

KEAR SAGA^{II}

The Newsletter of the Kearsarge Association

SUMMER**CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3****1997**

1998 CORPUS CHRISTI REUNION

The headquarters for the 1998 reunion (April 29th to May 2nd) will be the Ramada Hotel Bayfront, 601 N. Water Street, Corpus Christi, TX. The phone number is (800) 688-0334 and room rates are \$65.00 + 13% tax which includes an American Breakfast Buffet. These rates are good from 5 days before and 5 days after the reunion. All rooms have coffee makers. Check in is at 3:00 pm and check out is at 12:00 noon. There is on site covered parking for guests and parking is also available for guests' motor homes. There is also a motor home park 5 minutes from the hotel with very reasonable rates. We are working on the tour packages at this time and hope to have the details together soon.

Excitement is beginning to build as members of the Kearsarge Association have already begun to search for former shipmates in hopes of meeting them at the Corpus Christi Reunion. If each of us could locate just one former *Kearsarge* shipmate to attend the reunion **WOW!!!**

I have sent information to 25 periodicals who will publish our reunion notice. Since these periodicals are all military related we have had a lot of success in the past finding former shipmates...But, we still miss many who are not retired or members of military veterans organizations. Because of this I am asking members to contact their local newspapers to publish a reunion notice. Most newspapers do this free of charge. Finding a former shipmate is well worth the time and effort you invest.

BRUCE COVINGTON, PRESIDENT

Bruce Covington continues his chemotherapy treatments and reports that he is doing well and is looking forward to the 1998 reunion. He reports a loss of hair but with the shaved head style that is now popular Bruce decided to go for this look and his family thinks he looks real trendy. Lets keep Bruce in our thoughts, prayers and cards.

NAVAL TRAINING CENTER, SAN DIEGO

I had no idea that the Naval Training Center in San Diego had just been completed in September of 1942. I was in boot camp there in January of 1946 and I thought it had been there for centuries.

I might remember the base better than some, because I was there so long and the fact that I was so traumatized by just being there, it sharpened my memory. Every event was like a major happening. It seemed like the world hinged on the outcome of everything that occurred.

I remember being in sick bay with a temperature of 102 and worrying about not getting back to my beloved Company 43. They had a Admirals inspection the day after I arrived and we had to get up and clean our quarters and then lie at attention when the Admiral came in. Then, in walks this kindly old gentleman, who was so pleasant to us. Enough said!

Is anyone old enough to remember "rolling clothes"? I'm not sure how long the practice continued. Your

clothes had to be rolled and then tied with line so the crown of the square knot was up and your name and service number were showing.

The demise of the training center is premature. The old San Diego Naval Training Center will never die as long as there is one story left to be told and one old sailor left to remember.

ROBERT H. WILLIAMS, S1 (567-65-66) , FC DIV. 3/47-11/47

NAVAL TRAINING CENTER, UPDATE

A plan is being made to reuse the old Naval Training Center property in San Diego. The part of the base separated from the rest of NTC by a boat channel could be used for expanding the airport, the Camp Nimitz part of the property is proposed for a 650-room hotel geared toward business travelers, and a marine sciences laboratory is also being planned to be used by the Metropolitan Wastewater Dept. and San Diego State University. The remainder of Camp Nimitz is going to include a proposed Public Safety Training Institute, an expansion area for Lindbergh Field and a small arms firing range. Much of the open space at NTC will be used for golf courses, ballfields and picnic areas, and a 350-room hotel for family vacationers is under consideration for an area near Nimitz Bridge.

Fifty-two buildings of the more than 200 on the base have been designated as part of an historic district, but due to their condition rehabilitating these buildings will be extremely expensive, at an estimated cost of \$105 million. While a plan is not yet formulated to fund the project, and could take as long as 40 years, a 10-year financing plan has been outlined that could pay for \$46.1 million of the project.

From information submitted by Paul Young, R Division, '52-'55.

VF-112 LOUNGE LIZARDS

The pictures that I sent to the *Kear Saga* a few months ago (published in the Spring 1997 Edition) were of Cal Waterbury and Lloyd Lewis. Don't let anyone tell you different!!

T. W. Smith called me today regarding the pictures and I confirmed verbally to him that they were the subjects of the pictures. I don't remember when or where they were taken, but probably at Miramar or El Centro in 1953 or 1954. By the way, I was down at Miramar about three weeks ago, and it is now a Marine base.

I made the cruise departing approximately June 1, 1953 and returning in January, 1954. I was married to my present wife on Jan. 24, 1954 right after returning from the cruise. I stayed in the Navy for a total of 23 ½ years and retired as AVCM. At the time I was in VF-112 I would have bet anyone a million dollars I would not have stayed in. However, I was too lazy to work and too nervous to steal, so I had to make a living somehow.

Part of a letter from Chuck Stephens, AVCM, USN (Ret)

USS KEARSARGE LHD-3

After leaving its Norfolk, VA home port April 15th, the *USS Kearsarge* sailed for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The ship crossed the equator and prime meridian en route making its crew "Golden Shellbacks". The *Kearsarge* maintained station off West Africa for almost all of May in preparation for evacuations. Although no one required evacuation, the *Kearsarge* was commended by the US Ambassador to the DRC for helping stabilize what could have been an extremely violent turnover of governments. At the call of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the *Kearsarge* then steamed to Freetown, Sierra Leone where the ship evacuated more

than 2500 citizens and third country nationals. After two months at sea the *Kearsarge* arrived at the Canary Islands, where warm weather and a great reception by the people of the islands helped refresh the crew before sailing to Rota, Spain. A four day stop in Rota provided for vehicle and shipboard maintenance. A little R&R was also slipped in. *Kearsarge* entered the Mediterranean Sea June 18th en route to Naples, Italy, arriving there eight days later. The *Kearsarge* was in port for the July 4th celebration hosting the major attractions that had traveled to Naples for the event. Former major league baseball players, former members of the Allman Brothers Band and the Marshall Tucker Band were in attendance. The *Kearsarge* sailed from Naples July 7th and participated in the 6th Fleet sponsored exercise, InvitEx 97-2. The exercise involved ships and personnel from the United States, Italy, Greece, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany. After InvitEx the *Kearsarge* continues deployment with additional exercises and ports of call throughout the Mediterranean working toward its October return home.

From information sent in by Rod Amelotte, B Div., '54-'55 and William "Red" Wilson, VF112, '52 - '55

USS KEARSARGE SLOOP-of- WAR

A cable from Colon, Feb. 8, 1894 says:

The United States corvette *Kearsarge*, flagship of Acting Rear Admiral O. F. Stanton, was wrecked on Roncador reef at 6:45 o'clock Friday evening, Feb. 2. The *Kearsarge* was under both sail and steam at the time and was going about ten knots when she struck. A Heavy sea was running, and as the character of the cays in these waters was well known to the *Kearsarge*'s officers, it was evident that safety lay in forcing her as far up on the cay as possible before she began to break up. Accordingly she was at once lightened by heaving her guns overboard. One of the first to go was her splendid oil 11 inch after pivot, the gun that did such terrible execution on the *Alabama* in their famous fight in 1864. Next the masts were cut away, not only to lighten her, but also to provide material for constructing rafts. It would have been madness to attempt to make a landing in such a sea in the intense darkness of a tropical night, and therefore there was nothing to be done but to wait till morning. A terrible night was passed, the waves pounding heavily over the stern and weather side as she swung more and more broadside on. On Saturday morning, Feb. 3, a line was got ashore, and all hands were finally landed safe on the cay. Owing to the manner in which the waves had swept the decks and filled the holds only a little fresh water and a small quantity of provisions could be saved. Three boats were got ashore but little injured.

As there is almost no water on the reef and about 200 men were camped there with a trifling supply one of the boats was immediately put in order to go to Old Providence for relief. Lt. (J.G.) F. R. Brainard and Naval Cadet Thomas L. Sitt, with a picked crew of volunteers, left the cay. On reaching Old Providence and finding there nothing capable of taking off the shipwrecked crew they came on to Colon for assistance. When they left Roncador Cay the *Kearsarge* was breaking up fast.

A despatch received by the Secretary of the Navy on Thursday from Lt. Brainard, dated Colon, Feb. 8, was as follows: "*Kearsarge* sailed from Port au Prince, Hayti, Jan. 30 for Bluefields, Nicaragua. Was wrecked on Roncador Reef Feb. 2. Officers and crew safe."

Secretary Herbert sent a cable despatch to Lieut. Brainard directing him to charter a steamer and proceed at once to the rescue of the shipwrecked officers and crew. Later in the day Secretary Herbert received a telegram from Lieut. Brainard stating that the mail steamer *City of Para*, which anchored at Colon Feb. 8, was available for the purpose, and as he had full authority to make whatever arrangements were necessary it is assumed by the Department that she has been engaged, and that she is now on her way to Roncador Reef, which about 250 miles from Colon, and presuming the *City of Para* left for the scene of wreck on Feb. 8, she should reach Roncador Reef by Feb. 10. Her regular day of sailing from Colon is Feb. 14.

This account of the wreck of the *Kearsarge* was taken exactly as written (and spelled) in the "Army and Navy Journal, February 10, 1984. More of this account will follow in the next *Kear Saga*.

USS HORNET AIRCRAFT CARRIER FOUNDATION

Received from Ralph Johnson of the Hornet Aircraft Carrier Foundation:

Dear John,

I wanted to write you and bring you up to date on our efforts to save the HORNET. We are very close to doing just that. Our application went in to the Navy last Novmber, and we are about to send them the final pieces of information they need.

Little did we know two years ago that it would be so difficult to raise the funding needed to make our dream a reality. Thanks to Associations such as yours, several corporations, and individuals by the hundreds, our goal is in sight.

We have the lease and use permits just about done with the city of Alameda, so the HORNET will be berthed at Pier 3 (former NAS) Alameda as always planned.

If all goes well and "Murphy" stays away, we hope to have the HORNET open to the public about January 1. Once open, we plan to permanently honor all Essex class carriers, especially the KEARSARGE. Also we hope to one day host the USS KEARSARGE Association's reunion....What a setting; the HORNET in San Francisco Bay!!!

Thanks again for your kind donation and words of support.

For a greatful foundation
Ralph T. Johnson, Treasurer

As I'm sure you know, The HORNET was half built and was to be named KEARSARGE, but fate stepped in.

BROOKLYN NAVY YARD PICTURE

I was pleased to see how well my picture was reproduced on the front page of the *KearSaga*. The shot was taken on April 8, 1946 according to a copy of the log that I have. It was the first time out of the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

I also have a picture of Commander Byng, the first Executive Officer of the "K" flying the the first plane on board off Norfolk.

Plankowner Randy Green, Lt., H Div., '45-'46

PAY RAISES

UNDER ACT APPROVED 29 JUNE 1946 THE PAY READJUSTMENT ACT OF 1942 IS AMENDED AND FIXED NEW RATES AS FOLLOWS:

CPO PERMANENT	\$165.00	ABOVE CAPTAINS ARE OMMITTED HERE	
CPO ACTING	\$150.00	CAPTAIN	\$4400.00 BASE
FIRST CLASS	\$135.00	COMDR	\$3850.00
SECOND CLASS	\$115.00	LTCOMDR	\$3300.00
THIRD CLASS	\$100.00	LIEUT	\$2760.00
SEAMAN FIRST	\$090.00	LTJG	\$2400.00
SEAMAN SECOND	\$080.00	ENS	\$2160.00
SEAMAN(APP)	\$075.00	NO DOPE ON WARRENT PAY	

THIS INCREASE EFFECTIVE
AS OF JULY 1, 1946

The above is from the July 2, 1946 edition of the USS KEARSARGE DAILY PRESS (Captains Copy) that was donated by Plankowner Bernard D. Ernst, GM3, G Division, '45-'46

SHIPS STORE

USS Kearsarge Caps, 50th Anniversary	Navy Blue and Marine Red	\$14.00
USS Kearsarge Caps, White, CV,CVA,CVS 33		\$14.00
USS Kearsarge Caps, Blue, CV,CVA,CVS 33		\$14.00
Ties, Navy Blue , Ships Silhouette, CV,CVA,CVS 33		\$22.00
Magnetic Ships Crest 3" (for your refrigerator, etc.)		\$3.00
USS Kearsarge Coffee Mugs with CV 33 and LHD 3 Crest		\$13.50
USS Kearsarge Tie Bars		\$10.00
Blue Knit Watchcap with Ships Silhouette and Name CV, CVA, CVS (new item)		\$11.00

All prices include shipping and handling

Cachet (picture in last newsletter) \$1.50 each, including self-addressed stamped 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

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

After every mailing of the *Kear Saga* a number of newsletters are returned with a "No Forwarding Address" stamp. The post office will only forward mail for one year and then it is returned and I have no idea where you are. Please keep me informed of your current address and phone number. A lot of area codes are being changed so keep us up to date so your shipmates and your newsletter can find you.

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CHANGE OF COURSE

The following was published in "73 Armature Radio Today" Feb. 97 and is a radio conversation between a U.S. Navy ship and a Canadian source.

U.S. Ship: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision.

Canadian: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees.

U.S. Ship: This is the Captain of a U.S. Navy Ship. I say again divert YOUR course.

Canadian: No, I say again, divert YOUR course.

U.S. Ship: This is an aircraft carrier of the U.S. Navy. We are a large ship. Divert YOUR course now!

Canadian: This is a lighthouse. Your call Captain...

Sent in by Paul Young, R Div., '52-'55

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

A number of members who are on the Internet have asked about a directory so they can contact each other. Cal Waterbury, VF112, '54-'55, has agreed to collect the information needed for this. So contact Cal with your name, home address, and e-mail address, at purvis@n-link.com, and you will be added to the directory. When Cal has the list complete he will send out a directory. Cal also gets together with other members on AOL private chat room at "USS Kearsarge". Check them out.

TAPS

James V. Meyers of Wildwood Florida died May 18, 1996. A veteran of both World War II and the Korean War, Jim served aboard 5 ships: the *USS Guadalcanal CVE 60*, *USS Wasp CV7*, *USS Ranger CV-4*, *USS Merrimac TAO-37* and was a Plank Owner in B Division aboard the *USS Kearsarge*. A member of Moose Lodge 2301 and a life member of VFW Post 9296 and American Legion Post 531 Jim is survived by his wife Marian and five children. Jim died from Mesothelioma (asbestos cancer) from working with asbestos on the ships he served.

Charles M. Branner Jr. of Newberg, Indiana died September 20, 1997. Charles was a Vietnam War Navy Veteran serving aboard the *USS Kearsarge*. He was a member of American Legion Post No. 44 and VFW Post No. 2119, Newberg Masonic Lodge, and the Newberg Moose Lodge.

Rex "Goldy" Goldizen, AMM1 of Kaneohe Hawaii. Rex served aboard the *USS Kearsarge* in 1957 as a member of Air Group VF-53.

THE FANTAIL

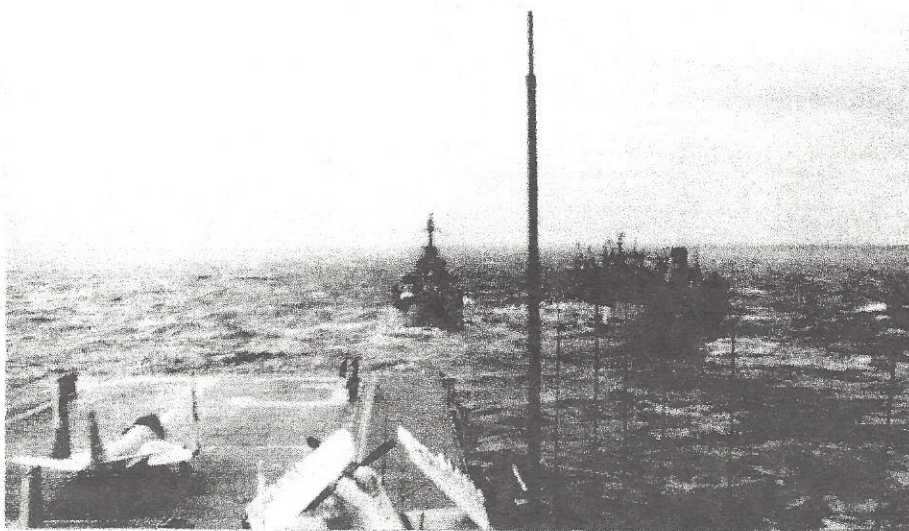
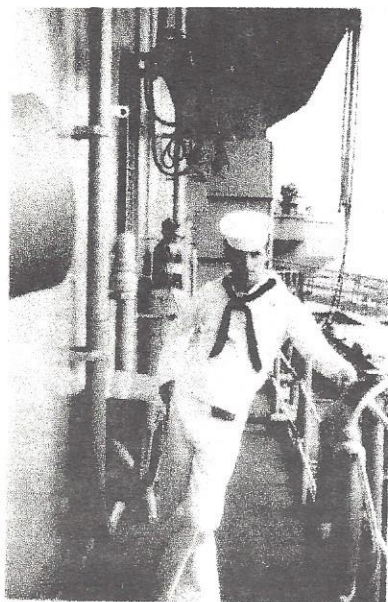
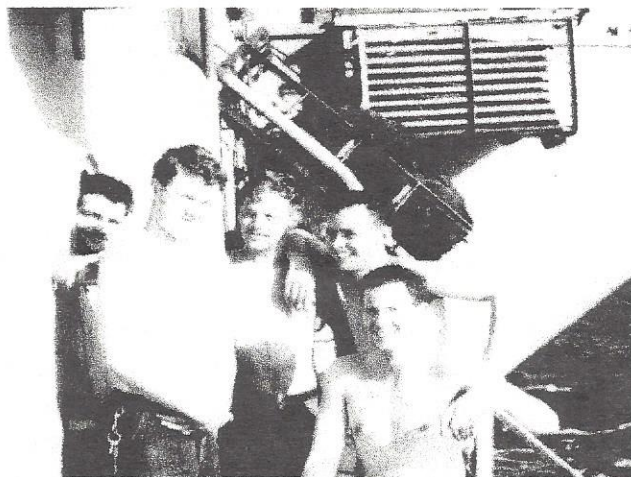
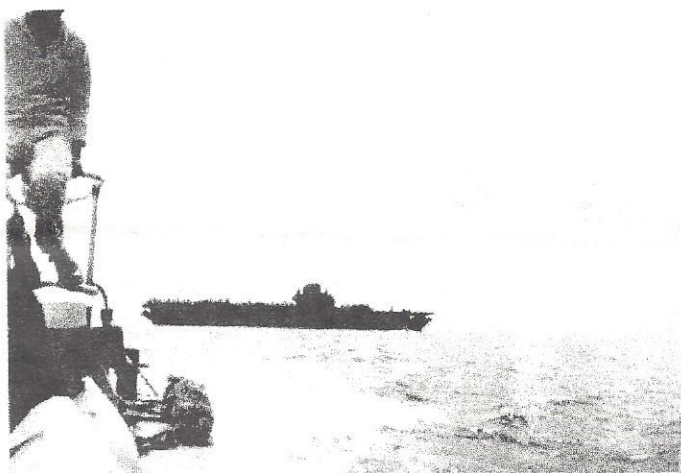
PICTURES SENT IN BY JOSEPH HOUSER WHO WAS IN R DIVISION 11/54 - 5/56

Top left - Heading for liberty at Manila Bay

Top right - Some R Division "Salts"

Bottom left - Joe getting ready to hit the beach, wonder where he's going

Bottom right - The USS Kearsarge in line to take on fuel



KEAR SAGA^{II}

The Newsletter of the Kearsarge Association

USS Kearsarge Association
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Columbus, Ohio 43228

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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 757-467-1668
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)