

# USS McKean DD 784 / DDR 784 SCUTTLEBUTT

July, 2012

Newsletter Contact: 1994 Thomas Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577, 510.351.5426  
email: joe.winkel@comcast.net website: <http://www.ussmckeanreunion.org/>



(J'aibon Esperance)  
"I Have Great Expectations"

**The next USS McKean reunion will be held Fri., Septmber 20 through Sun.,  
September 22, 2013 in Portland, Oregon.**

## **The 2013 Reunion Will Be A Smashing Success**

The hunt for a hotel for our 2013 reunion and negotiations have been completed. Our reunion will be held at the Red Lion Hotel (On The River), Jantzen Beach, Portland, OR.

Our rates are:

\$99 per night for single and double occupancy  
\$109 per night for triple occupancy  
\$119 per night for quadruple occupancy

Your reservations can be made by calling call the hotel directly at 503-283-4466 or the Red Lion central reservations number at 800-RED-LION. Request the USS McKean Reunion rate. Our rates have been guaranteed for up to 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion dates for those of you who may want to come early or stay longer.

Our block of rooms will be held for us through 8/23/2013. After that day, you will still be able to get our reunion room rate, BUT ONLY if there are rooms available.

The hotel imposes an EARLY DEPARTURE FEE. In the event you check out prior to your reserved checkout date, the hotel will add an early checkout

fee of \$50.00 to your account. You can avoid an early checkout fee by advising the hotel at or before check-in of any change in planned length of stay. You will be reminded of this fee by the hotel upon check-in.

The reunion registration fee has not been determined, yet. It will be published as soon we finish working out the group activities for Saturday. The fee will be announced in a future Scuttlebutts.

---

**SHIPMATE CONTRIBUTIONS**  
**Contributed by Rosie Cushing for Hal Cushing,  
BT3/C, 1951-1955.**

I'm a Sailor

I liked standing on deck at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe.

I liked the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the Boatswain's pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, harsh, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I liked Navy vessels -- plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphibs, sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers. I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge. All memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome.

I liked the lean angular names of Navy "tin-cans" and escorts, mementos of heroes who went before us. And the others -- San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Chicago, Oklahoma City, named for our cities.

I liked liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even liked the all hands working parties as my ship filled herself with a multitude of supplies, needed to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

I liked Sailors - Officers, Chiefs, & other Enlisted Men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the big cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me -- for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were "shipmates"; then and forever.

I liked the surge of adventure when the word was passed: "Now Hear This" "Now station the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port," and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier side. The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea was ever present.

I liked the fierce and dangerous activity on the flight deck of the aircraft carriers, earlier named for battles won but sadly now named for politicians. Enterprise, Independence, Boxer, Princeton and oh so many more, some lost in battle, and sadly many scrapped.

I liked the names of the aircraft and helicopters; Skyraider, Intruder, Sea King, Phantom, Guardian, Demon, Skywarrior, Tracker, and many more that bring to mind offensive and defensive orders of

battle. I liked the excitement of an alongside replenishment as my ship slid in alongside the oiler and the cry of "Standby to receive shotlines" prefaced the hard work of rigging spanwires and fuel hoses across the narrow gap of water between the ships and welcomed the mail and fresh milk, fruit and vegetables that sometimes accompanied the fuel.

I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead.

And I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

I liked quiet mid-watches with the aroma of strong coffee -- the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere. And I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

I liked the sudden electricity of "General quarters, all hands man your battle stations," followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war.

And I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night.

I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men and now women who made them.

I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones and Burke. A sailor could find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, we still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods - the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and mess decks.

Gone ashore for good, we grow humble about our Navy days, when the seas were a part of us and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, I stand taller and say,

I'm a Sailor!

John "Bos'n" Harrison

---

### **Contributed by Morris Ramsey, PN1, 1965-1968**

This article is attributed to: Mike McCaffrey,  
Admiral (retired USN)

Never forget this, a Chief can become an Officer, but an Officer can never become a Chief. Chiefs have their standards!

Recollections of a Whitehat.

"One thing we weren't aware of at the time, but became evident as life wore on, was that we learned true leadership from the finest examples any lad was ever given, Chief Petty Officers. They were crusty old bastards who had done it all and had been forged into men who had been time tested over more years than a lot of us had time on the planet. The ones I remember wore hydraulic oil stained hats with scratched and dinged-up insignia, faded shirts, some with a Bull Durham tag dangling out of their right-hand pocket or a pipe and tobacco reloads in a worn leather pouch in their hip pockets, and a Zippo that had been everywhere. Some of them came with tattoos on their forearms that would force them to keep their cuffs buttoned at a Methodist picnic.

Most of them were as tough as a boarding house steak. A quality required to survive the life they

lived. They were, and always will be, a breed apart from all other residents of Mother Earth. They took eighteen year old idiots and hammered the stupid bastards into sailors.

You knew instinctively it had to be hell on earth to have been born a Chief's kid. God should have given all sons born to Chiefs a return option.

A Chief didn't have to command respect. He got it because there was nothing else you could give them. They were God's designated hitters on earth.

We had Chiefs with fully loaded Submarine Combat Patrol Pins, and combat air crew wings in my day...hard -core bastards who remembered lost mates, and still cursed the cause of their loss...and they were expert at choosing descriptive adjectives and nouns, none of which their mothers would have endorsed.

At the rare times you saw a Chief topside in dress canvas, you saw rows of hard-earned, worn and faded ribbons over his pocket. "Hey Chief, what's that one and that one?" "Oh hell kid, I can't remember. There was a war on. They gave them to us to keep track of the campaigns." "We didn't get a lot of news out where we were. To be honest, we just took their word for it. Hell son, you couldn't pronounce most of the names of the places we went. They're all depth charge survival geedunk." "Listen kid, ribbons don't make you a Sailor." We knew who the heroes were, and in the final analysis that's all that matters.

Many nights, we sat in the after mess deck wrapping ourselves around cups of coffee and listening to their stories. They were light-hearted stories about warm beer shared with their running mates in corrugated metal sheds at resupply depots where the only furniture was a few packing crates and a couple of Coleman lamps. Standing in line at a Honolulu cathouse or spending three hours soaking in a tub in Freemantle, smoking cigars, and getting loaded. It was our history. And we dreamed of being just like them because they were our heroes. When they accepted you as their shipmate, it was the highest honor you would ever receive in your life. At least it was clearly that for me. They were not men given to the prerogatives of their position. You would find them with their sleeves rolled up, shoulder-to-shoulder

with you in a stores loading party. "Hey Chief, no need for you to be out here tossin' crates in the rain, we can get all this crap aboard."

"Son, the term 'All hands' means all hands."

"Yeah Chief, but you're no damn kid anymore, you old coot."

"Horsefly, when I'm eighty-five parked in the stove up old bastards' home, I'll still be able to kick your worthless butt from here to fifty feet past the screw guards along with six of your closest friends." And he probably wasn't bullshitting.

They trained us. Not only us, but hundreds more just like us. If it wasn't for Chief Petty Officers, there wouldn't be any U.S. Navy. There wasn't any fairy godmother who lived in a hollow tree in the enchanted forest who could wave her magic wand and create a Chief Petty Officer.

They were born as hot-sacking seamen, and matured like good whiskey in steel hulls over many years. Nothing a nineteen year-old jay-bird could cook up was original to these old saltwater owls. They had seen E-3 jerks come and go for so many years; they could read you like a book. "Son, I know what you are thinking. Just one word of advice. DON'T. It won't be worth it."

"Aye, Chief."

Chiefs aren't the kind of guys you thank. Monkeys at the zoo don't spend a lot of time thanking the guy who makes them do tricks for peanuts.

Appreciation of what they did, and who they were, comes with long distance retrospect. No young lad takes time to recognize the worth of his leadership. That comes later when you have experienced poor leadership or let's say, when you have the maturity to recognize what leaders should be, you find that Chiefs are the standard by which you measure all others.

They had no Academy rings to get scratched up. They butchered the King's English. They had become educated at the other end of an anchor chain from Copenhagen to Singapore . They had given their entire lives to the U.S. Navy. In the progression of the nobility of employment, Chief Petty Officer heads the list. So, when we

ultimately get our final duty station assignments and we get to wherever the big Chief of Naval Operations in the sky as signs us, if we are lucky, Marines will be guarding the streets, and there will be an old Chief in an oil-stained hat and a cigar stub clenched in his teeth standing at the brow to assign us our bunks and tell us where to stow our gear... and we will all be young again, and the damn coffee will float a rock.

Life fixes it so that by the time a stupid kid grows old enough and smart enough to recognize who he should have thanked along the way, he no longer can. If I could, I would thank my old Chiefs. If you only knew what you succeeded in pounding in this thick skull, you would be amazed. So, thanks you old casehardened unsalvageable son-of-a-bitches. Save me a rack in the berthing compartment."

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain.

---

## **REUNION ASSOCIATION BUSINESS**

### ***2012 MEMBERSHIP DUES NOTICE***

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES OF \$25 ARE DUE EACH JANUARY.**

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:**

**USS McKean REUNION ASSOCIATION  
NOT TO CHUCK HORVATH**

**MAIL CHECK TO:  
CHUCK HORVATH**

**NOT TO "USS McKean Reunion Association"  
P.O. Box 509  
Nevada, MO 64772**

---

### **PLEASE UPDATE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS**

Email addresses change often. You can check to see what email address we have for you on the Crew's List at our Web site:  
<http://www.ussmckeanreunion.org/>

If yours has changed, notify me:  
[joe.winkel@comcast.net](mailto:joe.winkel@comcast.net).

---

### **SHIPMATE'S SCRAPBOOK**

Over the years, some of our shipmates have completed and sent a scrapbook page for our reunion scrapbook. This scrapbook is available at each of our reunions and is a huge success. If you have not sent one (or would like to update yours), do so using the last page of this Scuttlebutt.

Please complete and send your page as soon as possible so we have it for the reunion in 2013. Use the mailing information on the page, below.

---

### **SHIPMATE PHOTOS AND STORIES**

I am often contacted by shipmates and family members of shipmates requesting photos and / or stories of McKean sailors. Therefore, I am seeking additional photos and shipboard stories to be added to our web site. If you would like to contribute any photos or stories we will post them to the web site. Send anything you care to send to my mailing address or email address at the top of this newsletter. You can also fax the information to me at eFax: (267) 224-6744. BE AWARE that the quality of faxed photos will not be as good as those mailed or emailed when added to the web site.

Please provide the names of as many people in the photos as you can and the month and year. At a minimum, identify the year or guess at it.

I can not return any materials you send to me.

