

# USS RANKIN NEWS

ISSUE #23 • THE NEWSLETTER OF THE USS RANKIN ASSOCIATION • DECEMBER 2014



**AKA-103**  
1945-1947  
1952-1968

**LKA-103**  
1969-1971

**GOLDE**  
1960-1961

## USS RANKIN REUNION

**September 24-28,  
2015**

**Nashville, TN**

We've been talking for several years about having a reunion in Nashville, and now we're going to do it!

The Music City is also Tennessee's capital. Located on the Cumberland River, it is centrally located and easy to get to. It's home to dozens of attractions – historic buildings, riverboat cruises, and fine Tennessee whiskey, not to mention more music than anywhere else in the country. The Grand Old Opry and country music are its best-known musical attractions, but the city is busy with every other kind of music.



## TWO GREAT REUNIONS!



**San Antonio - 2013**

The USS Rankin Association's Tenth Annual Reunion was held in San Antonio, Texas from October 10-13, 2013, at the Wyndham San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel. The reunion was held jointly with the USS Muliphen (AKA-61) Reunion Association. There were 96 attendees from the Rankin and 18 from the Muliphen, for a total of 114. A good time was had by all.

Special invitations had been sent to Rankin shipmates living within 200 miles of San Antonio, and several shipmates responded by attending. Notable among them were Bill "Rick" Reichenbach, SM3, 1959-1962, and Warren Wood, GM1, 1955-1958.

The first event was a water taxi ride to a Tex-Mex dinner at Casa Rio Restaurant on the city's famous Riverwalk. After dinner, we had an extensive boat tour of the area. Some guests couldn't get used to riding in a boat with seats and without a bow ramp.

The next morning we toured a Spanish Mission, had lunch in Alamo Plaza, then had a leisurely visit to the Alamo. In the evening we took a bus to Rio Cibolo Ranch for a hayride, buffet dinner, and Western entertainment. The guy with the lasso was great, and so were the longhorn cattle.

Saturday we took a long bus ride to picturesque Fredericksburg, Texas, home of WWII Admiral Chester Nimitz and of the National Museum of the Pacific War. The two ships held their memorial services on the museum grounds. The reunion ended with the traditional banquet dinner.



**Rhode Island - 2014**

Our Eleventh Annual Reunion took place in Newport/Providence Rhode Island from October 2-5, 2014. The reunion headquarters was the Crowne Plaza at the Crossings, in Warwick, RI. The reunion group from USS Yancey (AKA-93) was also in attendance. There were 55 attendees from the Rankin and 25 from the Yancey, for a total of 80 happy men and women.

Invitations had been sent to shipmates living within 200 miles of Rhode Island, and several of them attended. Notable among them were Al Hurwitz, S2/c, 1946-1947, and Tim McBurnie, SN, 1970-1971.

Early arrivals took an interesting tour of Providence and its Culinary Museum.

On Friday, we toured Newport's Naval War College Museum (did you know that the United States Naval Academy started out in Newport?) and the Surface Warfare Officers School, which uses realistic bridge simulators to teach shiphandling to surface ship officers from Ensigns to Captains. In the afternoon, the group drove past the famous Newport mansions. A tour of The Breakers, the most opulent and most famous of them, topped off the afternoon. An unforgettable clambake ended the day.

Saturday took us to Battleship Cove, our Memorial Service, and the world's largest collection of historic naval ships. We had a delicious lunch in the wardroom of USS Massachusetts (BB-59), then toured the ships and exhibits at the cove.

Our annual banquet wrapped things up.

## SHIPMATES ON PARADE

**Billy M. Weckwerth – Born 1928**



Billy spent a year on the Rankin in 1946-47. He enlisted on April 6, 1946 and joined the Rankin as a Fireman Second Class in July (note the Fireman stripe around his left shoulder). Here's his story in his own words:

I turned 17 in August, 1945, the same month that the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan. I wanted to join the Navy, and in December 1945 I was sent from my home in Casper, WY to Denver for a physical exam, which I failed to pass because they detected albumin in my urine. I returned to Casper and sometime during the next month or so I decided to go to Long Beach, CA to be with my Dad and his family for a time. While I was there I again attempted to join the Navy and was sent to Los Angeles for the physical exam. This time I was not rejected, and on April 6, 1946 I was sworn into the Navy and sent to the US Naval Training Station San Diego, where I underwent nine weeks of basic training.

During that time we were asked what area of service we thought we would like to pursue. I had the desire to go into underwater demolition but was steered toward the mechanical area and below decks training in the area of engine room and boiler room.

On completion of basic training I graduated from the Training Center with the rank of Fireman 2nd Class. On June 26, 1946, I transferred (by troop train) to Treasure Island Naval base to await transfer to a ship. On July 10, 1946, I was sent to Mare Island Naval Base at Vallejo, CA where I boarded my first ship, the USS Rankin (AKA 103). I was assigned duty in the engine room. On July 23, 1946 the Rankin went to sea for a "shakedown" cruise (after having undergone some repairs while at Mare Island) then sailed on to San Diego. My first job aboard the Rankin was to watch the bilge pumps in the lowest level of the ship. Later I was assigned to the evaporator watch, making fresh water for the ship.

After anchoring in San Diego harbor, we went through a few weeks of amphibious training, loading and offloading LCM and LCVP landing craft off Silver Strand at Coronado Island. On September 7, 1946, the Rankin joined a convoy of other ships and got underway for Japan. During the journey we went through a severe typhoon that lasted about four days and nights. There was a rumor that the merchant

marine ship, the Empire State, sunk with all her crew about four hours ahead of us.

One of my duties was to inspect the bearing wells that lubricate the shaft that turns the ship's screw. To gain access to them, I had to first go on deck, then aft to the Fantail where the hatch to the shaft alley was located, then below by ladder to the shaft alley which ran from the engine room bulkhead aft to the screw.

During the storm the deck crew had installed an additional emergency lifeline which was inboard from the main lifeline about four feet, for extra safety on deck during the storm. Prior to going aft to take care of my duties, the Chief Machinist Mate had loaned me his flashlight and on my way I lost my footing and slipped through the first lifeline. Fortunately, I recovered by the time I reached the next lifeline, but unfortunately, I lost the Chief's flashlight. He chewed me out royally for the loss when I returned to the Engine Room without it.

We arrived in Tokyo Bay on September 22, 1946, and after a lengthy time at anchor, we moved into Yokosuka, where we tied up at docks previously occupied by the Japanese fleet. We remained in Yokosuka, where we frequently went to sea for boat maneuvers, and underwent some repairs to the ship. We also had lots of liberty, allowing us to explore the towns and the area in and around Yokosuka.

During the time we were docked in Yokosuka some of the crew was sent by train to Nikko, a beautiful park in the mountains, for several days of rest and recreation. As we travelled through the Japanese countryside large areas were bombed out and much of it appeared to have burned. At first we thought it to be the site of the A-Bomb that ended the war, but we later found out that the destruction was caused by the many Allied bombing missions.

We all hated to leave this wonderful place of Nikko, but we returned to Yokosuka and on October 26, 1946 we sailed for Tsingtao, China where we anchored and remained until December 10, 1946, when we sailed for Chinwangtao, China. On December 12, 1946 we docked there until January 4, 1947 when we sailed for the States and moored at Navy Pier in San Diego harbor on January 25, 1947.

After the Navy, Billy worked in oil refining, and as a fire-fighter. Later on, he was the Wyoming State Fire Marshal and Director of the state's Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety.

## SEAMANSHIP TEST

One time during the underway watch the OOD decided to test the seamanship of the Boatswain's Mate of the Watch.

"Boats, what would you do if the bow lookout fell into the drink?"

"Easy, sir. I'd call Man Overboard and follow the man overboard procedure."

"And what would you do if an officer fell overboard?"

"Hmmm," the BM2 said, "which one, sir?"



# THE GATOR

AMPHIBIOUS FORCE, U. S. ATLANTIC FLEET

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 16

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 1958

## Rankin Nominated from All PhibLant Ships To Receive Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Prize

### \$500 Award Will Go into Ship's Fund

The Force ship Rankin has been nominated to receive the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award this year, designating her the best in PhibLant.

The Rankin, which has three "E" awards to her credit this year, has also been nominated for the Battle Efficiency Award plaque. She has held this award for the past two years.

The Marjorie Sterrett Award is given each year to one ship in the Pacific and one ship in the Atlantic Fleets. It is rotated between the different types of ships, and this year, as announced by the Chief of Naval Operations, it goes to PhibLant and PhibPac.

The prize consists of \$500 to be used for the benefit of the ship's enlisted personnel only. This year the money will be deposited in the recreation fund of the Rankin, and be used for athletic equipment, furniture for recreation rooms, dances, picnics, parties, and similar recreational activities.

The Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Fund was established in 1917 by the predecessor company of the "New York Herald Tribune." It was ini-

tiated by a 13-year-old girl who sent a dime with the following letter:

Brooklyn, N. Y.  
February 2, 1916

To the Editor of the  
New York Tribune

Dear Sir:

I read in your paper every morning a lot about preparedness. My grandpa and my great grandpa were soldiers. If I were a boy I would be a soldier, too, but I am not, so I want to do what I can to help. Mama gives me a dime every week for helping her. I am sending you this week's dime to help build a battleship for Uncle Sam. I know a lot of other kids would give their errand money if you would start a fund. I am thirteen years old, and go to Public School No. 9, Brooklyn.

Truly yours,  
Marjorie Sterrett

Before World War II, the income from the fund was used for annual prizes to turret and gun crews with the highest scores in short-range battle fire practice, and to submarine crews making the highest score in torpedo firing.

After the war, to promote battle efficiency, the Navy changed the award procedure whereby ships standing highest in intratype battle efficiency competitions would receive the prize.

The Gator was, and maybe still is, a weekly newspaper published in Little Creek for the benefit of the East Coast amphibious forces. We have several copies in our files. Judging by the Volume Numbers, it seems to have begun publication in 1942. When we checked during the early years of The USS Rankin Association, it was still being published, and there was a complete collection of all issues on hand at Little Creek.



**BEST IN PHIBLANT** - The Force ship Rankin has been nominated to receive the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship award this year, an award which designates her the best in PhibLant. She was in competition with all Atlantic amphibious ships, which were the only ships eligible to receive the award in the Atlantic this year.

### Seven Ships Win Battle Efficiency Award Plaques

Seven Force ships have been selected to receive the 1958 Battle Efficiency Award plaques, an award which is based on the ship's overall mark, including training exercises (65), inspections (20), and performance (15).

Winners this year are the Rankin, Tallahatchie County, Rockbridge, Waldo County, Taconic, Fremont, and LCUron 1470.

Dates of the presentations of the awards have not been announced.

The Battle Efficiency Award replaces the Battle Readiness Plaque that was presented in the Amphibious Force last year. Brass plaques of the award will be presented for display by each ship.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE AWARD

Before World War II, the battle efficiency competition was developed throughout the Navy to a high degree of perfection. It did much to stimulate development of new methods and techniques. Before the competition could get back into full swing after World War II, however, the Korean Conflict broke out and the program became sidetracked.

Under the present program, one ship from each amphibious transport squadron and landing ship squadron receives the award each year.

The unit, ship, and the ship's final score are as follows: LCUron 2, LCU 1470 - 91.55; TransPhibRon 8, Rankin - 86.30; LSTRon 4, Tallahatchie County - 85.08; TransPhibRon 2, Rockbridge - 82.33; LSTRon 2, Waldo County - 81.80; TransRon-PhibLant, Taconic - 80.86; and Trans-PhibRon 4, Fremont - 80.58.

## REUNION ATTENDEES – 2013 & 2014

These 62 USS Rankin shipmates attended our reunions in 2013 and/or 2014, along with 50 guests. Nine shipmates had not attended any of our previous reunions. Their first reunion dates are marked with asterisks. Several shipmates brought family members who enjoyed San Antonio and/or Rhode Island, but didn't attend our events.

Shipmate and Rank or Rate	Years Aboard	Guest	Current Residence	Attended
Allen, Paul, ENS (SC)	1946-1947	Faye Allen	Mission, Texas	2013
Beeler, Dave, ETN3	1963-1966	Andrea Beeler	Fort Walton Beach, Florida	2013, 2014
Berninger, George, LTJG (SC)	1962-1964	Rita Berninger	Camarillo, California	2013
Brown, Charles, LTJG	1962-1963	Jane Brown	Marion, North Carolina	2013
Buckner, Paul, EN2	1957-1958	Sylvia Tomlinson	Peachtree City, Georgia	2013
Burke, John, EN2	1966-1970	Lorraine Burke	Pompton Plains, New Jersey	2013, 2014
Declet, Daniel, DC3	1966-1968	Theresa Declet	Toms River, New Jersey	2014
Devault, Robert, SM2	1959-1962	Ann Devault	Fredericksburg, Virginia	2014
Devroe, Bill, SK3	1963-1965	Bette Devroe	Wayne, New Jersey	2013, 2014
Doherty, Hugh, SN	1959-1961	Margaret Doherty	Smithtown, New York	2014
Douthit, Teddy, BMSN	1965-1967	Joan Douthit	Highlands, Texas	2013
Dowling, June (Mrs. Ed), ENS	1963-1964		San Marcos, Texas	2013*
Dunning, Willie, PFC, USMC	1962		Mobile, Alabama	2013
Erickson, Gary, BM3	1964-1967		Muscoda, Wisconsin	2013
Falker, Ray, MM3	1964-1967	Jackie Falker	Ellicott City, Maryland	2013
Feeley, John, LTJG	1961-1963	Meg Feeley	Crystal Lake, Illinois	2013
Fields, Mike, IC3	1957-1961	Susan Fields	Richmond, Michigan	2014
Gaskell, Ed, LTJG	1954-1956	Ed Gaskell, III	McLean, Virginia	2013
Gersbacher, Frank "Pete", LTJG	1959-1960	Lola Gersbacher	Anaheim, California	2013, 2014
Gould, Elton, CSSN	1956-1960	Margaret Gould	Fall River, Massachusetts	2013, 2014
Gully, Stew, LTJG	1958-1959	Ellie Gully	Raleigh, North Carolina	2013, 2014
Hardegree, Howard, ENS	1960-1961	Peggy Hardegree	Fort Worth, Texas	2013*
Head, Hillyer "Billy", S1/c	1945-1946	Randall Gilreath	Oxford, Georgia	2013, 2014
Hitchcock, Matthew "Jack", LTJG	1962	Gail Zeanah	Eclectic, Alabama	2013
Hurwitz, Al, S2C	1946-1947		Barrington, Rhode Island	2014*
Koepp, Dale, EN3	1962-1964		Amherst, Ohio	2013
Lacy, Dick, ENS	1958-1959	Martha Lacy	Jamesville, New York	2013, 2014
Lathrop, Lee, SN	1957-1959		Roseville, Minnesota	2013
Len, Bill, LTJG	1962-1964	Beverly Len	Stillwater, Oklahoma	2013
Liesegang, Charles, RM3	1964-1966	Debbie Liesegang	Englewood, Florida	2013
Liff, Donald, SH3	1953-1955	Barbara Liff	Annapolis, Maryland	2013, 2014
Lint, Paul, RD2	1964-1967	Jeanie M. Lint	Sierra Vista, Arizona	2013
Lobello, Tom, RDM2/c	1945-1946	Lee Lobello	Jacksonville, Florida	2013
Mayes, Elmer, HMC	1962-1965	Ruth Mayes	Saint Cloud, Florida	2013
McBurnie, Timothy, SN	1970-1971		Seekonk, Massachusetts	2014*
McCourt, Jim, RD3	1963-1966	Mae McCourt	Tierra Verde, Florida	2013, 2014
McCubbin, James, RD2	1962-1965		Bridgeton, New Jersey	2013*, 2014
Miller, Drew, LTJG(MC)	1946-1947		Rochester, Minnesota	2013
Miller, Jim, RM2	1954-1958	Elenda Miller	Quinton, Alabama	2013
Mohun, Marion (Mrs. Richard), LTJG	1959-1961		Austin, Texas	2013*
Mooney, Jim, RM3	1955-1957	Alice Mooney	Phoenix, Arizona	2013
Newell, Allen, RM3	1959-1960	Donna Newell	Cumberland, Wisconsin	2013
Parsons, Mason, FN	1966-1968	Laura Parsons	E Wakefield, New Hampshire	2014
Peña, Manuel, RM3	1963-1964	Lynn Peña	Allen, Texas	2013, 2014
Pepper, Barton, LT(CHC)	1960-1962	Betty Pepper	Mt. Juliet, Tennessee	2013
Plumb, Jim, BT3	1966-1968	Linda Plumb	Hampden, Massachusetts	2014
Raso, Jack, LTJG	1963-1964	Barbara Raso	Ellicott City, Maryland	2013, 2014
Reichenbach, William "Rick", SM3	1959-1962	Serene Reichenbach	Fort Worth, Texas	2013*
Rogers, Dan, SN	1960-1961	Sue Rogers	Gettysburg, Pennsylvania	2013
Sander, Louis "Skip", LTJG	1961-1963		Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	2013, 2014
Shaw, Frank, BM2	1956-1959	Alberta Shaw	Sauquoit, New York	2014
Siciliano, Carl, CS3	1963-1964	Florence Siciliano	Lindenhurst, New York	2014
Smith, Charles, PN3	1964-1965	Mary Smith	Fort Wayne, Indiana	2014



## REUNION ATTENDEES – 2013 & 2014

Shipmate and Rank or Rate	Years Aboard	Guest	Current Residence	Attended
Smits, Jan, EN2.....	1957-1959.....	Carol Fuos.....	Grand Prairie, Texas.....	2013, 2014
Spicer, S. Ray, BT3 .....	1960-1963.....	Alice Spicer .....	Brooklyn, New York .....	2013, 2014
Stith, Ed, 1LT, USMC.....	1959-1961.....	Shari Clapp.....	Springdale, Arkansas .....	2013
Stringer, Walter "Buddy", MM3 .....	1965-1969.....	Arleen Stringer.....	Islip Terrace, New York .....	2013
Thomas, Mark, IC3 .....	1967-1970.....	Linda Thomas.....	Stillwater, Oklahoma .....	2013, 2014
Wetmore, Irving, Jr., SFPFN .....	1961-1963.....	.....	Taftville, Connecticut.....	2014
Wood, Warren, GM1 .....	1955-1958.....	Rosamalia Wood .....	San Antonio, Texas .....	2013*
Zellers, Raymond, FTG3.....	1959-1960.....	.....	Eustis, Florida .....	2013*, 2014
Zimmer, Harry, LTJG.....	1958-1960.....	Norma Zimmer.....	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.....	2013, 2014

\* First-time attendee

### USS Muliphen (AKA-61)

These nine USS Muliphen shipmates and their seven guests joined us in San Antonio in 2013. Muliphen reunions have historically been held in the spring, and the Muliphen group has decided to hold their future reunions at that time of the year.

Baines, David, Friend .....	N/A .....	Brenda Baines .....	Johnson City, Tennessee .....	2013
Bieler, Alan, MM2, .....	1963-1966.....	Laura Bieler .....	Medford, New York.....	2013
Casey, Bob, EM3 .....	1962.....	Karen Robinson .....	St. Louis, Missouri .....	2013
Hollins, George, YN1 .....	1966-1968.....	Rachel Hollins .....	Bumpass, Virginia .....	2013
Markley, Richard T., PN3.....	1963-1965.....	Faith L. Markley .....	Millington, Tennessee .....	2013
McCaffrey, Ed, RD2 .....	1963-1966.....	Theresa McCaffrey .....	Vero Beach, Florida.....	2013
Watson, Choice, YN3 .....	1967.....	Chiquita Watson.....	Kansas City, Missouri.....	2013
Wiant, Joan M., Friend .....	.....	.....	Newark, Delaware .....	2013
Wotherspoon, Jerry, YNSN.....	1964-1965.....	Liz Wotherspoon .....	Dover, Florida.....	2013

### USS Yancey (AKA-93)

These 17 Yancey shipmates and nine guests joined us in Rhode Island in 2014. The groups are highly compatible, and the Yancey shipmates bring some rare and useful talents to the table. The Yancey is committed to having joint reunions with us in 2015 and into the foreseeable future.

Amundsen, Jeffrey, RD3 .....	1967-1968.....	Isabelle Amundsen .....	Hamilton, Michigan.....	2014
Balt, Richard, LTJG.....	1962-1963.....	.....	Poultney, Vermont .....	2014
Boyd, Norman, EMC.....	1961-1963.....	Connie Boyd .....	Gulfport, Mississippi.....	2014
Clifton, George, QM2.....	1963-1967.....	.....	Oak Lawn, Illinois .....	2014
Cox, John, RD3.....	1964-1965.....	Julie Cox .....	Fairport, New York.....	2014
Foss, Eugene, FN .....	1962-1965.....	.....	Linwood, Pennsylvania .....	2014
Gillespie, Walter, FN.....	1961-1963.....	Toby Gillespie .....	Madison, Alabama .....	2014
Hill, Gene, PC3 .....	1966-1968.....	Shereen Hill.....	Duluth, Minnesota.....	2014
Karlis, John, EM3.....	1966-1968.....	.....	Derby, New York .....	2014
Lundberg, Marshall, LTJG.....	1965-1968.....	Mary Kay Lundberg.....	Portsmouth, Rhode Island .....	2014
Malme, Duane, MM3 .....	1955-1957.....	Betty Malme.....	Sacramento, California.....	2014
McCluskey, Leo, RMC .....	1964-1967.....	Ann McCluskey .....	Rochester, New Hampshire.....	2014
McLaughlin, Edmund, RM3 .....	1965-1967.....	.....	Kennewick, Washington.....	2014
Messer, Phillip, EN1 .....	1960-1963.....	Charlie Messer .....	Rancho Cordova, California .....	2014
Smiley, Robert, ETR3 .....	1965-1967.....	.....	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.....	2014
Smith, Jr, Paul, EM3.....	1966-1968.....	.....	York, Maine .....	2014
Welfare, William, EM3.....	1964-1967.....	.....	Riverside, Rhode Island .....	2014



## SHIPMATES ON PARADE



**Richard B. Lacy – Born 1935**

In 1953 I enrolled in the Navy ROTC at Cornell University in my hometown of Ithaca, NY. It was wartime and every Cornell student needed to deal somehow with his Selective Service obligation. About 1,000 of them applied for the Navy ROTC program, with the successful applicants being notified the week before classes began. I was one of 300 successful applicants, because I lived in Ithaca and because my dentist agreed to grind down one of my teeth so I could pass the stringent dental exam.

At the time I was accepted, I signed a contract not to marry until I received my commission. I met my future wife Martha that very night! We married on August 17, 1958, moved to Norfolk, and I reported to Little Creek, as the Rankin was at sea. After three weeks, the ship pulled into Norfolk. I was assigned to the Engineering Department—me, a Science Education major, with no technical skills. My roommate, Dave Stump, an MIT Engineering grad, was the boat officer. I said, "We need to swap jobs. Let's talk to Commander Hopkins." We talked to the exec, he talked to Captain Harllee, and two days later, I was the boat officer!

Captain Harllee always invited crew members to his cabin on their birthdays. Four weeks after I came aboard, I got an invitation, and we discussed amphibious operations. He also invited new officers and their wives to his home for dinner. John

Vinson and I were chosen in late November 1958. We had just been told of a six-month Mediterranean mission. Mrs. Harllee told us that she always followed the ship and met it in every port; she would show our wives (Martha and Terrie) the ropes. I had bought a French Simca automobile through the AAA to pick up in Cannes, France. Captain Harllee said, "If you transport my wife all over the Mediterranean, I will make sure your car comes back on the Rankin."

But two weeks before the ship left for the Med, CAPT Harllee was transferred. But the new C.O., Captain Gabbert, had received a letter reporting the promise. He agreed to keep it, as long as we would give him a ride to Rome from Naples to visit a friend (no official vehicle for pleasure). I was granted "basket leave" for Martha to go, too, so everything happened as planned. John and I met our wives for over half of the days in port. There are lots of stories about these stops which Martha documented with photos in an album. The Med cruise was scheduled for February to August, 1959. Guess who got new orders in June? Me, the only one on board who was not chomping at the bit to get home! The car was filled with souvenirs and put on board before I left Naples on July 1, 1958 aboard an MSTs Ship. Martha left the same day on the SS Constitution and reached New York City three days ahead of me. One notable fact: down came the 48-star flag on July 4th and up went the 49-star version to add Alaska to the Union.

After the Rankin, I was assigned to Little Creek's Boat Unit 2. I was division officer of 12 LCUs skippered by senior chief boatswain's mates who had an average time in service of 24 years. I didn't have a year in, and was still an Ensign. I admitted I knew nothing, so they trained me! We made several trips to Morehead City to pick up Marines, then off to Vieques Island.

I left Norfolk in late August 1959, stopping on my way home to interview for a job with the Boy Scouts of America. I got the job, bought a house, and started immediately. I went to the Navy Reserve Building to join up, but the Commander, who was on the Board of the Boy Scouts Council, knew I worked every night with volunteers and said he would call me if the reserves ever needed me. Four years later when I was transferred to Hackensack NJ, the Commander said the same thing. So in six years, I never actually was in the Reserves. After seven years with the Boy Scouts, I found a job with a church camp in Titusville PA, where I developed a horseback riding program, build an Olympic size swimming pool, and encouraged young people to be leaders. Then I moved to a Dude Ranch and developed a resident horse camp. My last camp was near Syracuse NY, introducing horses there. At age 53 the 80 hour week was replaced by 37 hours at Syracuse University, where I spent ten years in the Audiovisual Department. I'm retired now, and still traveling. The Rankin reunions are good starting points for other experiences, so Martha and I usually stay in town a while to learn more about the area, the history, and the people.

## HAND SALUTES

All veterans (this means YOU) are authorized to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering, or passing of the American flag, and during the playing of the national anthem. The saluting veterans can be in or out of uniform, and may or may not be covered (wearing hats). These authorizations were granted by the National Defense Authorization Acts of 2008 and 2009.

Many veterans left the service long before this authorization was granted, so they aren't aware that they can salute at the times when others are just standing silently or standing with their hands over their hearts.

## SHIPMATES ON PARADE

James Michael Dousman - Born 1942



I only spent five months aboard the USS Rankin in 1962, but it was as memorable in my Navy adventure as the following three years aboard the high-tech USS Mahan (DLG-11).

I was assigned to the Rankin directly out of boot camp, waiting for a billet at Fire Control Technician A School. The Rankin wasn't in port in January 1962 so I reported to the Norfolk transient barracks for a while. One very cold evening in February, on muster, I was ordered to report to a launch with few other sailors because the Rankin was "anchored in the stream." As a fresh boot, I was most excited about this. We arrived about midnight at the accommodation ladder dangling from the side of the ship. I scurried up the ladder with my seabag over my shoulder, and presented my orders envelope to the OOD on the quarter-deck. After I checked in, a BM1 named Frenchy with an arm full of hash marks sent me down below to take a bunk for the night. I was awakened about 5AM and told to join the deck force on deck. The ship was moving! We were at sea! I was given a squeegee and told to join



the others scraping the ice from the deck.

After a couple of days working on the deck force, a Lieutenant came down and told me to report to the Armory with the Gunners Mates. I was still in a daze since we were still out to sea, so I did not realize what good fortune this was for me. Life was much easier than it had been on the deck force. I shared a duty with another SA every other morning to check and record magazine temperatures. That was it for my duties for the day.

A day later, I was sitting in the armory on the main deck looking out the porthole watching the waves during particularly rough weather while we sailed off Cape Hatteras. GM2 Clark was laughing at me for my amazement at the rolling of the ship when a very strong wave apparently hit us and everything in compartment started moving around including a 400 lb. safe on the deck. I knew something was seriously wrong when Clark stopped laughing and grabbed for the pipes in the overhead. The safe crushed the 30 cup coffee pot against the bulkhead as the ship rolled heavily down on the starboard side and stayed there for a few seconds then back up again. Meanwhile green water spurted through the porthole as it was not tightly dogged down. The compartment was sloshing around with sea water. Finally the ship settled down to its previous rocking and rolling. A few minutes later our leading FT came in the armory and he had wet gray paint on his hat and shoulders. After we stopped laughing a bit, he told us that he had been painting in the radar room and felt a little seasick. He put the paint can on the deck and laid down to calm the motion. Then we took that roll and the paint can went flying. We found out later we had made a turn and a big wave hit us broadside.

Such were my memories of my first week aboard the Rankin. After my time in the Navy, I spent 27 years as an IBM Field Engineer in the Bay Area, then fifteen as the owner of two different tech companies.

## RANKIN BURIALS

Jerry Wotherspoon, president of the USS Muliphen (AKA-61) Reunion Association, has done some research on placing the ashes of deceased shipmates aboard the Muliphen. What he has learned probably applies to the Rankin as well, since the two ships are sunk about 20 miles apart off Stuart and Fort Pierce, Florida.

Jerry has found a Certified Diver working at the UDT/SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce. They are willing to take the ashes/urn of a cremated shipmate to their final resting place at an appropriate location aboard the ship. The only cost involved is a small rental fee for a boat. Here is the scenario for a Muliphen burial; a Rankin burial is probably similar, but shorter, since the Rankin is sunk closer to shore: The ashes/urn must be brought to the Fort Pierce, FL docks (maybe Stuart, FL for the Rankin) and handed to the diver. Family members may escort the ashes if they like. Plan on a five hour day for the ceremony—the trip to the ship is about two hours, the dive and photographs will take about an hour, and the trip back to shore will take another two hours.

The dive/memorial service will only be conducted during the calm water season of July and August. Therefore, start your preparation earlier than that for transporting the urn to the area. Contact Skip Sander to inquire about possible arrangements.

## PROUD FATHERS

Three men are sitting stiffly side by side on a long commercial flight. After they are airborne and the plane has leveled off, the man in the window seat abruptly says, distinctly and confidently, in a low voice, "Admiral, United States Navy, retired. Married, two sons, both surgeons."

After a few minutes the man in the aisle seat states through a tightlipped smile, "Admiral, United States Navy, retired." Married, two sons, both judges."

After some thought, the man in the center seat decides to introduce himself. With a twinkle in his eye he proclaims: "Chief Petty Officer, United States Navy, retired. Never married, two sons, both

# HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Saturday 1 January 1955

00-04 — Eight bells rouse a new year to life,  
For the old one has passed away.  
And thus does the year of Our Lord  
Nineteen fifty-five start this day.  
The starboard anchor is down in the mud  
With sixty fathoms of chain,  
The marking is at the water's edge,  
The stopper is taking the strain.  
The Navigator fixes the ship  
By bearings taken with care,  
Eight hundred yards west of anchorage eight,  
Which is not unusual or rare,  
In area Fox One of the Great Hampton Roads.  
In this state of Virginia so fair;  
Which the Good Ship Rankin certainly knows,  
This being her favorite lair.  
The depth of the water in fathoms is six,  
And those bearings taken with care,  
Show Middle Ground light bearing two thirty-  
three,  
If it changes, Sailor Beware!  
The Grain Elevator with a red light on top  
Bears one thirty-five and two-thirds,  
The Radio Tower: two seventy three,  
But no truer than these next words:  
The Senior Officer Present Afloat,  
His flag is there to see,  
Is COMPHIBLANT in the POCONO,  
The sixteenth AGC.  
The other ships present this New Year's Day,  
Include units various and sundry  
Of the United States Atlantic Fleet  
In which no one ever goes hungry,  
Especially true this glorious day,  
For the cooks will soon be awake,  
Rising this Happy Holiday  
To bake a festive cake.  
In closing this piece of poetic courage  
For the air is damp and chilly  
I must mention that Boiler Number One is in use  
For purposes auxiliary.



D. L. SCHREIBER  
ENS, USNR

## NAVY LOGS IN VERSE

It is an old Navy tradition that the first Deck Log of the new year can be written in verse. Here are two USS Rankin verse logs, one from sixty years ago, and one from fifty.

We've lost track of LTJG Schreiber. Bob Dyson died in July, 2012. Their memory lives on in the logs at the National Archives.

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Friday 1 January 1965

00-04 - The baby new year has just arrived  
At the good ship Rankin by the Army Pier  
In Norfolk, Virginia this "balmy" night  
Tied to the Amphion her starboard side  
Her lines are doubled, her wires are set.  
Her iron is cold, her sailors are warm  
As steam she receives as well as her lights  
From our neighbor next door to starboard or  
right.

Security is set, condition is four  
With YOKE below and X-RAY is high  
Many ships are here from near and afar.  
Most are Naval, though, of course, some are  
not

But all are friendly and join in good cheer  
To wish you all a Happy New Year!

SOPA is COMNAVAIRLANT.



R. E. Dyson  
LTJG USNR

## USS RANKIN NEWS

USS RANKIN NEWS is published by:

The USS Rankin Association  
153 Mayer Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
412-367-1376  
ussrankin@aol.com  
www.ussrankin.org

Back issues at [www.ussrankin.org/news.htm](http://www.ussrankin.org/news.htm)

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

Members of the Executive Board are:

Louis "Skip" Sander, Chairman  
George R. Berninger  
Jill S. Breslau  
John F. Feeley  
James P. McCourt  
Jack L. Raso  
Robert A. Reynolds  
Jan W. Smits