



USS Gunston Hall

LSD 5

Fall 2008 Newsletter of the Gunston Hall Reunion Association

Branson 2009

April 26, 27, 28, 2009



The Veterans' Memorial Museum is one of the attractions waiting for us in Branson.

Hello Shipmates,

Our 2009 reunion is fast approaching and I want to go over the details once again so we can have a great turnout. Our reunion will be held April 26-28, 2009 at the Ramada Resort and Conference Center in Branson, Mo. The hotel is conveniently located near many show theaters and shopping places which should interest many of the wives attending. The USS Ashland LSD-1 held their reunion at the Ramada last June; I have talked with two of their board members and they were very satisfied with the Ramada.

The daily rate at the hotel is \$55.21 including tax and is also good for three days before the reunion and three days after the reunion for anybody who would like to stay a little longer.

When you make your reservations be sure to tell them you are with the Gunston Hall reunion group so you will receive this rate and be counted toward our block of rooms. The hotel's

reservation number is 1-800-641-4106; you will be required to give them a credit card number to hold the room but you will not be charged anything until check out. At this time, only 11 shipmates have made reservations. Please don't wait to call the hotel. This makes it difficult to plan for meals, etc. If you make your reservation and have to cancel you will not be charged anything as long as you cancel with the hotel at least 48 hours before the reunion. So let's get with it and make reservations now. Branson was selected for this reunion because of its convenient location and the wide variety of entertainment offered. Let's take advantage of it.

I recommend driving to Branson if possible as the closest airport is approximately 50 miles away in Springfield. Shuttle service is available but can be expensive so having your own car will be a great help.

We will be having a drawing for a **FREE ROOM** for all three days of the reunion for some lucky shipmate. The winner will be drawn from the shipmates that have made their hotel reservations by **January 31st**. The winner's name will be drawn by our treasurer Chod Cremer. If the person selected has to cancel another alternate name will be drawn. Somebody will get a free room. So if you want to be eligible for a free room be sure you make your hotel reservations no later than the deadline of January 31, 2009.

Meal prices have not been set as yet for 2009 but will be much less than they were in San Diego last year – probably less than fifty dollars per person for two dinners.

An excellent attraction in Branson is the Showboat Branson Belle, a paddle wheeler showboat tour on Table Rock Lake for two hours and includes a 3 course meal and great entertainment. They have group rates and also cater to military reunions. Several shipmates have told me they would like to go on the tour. The prices for 2008 are from \$45 to \$52 per person depending on which cruise we take. Prices for 2009 are not available as of now. So if you are interested in this tour let me know as soon as possible as we will have to book it in advance. The Showboat also has plenty of handicap facilities.

Let's all get on board now and make reservations so we can have a great reunion. If anybody has any questions just e-mail me.

- Ron

Connections

The following are entries taken from the Visitor's Log on our website. Not all of the new entries are reproduced here and some of these have been edited due to space requirements. However, they all remain unedited on the web page.

Jack Yant, RM 1967
Email : spohs65.com

Mike Michelsen, SF, 1946
Email : Mikendi4@msn.com
Enjoyed the vessel in all respects.
Even swimming in the hold.

Walter Wierzbicki, "Ski", BM 1962-64
Email : XFireCapt@aol.com
My fondest memories were the way the crew stuck together and looked out for each other. Black shoe and deckhands hanging out together.

James Peters, BM 1957-63
Email : jpeters@rushmore.com
Looking forward to the 2009 reunion in Branson, Mo.

Ellsworth "Frank" Frankson, SK 1951-54
Email : ellfran@aol.com
See you guys in Branson in 2009.

Ed Murphy, RM 1959-60
Email : wildirish22@aol.com

Al Salois, SN 1963-67
Albert.salois@comcast.net
Hey Gary Basore - you out there??
Lots of good (and not so good!!) times on board

Ed Sargent, QM 1950-51
sargpeah@gmail.com
Served aboard on Korean voyage. Mothered a group of mine sweeps and had a helicopter aboard for pilot rescue.

Ronnie Langley, RM 1961-64
Utwest@cox.net

Ken Hardy, EM 1969-70
Email : kandslbirds@AOL.com
Attended the reunion in San Diego ... it was great ...to have some original "plankholders" and the final crewmembers together, Looking forward to Branson reunion.

Kenneth R. Nielsen, RD 1953-54
Email : kenneth-nielsen@privat.dk
WELL DONE

Dean Hedlund, YN, 1960-61
Coaster@lakedalelink.net

Larry Mc Nutt, FN 1963-67
Email : lrmjmm6@sbcglobal.net
I worked in the port eng. Rm ... miss those days.
If Robert "BUDDY Sharp is listed contact me via e-mail.

Sheldon Weaver, SN 1959-62
papamoon @suddenlink.net
See you all in Branson. I was there for Hurricane Gustav

Ambrose Alvarado, DK 1960-64
Email : ambros24@yahoo.com

Special Requests

George Winslow, Sgt USMC 1964
Email : geowinslow@yahoo.com
I was with 3rd 8" how. btry. at 29 Palms, Cal. We boarded the Gunston Hall with two Howitzers, many trucks and jeeps in Oct. 1964 for Operation Hardnose. We were at sea for eight days before making a landing at Camp Pendleton. One of my many great adventures while serving in U.S.M.C.
Anyone else out there who participated in that operation?

Alfred M Whitman, RD 1966-68
Email : whitmanam@mstarmetro.net
I am looking for anyone that had known my dad.
I would like to find out about his time on board.

IMPORTANT

With the reunion coming up you don't want to have your dues lapse. Dues must be current in order to attend the reunion, have a voice in the organization and receive these newsletters.

Your expiration date follows your name on the mailing label or in the "To:" box on your e-mail. Or, call and we will help you out!

Send your check (\$20) payable to GHRA to our treasurer ...

Chod Cremer
PO Box 201, Agency IA 52530



World War II

Following are the final entries in the log provided by Debbie Wilkinson, daughter of George Dickinson. The author of the log remains unknown. These entries may be edited from the original. However, photocopies of the original are available on the website in the World War II section

1945

February

- 08: Left Ulithe for Saipan
- 11: At Saipan, loading and preparing for invasion at Iwo Jima
- 12: Training for invasion
- 16: Sailed for Iwo Jima
- 19: Arrived Iwo Jima
 - 0900: Invasion begins
 - 1930: retired to sea
- 20: Anchored at Iwo – making repairs to small craft.

March

- 02: Left Iwo Jima
- 02 to 12: En route to Milne Bay, New Guinea
- 12 to 14: At Milne Bay, loaded troops and LCM's
- 14: Sailed for Leyte
- 21 to 25: At Leyte preparing for invasion Okinawa
- 27: En route to Okinawa
- 31: *Left alone with God and White Angels as protectors. GH couldn't keep up with increased speed of convoy.*

April

- 01: Arrived Okinawa, 325 miles from Japanese Home Islands
 - 0800: Invasion begins
- 02: Shifted to Kerama Retto, repairing damaged craft
- 16: Shifted to Okinawa Shima – continued with repairs.
- 20: 18 air raids in 4 1/2 hours!
- 28 USS Comfort attacked by Kamikaze.

The Dickinson log ends here. According to the Silvers log, between May 1945 and the end of the war, the ship moved around a lot – mostly between Okinawa and the Philippines.

If any of you have greater detail, please share it with us. Likewise, we would like something similar about the Korean War.

For the Dickinson log, go to:

http://www.ussgunstonhall.org/MAIN/WW2_files/MPage0.htm

For the Silvers log, go to:

http://www.ussgunstonhall.org/MAIN/WW2_files/HSPage0.htm

In Memoriam

Radie Harbour, FN, 53-54 passed away in January

Internet Links

Branson Websites

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

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

Ramada-Branson Hotel

<http://www.the.ramada.com/branson12843>

Nimitz Museum

<http://www.nimitz-museum.org/>

Other Links

American Naval Fighting Ships:

<http://www.hazegray.org>

<http://www.navsource.org>

<http://www.military.com>

Current military news and events

<http://www.americasupportsyou.mil/americasupportsyou/>

For the latest reunion info:

www.ussgunstonhall.org/MAIN/R2009.htm

Check this out – a film clip of LSD 44 in action!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOHTwZu-mjw>



LTjgs Lazerov and Layden, ca 1953

Lose Your BJM?

From: Christine Cook (ccook08@att.net)

I recently came across a paper with the letterhead "U.S.S GUNSTON HALL (LSD-5), C/O FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. It has some names jotted on the back side "Geraldine Marie Clause" and "St. Germaine, - Bernard Joseph". It also has some Japanese or Korean marks. I found this paper in an old book I purchased over 10 years ago, "The Bluejackets Manual 1946"

7 months and counting ...

Save the dates
Don't miss out

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First Reunion

In 1993, on the ship's 50th 'birthday' 17 former crewmembers got together for a 'reunion.' They were: Harold Andrews, MM, 43-45; Robert Bartimus, MM, 49-52; Ira Colhoff, RM, 51-55; Chod Cremer, BM, 50-53; Bill Driscoll, BM, 62-65; Jack Ealy, BM, 59-62; Henry Fairbanks, FN, 45-47; Carl Gregory, RD, 60-62; Bill Greene, RM, 50-54; Ted Holmes, MM, 53-55; Clyde Poe, EM, 62-66; Henry Plymire, YN, 43-45; Dusty Roades, EM, 43-46; Eugene Smith, QM, 43-46; Archie Stegeman, RD, 50-54; Eugene Weber, QM, 1953; Victor Weiher, QM, 43-45



Looking Ahead

Although never actually proposed, several of us mused about having a reunion on a cruise ship. Well, U.S.S. Oak Hill, LSD-7 is doing just that later this year. We will check with them after the fact to see how it went but at first blush it does sound like a fun thing and is actually cheaper than most hotels. For details on the Oak Hill adventure, check out their website: <http://ussoakhillsd7.myevent.com/>

USS Gunston Hall LSD 5 Reunion Association

Ron Kennedy (PN, 57-59), Chairman

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<http://www.ussgunstonhall.org>

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Some Numbers

We currently have more than 3,600 names of shipmates in the database. Names are never deleted for any reason but a person's status may change. For example, the published directory only includes living shipmates that have shown an interest in GHRA past or present.

In all reunions since the first in 1993, 263 shipmates have attended ... obviously not all at the same time. In the past two reunions (Las Vegas in '05 and San Diego in '07) we had 33 new faces. That is, 33 shipmates that had never previously attended a reunion.

As we are an aging population, the list of deceased shipmates is growing. Currently we have notification of 714 deaths but simple actuarial estimates would put the real number over 1,000.

Some ships list all of this information on their websites but that seems an imprudent thing and we have never considered doing that. However, we will have all of the data in binders for review in Branson.

2009 Directory

In the next few months, we will be putting a new directory together. As in the past, it will include only those shipmates that are current members and those that have ever been a member in the past. If your data has changed or if you wish to limit or exclude anything we must know your wishes *now*.



Picture yourself on our private deck, sipping a brew and swapping tall tales! **Branson – April 2009 – Be There!**