

USS McKEAN

DD 784 * DDR 784

S C U T T L E B U T T

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USS McKEAN DD/DDR 784

REUNION ASSOCIATION

(Submitted by Don Kessler, Chairman)

Our 2004 Reunion is now a fond memory. Those shipmates that couldn't make it to San Diego, CA this past October missed a good one. I won't be summarizing the reunion here as the 2004 Reunion Chairman, Dick Shaw, will be doing that either in this newsletter or the one coming out during the first quarter of 2005. I do want to cover a couple of items that were decided during the business meeting held on the final day of the reunion.

If you haven't already heard, I am passing the mantle of association chairmanship after serving for the past four years. I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to serve as your association chairman. I have enjoyed working with all of you. In particular there is one person who I would like to publicly thank. Everyone knows her, but I'm not sure everyone fully appreciates the things she does for the association. I'm talking about Donna Gardner who has been publishing the newsletter, maintaining our website, and putting together all the name tags/reunion materials for the past four years. Prior to my stepping down I wish I could award her a medal, but the best I can do is give her a well-deserved "Bravo Zulu" (USN speak for Job Well Done).

We have a shipmate that stepped forward during the meeting and is now our new association chairman. His name is Charles (Chuck) Horvath. I had the honor of serving with Chuck aboard the McKean for three and one-half years from 1957 through 1961. We were then and have remained friends ever since. I am sure Chuck will take our association in new and improved directions. Chuck can be contacted by telephoning (909) 861-3761 or emailing him at taxshop1@aol.com. His mailing address is 1309 Baft Lane., Diamond Bar, CA 91765.

What's in my future, I will be staying on as your Treasurer for at least the next year. If you are not aware, our previous Treasurer, Joe Hebert under went heart surgery just before this last reunion. The last contact I had, he was doing well and looking forward to attending our next scheduled reunion. Joe also deserves a "Bravo Zulu" for his three years as our association's Treasurer.

Before closing our business meeting and everyone heading for home, the membership voted to hold our fifth reunion during September 2005 in the Buffalo, NY area. Bob Tokarczyk agreed to take on the responsibility of the reunion chairmanship. The exact location and dates will be forthcoming as soon as Bob and Chuck can tie the details down.

Well, as my final official act, let me remind everyone of the following:

***ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$25.00**
(PAYABLE EACH JANUARY)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:
USS MCKEAN REUNION ASSOCIATION

MAIL CHECK TO:
CHARLES HORVATH
1309 S. BAFT LANE
DIAMOND BAR, CA 91765

I STAND RELIEVED, SIR!

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN
(Submitted by Chuck Horvath)

It is a great honor for me to accept the chairmanship of this well organized and successful association. My wife Sandra and I have attended the last three reunions and I now understand what it is that compels you to attend

every future reunion that you can. We look forward to seeing old friends as well as making new ones. When you are aboard a ship, whether you accept it or not, your shipmates become your family. When you attend a ship's reunion, it just extends this family and enriches your life.

As association does not run itself. It is like a ship that has an objective and needs to be kept on course. I want to express the membership's appreciation to Don Kessler, our previous chairman, who has accomplished this task with efficiency and excellence. I intend to continue this fine tradition.

I am pleased with our 2995 team. Donna Gardner, who will continue to publish the Scuttlebutt as well as other tasks. Thanks Donna for your fine work. Our reunion Chairman, Bob Tokarczyk, who is already well down the road in setting up a really great reunion in the Buffalo, New York area. Great effort, Bob! And Don Kessler who continues to stay active in our association as our Treasurer.

Our reunion will be held on the 60th anniversary of the USS McKean's commissioning. **YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS THIS REUNION!** If you want to help Bob in some way now or in Buffalo contact him by e-mail at bobtoke3830@sbcglobal.net.

Again I want to thank everyone, past and present, who makes the association continue to function.

2004 REUNION

There will be a full recap in the first 2005 newsletter of the reunion just past. From all accounts, it was a great success and everyone had a great time.

THE CHRISTMAS MENU *(part fact/part fiction by Dave Hood)*

The chances are that you are reading this in a den; someplace that you have labeled, "The computer room." If that is the case, pause for a moment and look around that room. What do you see? In the room where I am writing this I can see three framed pictures- one of me while I was in the National Guard; one of Elaine and two of our dear friends in Cozumel, Oscar and

Noemi; and an ocean print from Hawaii. Behind me are bookshelves. Some of the books are in a pile awaiting the opportunity for me to read them. Most of them I have read and because I have kept them I have told myself that I will read them again. (It's doubtful that that will ever happen.) Alongside my computer monitor are coffee cups- two from Nuclear Weapons Training Group Pacific; one from Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare; a generic USN mug that my Precinct commander gave me (it was his late father's); one from the KGB (a long story) and one from the kitchen still half-full with this morning's cold coffee. Off to my right are two de-milled (I hope) naval 5"/38 caliber projectiles. To my left are journals and notebooks. My naval journal has been my standard reference source for most of my "sea stories." On my left and a little behind me is a framed photo of a USN warship. The number painted on her bow is "784".

All of these items are, to me, priceless and irreplaceable. If the house were to catch fire I would save Elaine first, the pets next, then the journals and then I would rescue my gun safes.

They are important to me. They are probably meaningless to whoever will divide up my estate once I am gone. The guns, knives, tools, cameras and electronics have real value. They can be appraised, sold, traded, auctioned or donated. The "memorabilia" has meaning only to me and, hopefully, to those that I have shared their history with.

Most of us this reading this are at an age where our parents have passed. Think about the items that were in their home. What happened to it all? Their 20 year-old TVs and stereos may have been donated to the Salvation Army. Their furniture sold at an estate sale. The books were taken to used book stores, their saved magazines simply thrown away. What happened to their photo albums; their scrap books; the "treasures" tucked away in a drawer? Why is that while

most get thrown away, a few managed to get saved?

Quite often I will log into EBay and search for items pertaining to the ship I sailed almost a quarter of a century ago, the U.S.S. McKEAN DD-784. I have located photos, patches and postcards. Last year I stumbled across the most curious of items, a U.S.S. McKEAN DD-784 CHRISTMAS MENU from 1951.

The seller's description for it read:

"The menu cover is a very colorful red and green, printed on a textured paper. It opens to show the entire menu for December 25, 1951. It also shows a photograph of the ship, along with a list of the commanding officer (J.C. Weatherwax), the Executive Officer (Lt. Commander R. W. Frieden), and the Supply & Commissary Officer (Ensign J. J. Angner). The menu was made to be mailed: the back has the "TO" and "FROM" spaces, with a place for a stamp. (It was not mailed, but written To: "Mom and Dad" From: "Chuck Young.")

The menu is in wonderful condition: It's been folded in half, and there's a tack hole in the upper right corner (when it's open) where proud Mom and Dad probably pinned it to a bulletin board. Also, a 1-inch strip has been cut off the bottom of the opened menu, but this doesn't affect this wonderful item. Size (folded): 5" x 7 1/4"

There was one bidder for it. I contacted the bidder via email and asked if he was a McKEAN sailor. I mentioned how I had sailed the McKEAN from 1976~1980 and I had a small collection of McKEAN memorabilia. The bidder, Kathy Norton, told me that she had no personal connection with my ship. She was going to remodel her kitchen in a 1950s-1960s motif and her intention was to frame the menu and display it in her new kitchen. It was the date and the Christmas theme that had attracted her to

it. She said that she would cease bidding on it and hope that I acquired it.

I then contacted the seller, Annette Reynolds. I asked her if anyone in her family had a connection to the McKEAN. She said she bought the menu at a garage sale in Tacoma, Washington. The sellers at one time operated a collectable shop and were simply disposing of unsold inventory. The menu was in an envelope of miscellaneous stuff and while she had no interest in it, she thought it too unique to simply throw it away.

I submitted the winning bid and won it for the sum of \$8.00. I received the menu about a week later. The envelope was simply addressed to "Mom." The return address only said, "Chuck Young" but a different hand, using a different pen, had added "in Navy."

Now I needed to locate my former shipmate Chuck Young. I first went to the TIN CAN SAILOR website and checked the "Shipmate Registry." Nothing. I looked at the McKEAN's reunion website and again found nothing. There was no Chuck Young with HULLNUMBER or DESTROYERS ON LINE.

I emailed my buddy Verner Newman. Verner was a Gunnery Yeoman on the McKEAN during that timeframe. I told him of my acquiring this 1951 menu and of the name "Chuck Young." Verner remembered that Christmas very well.

"It was right after the incident with the Russian submarine. We were out at sea then. We were stationed out of Sasebo but we had to get underway on the 24th because of a typhoon. We had planned on a really nice Christmas celebration in port but it just didn't work out that way. We had to get to sea to get away from the storm. We sailed south as fast as we could but on Christmas morning it hit us hard. 45-degree rolls were common and we even did a few 65-degree rolls and once I know we did a 75-degree. We weren't supposed to recover from

ones that big. We lost our starboard depth charge rack and they blew up when they hit their pre-set depth. Scared the crap out of me when all of those ash cans went off unexpectedly right in the middle of that storm. I remember being in After Steering and the noise those propellers made when the stern lifted out of the water made me think that those blades were going to come off and come slicing right through the hull. Funny thing was that by noon we had reached the south edge of the typhoon and the seas calmed down for us. Except for the depth charge rack, a few missing lifelines and a little water in the XO's stateroom there wasn't much damage. The cooks were able to make up their Christmas supper just like they planned, just a couple of hours late. Some of the crew was still seasick but I remember how good the chow was and how hungry I was that night. Damn that was good."

I asked Verner, again, about Chuck Young.

"I can't say I remember that name. There were 350 of us onboard then. It's been over 50 years. I can't remember them all. Was he an officer or enlisted?"

I told Verner I didn't know but I was going to guess at Chuck Young being enlisted. The scrawl on the envelope suggested someone with a rudimentary education. Verner said that he would check around and if he found out anything he would get back to me.

A few weeks later I got an email from Verner with the subject matter "CHUCK YOUNG." Verner told me that he was talking to another McKEAN sailor, a Torpedoman that Verner steamed with and with whom Verner has stayed in touch with all of these decades. Verner said that he recalled the name "Chuck Young" as a Seaman 2nd or 1st, assigned to the Deck Division. He remembered the name because the McKEAN was built in Seattle, Washington and Chuck Young would tell anyone who would listen that he came from Tacoma, Washington. Other than that Young was supposed to be "a

real jerk" Verner's buddy couldn't remember much more about him and had no idea what became of him. Verner added that maybe he did recall him now but he could have sworn that Young was an Electrician.

It was no wonder I had such a hard time locating Chuck Young. I was so fixated looking at the problem that I had failed to notice the solution. The menu was discovered at a garage sale in Tacoma. I should have started my search there. In the Tacoma-Pierce County I found about fifty Youngs. There were three Charles Youngs. I started calling them telling the person who answered that I was trying to locate a "Chuck Young" who was in the Navy during the Korean War. I scored with the third one.

"My name is Charles Young and you might be talking about my dad."

Charles verified that his dad was a Bosn' Mate on a destroyer but that he didn't know the name of his dad's ship. I told him that he and I have to meet. We agreed on STANLEY AND SEAFORT'S STEAK AND CHOP HOUSE up on the hill overlooking the Tacoma waterfront the following Saturday.

He was waiting for me when I got there. He was just a few years younger than me. His 14 year-old son James had come along. Charles was a likeable guy. He never joined the military. He is Pediatrician at MARY BRIDGE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL in Tacoma. He grew up in Tacoma and still lives in the home that his dad built. He inherited it when his parents died. He lost his dad in 1992 and his mom in 1994. James was a neat kid who had no memories of his grandfather and could only vaguely recall his grandmother.

I showed them my U.S.S. McKEAN photo album. Most of the pictures in it were taken during my time aboard her, from 1976~1980. I explained if Chuck could see these pictures it's doubtful if he would have recognized his ship.

In the early 1960's, the McKEAN, and dozens of other destroyers of her class, was extensively modernized. That program, called FRAM – Fleet Rehabilitation And Modernization – had added an additional 20 years to their lifespan. The first of the class saw combat in the Pacific theater of World War II and they served America until the last was one decommissioned in 1983. Many were sold to foreign navies. Korea, Turkey and Greece retired their last ones in 2000 and it's possible that two are still serving with Mexico.

While Charles and James found the ship photos curious, they were most interested in my pictures of the crew. "Is that you?" they kept asking? "How old were you when this picture was taken?" If the picture was taken when I was a Third Class Petty Officer I would have been 19 or 20 years old. If I was a Second Class Petty Officer I would have been 21 to 23 years old. James wanted to know what being a Third Class or Second Class Petty Officer meant. I compared it to the Army where Seamen would be Privates, a Third Class Petty Officer the same as a Corporal and a Second Class Petty Officer was a Sergeant. I asked Charles what his dad's rank was and he admitted that he really didn't know.

Charles told me that his dad told him that he grew up in what we would now call a "Trailer Trash" family. While Chuck's mom was a saint, Chuck's dad was an indifferent "functional alcoholic." The dad worked 50 hours a week at the local paper mill and when his shift was over he would head to the corner bar and stay there until closing time. He would stagger home and go straight to bed. Charles said that Chuck once told him that he only saw his dad awake on Sunday mornings. By Sunday afternoon the dad was back in the bar and Chuck wouldn't see him for another six and a half days. When Chuck was 15 his dad drank himself to death. Within a year the mom lost the house and she and the three children (there were two older sisters) moved in with an aunt in Lakewood.

When Chuck was 16 the Korean War was in full swing and Chuck dropped out of high school and joined the navy. (Charles's aunts had told him that Chuck had gotten into trouble with the police and the judge told Chuck that his choice was the service or Juvenile Hall.) After boot camp he was sent to Japan and was assigned to a destroyer.

Charles said that his dad once confided that when he reported aboard the ship he had a real bad attitude. He had no education and no skills. He was told to "chase rust and chip paint" from dawn to dusk and while he was never busted he was constantly butting heads with his superiors. He had no friends and whenever he was granted liberty he was in the Japanese bars spending all of his money on drinking.

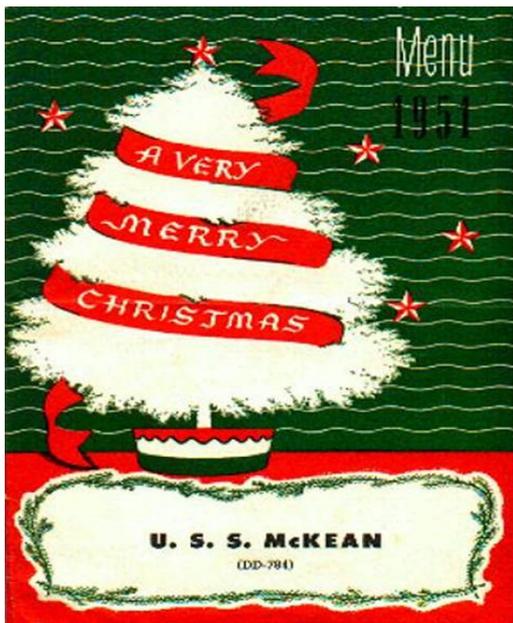
Chuck told his son that what changed him was a storm at sea. One Christmas there was a huge typhoon and the ship was in danger of sinking. Chuck realized that the ship was saved, and no lives were lost, because all the crew worked together. They performed above and beyond their level of training and came through that experience with minimal damage. Charles remembers his dad using words like, "Valiant" and "Heroes" and "Supermen." Chuck told his son that by noon on that Christmas day the storm was over and by nightfall the ship's cooks, with the help from some off-duty volunteers, had produced a magnificent Christmas dinner.

Chuck requested a transfer from being a Bosn' Mate and wanted to become an Electrician. His request was approved and he worked hard learning everything he could about his new rating. He finished out his four-year enlistment, returned to Tacoma and became an apprentice electrician for the school district. He soon got his license and became an Electrical Contractor. He was able to build and own his home and pay for Charles to go to medical school at the University of Washington. Charles interned at JOHN HOPKINS in Baltimore and was able to

get a residency at MARY BRIDGE to be near his dad and mom.

I showed them the 1951 menu. Charles had never seen it before. Charles recognized the handwriting on the envelope. The “Chuck Young” written in the return address was his dad’s writing and the “In Navy” on the front was his grandmother’s. I explained that it ended up on EBay after a lady bought it at a Tacoma yard sale. Charles speculated that when his mom died the family held a garage sale to get rid of boxes and boxes of stuff like pots and pans and old tools and miscellaneous household items. That menu must have been tucked away in there. If they had known that it had existed they wouldn’t have parted with it.

It was getting late and I had a long drive home. Charles picked up the tab. I gave James the menu. I hope he appreciates just how much it meant to his grandfather. Let’s hope that in about 70 more years James’s heirs will recognize the importance of the menu.



(front of menu)



(inside of menu)

McNuggets of news

John Price reports that he was unable to attend this reunion but hopes to attend the next one!

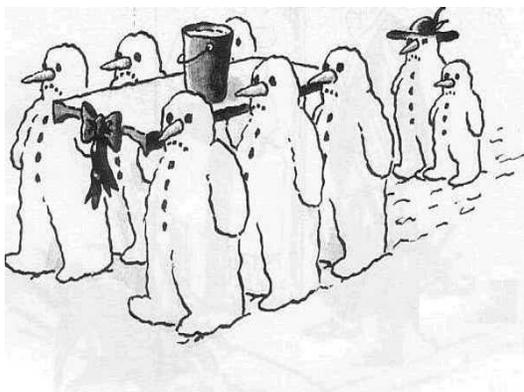
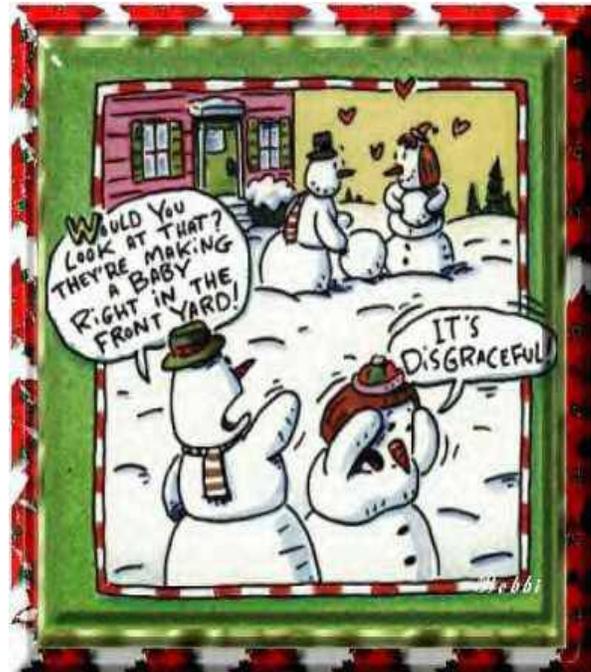
MacRib Ticklers 😊

Living in 2005

You know you're living in 2005 when...

1. You accidentally enter your password on the microwave.
2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.
3. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of 3.
4. You e-mail the person who works at the desk next to you.
5. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses.

6. You go home after a long day at work and you still answer the phone in a business manner.
7. You make phone calls from home, and you automatically dial "9" to get an outside line.
8. You've sat at the same desk for four years and worked for three different companies.
10. You learn about your redundancy on the 11 o'clock news.
11. Your boss doesn't have the ability to do your job.
12. You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.
13. Every commercial on television has a website at the bottom of the screen.
14. Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.
15. You get up in the morning and go online before getting your coffee.
16. You start tilting your head sideways to smile :)
17. You're reading this and nodding and laughing.
18. Even worse, you know exactly to whom you are going to forward this message.
19. You are too busy to notice there was no #9 on this list.
20. You actually scrolled back up to check that there wasn't a #9 on this list.



Snowman Funeral

Hope your holidays are great and the New Year brings surprise and adventure into your life!