



USS Gunston Hall

LSD 5

Spring 2007 Newsletter of the Gunston Hall Reunion Association

Countdown to ...

Reunion VIII

San Diego

Hello Shipmates,

Our 8th reunion is fast approaching and as this will be the last newsletter you will receive before we all go to San Diego I just wanted to go over the final details. The reunion will take place April 29 to May 1st at the Red Lion Hanalei Hotel in San Diego's Mission Valley. The address of the hotel is 2270 Hotel Circle North.

On May 1st (our last day of the reunion) the hotel will change over to the Crowne Plaza Hotel. This won't affect us except that there will be some good upgrades. When we check in on Apr. 29 the sign outside should still read Red Lion. The Red Lion's website address is www.hanaleihotel.com so check it out.

Room rates are \$127.07 per day which includes all taxes. Vehicle parking is \$3 per day. The room rate is good for three days before and three days after the reunion for anyone who wants to stay longer. Meal costs for the Sunday buffet and Tuesday's Royal Hawaiian Luau dinner are **\$82 per person for both meals**. If you haven't already please send your meal money to our treasurer Chod Cremer, PO Box 201, Agency, IA 52530.

There are still many shipmates who have said they are going to the reunion but have not made their reservations with the hotel so I don't really know how many to expect. We need to give the hotel a



Balboa Park, San Diego, California

firmer count of attendees for meal purposes, room blocks, etc. and it is difficult when so many have not made plans yet. **The deadline for making room reservations is April 2nd.** So if you are serious about going you had better make your reservations now.

The hotel's reservation number is 1-800-882-0858 and make sure you tell them that you are with the USS Gunston Hall reunion. You will be

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Many of the decks and exhibit spaces on the U.S.S. Midway are wheelchair accessible; loaner wheelchairs are available.



Nostalgia

As told by **Ellsworth Frankson**, SK2, 51-54

Watching TV on Christmas Eve, I saw various celebrities re-counting how they entertained troops overseas. We too on the Gunston Hall LSD-5 entertained troops...especially one night in Korea.

In the fifties, during the Korean War, we had a country-western band onboard. Some of the members I can remember were Red Sansing, Gene Autrey, Archie Stigman, myself and others whose names I can't recall. We usually played after chow, before the movies in the ship fitter's shop.

The ship was moored one time near a Korean Island when the army guys on the island asked if we'd come over and play at their enlisted men's club. It was the kind of island that the war passes by, leaving nothing but boring duty to the G.I.s stationed there. We loaded up our gear in a cloth covered, open ended army truck for a trip across the island. The road was nothing but ruts and potholes. It was so rough, the steel guitar flew out the back of the truck, bounced several times, and ended up in a ditch. We yelled for the driver to stop, went back, got the guitar, wiped off the mud, and continued on our journey. When we arrived, the club was a small building made of field stones and the army guys were all coming in expecting a few beers and another boring evening. They were surprised when the navy showed up, instruments, amplifiers and all.

We set up and started playing country music. The crowd loved it and we were a real hit. As the evening wore on, the audience and the band got tipsier and tipsier. Finally I remember (through a haze), leading rousing singing, directing with my fiddle bow, as the G.I.s sang song after song until the wee hours in the morning.

When it came time to head back to the ship, the whole audience turned out and helped us pack up our gear and carry it out to the truck. In drunken sincerity they kept telling us over and over how much they appreciated our coming and playing for them. Some had been on that lousy island for over 18 months, and other than a USO troupe that came one time, did their show, and then headed for the officer's club, we were their first entertainment. They all urged us to come back again, saying they'd provide all the beer we could drink, and even fix us up with some of the local girls. What more could a bunch of young G.I.s ask for?

But of course we never had the opportunity again. Never in my fifty years of playing music have I ever had such an appreciative audience. Nothing fancy...just a bunch of ground-pounders who loved country music and the swabbies from the Gunston Hall. It was something I'll always remember, as I'm sure will all the others who were there that night many years ago in Korea.

Ellsworth Frankson, ellsfran@aol.com

In Memoriam

Robert (Bob) Radcliffe passed away on 1-11-07. He was Captain of the Gunston Hall from 1964 to 1966. He was planning on attending our 2007 reunion. Our condolences go to his wife Irma and his entire family.

We have received word that **Paul Chiabotti**, EM, 45-46 died on 10-6-06. We extend our sympathy to his wife Mary and his family.

Carl Maxie Brashear

Although he never served on the Gunston Hall, it is with some sadness to learn of the death of BMMC Carl Brashear. He was a pioneering Navy diver whose life story was the subject of the inspirational film *Men of Honor*. Shipmates that went on the LSD 44 cruise will recall having met him..



Burial At Sea, Unknown time and place
Photo submitted by Ron, son of Horace Silver RM 43-45



Mary Soo and her side painters at work in Hong Kong

Connections

Austin Climenson, QM, 57-61

Pedro Cruz, EM, 64-66, PACRUZ1932@aol.com

Kenneth Mathis, FN, 59-61

Squirrel Murphy, FN, 66-67, squirrel@dependmail.com

Robert L. Stevenson, HM, 65-66, rsteven@charter.net

John Wheelock, EM, 61-63, jaw229@cox.net

Editor's Note regarding '*Connections*' ...

Over the years, lists of crewmembers have been compiled from various sources and with the assistance of many shipmates. In pre-Internet years it was very difficult to actually find these guys. As a result there are several lists. Those that had been 'found' and contacted, those that had died, those that had been found but were not interested in GHRA and a big list of shipmates that had been identified but never located.

Recent efforts have been directed toward finding those on the "Not Found" list and generating interest among those on the "Not Interested" list.

In addition, there are new 'finds.' That is, shipmates that had never been on any list but happened to find us by accident or by surfing the Internet.

These efforts have paid off; we have reconnected with or found 72 shipmates, 18 of whom plan to attend the reunion!

How many men served on the Gunston Hall in total?

We can only estimate. From our records, the average tour of duty was just over 2 years. As the ship was in service 27 years, this would imply a turnover of 13.5 times throughout the ship's service period.

The ship usually had a compliment of 237 enlisted men and 17 officers for a total of 254. Applying our estimated turnover, we expect 254×13.5 or a total of 3,429 shipmates. All of our lists combined have 3,600 names.

Why the difference? There are probably errors in our database which would affect the average tour of duty and the total crew probably was not exactly 254 all the time. The point here is that all of the efforts, past and present, have been very effective in identifying members of the crew. At this time, we must have most of them on one list or another.

GHRA membership will decline in coming years. It is inevitable. Whether the above numbers are correct or not, there is a fixed number of potential members. The last candidate was a young sailor aboard the ship in 1970. He will be 55 at this reunion. We are an aging population; many have died, others have reached an advanced age. Social Security actuarial statistics indicate up to 2/3 of those aboard during WWII may have died; perhaps as many as 1/3 of the Korean vets. Those among us that think we will go on forever are in for a shock. We must concentrate on enjoying what we have and continuing to re-connect with those we have not yet found.

Internet Links

Reunion Headquarters

Hanalei Hotel

www.hanaleihotel.com

Reunion Attendees

To see a list of those planning to attend the reunion, go to ...

<http://www.ussgunstonhall.org/Special/attend.html>

Reunion Updates

There is a special page on our website that has all of the information regarding the reunion. It will be updated periodically. Even if you have read it already, it will be a good idea to check back from time to time.

<http://www.ussgunstonhall.org/Special/attend.html>

Other Links

American Naval Fighting Ships:

<http://www.hazegray.org/danfs/>

<http://www.navsource.org/>

If you haven't already discovered

<http://www.military.com/>

check it out ... they have interesting articles, special offers for veterans and they keep on top of benefits available to us.

San Diego Attractions

<http://www.sandiego.gov/directories/visiting.shtml>

Sick Call

John Tradup, YN 1954-56

Ted Reiley, TE, 1954-56

DUES REMINDER

Just a reminder to check your dues expiration date which is the three or four numbers just after your name on the mailing label. The first two numbers are the month and the last two numbers are the year in which your dues expire. Thanks for keeping your dues current and remaining a member of our Association.

Remember: in order to attend the reunion and participate in GHRA matters your dues must be current

Send your check for \$20, payable to GHRA to:

Chod Cremer

PO Box 201

Agency IA 52530

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asked for a credit card number to hold the room. Nothing will be charged to your credit card until you check out. If you make reservations and have to cancel for some reason just notify the hotel at least 48 hours before the reunion and there will be no charge. Less than 48 hours notice will result in a charge of one day's room rate. Don't take a chance of being shut out ... call the hotel right away.

I have arranged for a tour of the USS Midway CV-41 museum at the foot of Broadway followed by a harbor tour. The fee for the entire tour is \$49 per person and includes a box lunch, beverage and dessert. If you would like to go on this tour with us just send a check to Chod for \$49 or \$98 if you wife or guest would like to go so we can give them a count. It should be a fun day.

Also remember that in order to attend the reunion and participate in any GHRA matters your dues must be current so if your dues have expired or soon will add \$20 to your check to Chod. Check the date behind your name in this e mail or the date on the mailing label.

If you have any questions, give me a call! See you in San Diego!
Ron

Membership Directory

LAST CHANCE

URGENT

A new membership directory is being prepared . If any of your information has changed, please let us know. It is important that we have your current address, e-mail address and phone number. Also, you must let us know if you prefer to restrict any of your personal data. If we do not hear from you by April 1, we will assume the information on file is correct

USS Gunston Hall LSD 5 Reunion Association
Ron Kennedy (PN, 57-59), Chairman
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623/907-3688

Reunion VIII

April/May 2007 ...

Be There or Regret Having Missed It!

Here are a few comments we received after the last reunion ... Las Vegas in 2005.

I had a good time, and will definitely be going again ... Nice to meet you and the other guys for sure, I felt very welcome there!
-Tom Knox, SN, 1967

Thanks for the outstanding job done by you and members who helped make this one of the best reunions that I have attended.
-Quincy Stephens, 49-50

I really enjoyed myself and I think everyone at the reunion thought it was a huge success. - Bill Ludtke, RD, 56-59

Ardis and I had a very good time and enjoyed seeing everyone ... you did a fantastic job with the banquet and with the business meeting!!
- Robert Roh, SK, 54-56

This was the first business meeting in years that was free of unpleasantness.
- Don Parsley, SK, 51-54



Ship's plaque. Submitted by Cliff Boxer, EM, 1967-70

