

USS RANKIN NEWS

ISSUE #7 • THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USS RANKIN ASSOCIATION • SEPTEMBER 2007



AKA-103

1945-1947

1952-1968

LKA-103

1969-1971

GOLD E

1960-1961

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome these four new shipmates, found since our June newsletter:

John J. Burke Jr.

Bill J. Griffin

Ronald E. Rittenhouse

James E. Sutton

We've put together a program to find more shipmates by sending postcards to people whose names and ages match those of people on USS Rankin crew lists.

The mailing will get underway within a few weeks. We expect to find quite a few missing shipmates, but we won't know for sure until the cards go out. We'll report our results, good or bad, in December's newsletter.

In the meantime, let us know if you know a shipmate who isn't yet a member.



LAST CALL FOR NEW LONDON



Our fourth annual reunion will take place in New London, Connecticut, from Thursday, November 1 through Sunday, November 4, 2007. Registration packets were sent out in August, and it is NOT too late to register. To do so, just call Military Locator & Reunion Service at 828-256-6008.

The schedule includes lots of time to talk with shipmates old and new, and some tremendous tours to places in this historic part of New England. As usual, there will be a fine meal on Friday, and a gala banquet Saturday evening.

Friday's optional tour will include a visit to the Submarine Force Museum, with a tour of the USS Nautilus, and a trip to the United States Coast Guard Academy. (Did you know that during World War II, several AKAs operated with Coast Guard crews?)

On Saturday we'll head to world famous Mystic Seaport and Olde Mistick Village, pictured above. These are said to be two of the very best attractions in the Eastern part of the country. If you like history or seafaring, you're sure to enjoy both of them.

AMPHIBIOUS DECORATIONS

The Rankin was authorized to display the World War II victory ribbon (far left, bottom) and five others for her service during WWII and its aftermath. She was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Ribbon (near left, bottom) for service in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

During WWII, many Rankin men wore the red and gold Naval Amphibious forces shoulder insignia (left). It was approved by the Secretary of the Navy on June 15th 1944, to be worn at the top of the left arm. The authorization to wear it terminated with the man's detachment from the Amphibious Forces.

To the right is a picture of plankowner Henry "Hank" Donahue enjoying

(See *Decorations*, page 2)



(Decorations, from page 1)

WWII shore leave as he proudly wears his Amphibious Forces shoulder patch.

When Hank's photo was taken, all deck force sailors wore their rating badges on the right arm. Everyone else wore them on the left. Deck ratings were those associated with seamanship, gunnery, navigation and signals—vital skills in the sailing navy. Boatswain's mates were senior in precedence, followed by gunner's mates, quartermasters and signalmen. A few other ordnance-related ratings also had right arm badges.

The boatswain's mate 3rd class designation was not used until 1949, when all badges were shifted to the left arm. In the old Navy that junior BM rating was called coxswain, another job description from the days of sail.

When Hank Donahue left the Rankin, he returned to his home town of Brockton, Mass., where he met and married Madeleine Nadeau. They raised eight children while Hank worked as a civilian employee of the Boston Naval Shipyard. He retired when the shipyard closed in 1974, and pursued his passion for real estate. He opened his own business in 1978, selling and building residential real estate. Later he worked with his sons in commercial real estate.

Hank and son Mark attended the 2004 Rankin



1942-1945 – WOODEN BOATS FOR IRON MEN

Main LCVP production line at Higgins Industries, New Orleans.

reunion in Norfolk, where they enjoyed meeting shipmates from the "good old days." Henry Erving Donahue died on April 16, 2007. May he rest in peace.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

With the help of Roger Craig, members can use our tax-deductible status to send needed "goodies" to Marines & sailors in Iraq or Afghanistan. Send us a contribution, and Roger will convert it to needed materials sent directly to one of our servicepeople. Make checks payable to "USS Rankin Association, Servicemen," and deduct them from your federal income taxes. Contact Skip Sander for details.

WHY PEOPLE GO TO USS RANKIN REUNIONS . . .

The reunion was my first, and my wife and I enjoyed it very much.

Tom Lobello, RDM2 1945-1946

The hotels, food and activities were excellent. We saw many things on the extra trips that we wouldn't have otherwise. We have met several special friends and are looking forward to seeing them in New London. In fact for the last two years we have brought two friends and they are looking forward to this year, too.

Tony Haring, BMSN 1953-1955

I can only say that any shipmate deciding not to attend ought to be brought to Captain's Mast and locked in the brig. Depriving your shipmates of your company is a serious offense!

Ed Gaskell, Navigator 1955

I really enjoyed the reunion and was impressed with the turnout and events scheduled. I talked with no one who was not thrilled with the overall event. Everyone should go to at least one of these great affairs.

J. W. Smits, EN3 1957-1959

Until I received the post card about 4 years ago, I thought the days of finding anything about the Rankin or my shipmates were over. Now after 46 years I was able to attend my first reunion and connect with some old and new shipmates. Now my wife and I look forward to the reunion every year.

Ralph Ayasse, SMSN 1959-1962

Each reunion is more enjoyable than the last. I enjoy reminiscing with all the guys I served with on the Rankin. I also enjoy talking to those who were on the ship in different eras, and how some things changed and some remained the same. I'm disappointed that I can't see many others who were on the ship with me. Hopefully this is the year I will get to see them. My wife, Ginny, looks forward to the reunions as much as I do. See you in New London!

John Mazzarini, RM2 1960-1962

Meg had only met one of my shipmates before, and never anyone's wife. When we got there, forty years had slipped by like it was yesterday. Old friends be-

came closer, and new friends were made. Meg and several of the wives became close friends, and she communicates with them throughout the year. We even vacationed last winter with several of them, making new memories and plans for future vacations.

John Feeley, LTJG 1961-1963

I attended the Rankin reunions in the early nineties, plus two of the recent ones. My wife and I met many shipmates who I served with and it has brought back many memories and lasting friendships.

Carl Siciliano, CS3 1963-1964

It's a refreshing break from your "now life" to return and revisit the early events that helped to shape your future. Great camaraderie, renewing old friendships and establishing new ones.

Paul Lint, RD2 1964-1967

The reunion was the highlight of my year . . . The opportunity to reunite with shipmates is priceless . . . If you're in doubt, just go! *Various, 1945-1971*



JANUARY 1958 – USS RANKIN ENTERING GIBRALTAR
LTJG Mal Malloy plays bagpipes to announce the ship's arrival.



SEPTEMBER 1958 – GLAMOUR GUYS OF GUANTANAMO
ENS Jack Kersh, ENS Fred McBride, CDR Paul Hopkins, and LT Dave Frost. Jack and Dave later made Rear Admiral.



JULY 1959 – MEDITERRANEAN LIBERTY CALL
Pompeii and Mt. Vesuvius, outside the (somewhat) lovely port of Naples, Italy. This was the *good* part of a Med cruise.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

These shipmates have made financial contributions to the Association since our last newsletter in June. Altogether we have 262 contributors so far. Their generosity lets us operate without any annual dues or initiation fees, and lets us serve everyone who spent time aboard the Rankin, regardless of their ability to pay:

Belmore, Brainard	CDR.....	1956-1958
Boyles, Eugene E.....	SHSN.....	1959-1961
Caldwell, Geoff	LTJG.....	1965-1967
Casto, Mark.....	ENS.....	1957-1958
Cayo, Richard	BTC	1958-1962
Decker, John	SF2	1960-1962
Dyer, George B.	BM3.....	1964-1967
Fairbourn, Calvin R.....	ENS.....	1945
Fleming, F. Donald	LTJG.....	1958-1960
Forde, Hugh	MMFN.....	1961-1962
Fowler, Joseph R.....	DK2.....	1957-1958
Gardner, George D.	MR2	1968
George, Robert F.	Y3.....	1945-1946
Gorham, John P.....	SN	1959-1962
Hakala, John M.....	ETR2.....	1961-1963
Izyk, James J.....	RM2	1960-1964
Jones, Iver.....	DC1	1954-1957
Lechaton, Michael	EM2	1953-1957
Len, William J.*	LTJG.....	1962-1964
Linner, John	LT(MC)	1945
Malloy, Heather	**	
Mayes, Elmer S.....	HMC.....	1962-1965
McCourt, James	RD3.....	1963-1966
Montalbine, Gary.....	LT	1961-1963
Munger, Dwayne.....	EN3.....	1957-1958
Shaw, Jim.....	IC2	1952-1954
Smith, Charles T.	PN3	1964-1965
Sutton, James E.*	SM3	1966-1969
Walton, Edward P.....	SA.....	1946-1947

* New Shareholder

** Wife of Mal Malloy, LTJG, 1956-1958

FINANCIAL REPORT

Thanks to the continuing generosity of our members, The Association is in excellent shape financially. We spend about \$10,000 a year on these newsletters, our web site, shipmate finding activities, and all the other things that benefit our 1,639 known living and deceased former shipmates, plus an additional 134 family members and friends.

We have enough cash on hand to operate until the Annual Fund Drive in March, and enough in savings to keep us afloat through any foreseeable hard times. (But if you haven't contributed this year, we still can use your money!) If you'd like to see a complete financial report, just contact Skip Sander or any member of the Board.

THE AMPHIBIOUS SAILOR

You've heard of the fliers, Marines, and the troops,
The Navy and frogmen, and all sorts of groups.
But give it some thought, and then tell if you can,
Have you ever heard of th'Amphibious Man?

This seldom seen gob is a wandering sort,
Since unlike his brothers he's got no home port.
He goes where he's needed, he does what he can,
This orphan-type sailor, th'Amphibious Man.

He might be a seaman from off of a ship,
Or just out of boot camp, a skinny young whip.
He's picked out at random—how else to decide?
A few might have chose it, but most were Shanghaied.

He runs with the boats, wherever they go,
And nobody told you, so you'd never know.
Yes, no one has told you of him or his job,
He's not known or heard of, th'Amphibious Gob.

No matter his duty or how much he knew,
He got special training before he was crew.
They showed how to run 'em, and told what they're worth,
And taught how to land 'em, then back through the surf.

You've heard of the Navy, of ships fore and aft,
But probably never of this: "landing craft."
They're building 'em plenty, we need a lot more
To land on the islands, and win this damned war.

Both Mike Boats and Peters, and others as well,
Of wood and of metal, and sturdy as hell,
With ramps in the front, and with engines in back,
And armed with machine guns, for when they're attacked.

They're loaded from transports, in darkness of night,
He sails 'em in circles without any lights.
Then out through the gunfire to land on the shore
Through surf that can kill them, then go back for more.

Surviving the first wave's the start of his job,
Since those on the beach, they depend on this gob.
He brings reinforcements and all that they use,
His job's in the battle, but not in the news.

When battles are over, the radio tells
Of soldiers and heroes, their beaches and hells.
You'll thrill at the stories of them and their jobs,
But never a word of Amphibious Gobs.

And after the conflict, in good civvy life,
How *can* he explain to his kiddies and wife:
He fought in the Navy, but not on a ship—
An orphan-like sailor, now ain't that a pip?

They've heard of the fliers, the troops and the draft,
Marines and the Navy, but not landing craft.
And no one has told them of him or his job...
He's a hell of a mystery, th'Amphibious Gob.

Anonymous. Adapted by Louis F. Sander, 2007

The poem to the left had its origin in World War II, when boat crews were assigned to boat groups rather than to ships. Coxswains and "Motor Macs" would be plucked from other duty, given amphibious training in Fort Pierce, Florida, then rushed off to man the landing craft wherever they were.

These sailors wore a red and gold patch on their sleeves, to show they had earned this special qualification. Like gators everywhere, their work was difficult, dangerous, and dirty, but it was essential to waging and winning the war.



Roget's Thesaurus lists these synonyms for "sailor": gob, jack, jack tar, bluejacket, seaman, mariner, sea dog, salt, swabbie, and galley slave.

To "Shanghai" is to forcibly conscript a man to serve a term working on a ship, usually after having been rendered senseless by alcohol or drugs.



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