

A newsletter exclusively for former USS YANCEY SAILORS

YANCEY MEMORIES

Volume 14, Issue 2

April 2010

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS YANCEY AKA-93



Special Points of Interest

- **Our cover story is by George Dawson as he remembers a happy time in San Francisco that turns into a frightening event.**
- **Only one new name for Welcome Mat on page two. Continue to search for lost shipmates.**
- **George Clifton tells why this year's Memorial Service will be especially hard. His column is on page two.**
- **The wife of a deceased shipmate has a reminder for all shipmates. See her request on page two.**
- **Did you ever meet someone you knew in an unexpected, far off place? Read stories on this subject on page three.**

THE LOST PURSE

By George Dawson

During my service on the Yancey in 1950-51, we made several trips from Oakland to Japan or Korea. Our time in Oakland was usually short—just enough to take on a new cargo. During Thanksgiving time of 1950, however, the ship needed some repairs, so we had a relatively long stay in Oakland. My wife was living in our house in New York, so I phoned her and urged her to come to San Francisco for a few days. She came and took a room in a hotel in San Francisco.

We had a great time going to movies and plays, eating in restaurants and doing what married couples do when they are home in bed. One evening when my time in the USA was

about to end, my wife and I were on one of the old street cars. As we were coming down a steep hill, my wife dropped her purse. It landed on the pavement, and I yelled to the driver to stop. He could not. As soon as he reached the bottom of the hill, however, we jumped out and ran up the hill to retrieve the purse. It was getting dark, and we saw a car stop at the spot where the purse was dropped. Before we could get there, however, the car was gone. So was the purse!

I had managed to see the license plate and memorized it before the car was gone, so we went to a police station. The police looked at the license plate number and said, "You must be mistaken. That is a plate for a car that is owned by someone far away from San Francisco."

Nearly all our money we had was in that purse. Back on the ship I told everyone the problem. How would my wife pay for her hotel bill? How would she pay for her trip back to New York? Some of my mates loaned me money, but they had been spending heavily too, so I got very little. The police gave me the home telephone number of the car's owner. I called but got no answer.

We were desperate, for the ship was due to sail very soon. Then a phone call came for the ship. A doctor who was visiting San Francisco had found the purse and wanted to return it. He came to the hotel and gave us the purse. By a happy coincidence, a reporter for a San Francisco newspaper was there. He got the whole story, with pictures of my wife and I

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hugging the purse and one another. It appeared in a San Francisco newspaper the next day.

More details on my life can be found in the following:

http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/memoirs/dawson_george/index.htm

This was something I never intended to create. I answered a request in a military magazine wanting material from Navy men who had served in the Korean War. I sent them material on my experiences on the Yancey. They then kept asking for more material, such as my experience in World War II as well.



WELCOME

The following shipmate has been located since the last newsletter. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 01/10	\$108.07
Funds received since 01/10	\$110.00
Funds available for 04/10	\$218.07
Funds expended for 04/10	\$129.95
Balance for 07/10	\$88.12*

The newsletter is being mailed only to those who returned the coupon for USPS service. All others can access the newsletter on line at www.mlrsinc.com/yancey.

*Funds will be needed for the next issue. Please send contributions to the newsletter to ML&RS, Inc at the address to the far right.

COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

By George Clifton

I hope this finds everyone well. I received sad news twice in the last week. First, I learned that Jimmy Johnston passed away last November 3rd, then days later learned of the death of Ken Chester. This newsletter has a TAPS column almost monthly, however, knowing these two shipmates personally makes it a little harder this month.

I served with Jimmy during the 60s and being part of the Bridge Gang, knew him well and had many good times on liberty with him. I'm sure many of you remember Jim and his wife Gail from the reunions in Chicago and Washington, DC. Unfortunately they were unable to attend the reunions in Seattle and Mobile when Jim became ill. I wish Jim could have attended more reunions so that all of you could have gotten to know him better.

I first met Ken at his first reunion in Pensacola, Florida. His son Rick learned of the Yancey reunion on the internet and thought it sounded like something his dad would enjoy. He couldn't have been more right. Ken and his wife Connie, along with Rick and his wife Jackie, have been regulars at the reunions ever since. I know all the reunion regulars will miss Ken as much as I will. He really was a great guy.

My closing thought is that I think it may be a little harder reading the names at the Memorial Service in Boston this year.



TAPS

The Yancey Memories was notified of the following shipmates' deaths. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families of the deceased. Anyone who knows of a deceased shipmate, or learns of one, please notify ML & RS, Inc so their names can be included in TAPS and be added to the Honor Roll.

Kenneth Chester
(1942-46) EM2
Died March 25, 2010

Jim Johnston
(1965-68) RM2 Comm
Died November 3, 2009

Karen,

I'm sad to say that I lost my husband (Jim Johnston) to prostate cancer this past year (Nov 3, 2009). I would like to remind his fellow shipmates to request a PSA test to prevent prostate cancer. Since they found that a virus causes uterine cancer, I'm hoping that they'll find a cause and cure for this cancer as well. Take care.

Gail Johnston

USS YANCEY REUNION

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"Our Reunions Work So You don't Have To"

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

Editor's Note: We sent out an e-mail asking for stories about a time you met someone you knew in an unexpected place—maybe a high school classmate somewhere far away while you were in the Navy, or a Navy buddy somewhere unexpectedly many years after you were discharged. Here are the responses:

Dale Hall, DC3:

I believe I already sent in my story about meeting two of my school mates in downtown Honolulu in 1956. The interesting thing was that there were only 73 students in my school and 1,100 people in my town. Of further interest, was that they were on the same carrier and didn't know it. Also in Honolulu, though no longer on the Yancey, I also met a young lady I had dated in high school from a neighboring town much smaller than my own. While going to damage control school on Treasure Island, California, I met a classmate on a trolley taking us to San Francisco. He was in the Army. In Japan I met 3 buddies from boot camp. There were several other unexpected meetings, but that's enough for now.

Jay Lose HM/1 (Ret):

I was an HM3 stationed with ACB2 out of Little Creek, VA when I was sent on a detachment with about 30 Seabees to a small island in the Caribbean to protect a pipeline. There were also a lot of Air Force and Army nearby.

One afternoon an Army helicopter landed by our camp and the crew chief of the helicopter was my childhood fishing buddy Frank Tigger. We spent a great afternoon catching up on old times and swapping fishing stories while having some beers.

George Brooks:

I was in Marshes, France and we went to a place called Aix where there was an American girl school. While I was there walking down the main street, I saw a person that I knew from high school, who was in the Marines over there. What a surprise to go half way around the world and meet someone from our hometown of Haverhill, Mass.

William Tenseth, YN2:

I did revisit the Port of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands a few years back—once on a cruise and the next time was with some friends on a diving tour. We went to the beaches, one of which was the Limburgh Beach Club where the Yancey had a Port & Starboard watch—half the ship went over to the beach while the other had a party on the beach. We all cruised over there with the LCVPs, dropped the ramps and went ashore. I think back about it now and wondered what those folks thought of us landing there. On one of my re-visits to St. Thomas, we were all sitting around having dinner at one of the local restaurants when an man I know from my hometown showed up, much to our surprise. His wife and mine worked together and my brother had worked with him at one time. The visits back to the Virgin Islands brought back a lot of memories. One time we took our whites to the local laundry. The sign outside said, "Modern Laundry." Went back a few days later to retrieve our laundry and when they opened the door to the back, I was surprised to see a lot of women back there ironing by hand. I expected Mandrels for pressing the clothes and the racks that one would normally see when visiting a "Modern Laundry." They did a good job however and we were pleased.

I might add that on the Yancey I found peace while patrolling our area at night. After a mid watch I would go up near the bow and sit down. The ship gliding through the seas, the wind in my face, the phosphorous spraying and look up to the heaven and seeing all the stars brightly shining down—moments like that I really treasure and wish that my children could experience moments in their lives such as that.



3rd Division waits on deck for arrival in French Harbor to Marseille in 1967.

Submitted by Sheldon Gotesky

OLD FART PRIDE

I'm passing this on as I did not want to be the only old fart receiving it. Actually it is not a bad thing to be called an old fart, as you will see. Old Farts are easy to spot at sporting events; during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner, Old Farts remove their caps and stand at attention and sing without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them.

Old Farts remember World War II, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Normandy, and Hitler. They remember the Atomic Age, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Jet Age and the Moon Landing. They remember the 50 plus Peacekeeping Missions from 1945 to 2005, not to mention Vietnam.

If you bump into an Old Fart on the sidewalk, he will apologize. If you pass an Old Fart on the street, he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. Old Farts trust strangers and are courtly to women.

Old Farts hold the door for the next person and always, when walking, make certain the lady it on the inside for protection.

Old Farts get embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children, and they don't like any filth or dirty language on TV or in movies.

Old Farts have moral courage and personal integrity. They seldom brag unless it's about their children or grandchildren.

It's the Old Farts who know our great country is protected not by politicians, but by the young men and women in the military serving their country.

This country needs Old Farts with their work ethic, sense of responsibility, pride in their country and decent values.

We need them now more than ever.

Thank God for Old Farts!

Pass this on to all the Old Farts you know.

I was taught to respect my elders. It's just getting harder to find them.

NAVY TERMS

"MESS DECKS"

It comes from the Latin term "mensa" meaning tables. "Mesa" is Spanish for table and "mes" in old Gothic means a dish. The English word originally meant four, and at large meal gatherings diners were seated in fours. Shakespeare wrote of Henry's four sons as his "mess of sons." The word "mess" that suggests confusion comes from the German "mischen," meaning to mix.

"CUP OF JOE"

Ever had a cup of Joe? Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, scandalized by reports of drunkenness aboard ship, issued an order in 1919 banning the serving of wine in the wardroom and any consumption of alcohol aboard ship. Daniels, a teetotaler, decreed that only coffee or tea should be served. This was not a popular order and sailors promptly dubbed a cup of coffee as a "cup of joe."

"DISBURSING"

We have all been to the disbursing office, but have you ever wondered why it was called "Disbursing"? This comes from the medieval word, 'bursar' who was the nobleman's keeper of the cash. Hence the word, 'disburse', when referring to payments or salaries to the crew.

"FORECASTLE"

Ever been on a forecastle? The appropriate pronunciation for this word is fo'ksul. The forecastle is the forward part of the main deck. It derives its name from the days of Viking galleys when wooden castles were built on the forward and after parts of the main deck from which archers and other fighting men could shoot arrows and throw spears, rocks, etc.

Submitted by George Rohman

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The YANCEY MEMORIES is the official publication of the USS YANCEY AKA-93 Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding.* The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the YANCEY. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of article submitted for publication. It would be a monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the submitter to research each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space and grammar limitations.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.