

USS RANKIN NEWS

ISSUE #10 • THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USS RANKIN ASSOCIATION • JUNE 2008



AKA-103

1945-1947

1952-1968

LKA-103

1969-1971

GOLD E

1960-1961

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

Our annual fund drive is going well so far, but the story is far from over. Though we have plenty of money set aside for emergencies, we still need more cash to get us through 2008.

As you know, we don't have annual dues or initiation fees, so we rely on voluntary contributions from shipmates and friends. Most people who send money send \$25, and this year's contributions have ranged from \$5 to \$500. If your contribution is among them, we thank you for your continuing support.

If you *haven't yet* sent us your 2008 contribution, just use the envelope enclosed with this newsletter. Sending even a dollar helps out, and it keeps you on our list of active contributors.

You can also use that envelope to send us photos, letters, a contribution to the Lottery Pool, etc.



STUART REUNION PREVIEW



As most of our shipmates know by now, the Rankin is berthed at the bottom of the sea seven miles off the coast of Stuart, Florida. We'll be boating out to the site during our reunion from October 30 - November 2, which is the best weekend of the year to visit South Florida. Registration packets will be mailed in late July or early August.



Stuart, known as "the sailfish capital of the world," is a picturesque old Florida town with many 21st century amenities. Visitors can tour the intriguing shopping district on a leisurely free people mover called Sailfish 6 "The Tram."

Our ship holds a special place in the hearts Stuart's 15,000 residents, since her 1988 sinking was a major event in the city's history. Some witnesses to that event will be on hand to tell us all about it.

Planning for the reunion is underway right now, with several excellent tours in the works. The best of these will be the boat trip out to the Ran-

kin. We're chartering a vessel big enough to give a smooth ride to all hands who are willing to sail on her. If we're lucky, we'll see some live video from the ship on the bottom, and eat some fish caught in or near the ship. Also in the works are placing an underwater flag and sinking a memorial wreath.

We will also travel 18 miles north to see the National UDT/SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce. The museum is located at the former Amphibious Training Base where many WWII boat crews learned to handle their LCVPs and Mike boats.

As this is written, Skip Sander is headed to Stuart to recon the beach and as many other potential tour sites as he can find. By the time you read this, there will be a visit report on the Rankin web site at www.ussrankin.org

Stuart is about 40 miles north of Palm Beach International Airport, in the heart of Florida's Treasure Coast. Reunion headquarters will be the newly renovated Ramada Inn, shown in the picture below.



LOST SHIPMATES

Who remembers Raymond E. HANKINS, Jr., a Seaman Apprentice who was aboard the Rankin for five months during 1962?

He passed away in 2006, and his son, Raymond E. Hankins, III, would like to contact anyone who knew him during his Navy days.

Ray III says "He didn't tell me much about his time and service with the Navy (or I was too young to care at the time, unfortunately). Since his death I have been trying to reacquaint myself as to who he was and what he did in life. I'm hoping to find out what he did on the ship, where he went, etc."

If you remember Ray Hankins, Jr., let us know and we'll put you in touch with his son.

And also, who remembers our deceased shipmate Richard C. DEDRICK, S/2c from 1945-1946?

His daughter would like to get in touch with anyone who knew him way back then. If you remember him, please let us know.

PHONE TALKERS

The Association uses the Vonage internet-based telephone service, which is the least expensive service we're aware of. Our experience with Vonage is pretty positive—the service is reliable and only costs \$30 a month for unlimited domestic calling and tons of features like call waiting, voicemail and so forth.

If you have broadband Internet service already, you'll probably save some money by using Vonage for your telephone company. If you sign up and tell them we referred you, the Association will get two months worth of service at no charge. To learn more, just call 1-800-595-0875 and tell them you were referred by The USS Rankin Association at 412-367-1376.

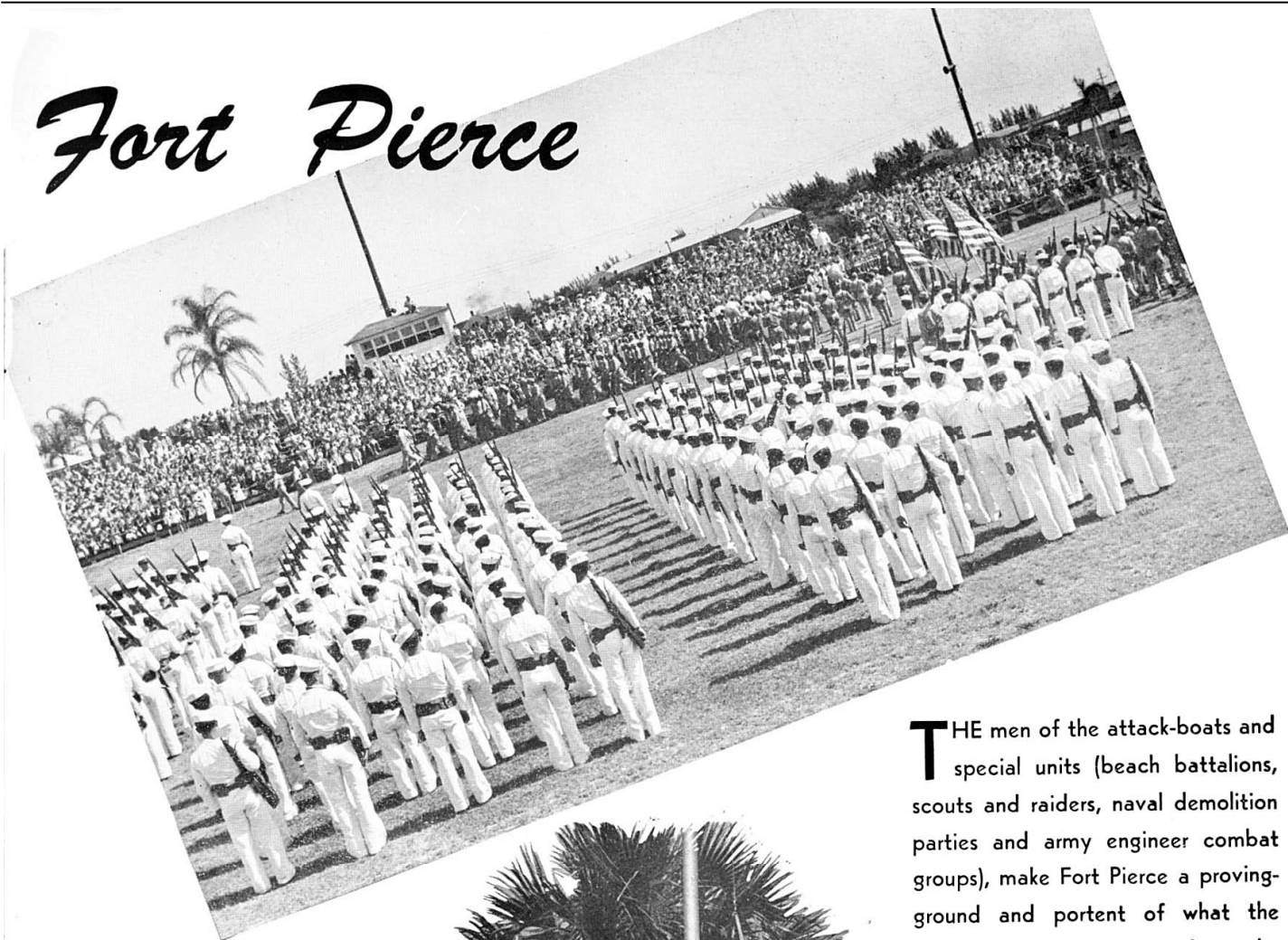
HOW TO RELIVE YOUR RANKIN DAYS

1. Buy a steel dumpster, paint it gray inside and out, and live in it for two years.
2. Run all the pipes and wires in your house exposed on the walls. Label them.
3. Repaint your entire house every month. Always use the same colors.
4. Renovate your bathroom. Build a wall across the middle of the bathtub and move the shower head to chest level. When you take showers, make sure you turn off the water while you soap down.
5. Put lube oil in your humidifier and set it on high.
6. Once a week, blow compressed air up your chimney, making sure the wind carries the soot onto your neighbor's house. Ignore his complaints.
7. Raise the thresholds and lower the headers of your doors so that you either trip or bang your head every time you pass through them.
8. Disassemble and inspect your lawnmower, washing machine, and furnace every week.
9. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, turn your water heater temperature up to 200 degrees. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, turn the water heater off. On Saturdays and Sundays tell your family they use too much water during the week, so no bathing will be allowed.
10. Raise your bed to within ten inches of the ceiling, so you can't turn over without getting out and then getting back in.
11. Sleep on the shelf in your closet. Replace the closet door with a curtain. Have your spouse whip open the curtain about three hours after you go to sleep, shine a flashlight in your eyes and say "Sorry, wrong rack."
12. Make your family qualify to operate each appliance in your house—thermostat specialist, stove technician, vacuum cleaner operator, etc.
13. Have your neighbor come over each day at 5 AM, blow a whistle so loud Helen Keller could hear it, and shout "Reveille, reveille, all hands heave out and trice up."
14. Have your mother-in-law write down everything she's going to do the following day, then have her make you stand in your back yard at 6 AM while she reads it to you.
15. Submit a request chit to your father-in-law requesting permission to leave your house before 3 PM.
16. Three times a day, empty all the garbage cans in your house and sweep the driveway, whether it needs it or not. "Now sweepers, man your brooms. Give a clean sweepdown fore and aft, empty all trash cans over the fantail."
17. Have your neighbor collect all your mail for a month, read your magazines and randomly lose every fifth item before delivering it to you.
18. Watch no TV except for movies played in the middle of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch, then show a different one.
19. When your children are in bed, run into their room with a megaphone shouting that your home is under attack and ordering them to their battle stations "This is a drill. General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations."
20. Make your family menu a week ahead of time without consulting the pantry or refrigerator.



(See RELIVE, on page 6)

Fort Pierce



THE men of the attack-boats and special units (beach battalions, scouts and raiders, naval demolition parties and army engineer combat groups), make Fort Pierce a proving-ground and portent of what the enemy can next expect from the Amphibs. LCVPs and LCMs led the way at Guadalcanal and North Africa, have been there first ever since . . .



Fort Pierce, Florida was the site of a large WWII training base for LCVF and LCM crews, demolition teams, etc.

Technical Training

Bob Gragen gave us a book with these pictures of WWII training in Fort Pierce. Were YOU ever in classes like this?



U.S.O. House
is pleasant
meeting place

*A*dministrative Headquarters



*A*uditorium is setting for religious
services



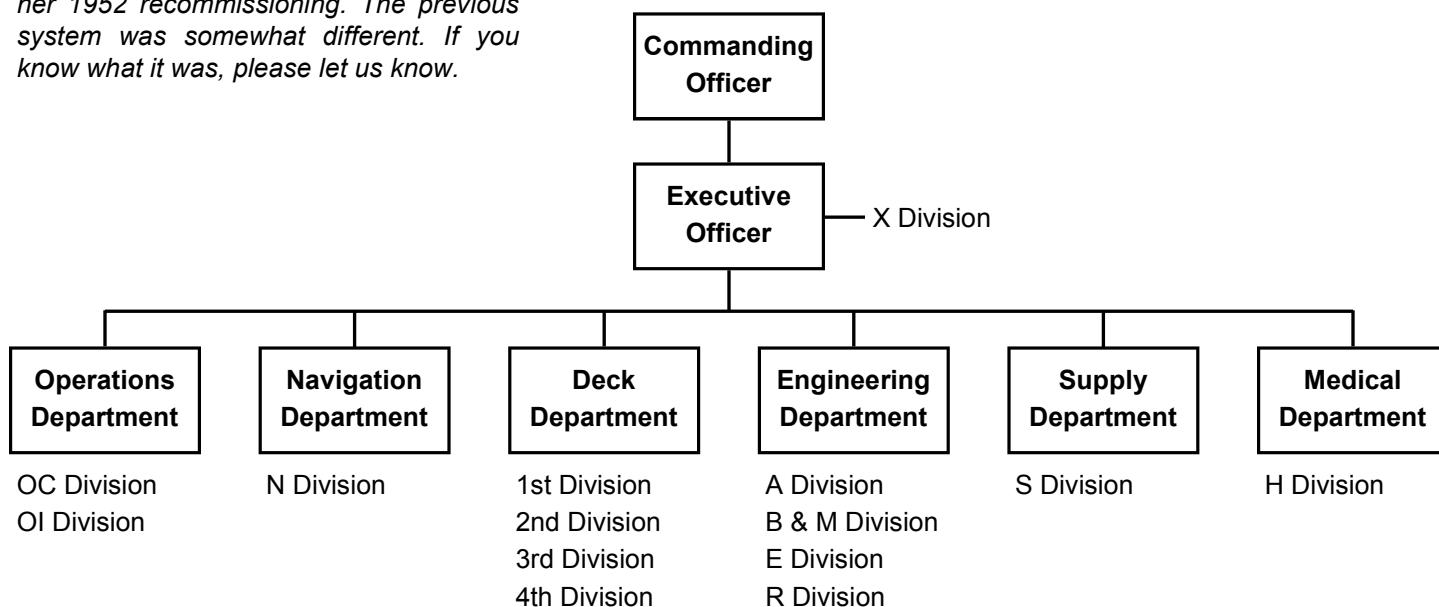
*G*ulbranson Hall in full
dress for war bond rally



Are any of these buildings still standing today? Come to the October reunion and see for yourself!

SHIP'S ORGANIZATION CHART

This is how the ship was organized after her 1952 recommissioning. The previous system was somewhat different. If you know what it was, please let us know.



(RELIVE, continued from page 2)

21. Post a menu on the kitchen door informing your family that they are having steak for dinner. Then make them wait in line for an hour. When they finally get to the kitchen, tell them you are out of steak, but they can have dried ham or hot dogs. Repeat periodically until they ignore the menu and just ask for hot dogs.
22. Bake a cake. Prop up one side of the pan so the cake bakes unevenly. Spread icing real thick to level it off.
23. Get up every night around midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on stale bread. Before you eat the bread, hold it up to the light to see if there are any insects in it.
24. Set your alarm clock to go off at random during the night. At the alarm, jump up and dress as fast as you can, making sure to button your top shirt button and tuck your pants into your socks. Run out into the backyard and uncoil the garden hose.
25. Every week or so, throw your pet into the pool and shout "Man overboard, port side." Rate your family members on how fast they respond.
26. Put the headphones from your stereo on your head, but don't plug them in. Hang a paper cup around your neck on a string. Stand in front of the stove, and speak into the paper cup "Stove manned and ready." After an hour or so, speak into the cup again "Stove secured." Roll up the headphones and paper cup and stow them in a shoe box.

27. Place a podium at the end of your driveway. Have your family stand watches at the podium, rotating at four hour intervals. This is best done when the weather is worst. January is a good time.
28. When a thunderstorm is in your area, get a wobbly rocking chair, sit in it and rock as hard as you can until you become nauseous. Make sure to have a supply of stale crackers in your shirt pocket.
29. For former engineers: Bring your lawn mower into the living room, and run it all day long.
30. Make coffee using twenty scoops of budget priced coffee grounds per pot. Allow the pot to simmer five hours before drinking.
31. Have someone under the age of ten give you a haircut with sheep shears.
32. Sew the back pockets of your jeans on the front.
33. Remove the drawers from your nightstand and replace them with a metal door with a padlock. Keep all your belongings in the nightstand.
34. Lock yourself and your family in the house for six weeks. Tell them that at the end of the 6th week you are going to take them to Disney World. The day before the end of the 6th week, inform them the trip to Disney World has been canceled because they need to get ready for an inspection, and it will be another week before they can leave the house.
35. Every few weeks, dress up in your best clothes and go to the scummiest part of town. Find the most rundown trashiest bar. Drink until you are so drunk you can't stand up. Walk all the way home.

1962: CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

If you were aboard the Rankin during this dustup, you earned a campaign medal that you probably didn't know about.

For participating in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the ship and every crew member earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. For whatever reason, the Navy never got around to awarding individual medals, or even to recording them in personnel records.

But they are willing to do that now, provided you make the proper claim. Your DD-214 will be updated to show the receipt of the medal, and you'll get both a medal and a ribbon for your souvenir case.

One of our board members got his by calling his Congressman. All he had to do was send in a copy of his DD-214 and a letter saying he was on the USS Rankin during the Cuban Missile Crisis (10/24/62 to 6/1/63). The Congressman asked the Navy to verify his service, and in a few weeks he got his medal.

Among other things, this medal qualifies its recipients for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which is a pretty good group to be associated with.

1965: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

It's not perfectly clear right now, but we think the ship and her crew also qualified for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the Dominican Republic between 4/28/65 and 9/21/66. If you were aboard during that time and went to the Dominican Republic, check with your Congressman to see if you qualify for the medal. If you let us know what happens, we'll put it in a future newsletter.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Though our reunion doesn't directly conflict with the general election on November 4, it's conceivable that you might not get back home in time to vote. If you're going to the reunion, it might be a good idea to apply for an absentee ballot.

TREASURE CHEST

Over the years, we have collected lots of USS Rankin memorabilia, ranging from ship's plaques to hundreds of photographs. We keep some of the smaller items in a wooden "Treasure Chest" that we bring to most of the reunions. Some of the items were donated by shipmates, while others were bought on eBay. Here's what's in the treasure chest today:

- USS Rankin Chief Master at Arms badge
- Ladies' compact engraved with a picture of the ship
- Tiny USS Rankin replica once included in a cereal box
- Cigarette lighter from Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award, 1959
- Apollo 8 memorial coin, 1968
- WWII red amphibious forces patch
- WWII embroidered gator uniform patch (shown below)
- USS Rankin rocker patch for enlisted uniform
- USS Rankin Gold E patch, for a jacket, not for a uniform
- USS Rankin jacket patch
- PHIBLANT patch

We're always looking for new items to include in the Treasure Chest, so if you have something, by all means send it in.



POWERBALL!

The next USS Rankin Lottery Pool runs from August through October. A \$25 contribution will get you a share of the winnings for 26 draws in the lottery. (The Pool will pay for the extra one.)

There are 55 players in the current pool, up from 46 in the last one. We play every drawing in the multistate Powerball lottery. Drawings are held every Wednesday and Saturday, with a minimum cash jackpot of \$7.5 million, and a maximum in the hundreds of millions.

Other winnings can range from \$3.00 to \$200,000, depending on the tickets we hold. Because we have so many players, we win at least one prize every week. Our biggest win so far was \$100. If we win a Jackpot or other substantial prize, we'll divide the money equally among all the players, with one share going to The USS Rankin Association. (If we get lucky, stand by for a truly special reunion!)

The chance of winning a jackpot is pretty slim, but it's a LOT of fun to play. Each player gets a list of all our numbers, so he or she can check for winners on the Internet. Skip Sander checks for them, too, and keeps a list on the USS Rankin web site. There's also a lot of other info up there. You can see it all at:

www.ussrankin.org/lottery.htm

You can even win money after the pool is over. When the Jackpot gets over \$100 million or so, we buy extra tickets out of our past winnings. If one of those tickets is a big winner, we will divide the money among all those who have ever played in one of our pools.

If you'd like to play in the August through October pool, send \$25 for 26 drawings to USS Rankin Lottery Pool, 153 Mayer Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Use the enclosed envelope if you'd like. All money must be received by Saturday, August 2. Make checks payable to USS Rankin Lottery Pool #4.

SHIPMATES ON PARADE

John Mazzarini is the newest member of our Executive Board. He joined the board on May 16 as Vice Chairman, with the mission of backing up Skip Sander and taking over in case of his absence or departure.

John joined the Navy a year after graduating from high school in Pittsburgh. He wanted to be an ET, and the Navy told him he was on track for that rate. But at Great Lakes they discerned his great talent for morse code and other RM duties, so they made him into a radioman and sent him to NAS Patuxent River. He got married there, then came to the Rankin where he was a watch supervisor and teletype repair expert. His best Navy memory is winning the Gold E in 1960.

In civilian life John finally got into electronics, spending many years in sales and support with top computer companies like Honeywell, Burroughs and UNISYS. He and Ginny have three grown children and five grandchildren.



Mazzarini, RM2, 1961



John & Ginny, 2005

USS RANKIN NEWS

USS RANKIN NEWS is published by:

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Pittsburgh, PA 15237
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www.ussrankin.org

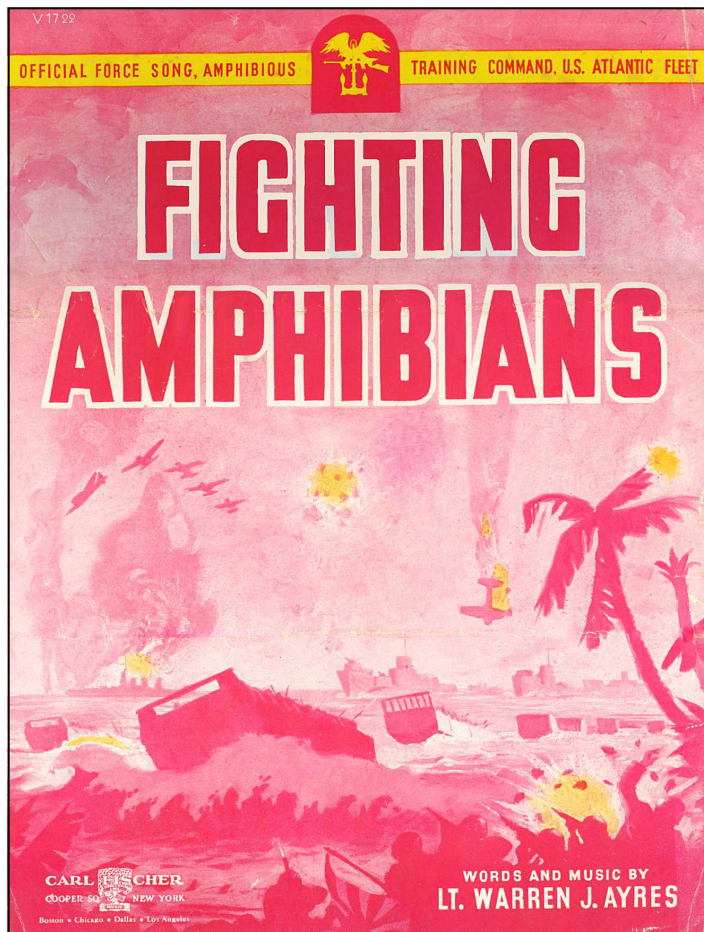
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The USS Rankin Association is a non-profit 501(c)(19) veterans' organization incorporated in Pennsylvania. Donations to the Association qualify as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes.

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James P. McCourt, Secretary
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Robert A. Reynolds
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FIGHTING AMPHIBIANS

Sail for the beach, Fighting Amphibians,
We land at break of day.
Victory's in reach, Fighting Amphibians,
Again we lead the way.
And when they write the history
Of the way the war was really won,
The world will acclaim men of the landing force
With "Amphibians, well done!"

Amphibians, Men of the landing force,
Amphibians, Charting a vict'ry course,
The A P A's and A K A's,
Hurling in assault boat waves,
Make every Jap and all the Huns
Learn to fear Amphibians!

Amphibians, All alligator guys,
Amphibians, Some of the greater guys,
The L C I's and L C T's,
And L S M's and L S T's
Salute our mighty landing fleet,
A navy in itself complete!

This rousing song was sung by amphibious trainees in Fort Pierce and Little Creek during the latter stages of World War II. We found a copy of the sheet music on eBay and bought it for our library. Participants in the USS Rankin's Florida reunion will be expected to sing it loudly and vigorously to a piano accompaniment.