

KEARSAGA

USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

ISSUE 55

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

Summer 2015

“A FAMILY REUNION”


by John Starnes

A Family Reunion is a time to remember, a time to laugh, a time to celebrate ... a time to share old stories and make new memories.

A time to see each other and the faces all around us and find reflections of ourselves in the heart of both the young and old.

A reunion is a coming together that strengthens the bond of family and reminds us of the gift of belonging.

A chance to share our history; a reason to celebrate our past and a time to welcome our future as family.

This article recently appeared in the Starnes Association Newsletter. When I read it, I immediately thought of our association. It is so fitting! We are like a family! If this is not us I do not know what is. I hope this will mean as much to you as it does to me. 

Hey shipmate!
Yes you, you're invited to join us
at our reunion in San Antonio, TX.



Presidents Message

by John Starnes



I am submitting this letter for inclusion in this edition of the KEARSAGA early on and for good reason. My intention is to resign as president of our association at our next reunion which is, as you know, one year away. This should give everyone sufficient time to consider who they would prefer to be the next president and nominate and vote accordingly.

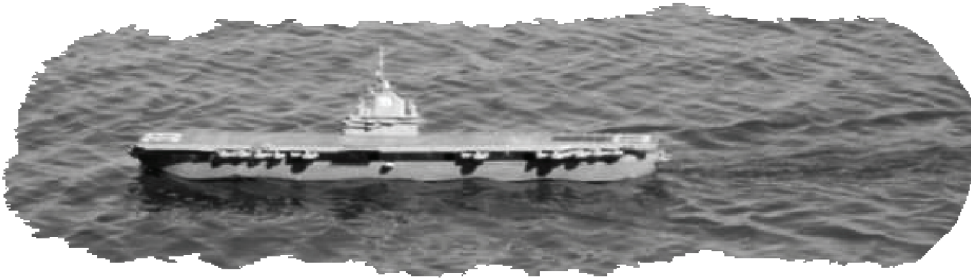
It has been a pleasure to serve the Kearsarge Association. I have renewed old acquaintances and made many new friends. The only reason I am stepping down is to provide an opportunity for Paula and I to hopefully enjoy a few reunions without the responsibility of organizing and running them.

Many years ago, when I was a Chief, and that was many years ago, I took an active interest in military leadership and history. I found a book on WW-1 and what the young officers and cadets were taught and it was pretty simple. They were taught to first take care of the horses and mules, secondly they were to take care of the troops and lastly themselves.

I translated that to taking care of the ship first, the men second and myself last if there were any remaining hours in the day!

In my most recent past as the VP and president of our association I again applied this principle. The association came first, the members second and myself last. I trust I did not let you down.

USS KEARSARGE RC MODEL



by Jim Kruger AO3 / AZC ret:

The model history started sometime in 1995 when a member of the association Cliff Weirick decided to build a model of the ship. Cliff was a retired AD1 who was one of the first AD's to work on jets. After he retired he became interested in mode airplanes the radio control type and the half scale model which he could actually fly.

During the San Diego reunion of 1996 Cliff placed the model in the hotel pool and former Commanding officer of the USS KEARSARGE (1962-63) Captain. Eugene Rankin conducted the commissioning of the model.

The model was then packed up and sent from reunion site to reunion site after which at some point it was severely damaged. I was approached by the association president Ed McKee at the Pensacola reunion about whether it could be repaired. I was skeptical because the photographs showed the hull in two pieces and the hangar deck and flight deck not much better.

If she could not be repaired she would be the second Kearsarge to be scrapped.

Some weeks later a huge

box about 6 foot long by 18 inches square arrived at my door. When I opened the box, looked inside and immediately closed it where it stayed for 18 months. With the 2014 reunion closing in on me I had to find a way to repair the model. Since I live in southern California I realized that we have the expertise to repair the ship. I took it to a local surf board shop (they work with fiberglass and foam) presented the challenge of repairing the grand old lady. They accepted the challenge and a week later asked me to pick the old girl up. Not only did they repair her they applied a new coat of paint.

I then began to repair the hangar and flight decks install the radio and test float it in a friends

pool where she went through a ORE test, which she passed with flying colors.

Meanwhile, conversations between myself and association President John Starnes about what to do with the ship once I have it completed. The decision was made to de-commission her in San Diego at the September 2014 reunion after which the hopes of donating her to a museum. A navy band was on hand during the ceremony. They played many patriotic songs and then the ship made one final run in the bay. The Kearsarge association members gathered by the shore as retired Lieutenant Commander John Starnes declared her de-commissioned. As of this writing I am working with the folks at the San Diego Veterans Museum who have expressed an interest in incorporating it with a display of a Battle Ship they are waiting to place on exhibit sometime this April 2015. I will update you when this takes place.



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MAIL CALL

Jeff Martin, RD2

Arroyo Grande, California

I entered the navy in Birmingham and was asked by my recruiter which boot training facility did I want to be sent. I asked him which one was the farthest from Birmingham and he told me it was San Diego, and San Diego was my destination.

After boot camp, I was sent to ET 'A' school at Treasure Island. I had not been in ET school long before I realized that I hated it and in my exit interview I remember requesting to be assigned to a ship and as luck would have it, one was available.

Kearsarge was docked on Coronado Island and was the largest man made object I had ever seen and she was intimidating. After a short time in limbo, I was assigned to OI (Operations Intelligence) Division and I began my on the job training, learning how to operate the equipment and then how to make sense out of the information the various units provided. We worked long hours at sea, port and starboard, four on four off. The "off" hours were shortened by eating, showering, GQ drills and personal necessities, so we were in sleep deprivation always. We were left alone in port, which was nice. As we all remember, crew quarters were unheated and not air conditioned. In the South China Sea, in summer, sleeping and even breathing was difficult.

In those days, San Diego downtown was a sea of white hats and Marine green. All night movies, Bennie's Pizza and Painless Nel's tattoo shop were the most often visited spots for liberty.

Fast forward to 1959 and my first WestPac cruise. I was excited and anxious to get going, damn, this is why I joined the navy. I was not disappointed by this visit to Asia or the second trip in 1961. We departed March 3, 1961 and returned September 18, 1961. Our stops at Pearl Harbor on the way over were always a hoot. On the last visit, after our obligatory stop at Ft. DeRussy on Waikiki, we rented a couple of scooters and a Jeep to haul our beer and headed out to visit the beaches. It was a lot of fun and innocent enough but we would be arrested and jailed in today's climate.

The ship had been an anti submarine carrier for some time in the early 60's and as such we were plugged into the ultra Top Secret system called SOSUS (sound surveillance system) which was a chain of underwater listening posts that gave us great info on Soviet sub movements. Those of us who knew about it never referred to it by name or concept to any other person. I never spoke the word or revealed the existence of SOSUS even to my wife, long after I left the navy. I was actually shocked when I saw the word in a newspaper after the secret was revealed to the Soviets by a traitor named Walker. Now we all know that our ship movements were certainly, much of

the time, not random. Some of you may recall the time we pulled into Long Beach and had been there long enough for me to make it to the gate where I was turned back to the ship. We got underway and headed for the Bay area where we chased a diesel Soviet sub for 19 days as I recall, maintaining contact for a lot of the time. I had picked up their very week radar sweeps at night a couple of times on the ECM unit which could not give range and only a crude direction but we at least we knew they were still within smelling distance.

Once, we were near enough to Red China for an air visit from an unidentified plane. I went to the ECM unit and picked up a signal which appeared to be fire control (we had a book which told who had what) on a Chinese fighter. The signal disappeared suddenly and I informed Chief Harris, who to my surprise and admiration, suggested that I check for a higher frequency. This meant that the pilot was lighting us up so he would be able to fire a missile at us, or as it turned out, he was just playing chicken.

Once when we were taking on provisions at sea from the refer ship Vega, I saw a high school buddy who I knew was aboard Vega and we shouted greetings and agreed to meet when both ships went to Kobe. We met there and had a party at "Charlie's Log Cabin" ...only in the navy.

Yes, I remember when we found the Russian Marines off, way off, Midway, on our return to conus. I wanted one of those belt buckles but the MarDet would not let me close enough to barter.

We lost a shipmate overboard on that 1961 cruise who happened to be a lookout assigned to OI Division. He fell over after a visit to check the side and running lights, which they did hourly. One of our guys, who was on the "porch" outside CIC, heard him screaming as he went by and called the "man overboard" to the bridge from CIC. We stayed in the area with our destroyers and all our air assets for four days without success but I felt good that our Captain gave it a hell of an effort.

Kearsarge went into the yards at Bremerton after we returned from the 1961 Far East cruise (that cruise book was a work of art and those who have one will agree) and we hoisted all the personal vehicles of those crew members who were not driving up and put them on the hanger deck for the trip. That was a nice touch and the 6 months we spent at Bremerton were memorable.


I close this little blast from the past with a note that you please say a prayer for the souls of shipmates we lost on that '61 cruise.

Lt. J W Findling VAW11, LtJg J R Arsenault VAW11, Sn L C Richards OI Div, Lt E R Baker HS6, LtJg M A Fox HS6, MM H L Nelson HS6, SO D D Hodges HS6

USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

Joseph Neary V4, AMS3

I sure do miss all the reunions and shipmates. I've been wrestling some issues with my health (service connected) and don't travel too far. But I am going to try my hardest to make the 2016 reunion in Texas.


There are about 4 shipmates living here in Florida and we keep in touch from time to time. So it gives me some touch of the past. I was in V-4 from '65 to 67', so I am a Golden Shellback. I swallowed a little too much AV gas, so I have issues, but still enjoy the memories and hope to make it next time. Your shipmate. 

William Waller, Jr. USN, Ret

I served aboard Kearsarge (CV-33) Jan-Dec 1952 and have many great memories of that tour.

In the fall of 1948, I was serving as an Ensign aboard a destroyer undergoing overhaul at Hunter's Point Naval shipyard when the Crane Ship Kearsarge (BB-5) arrived and tied up across the pier from us. The next day our ship's officers were offered a tour of the Crane Ship Kearsarge which most of us took.

I was the OOD on the 12-1600 watch the day the carrier Kearsarge was re-commissioned in Bremerton, Washington. As a result, I was awarded the privilege of 'Passing the Long Glass' at the commissioning of the fourth Kearsarge (LHD 3).

I was also OOD operating as a part of Task Force 77 off Korea when Kearsarge received notification that her designation had changed from CV-33 to CVA-33. 

Wayne E. Dempster, LT. USNR


Let me begin by offering my congratulations and appreciation to Mr. Starnes and yourself for "stepping up to the plate" to accept the responsibilities of running for office in the Kearsarge Association. Thanks to the men like the two of you, the Kearsarge Association will remain a long and lasting remembrance for the men who served aboard her.

I served aboard the "Mighty K" from 1952 to 1955 in the OI division. I was released from active duty in June 1955, but continued service in the Naval Reserve. Like so many other "G.I's" I should have stayed for 20 years, but we all make mistakes. Mine are many and often have had a great influence on my life, and usually not in my best interest. Since I am 84 years of age now, it is a little too late to make corrections.


Incidentally, I did know Paul Czesak. He served aboard the "K" the same time as I did. I was sorry to hear of his passing. Paul was always very serious and dedicated to his profession as a Naval Officer.

Perhaps it may be of interest to you that I have written a "yet to be published" book entitled "Up All Late

Sleepers." Since it describes the antics of my shipmates, fellow officers and myself, I hesitate having it published. I am sure you recall the wild and sometimes troublesome liberties that we all experienced. The U.S. Navy may not appreciate my disclosing those that could reflect poorly on the Navy and Naval personnel.


I have tried to maintain contact with a few of my shipboard friends, but time is taking its toll. My good friend and former shipmate, Robert E. Gray, apparently has passed away. I lost contact with him. I do correspond with and sometimes vacation with Henry Ingram. He was in the supply department. Unfortunately, he lives nearly 3000 miles from me in North Carolina, so we are seldom together. Thanks again for picking up the reins. 

Melba R. Edington


I really enjoy receiving the KEARSAGA and keeping in touch with the association. We really enjoyed going to so many places, and being with so many nice people. Take care. 

Sam Pignatiello

My wife took care of my dues in the past. She past away last June.


Hello to the ship's crew of 1952 to 1954. Never made it to any reunions. Have been kept up to date by my best friend, shipmate Stan Nanevicz, LtJg. He's probably attended more than 50% of the reunions with his wonderful wife. Thank you to all the folks who work on the publication 'KEARSAGA' and those who support the Association. Best to all. 

Phil Lerum


I was on the Kearsarge from 1952 to 1953 during the cruise to Korea. Hello to Ralph Arnold - Semper Fi. Great job to the new officers. 

Felix Manaia

I received a phone call from shipmate Wally Kline living in Genoa, Ohio. He was a shipmate that I met at a local grocery store with his Kearsarge cap on. I introduced myself and found out he was on the Kearsarge shakedown cruise at the same time I was on it in 1946.

He recently called me and saw in the last issue of the Kearsaga that my article about my experience on CV-33. I didn't do anything aboard the ship. I took my accordion with me and entertained all the shipmates and pilots on board the shakedown cruise. 


Ron Van De Steeg

Thanks a lot for all the good work all of you do on getting the KEARSAGA out. 


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Jack White

Just got my first issue of the KEARSAGA. Read every word. It was like being on the ship again. I told my wife I used to look forward to it coming out when we were in. I bet it is a lot of work to do and an expense to mail but, having a copy in my hand is like being aboard ship again. If it is a bother, you can send it to me e-mail but, the experience won't be the same. I loved it. Thanks for all the hard work you guys put into all of this. Thanks again, Jack 

Paul N. Raines, MR3

Paul has met a family whose son was lost on the USS Frank E. Evans. They have never gotten over the loss. If anyone has any information they can share it would be greatly appreciated. This may help the family get closure. Contact Paul call (770) 367-7215 or at rainespaul@bellsouth.net. 



Six of my Kearsarge (CVS-33) shipmates and I had a mini-reunion in Vegas, from April 6th through April 10th this month.


We found each other on 'NavyBuddies.com'. There are 12 in our group, eight agreed to meet and 5 brought their wives. Seven showed up, the eighth (Bill Bressler), unfortunately passed on March 21, just 2 two weeks before our event, so we missed him and his wife Carol.

We hadn't seen each other in 45 years. It was as though we were together the week before. Same mates, same laughs and even some of the same jokes.


We recalled stories, both good and bad. We showed a slide show on a laptop, showing how young and invulnerable we were at 22. Now, 68 year old gray, beer bellied 'salts'.

The wives melded, even though they had never met before.

We missed having our shipmate William 'Bill' Bressler. We all served in 'V4-Aviation Fuels Division' between '66 and '69. We did 3 'Far East' cruises on The Mighty 'K', during that period. Bill would have been able to tell us of the commissioning ceremony of the new Kearsarge (LHD-3). He had been invited and was able to attend. I purchased from a coin company in China, a

commemorative coin for each attendee and one for Carol Bressler. 

Doug Care RD2

Just wrote a check to join the association. Was glad to see Louise Esola's book AMERICAN BOYS advertised in the ships store. A Great book, I highly recommend it! I was a RD2 on watch 3 June 69 when the Frank E Evans and Melbourne collided. I'll never forget the Melbourne message that morning: "MELBOURNE has just collided with EVANS, envision many casualties, request all possible assistance." Thought it was a drill until I sensed Rear Admiral King standing behind me (in his bath robe and slippers) reading the message as I was writing down! I've also joined the Frank E Evans Association and attended their last reunion in Seattle. 

WEARING MILITARY MEDALS


by Calvin Lindley

Wearing military medals on civilian clothing. Retired Military Personnel as well as all Veterans are authorized to wear earned Military Medals/Ribbons on appropriate civilian clothing. This includes clothes designed for veteran and patriotic organizations on Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, and Armed Forces Day, as well as at formal occasions of ceremony and social functions of a military nature. You may wear either full-sized or miniature medals. If you wear medals on civilian clothes, you should place the medals on the clothing in approximately the same location and in the same manner as for the uniform.

The VA encourages you to wear your medals and decorations during Veterans Day (November 11th) and other patriotic holidays (such as Independence Day - July 4th, and Memorial Day - May 25th).

According to the VA, veterans don't need to wear their medals only if they're in a parade. "Wear them when you go play golf. Wear them when you go to the store. Let America know that you took that oath and served."


First, you should double-check to make sure that you're only wearing the decorations you've earned. They should be indicated on your DD-214. If you've lost your decorations or never received them, you may be entitled to a one-time free replacement of medals and decorations. You can also purchase replacement decorations on base at the Exchange Clothing Sales Stores. Also available at <http://www.medalsofamerica.com/>

Our Saturday night reunion banquet would be an appropriate event for medals or ribbons to be worn on civilian attire. 

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TAPS

Leo H. Keiffer

I regret to inform you of the passing of my father, CDR Leo H. Keiffer, on March 10th, 2015. Nancy Conrad 

Paul Clarence Peterson

It is with great sadness that I write to let you know that on Nov 8, 2013 my dear husband, Paul Clarence Peterson, entered Heaven. He served aboard the USS Kearsarge Dec. 1954 to Dec. 1956 where he made many life-long friends. Paul was a member of the Kearsarge Association from the time of its inception and enjoyed many of the ship's reunions.

As it has been more than a year since Paul's death, please forgive my delay in notifying the association.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of the newsletter that contains this information.

I send my warmest regards to you and all the members in carrying on with this important work.

Peggy Peterson 

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome Aboard!

Since May 2014

1431 Martin R. Sterrett	1965-1969
1432 Dale Maddy	1967-1970
1433 Kent Weiser	1959-1961
1434 Jeffery Martin	
1435 Bruce Nelson	1966-1969
1436 Ralph Arnold	
1437 Richard Kortcamp	1950-1954
1438 Dennis R. Limkemann	
1439 Allan S. Stollberg	1965-1969
1440 Philip G McDowell	1967-1969
1441 Barry Rittle	1965-1969
1442 John S. Hand	1968-1970
1443 Tommy L James	1952-1953
1444 Michael A. Douglas	1968-1969
1445 Thomas A. Gabianeli	1967-1968
1446 Michael C. Kelly	
1447 John R. White	1967-1969
1448 Ron V. Smith	1967-1968
1449 Doug Care	1967-1970
1450 Kenneth Abell	1969-1970
1451 Carroll A. Thomas	1969-1969


NIMITZ MUSEUM

by the John Starnes

We are in the final stages of planning for our reunion. We are so excited about the events. My favorite of all is a visit to the Nimitz Museum.



I would like to share some things about Admiral Nimitz with you. He was born in Fredericksburg, TX. His parents were in the Hotel business and one of his duties was to stoke the fire on a cold winter's night. Army Officers were frequent guests and he admired the way they dressed, looked and spoke. Upon a day he attempted to apply for acceptance at the US Military Academy also known as West Point. All of the openings had been filled! He was told that the Naval Academy had a few openings. Not knowing what it was or where, he applied and was accepted. Thank goodness.


On December the 7th, 1941 he and his wife were attending a concert in Washington, DC and he was summoned to the phone. Pearl Harbor had been attacked by Japan and he was told to report to Pearl Harbor without delay. When he arrived, in typical Nimitz fashion, despite the devastation he looked for the good things and found them. The ship repair facility including the dry docks were not damaged. Ships damaged there were repaired there. Otherwise, they would have been towed back to the States for repair. The fuel farm was all but undamaged. Had it been wiped out that would have been a huge loss. The air traffic control tower was damaged but useable as were the taxiways and runways. In fact aircraft took off from and landed there that very day. 

THE NAVY CORPSMAN

By Robert Cowan

What is a Navy Corpsman, many people ask?

USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

Well, I've decided to enlighten you; I've taken on the task. A Corpsman is a strange fellow; I'll tell you what I mean. He joined the U.S. Navy but he's more like a Marine. When Marines are asked to go to war to fight and maybe die. They have their "Doctor" with them; he's their "go to" guy. A special breed of sailors that Marines do call their own. His job is taking care of them so they can go back home. When the shooting starts and bullets fly and men all hit the dirt. The corpsman looks around to see if anyone's been hurt. He hears a feeble voice cry. "Doc, I'm over here". The corpsman rushes forward, his mission crystal clear. He finds a wounded comrade, a Marine that has been shot. The corpsman working swiftly, giving all he's got. The young Marine whispers weakly, "Doc, will I die today?". "Not a chance", the corpsman replies, "if I have my way". The young Marine did survive to fight another day. On a miserable far off battlefield, a sailor saved his life. He'd soon be going home again to his children and his wife. So, if you ever meet a Corpsman say a silent prayer. For there are many Marines alive today who are glad that he was there. There's no way of telling just how much he's done and seen. As I said, he's in the Navy but he's more like a Marine. 

SHIPS STORE

Golf Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Navy or White - Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$29.00

Sweat Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Navy or White - Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$36.00

Dress Shirts



CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Short sleeve - Navy only - Med, large, W-large, 2x large - \$29.00

Hats



CV CVA CVS 33 - Navy - \$14.00



Marine - Red - \$14.00

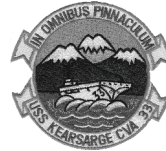


LHD 3 - Navy - \$7.00



Watch Cap

Navy - CV, CVA, CVS 33 - \$11.00



Cloth - CV, CVA, CVS 33 - \$5.00



Magnetic - CV, CVA, CVS 33 - \$2.50



Chrome - LHD 3 - \$15.00



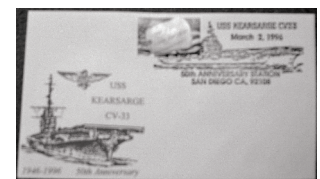
Brass - LHD 3 Ships crest - \$15.00

Dawn of Glory



Print - LHD 3 with inserts of previous ships - \$20.00

50th Anniversary



1st Day Cover Envelope - \$1.50

Jackets



The Port Authority Challenger jacket has a Tekon nylon durable, water repellent outside with a poly-filled body with heavyweight fleece lining. It has rib knit cuffs and waistband, zippered pockets outside a zippered inside pocket. We are offering it in Navy with a Navy lining with USS KEARSARGE, CV,CVA, CVS and the ships silhouette on the back.

Small, medium, large and 1X large for \$57.00
2X large for \$61.00 - 3X large for \$65.00



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

Small, medium, large and 1X large for \$53.00
2X large for \$55.00 - 3X large for \$57.00

They are a Special order item only and all sales are final. When I have 6 orders I will place the order with the supplier. We need a minimum of 6 to be eligible for the above mentioned prices.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING AND HANDLING
Make checks payable to the Kearsarge Association and send order to:
Charles Patton
9125 Live Oak Ave
Ocean springs, MS 39564
(228) 875-7572
charlotteap@bellsouth.net

KEARSAGA

USS Kearsarge Association Newsletter

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Annual membership dues are \$15.00
Check payable to the: KEARSARGE ASSOCIATION
Mail to: Bill Hollywood

New members, send your information to include:
Name, address, phone number, E-mail address,
rate/rank, division, and years aboard.

If you are interested in receiving your Kearsaga via E-mail go to our web page and leave a message stating "Send KEARSAGA via E-mail". For those who do not have a computer we will continue sending via U. S. Postal service.

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Honorary President Kenneth McDaniel (*Deceased*) Association Founder
