

USS RANKIN NEWS

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AKA-103

1945-1947

1952-1968

LKA-103

1969-1971

GOLD E

1960-1961



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USS RANKIN 2006 REUNION

SEPT 21-24

WASHINGTON, D.C.

CRYSTAL GATEWAY MARRIOTT
1700 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA



REUNION 2006: WASHINGTON, D.C.

Our next reunion will be from 21-24 September, 2006, in exciting Washington, D.C.! Our headquarters hotel will be the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia—a beautiful hotel near all the best attractions. We're planning some wonderful tours, including a trip to the Navy Memorial, the WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Memorials, and more. Since Washington is within easy travel distance of over 500 of our members, we're expecting a very large turnout. Mark your calendar right now for September 21-24, the third weekend after Labor Day!

We'll keep you posted as our plans develop. Until then, you can keep up to date by visiting our web site at www.ussrankin.org. The new Discussion Forum section already has a detailed report on the Marriott by Jack and Barbara Raso, plus a feature on Washington attractions courtesy of Irving Wetmore (SFPFN, 1961-1963).

Like all our reunions so far, this one will be managed by Military Locator and Reunion Service, Inc., the nation's largest and best military reunion company. Led by Larry Eckard, ML&RS makes all the hotel and tour arrangements, col-

lects and disburses all the money, and staffs the reunion itself, including the welcome desk and hospitality room. The result is a reunion where all of the attendees can enjoy themselves without the distractions involved in running a reunion. Financially, we're pleased to say, the company's fees are more than outweighed by the savings they negotiate on hotels, meals, and tours. (Their buying power includes over eighty reunions this year, plus the promise of significant repeat business for every hotel and tour operator they work with.)

ML&RS' Dina Coffey says "Big changes are going on at our company, and they'll benefit every member of your Association. Registration for the reunion will be even easier this year, and shipmates with Internet access can use the ML&RS web site to keep themselves informed. We have a whole section devoted to the USS Rankin, including but not limited to basic information about the reunion, lists of people who have signed up, and links to newsletters like this one. The very popular profiles previously printed in the Sentimental Journal will now be available on our web

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REUNION 2006*(Continued from page 1)*

site at www.mlrsinc.com/rankin.

"To maintain the security of personal information, addresses and phone numbers will not be published, and email addresses will only be published with permission. The site is already online, and you can see it at any time. Some areas are still under construction, of course. If your profile isn't listed in the Crew Profiles, be sure to submit one by clicking the link to the On-Line Questionnaire."

Dina reports other improvements as well. "In place of the Sentimental Journal, each reunion attendee who signs up for one of the option packages will get a 2006 Memory Book including photos from the reunion and any 'then and now' photos that have been submitted prior to the reunion. We've had a lot of requests to add on-line registration capabilities, and that's definitely on our list of things to do. Also, since so many people have



email and Internet access, and since postage costs have recently gone up, we're hoping to reduce everybody's reunion costs by moving newsletters, surveys, questionnaires, and registration materials to the Internet. We will continue paper mailings, but only to people who let us know they want their information via postal mail. The next mailing from The USS Rankin Association will include a place to let us know your preference. Watch for it, and be sure to check the proper box."

SAN DIEGO REUNION REVISITED . . .

The second annual USS Rankin reunion is now a part of Naval history. The four day, three night event was held at the Red Lion Hanalei Hotel, San Diego, California, from Thursday 29 September through Sunday 02 October 2005. Fifty-two former crewmembers and 32 spouses and guests attended the reunion, which was created and managed by our own Jill Breslau and by Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc. The Red Lion Hanalei hotel was an ideal location, near San Diego's International Airport and close to all the Navy bases. The spacious rooms and hospitality area were made for the reunion attendee desiring a mix of comfort and luxury. The food was well prepared and beautifully presented by a dedicated staff.

There were a few early arrivals, but the reunion officially kicked off on Thursday at noon when the hospitality room opened and registration began. Jan Smits was the first shipmate to register. After the members checked into their rooms, the hospitality room became the reunion focal point, and a messenger made frequent visits to the registration desk

to see who had arrived. The first "official" function was the welcome reception at 5:00 PM. After a few opening remarks by Jill Breslau (daughter of Max Breslau, chief engineer in 1952), the bar opened and hors d'oeuvres were served. A very pleasant reception was held at the side of the Hanalei's distinctive pool. Following the reception everyone had dinner on their own, either in the hotel or at a local restaurant.

Friday dawned bright and sunny and the enthusiasm was the same. Breakfast was a private buffet and after a leisurely meal, it was tour time! Fifty-five members and guests boarded two classic trolleys for a San Diego City tour. This unique way of seeing the city was highlighted by the narration of the knowledgeable guide who seemed to know everything about the city—from the Gaslamp Quarter to Coronado Island. In addition to the city tour, there was a visit to the Navy Base for a guided tour, as well as a stop at the famous Hotel Del Coronado, where everyone had time to see the beautiful beaches and go inside the opulent hotel. After leaving the island the group was off to Seaport Village for shopping and lunch on their own. Later in the afternoon, 44 stout-hearted men and women boarded a SEAL amphibious vehicle for a continuation of the city tour and a ride around the harbor. Eleven people decided to remain in the Seaport Village area and either shop, relax with their favorite beverage, or just relax

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SAN DIEGO REUNION*(Continued from page 2)*

on a bench in the sun. Following the SEAL ride, everyone re-boarded the trolleys and headed back to the Hanalei. All hands agreed that it had been a great day!

Later in the evening, the social hour began and a Hawaiian-themed dinner was served. The food was outstanding and the comradeship even better.



After Saturday's private breakfast buffet, at 8:30 AM, the first tour group—those visiting the USS Decatur (DDG-73) and getting a guided tour of the ship. What a thrill for a group of old sailors to go back on board a real US Navy warship! And how different today's "tin cans" are from those of the Rankin's time. Another tour group left the hotel at 9:30 AM for a visit to the museum aircraft carrier, USS Midway (CV-41). The Midway is one of WW II's most famous ships, and she served her country for many years afterward. Just to walk her decks is to walk where history was

made.

From the Midway it was just a short walk to the cruise boat Hornblower, where both tour groups met up. As we boarded, each person was handed a glass of champagne and escorted to the seats reserved for the Rankin. Meal service began almost immediately—table by table until everyone had eaten their fill from the lavish buffet. Champagne glasses were refilled as often as any diner liked. Following lunch, everyone was free to find his or her own special viewing place for Fleet Week's naval armada of ships and planes. Rankin people had some of the best seats in the house for the parade of ships coming into the San Diego harbor. Leading off the parade of ships was USS Lake Champlain (CG-57), followed by USS McCampbell (DDG-85) and USNS John Ericsson (T-AO-194). The Ericsson is one of the newest MSC underway replenishment oilers with a crew of 21 Navy and 82 civilians. The next two ships to sail by were the Sea Fighter and Sea Shadow, both experimental ships exploring a variety of new technologies. Next out were the Air Show Demonstrations featuring the F/A-18E Hornet, C-2 Greyhound, E-2C Hawkeye, and the U. S. Coast Guard HH-60 helicopter demonstrating a Search and Rescue mission. Keeping the fast moving pace of the parade,



USS Dubuque (LPD-8) sailed into view, followed by USS Germantown (LSD-42), disgorging an LCAC and LCU. Next came His Swedish Majesty's Ship Gotland, a diesel powered attack submarine berthed on Point Loma for a year's bilateral training with the U.S. Navy, followed by USCGC Alex Haley (WMEC-39). Then the final ship, the highlight of the parade, the mighty carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76). What American could not be proud and impressed with this display of sea power and the courageous young men and women to man these ships? With the passing of the Ronald Reagan, it was time to head for shore and the bus returning us to the hotel.

Back at the Hanalei, next on the agenda was the annual business meeting chaired by Skip Sander. At the meeting the decision was made to hold next year's reunion in the Washington or Baltimore area.

The highlight of the reunion was, of course, the Saturday night banquet. At 6:30 PM the bar opened and the evening's comradeship began. The next ninety minutes demonstrated exactly why reunions are held: countless photos were taken, countless greetings were exchanged and countless hands were shaken. But most impressive was the fact that everyone visited with everyone else. At 8:00 PM sharp Skip Sander called the banquet to order with the playing of "Anchors Aweigh." With everyone's undivided attention, former Rankin C.O. CAPT Nello Pierozzi (USN Ret)

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POETRY MEN: USS RANKIN WATCHSTANDERS

Navy tradition says that the first deck log entry of the New Year may be written in verse, as long as it complies with Navy Regulations for log entries. The Rankin was in commission for a total of 21 New Year's Days from 1946 through 1971, and we've collected the original midwatch log entries from each of those holidays. Many of them are in verse, written by fuzzy-cheeked Ensigns and grizzled old Chiefs alike.

Most of them are pretty good rhymes, and a few even rise to the level of poetry. The media has learned about

our collection, and on New Year's Day 2006, our story was featured on CNN Radio, the Boston Globe, and dozens of other outlets across the land. Many of them reprinted a 50-year-old entry by then-LTJG Judson F. Ayers, now a retired South Carolina legislator. Next year we'll remind the media of the verse log story, and we'll send them the 1957 Golden Anniversary entry by Michael M. Brunner, USMC. Look for it in the news on New Year's Day. (You can download the entire collection from our web site's Ship's Store section.)

SAN DIEGO REUNION*(Continued from page 3)*

gave permission to present the colors. The Colors were then brought forward by the Sea Cadets Coronado Battalion. After the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance, the colors were retired. After a few announcements, Skip declared, "Dinner is served." Following an excellent meal the winning raffle tickets were drawn and prizes distributed. Three special guests, crewmembers of today's visit ship, USS Decatur were introduced and welcomed to the banquet. (Believe it or not, all of them were *women!* What a far cry from the "old Navy" of the USS Rankin's time.) After the formalities, it was time for dancing. The ballroom magic of Earl and Marlene Gimpel and Peter Trinca and Carmen Patella reminded everyone of ABC Television's *Dancing with the Stars*. Wonderful conversations continued late into the warm California night.

Suddenly it was Sunday morn-



ing. The farewell breakfast seemed a little more somber, a little more nostalgic, and perhaps even a little quieter—each person reflecting on the past few days of memory sharing. Acting Chaplain Ed Gaskell conducted the Memorial Service and did a bang-up job of remembering the deceased shipmates. The theme of his service was a reminder that deceased shipmates did not die in vain.

Though no one wanted to leave, the realization slowly came that it was time to go. One by one the

hugs and handshakes began. The photo below typifies the many good-byes that were exchanged all over the room. The final words from almost everyone were, "See you next year in D.C." Then the room was empty with only the echoes and memories remaining.

**NEW MEMBERS**

The USS Rankin Association welcomes these recently located former shipmates. We hope to see them at the upcoming reunion:

Lee Bledsoe
James R. Christy
Ridgely G. Conant
Daniel D. Condon
Bobby J. Crawford
George R. Dixon
Jimmie Donaldson
David T. East
Robert F. George
William E. Groll
Larry J. Richard
John Smith
Joe Whitson
Lawrence Willis

MEMORIALS

Our Association places a high value on honoring deceased shipmates, and our reunions feature an empty Remembrance Table in honor of all our departed comrades. We also honor them by reading their names at a special ceremony, and tolling a memorial bell for each name.

In addition, the names of all known deceased shipmates are listed in a special section of our web site, which also includes obituaries, funeral cards, photographs and similar items. If you learn of the death of a former shipmate, please let us know so we can take the proper steps to memorialize him.

FUND DRIVE

Over the next few months, each Association member will get a letter about our Annual Fund Drive. Since we have no formal dues structure, we rely on donations from members to keep our organization going.

All contributions go to our day-to-day operations of keeping in touch with all our shipmates, and finding even more of them. None of the money goes to fund our reunions, which are totally paid for by the people who attend them.

Past contributions have ranged from \$5 to \$500, and most people who send money send \$25. There's special recognition for those who send \$100 or more for our "rainy day fund." Try to be generous when you get the letter—we can really use your help.

**FIVE-STAR COMMANDERS**

Only nine men in the history of the U.S. have achieved the rank of "five stars"—four U.S. Navy, four U.S. Army, and one U.S. Air Force. They are: Adm William Leahy, Adm Ernest J. King, Adm Chester Nimitz, Adm William F. "Bull" Halsey, Gen George C. Marshall, Gen Henry H. Arnold, Gen Douglas MacArthur, Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Gen Omar N. Bradley.

WEB SITE UPDATE

Our web site is probably one of the best ship sites on the Internet, and it might just *be* the best.

It's got a new Discussion Forum where any shipmate can post and answer messages. It also includes a complete list of deceased shipmates, with obituaries for about 50 of them, plus some great previews of our hotel and tours for the reunion in September. Additionally, there's a link to a listing of all our financial policies and a detailed three-year financial statement.

You can see the web site at www.ussrankin.org. It's full of information about the Rankin, including three complete cruise books and hundreds of pictures from 1945 through the present.

If you don't have Internet access yourself, you can go to your local public library and ask one of the librarians to show you the site at www.ussrankin.org.



TAX DEDUCTIONS

Thanks to work by members of the Board, The USS Rankin Association is now an official Nonprofit Pennsylvania corporation. We've applied to the IRS for exemption from paying federal income tax, and for your contributions to qualify as charitable contributions on your tax returns. Once our application is approved, contributions you make will be officially deductible, retroactive to our date of incorporation, which is January 20, 2006.

This might be the year to increase the amount you contribute to our group. The biggest contribution so far is \$500, and sixty people have given \$100 or more.

NEW JACKETS!



Please take a careful look at the enclosed Special Offer flyer from www.NavalShopping.com. It offers some great deals on four of the best Navy clothing items we've ever seen. We've examined and worn each one of them, and they are absolutely top notch products.

We especially like The Three Seasons Jacket, shown above. It looks great and is suited for all sorts of weather. (Paul Doiron won one in the raffle at the 2005 reunion, and he loves it. Harry Zimmer won one of the great-looking windbreakers. Skip Sander bought two of the sweat-shirts.) Naval Shopping is supporting the mailing of this newsletter, and as you can see, they're offering some very attractive prices as well. You can't go wrong by buying one or more of these outstanding USS Rankin items. And, of course, your purchase benefits our Association.

USS RANKIN FILMS

We now have the ability to produce DVDs from film and still photos. We've got film from China & Japan in 1946-47, from recommissioning in 1952, from the ship's sinking in 1988, and some beautiful underwater footage from 2004.

If you have movies or videos from your time aboard the Rankin, please let us know about them so we can see about adding them to our list.

NAVY LOG

Now through the end of July 2006, all USS Rankin veterans can enroll in the U.S. Navy Memorial's Navy Log, without charge and without any obligation. This year's reunion will include a visit to this beautiful Memorial and its famous Lone Sailor statue, where each person can view the permanent Navy Log. You can see the online version at www.lonesailor.org.

The U.S. Navy Memorial on Pennsylvania Avenue is a national memorial honoring those who served, and are serving, in America's Sea Services—Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine. The goal of the Memorial is to record the service history of all eligible uniformed individuals and veterans. Its centerpiece is the Navy Log.

"The Navy Log is the heart and soul of the Navy Memorial because it represents people, not hardware," said Retired Master Chief David Michael, the director of the Navy Log. "They're the backbone of the Navy. The Navy is people, not ships and aircraft".



The Navy Log is a permanent public registry where Sea Service members and veterans can record their name, duty stations, awards, photos and service memories. Family members and friends can record service information for veterans who are deceased or those who are unable to record their own information. Over 30 Rankin sailors are listed in the log already.

"The real reason to enroll in the

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NAVY LOG*(Continued from page 5)*

Navy Log is to show Navy pride and to record your service for history," said Chief Michael.

To enroll yourself or a family member, you can enter the service member's information at www.lonesailor.org or call the Navy Log at 1-800-628-9564. If you call, you can provide your information over the phone or request a registration form by mail.

After your enrollment has been processed, you can submit a photo to be added to the Log. Pictures can be submitted over the Internet or mailed in to be scanned by the Navy Memorial's staff.

Photos should be 8x10 or smaller and should be very clear so that the scanner can get a clear image. The photo can be either color or black & white. High quality copies are acceptable and requested, because photos are normally not returned. Write on the back of the photo the person's full name, the place where the picture was taken, and the year it was taken. We recommend not using a pen to write with because the imprint may cause a blemish in the scanning process.

If you submit your picture by email, it must be in .JPG format, and your email should include the name, place, and year as above. The resolution should be set at 75 DPI, and the dimensions should be 240 pixels wide and 318 high.

MAIL CALL

Here are some of the letters we've gotten in the last few months:

"It was so good to see so many of my shipmates after 40+ years. I got an opportunity to catch up on so many things in our time together. I am looking forward to the next reunion. Hope to see all those that were there last year and some others I haven't seen in 40 years."

John Mazzarini (RM2, 1960-1962)

"We were honored to have the USS Rankin's crew onboard Decatur in San Diego. The three crewmembers who attended your banquet had a wonderful time. They thoroughly enjoyed conversing with your crewmembers about the differences between shipboard life then and now.

"I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for your service to our Navy and our country. You serve as examples to all of us."

*John Steinberger
Commanding Officer
USS Decatur (DDG 73)*

"If you didn't go to last year's reunion, you missed a great get-together. I know this year's reunion will be bigger & better than ever. I guarantee you'll have a life-time experience—so don't miss it."

Gunnar "Swede" Hansen, (1952-53)

"The USS Rankin reunion was the highlight of my year...it was so well organized, fun, and the food was great, as well as meeting with so many former Rankin members. I have so many fond memories of serving and this was a culmination of such good will among all."

James Stubbs (BM3, 1960-61)

"I'm searching for any information about my father, Julius F. Miller, who was aboard the USS Rankin from 1962 to 1964. If anyone out there has any information or photographs, please email rangerdog_58@yahoo.com

Tenna Miller Perez

"I believe that every person should be in the Navy Log if they are in or have been in a sea service. All of you have put your lives on the line for the rest of us, and should be honored for it."

Thelma (Mrs. Robert) Kanavel

"Do any of you guys remember when I got pushed down the dumbwaiter shaft on the messdecks? It dislocated my shoulder and I had to go to Portsmouth Naval Hospital to get it fixed. I declined to have the guy written up who pushed me."

Randall Jameson (CS3, 1966-1968)

"The time at the Rankin reunion was worth more than the time and money spent. The opportunity to re-unite with shipmates is a priceless commodity. I would encourage everyone to make the effort to get to a reunion while they can. It is worthwhile."

Don Wilburn (LCDR, 1965-1967)

"My father, 1945-1946 USS Rankin ENS Edward T. Gellenbeck, passed away from complications of emphysema on February 3, 2006."

Ed Gellenbeck

OUR MEMBERS

As of this writing, our membership rolls include 1,204 living former shipmates. We've learned of the deaths of 318 more, over 50 of whose widows and other survivors have registered with the Association.

That leaves 2,337 former shipmates unaccounted for, out of the 3,859 who served aboard the Rankin. We'd really like to find these people, and we're looking for someone to be in charge of the effort. If you'd like to be that person, please contact Skip Sander.

This project involves a lot of work, but it's productive and rewarding, and there's nothing like the excitement of finding a long-lost former shipmate. And shipmates definitely *can* be found—we've located all but one of the 437 officers who served aboard the ship from 1945 through 1971. Now we need to do more.

**USS RANKIN NEWS**

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www.mlrsinc.com

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