldn't have done a better job in assembling this crew if I had been given the opportunity to hand pick every man aboard." French says, "We have an esprit de corps which is remarkable for the short time that we have been together."

The Kearsarge is a proud successor to two other U.S. Navy ships. The first, and more famous, was the sloop of war USS Mt. Kearsarge, which met and sank a Confederate raider, the Alabama, in thundering battle off Cherbourg, France in 1864.

The second was a battleship of the late 1890's which went around the world with "fighting Bob" Evans and the great white fleet in 1907. The second Kearsarge is still afloat as a Navy crane ship. (Recall this was written in 1952.)

The third and greatest of the three Kearsarges was built in 1945, but did not get the chance to see combat before the war ended.

Ed McKee

KEAR SAGA^{II}

The Newsletter of the Kearsarge Association

USS Kearsarge Association
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CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR DUES EXPIRATION DATE

The yearly dues for the Kearsarge Association is \$10.

— Check your label to see when your dues expire.

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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HORNET Memorial Room Liaison Dan Levin, 309 Surry St., San Francisco, CA 94133, Ph Email: DWLevin@aol.com

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President Emeritus — John Bennett

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