

USS RANKIN NEWS

ISSUE #8 • THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USS RANKIN ASSOCIATION • DECEMBER 2007



AKA-103

1945-1947

1952-1968

LKA-103

1969-1971

GOLD E

1960-1961



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

With the uncertainty of mail service at the end of the year, we are never sure if our message will reach you before or after the holidays. So even if this reaches you late, be sure that we wished you a Happy Holiday Season.



2007 REUNION REPORT



The 2007 USS Rankin reunion is now in the books. The Radisson Hotel in New London, Connecticut was the host hotel for the event, held November 1 – 4. Eighty-three people (46 shipmates and 37 spouses and guests) attended the four day, three night event.

The reunion kicked off mid-morning on Thursday when the registration desk and hospitality room opened. James Miller from Quinton, Alabama was the first person to register. Initially, shipmates gathered in the hotel lobby to see who would next come through the door, but eventually everyone found their way to the hospitality room where they found coffee, soft drinks and a variety of snacks. From then on this became the focal point of the reunion where sea stories and memories flowed back and forth. Some of them were probably true—or at least based on an actual event.

At 5:00 PM the first official function of the reunion—the Welcome Reception—began. Skip Sander officially welcomed everyone, made a few adminis-

trative announcements, and declared the Radisson's famous wine and cheese reception open for all comers.

The next hour or so was a very pleasant time spent with old friends or making new ones. At 6:00 PM, 34 members of the group left for a trip to Foxwoods Casino and a chance at fame and fortune. Most left the casino at 10:00 in typical fashion, possessing fewer dollars than they arrived with. The majority of those remaining behind had dinner in the hotel restaurant. A few of the more venture-some went out to one of the nearby local restaurants and sampled the New London night life. The fact that all were back in the hotel by 9:00 PM suggests the old boys ain't what they used to be, or perhaps is a reflection on the quiet nature of New London night life.



Friday morning began with a private breakfast buffet full of wake up food and coffee. The day was a beautiful New England autumn day, complete with the gentle breeze that one expects near the ocean. First stop was the USS Nautilus and the Submarine Force Museum, located on the Thames River in Groton, Connecticut. The museum maintains the world's finest collection of submarine artifacts. It is the only submarine museum operated by the United States Navy, and as such is the primary reposi-

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

tory for artifacts, documents and photographs relating to U.S. Submarine Force history. Particularly interesting was a display honoring 1945 Medal of Honor winner Lawson P. Ramage, who commanded the USS Rankin in 1953-1954.



Members were able to board the Nautilus and experience first-hand the thrill of being a submariner. They walked the decks that made naval history: the world's first nuclear powered vessel, first ship to go to the North Pole, and first submarine to journey "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." They saw the tiny spaces where the crew of this amazing ship worked, ate, slept, and entertained themselves on their long voyages far beneath the ocean's waves.

A stop for lunch was made at a local Applebee's restaurant, where the New England clam chowder tasted almost home made.



After lunch it was off to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The group was met by two cadets (yes, they are called cadets) and taken for a combined walking and riding tour of the Academy. When a guide kept

pointing out things "on the left," Skip Sander shouted "We call that the port side!" The young officer candidate, corrected by a senior, immediately began using the proper terminology.

One unexpected "perk" was a stop at the Coast Guard Exchange. To comply with the rules only military retirees were permitted to make purchases, but without the knowledge (yes sir) of the Exchange management and staff, retirees with ID cards bought a goodly amount of gear. We are aware of one male retiree who bought himself some perfume and ladies' outerwear. We didn't ask, and we won't tell.



A visit to the Coast Guard Museum provided some unusual views of lighthouses, lifesaving, and other aspects of Coastie life. The group returned to the hotel around 3:00 PM.

Meanwhile back at the Radisson, a few additional shipmates arrived, found the hospitality room and patiently waited for the tour group to return. For a few minutes pure confusion reigned in the hotel lobby as the new arrivals and tourists greeted each other. Then it settled down and the hospitality room once again became the focal point.

Then at 6:00 PM the social hour began, and social it was! During the next hour the cash bar served the guests a wide variety of beverages. Following a dinner buffet served at 7:00, the Yankee Swap game began. In this version of the game everyone who brought a gift from home

hopefully went home with a different gift. The first ticket was drawn and the winner was given a randomly selected gift from the table. The first winner then opened and displayed the gift and a second ticket was drawn. The second winner had the choice of accepting the unopened gift that was again randomly selected from the gift table—or "stealing" the first winner's gift, and so on. It was a lot of fun and there were a lot of favorable comments.

Saturday dawned with a soft mist falling accompanied by a gentle breeze. (New Englanders quaintly called it a "Nor'easter.") The day began with a private breakfast buffet. At 9:00 AM 63 hale and hearty men and women boarded two motor coaches for an exciting visit to Mystic Seaport which featured historic homes, shops and trade buildings representative of life in a seaport. Mystic Seaport is one of the major nautical museums in the United States as well as being a recreation of an historical seaport.



The motor coach made two departures—at 11:30 and 12:30 from the Seaport to the Mystic Aquarium for lunch at the Seaport or at the slightly damp Olde Mistick Village, adjacent to the aquarium. The buses returned to the hotel at 2:30 PM.

The annual business meeting was held at 3:00 and all matters of business were quickly taken care of. The final decision on the 2008 reunion site will be announced in the next USS Rankin News.

The evening's activities kicked off at 6:00 PM when the cash bar opened, and amazingly, there were customers trying to be first in line. Individual and some group photos were taken for inclusion in the 2007 Reunion Memory Book.

The banquet was of course the highlight of the reunion. Gentlemen in their uniforms or suits, and their ladies so elegantly dressed looked exactly like the fine group they are. The formalities began with the playing of Anchors Aweigh (to get everyone's attention) followed immediately by the National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and the Invocation. The Memorial Table was arranged as usual. Skip Sander welcomed all and announced that "Dinner is served."

After a fine prime rib dinner the remainder of the evening was spent in a very relaxed atmosphere filled with intelligent conversation and comradeship.



Sunday morning arrived all too soon. It was hard to believe that the reunion was nearly over. Consequently, breakfast was a lot more subdued than normal. Following breakfast, the Memorial Service was held, honoring all deceased shipmates, but with emphasis on those who died or whose death was learned of since the last reunion. As the last notes of Taps sounded, there was more than one wet eye. No one really wanted to be the first to leave, but slowly the room emptied and all that was left was the echoes of "See you next year."

SHIPMATES ON PARADE



Vernon C. Smith - 1947

This continues our series of articles about Rankin shipmates, their Navy careers, and their later lives. We're looking for more good stories—if yours is one of them, or if you know of somebody else's, get in touch with us and we'll put it in a future newsletter.

Vern Smith joined the Navy as a lowly high school dropout in 1947. He joined the Rankin as a lowly Ensign in 1956. He retired from the Navy as a not-so-lowly Rear Admiral in 1989. The Gator Navy was quite important in his career.

His Seaman-Recruit-to-Rear-Admiral story, told in his own colorful words, starts on Page 4. It covers a *lot* of ground. (Or is it water?)



VOLUME XXIX No. 13

LITTLE CREEK, VIRGINIA

APRIL 3, 1970

Rankin Celebrates Silver Anniversary

The amphibious cargo ship Rankin celebrated 25 years of outstanding service with the U.S. amphibious forces with a gala silver anniversary celebration Feb. 24.

The festivities took place in the Caribbean where the ship was participating in Operation Springboard.

Highlight of the anniversary celebration was the traditional cake-cutting ceremony. Prior to cutting the huge birthday cake, Captain C. N. Pierozzi, the ship's commanding officer, read congratulatory letters to the officers and crew from Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, and Vice Admiral Luther C. Heinz, Commander Amphibious Force, Atlantic.

Admiral Moorer's message read: "On the 25th anniversary of first commissioning, I take great pleasure in conveying warmest regards to all hands in Rankin. The men who have sailed Rankin have demonstrated in an outstanding manner the flexibility and dedication for which the amphibious forces are renowned.

"During participation in the Okinawa campaign, the Cuban missile crisis, and in present operations in the Atlantic, Rankin has carved a record of which you can be justly proud. May your future be as productive and as successful as your past."

The ship, which returned to Norfolk last week, is a member of Amphibious Squadron Four.

SEAMAN TO ADMIRAL: VERN SMITH IN HIS OWN WORDS

I was Born 6 November 1929 in Bay City, Michigan and raised on a small farm in Midland. Delivered newspapers on horseback. Learned the value of hard work quickly but was behind the curve on education.

Finished the 10th grade and started the 11th, but in 1947 after a confrontation with a teacher quit school and joined the Navy.

The last thing I wanted was more school but my entrance test scores made me one of three in our company to go on to a service school. After almost a year in airman "P" and Aviation Radioman school I became an ALAA (Aviation Electronics Man Apprentice, E-2).

From March 1949 to August 1950 I was assigned to VR-44 overhauling R5Ds which were involved in the Berlin Airlift—mostly hauling coal.



Douglas R5D

I worked the evening shift and actually did some work, but for the most part I played fast pitch softball five days a week. Three days Navy league and two nights civilian league. Consequently I remained an E-2.

From April 1950 until August 1952 I was assigned to the flight test section of the overhaul & repair group of NAS Corpus Christi, Tex. I made E-3 on arrival through a co-operative Yeoman who accepted my story that I was advanced just before my departure from VR-44 but they must have forgotten to

enter it in my record. I flew in all types of aircraft R5Ds, R4Ds, PB4Y2s, TBMs, SB2Cs to name a few. I continued playing ball but did not travel with the team. In November 1950 I married my on again off again sweetheart from the 7th grade.



In those days the Navy did not recognize marriage unless you were at least an E-5 or an E-4 with 7 years service. In March of 1952 my first child was born and I got serious about advancement, making E-4 shortly thereafter.

In August 1952 I was assigned to the Naval Operating Base Argentia, Newfoundland, as a CW/voice operator at the Naval Communications Station. My family could not accompany me because the Navy did not recognize our marriage. At the first opportunity I made E-5 and became eligible to bring my family up, but I was a "left arm rate" and a "right arm rate" could bump me on the housing waiting list. I eventually found housing on the economy. Two 8' by 8' rooms with a semi-attached outhouse, a 55 gallon drum for running water, and a window box for an ice box. One hundred twenty-eight square feet of living space is tight when you consider I worked 3 days, 3 evenings, 3 mids and 3 days off. I now have a 140 square foot storage shed and my kids and grandkids wonder how we ever made it. I made AL1 at the first opportunity and AT1 (Aviation Electronics Technician) on the following exam. LCDR Rapp, later

CO of USS Rankin, was my department head at this time. Shortly before detachment we moved into a condemned Quonset hut on base.

From September to the end of 1954, I was stationed with Utility Squadron 4 at Chincoteague, Va. VU-4 was a target towing squadron and I was Shanghaied to Target Drone School, El Centro, California. Detached within 24 hours of notification. After three months of learning how to launch, fly, recover and crash target drones our ten-man unit was assigned to Utility Squadron Six, Norfolk, Va.

In 1956 the OinC of my unit talked to me about the Seaman-to-Admiral program. I wasn't interested but he put the pressure on and the squadron XO practically ordered me to take the fleet-wide competitive test. First was the physical. The height requirement was 5'6". I was 5'5¾". The medical exam physician sent me back to the squadron without any further examination, marked "Failed Physical." My XO, LCDR Anderson, was a Naval Academy grad where the height requirement was 5'4". He was actually about 5'2". LCDR Anderson took me back to medical and ordered the doctor to finish the exam and request a medical waiver for me.

Some months later the list for OCS came out and I was not on it. A few weeks passed, and a second list came out with four or five of us who had gotten medical waivers.

I saw LCDR Anderson in 1968 or 1969 in Vietnam. He was XO or OPS Officer on a seaplane tender. He was still a LCDR.

From April 1956 - August 1956. Officers Candidate School, Newport, Rhode Island. Commissioned as an Ensign August 2nd 1956.

From here on it is a different career and a much different life.

8/56 to 2/58. USS Rankin. This ship formed my future as an officer. First, I was lucky because there were Warrant Officers and Limited Duty Officers in the wardroom, so being an ex-enlisted man was not a negative.

Second my first Commanding Officer was Wally Wendt—tough as nails, and later four star CINCUSNAVEUR. He would have been CNO but for Admiral Zumwalt who was more personnel oriented.

Thirdly, my second Commanding Officer was John Harlee. He was people oriented to a fault. Unfortunately I was his Public Affairs Officer, and God help me if a new crew member's picture was not on our famous quarterdeck picture board the day after he reported aboard. The same applies to the birthday party celebrations—each crew member had a birthday cake and dinner with the Captain on his birthday. We all cringed at the summons for the Division Officer or Department Head and sometimes the Executive Officer to report to the Captain's cabin to answer for any complaints the individual had about the chain of command. I learned the importance of caring for your men, but also the foolishness of destroying the chain of command.

Fortunately I had an Executive Officer named Paul Hopkins. He saved my bacon more than once. Harlee was so upset with me that he refused to attend my piping over the side on detachment. For those who don't remember Paul, he was a big man and one of the many times I screwed up he picked me up and shook the devil out of me and said if I screwed up again he would "wear my guts for a necklace." I loved this man. He put me in charge of his family and to this day I look after his widow, Ruthie, who

lives in Vero Beach, Florida.

While in OCS I learned that there were two areas of a Naval Officer's life that I was scared of: engineering and gunnery. I requested an assignment in either, and was then sent to an engineering school for destroyer officers.

4/59 to 7/60. After four months of engineering school I was assigned to the USS Ault (DD-698) as chief



engineer. Here I encountered the "better than I" culture. Ex-enlisted were not all that welcome and I got loaded with most of the collateral duties that could be assigned, even though I had by far the largest department. Special events: we opened the Saint Lawrence Seaway to the Great Lakes—had over 100,000 attend an amphibious landing in Milwaukee—and we were the first U.S. ship to enter the Black Sea since World War II.

8/60 to 5/62. Commanding Officer USS Rockville (EPCER-851), a patrol craft rescue converted to an experimental research ship, home ported at the Naval Research Lab in Washington, DC.



We carried a research team of 8 to 10 scientists from NRL and did all sorts of weapons testing—sonar

research and ocean bottom core sampling—mostly in the Caribbean.

5/62 to 6/64. OPNAV staff, OP-943 where I was head of the Communications Procedure Unit. Most notable accomplishment was an internal memo on how to operate the coffee mess. A very demeaning assignment after being a Commanding Officer with my very own parking space, to one having to park in the West Parking lot at the Pentagon, 1.1 miles from the office.

During this Pentagon assignment I attended George Washington University night school, earning 30 semester hours of credit. More on this later.

7/64 to 6/66. Commanding Officer USS Avenge (MSO-423). I was a LT in a LCDR billet on the division flagship with a CDR that had never been away from his family and didn't even know how allotments worked. He finished a 30-year career with one assignment separated from his family. We participated in the Cuban Blockade.

6/66 to 6/68. After years of night school and correspondence courses, I acquired the necessary 45 semester hours of credit to apply for the five term program. You get three terms on your own and then apply for the program and if accepted the Navy will put you in a program at a university to get the remaining five terms. I was selected and assigned to the Naval Post Graduate School at Monterey, Cal. Unfortunately my credit hours were in business administration and commercial law. They assigned me to the engineering curriculum with an advanced standing of eight credit hours. Therefore I needed 112 credit hours in engineering with all the necessary labs for EE, physics, chemistry etc., all to be completed in two years. Made it with BS in

(Continued on page 6)

engineering science but with a terrible toll on family life.

7/68 to 2/70. CO, USS Washoe County (LST-1165). CAPT John Adams, the surface placement officer from BUPERS told me I could have command of a destroyer out of any East or West coast port upon graduation. Again the ring knockers came out. I hadn't paid my dues with enough time in destroyers and therefore had to serve as an XO. I declined the offer and took command of the Washoe County out of Yokosuka, Japan. Spent most of the next 18 months in Vietnam in support of Market Time operations and with the Swift Boats in the Bode River and off the Cau Mau Peninsula with 4th Corp.

3/70 to 12/71. Defense Communications Agency, Washington, DC. The greatest collection of incompetents in the world, with the possible exception of the United Nations. Enough said.

2/72 to 1/74. During this time I was selected for a graduate program in computer science at Washington State University. I was about to accept the assignment when I was offered command of the USS Harlan County (LST-1196). Needless to say I took the assignment back to sea. A wonderful assignment with lifelong ties to Harlan County, Kentucky.



2/74 to 6/75. Stashed at COMPHIBLANT for 3 months, then a year at the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. I majored in bass fishing and pheasant hunting. Also participated in a study that concluded that we would be a Span-

ish speaking nation by 2050. It may well be happening sooner.

7/75 to 7/77. Director of readiness and evaluation at the Naval Telecommunications Command in Washington, DC. No one was quite ready for an independent department to tell them how poorly they performed. I was lucky to get out of there alive.

7/77 to 7/79. Executive Assistant and senior aide to the Director of Command, Control and Communications OP-094. A tough assignment which I was ill prepared for but after two years of 14 to 15 hour days working for a three star and one two star admiral I survived.

1/80 to 11/81. After three months at the nuclear power school Senior Officers Material Readiness class in Great Falls, Idaho, I assumed command of the USS Mount Whitney (LCC-20).



Mount Whitney was the flagship of Commander Second Fleet, Commander Amphibious Group Two, and Commanding General of the Second Marine Amphibious Force. Three flag officers on one ship. Talk about a headache. Anyway I survived the experience.

12/81 to 6/83. Commander Amphibious Squadron Six. During this 18 month period I probably had less than eight weeks in home port. Deployed and redeployed. Ended up in Northern Europe, only to be directed to proceed at best speed into the Mediterranean for duty as Commander Amphibious Force U.S. Sixth Fleet. Ended

up landing our Marines in Lebanon late 1982. After approximately five months as Commander U.S. Forces Lebanon, I was selected for flag rank at the age of 53. Probably the oldest flag select ever.

7/83 to 8/86. Commander Naval Telecommunication Command. In charge of naval communications around the world.

9/86 to 6/88. Commander Amphibious Group One, and Commander Amphibious Forces Seventh Fleet, and Commander Amphibious Forces Western Pacific. Many stories, but am getting tired of telling stories. My biggest challenge was command of 68 ships and over 200,000 people in an amphibious operation in South Korea.

7/88 to 7/89. Vice Chief of Naval Education and Training Command. My more important duties were NJROTC, NROTC, and Recruit Training Centers. A wonderful experience from a kid who could not swim to an Admiral in charge of the whole thing. Talk about the American dream! Does it get any better than this?

7/89 to Present. After retirement I worked for four years as VP of MILCOM Systems Corporation, a family owned electronics business headquartered in Virginia Beach but with offices worldwide.

In 1992 I bought 30 acres on the James River in Nelson County, VA and in 1994 started building my dream cabin. Still working on it. My wife and I are now living in our 28th home. She does not want to move anymore.

In 2004, I attended the Rankin reunion in Norfolk.

In May of 2007, I graduated from Liberty University Bible College at the young age 77. I am debating whether to proceed with a graduate degree in theology. I come from a long line of ministers so the

heat is on.

I have one last story, about the diving board at Naval Recruit Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, where I and so many others went to boot camp. I am a non-swimmer. In fact I am almost deathly afraid of the water. In recruit training I was required to jump from a platform into the swimming pool. In my mind the platform was at least 20 to 30 feet above the water. I could not jump, so the instructors pushed me off the platform into the water. I was then placed in remedial swimming for the remainder of recruit training. I did not learn to swim, so upon the final swim test prior to graduation I hid in the overhead of the barracks and did not take the final swimming test. I was the company guide, so I wonder how I got away with it.

Over 40 years later, serving as Vice Chief of Naval Education and Training I was guest speaker at a recruit graduation at Great Lakes. During the tour of the training facility I saw the 20 to 30 foot platform. Somehow it was reduced in height to 6 to 8 feet. Things DO change with time.



Vernon C. Smith – 1989

TO A SHIP AT SEA:

May the prow of your ship not bury itself in an oncoming wave,

May its keel not feel the scratch of a coral reef,

May its deck not be marred by shrapnel or bullets,

And on returning to port may its berth not be occupied by some other less worthy vessel.

*From Ed Gaskell, the
USS Rankin Toastmaster*

RANKIN HISTORY

The USS Rankin was built by North Carolina Shipbuilding Co., in Wilmington, NC, and named after Rankin County, Mississippi.

Commissioned in February 1945, she participated in the final stages of the Battle of Okinawa, one of the last actions of WWII.

She was decommissioned in May 1947 and put into mothballs on the West Coast. Rankin was recommissioned in 1952 during the Korean War and assigned to the East Coast.

She spent the rest of her life on cruises to the Mediterranean and Caribbean, training and showing the flag in hot spots. She was redesignated LKA-103 in 1969. Her final decommissioning was in May 1971, after 21 years and 5 months of total commissioned service.

In 1988, she was sunk as a fishing reef off Stuart, Florida.

NAVY WEB SITE

There's a very nice web site for Navy active duty personnel, but which also has a lot of veterans. We learned of it from a local Navy recruiter. There's a free part and a subscription section, and the site features everything from chat rooms to user profiles to stats about contributors. You can see it at <http://navy.togetherweserved.com> Try it, you'll like it.

POWERBALL!

As you may know, we've been running a lottery pool for the famous multi-state, multi-million dollar Powerball game. This particular pool is over at the end of January, and we plan to start a new one for February, March, and April.

We have 42 players in the current pool, and we buy at least 40 tickets for each drawing. Drawings are held every Wednesday and Saturday at 11:00 PM Eastern time. The minimum cash jackpot is \$7.5 million, and the maximum can be in the hundreds of millions.

Other winnings can range from \$3.00 to \$200,000, depending on the number of winning numbers we hold. We win a small prize pretty much every week, and we invest those winnings in extra tickets when the jackpot is really big. (It's been as big as \$155 million during our time so far.)

If we win a Jackpot, we'll divide the money equally among all the players, with one share going to The USS Rankin Association. (If we should happen to win, stand by for a truly special reunion, maybe on a cruise ship.)

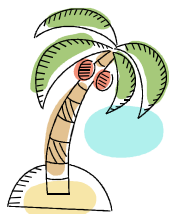
The chance of winning a jackpot is pretty slim, but it's a LOT of fun to play. We play the same numbers for each drawing. Each player gets a list of our numbers, so he or she can check for winners on the Internet. Skip Sander checks for them, too, and keeps a list on the USS Rankin web site. Take a look at it.

If you'd like to play in the February through April games, send \$25 for 25 drawings to USS Rankin Lottery Pool, 153 Mayer Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. All money must be received by February 1.



RANKIN SONG

Just across the ocean,
Cuba is the spot,
Where we are doomed to spend our
time
In the land that God forgot.
Among the snakes and lizards
Out where a man gets blue,
Out in the middle of nowhere,
3,000 miles from you.
Well we sweat, we freeze and shiver
It's more than a man can stand.
We're just supposed to be convicts
Who defend our home land.
Yes, we're men of the U.S. Navy
Earning our measly pay,
Guarding our country's millions
For just two and a half a day.
We're living with our memories,
And dreaming of our gals,
And hoping while we're dreaming
That they won't marry our pals.
Yes, no one knows we're living,
And no one gives a damn—
At home we're soon forgotten
For we belong to Uncle Sam.
For the time you spend in the Navy
And all the good times you've
missed,
Don't let the draft board get you,
And for God's sake don't enlist.
'Cause when you pass the pearly
gates,
You'll hear Saint Peter yell,
"Fall in all you Rankin boys,
You've served your time in hell!"



The words above were sent to us by Richard B. "Huey" Hughes, BT aboard Rankin from 5/59 to 12/62. They were given to him in '61 or '62 while cruising in the Caribbean. Huey is a guitar player who had a band on the ship, playing for the crew and in San Juan night clubs. "Cuba" in the song probably refers to Guantanamo Bay, a.k.a. GTMO.

NAVY ENLISTED BASE PAY

1943	2007
CHIEF PETTY OFFICER:	CHIEF PETTY OFFICER:
Permanent Grade \$138.00	E-9 with over 16 years \$4,459.50
Acting Grade \$126.00	E-8 with over 16 years \$3,835.80
PETTY OFFICERS:	E-7 with over 8 years \$3,055.20
First Class \$114.00	PETTY OFFICERS:
Second Class \$96.00	E-6 with over 6 years \$2,519.40
Third Class \$78.00	E-5 with over 3 years \$2,073.30
NON-RATED:	E-4 with over 2 years \$1,786.50
First Class \$66.00	NON-RATED:
Second Class \$54.00	E-3 with 2 years or less \$1,534.20
Apprentice \$50.00	E-2 with 2 years or less \$1,458.90
	E-1 upon enlistment \$1,301.40

VETERANS SALUTING THE FLAG

You've probably seen veterans in civilian clothes saluting the flag when the National Anthem is played or on other ceremonial occasions. Maybe it has bothered you to see people saluting uncovered and out of uniform, but doing so has become a widespread practice among veterans of all services. The USS Rankin Association heartily endorses the practice.

A bill in the United States Congress, S. 1877, proposes to amend title 4, United States Code, to prescribe that members of the Armed Forces and veterans out of uniform may render the military salute during hoisting, lowering, or passing of the flag. It was introduced by Sen. James Inhofe [R-OK], and passed in the Senate by unanimous consent on July 25, 2007.

On August 10, 2007, the bill was referred to the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. As of December 10, 2007, that committee has taken no action on the bill.

USS Rankin shipmates are encouraged to inform their Member of Congress of their desires regard-

ing passage of this bill (especially if they want it to pass!).

You use the Internet to follow the progress of the bill. Look at www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-1877



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