

USS ROCHESTER (CA-124)



Association



Vol. III, No. 6

News Letter

May 2016

From Secondary Conn...

Garry Phillips

In my hometown, Paris, Tennessee, we hold "The World's Biggest Fish Fry" every year in late April. Yesterday, we had the parade. Miss Tennessee (from Paris!) was the Grand Marshal and everybody showed up for the big event. Six marching bands played, shiny fire trucks drove by with lights flashing and people waving. It was a grand day. I even drove a truck with a float. The people of Paris, like most small towns across America, are quite patriotic. Flags galore! Additionally, every year the last Monday in May, we celebrate Memorial Day in dignified fashion.

As my fellow veterans know, Memorial Day is *not* Veterans' Day. Memorial Day is especially set aside for those servicemen who died during war while serving their country. I have always held in highest regard those who died in defense of our country – whether Medal of Honor heroes, or foot soldiers, or sailors trapped on a sinking ship – those who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. The point is they were on duty when their number was called. Being a hero is largely a function of opportunity; being on duty is a matter of choice. May God bless those who answered the call and stood their watch.

Will We See You in Charleston? It's Time to Make a Hotel Reservation and Register for Reunion Events

Registration is now open. In this newsletter you will find the form to fill out and send in to the Association Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Hill, along with your remittance for your events of choice. **The deadline for registration is Friday, 26 August 2016.**

Over the past two years, we have planned a schedule providing opportunities to experience the

culture of this historic city. **Thursday** evening will be our traditional Welcome Reception. Reunion tours to choose from include Historic Charleston City (**Friday**), with an optional add-on of a narrated Harbor Sightseeing Cruise; we will visit the beautiful colonial-era Magnolia Plantation and Gardens on **Saturday**. **Sunday** evening we will gather for our Reunion Banquet, including after-dinner dancing with music provided by a local renowned DJ.

Our trusty MAA Bill Berkley will have the coffee pot on in the *Hospitality Suite* beginning Thursday morning and our Storekeeper, Betsy Phillips, will have the *Ship's Store* open and fully stocked with Rochester ball caps and shirts for your desired shopping. Joe Hill will open the *Registration Desk* early Thursday morning for welcome bag pick up.

The schedule also provides for more relaxed personal time for visiting with our shipmates and their families. A more lengthy description can be found in our several newsletters over the past year, and on the Rochester Association website at <http://communityassociations.net/ca124/>. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

Charleston Reunion Hotel is Now Accepting Room Reservations

The reunion in Charleston is officially scheduled from Thursday, October 6th through Monday, October 10th 2016. Our hotel is the *Crowne Plaza Charleston Hotel*, located at 4831 Tanger Outlet Blvd., North Charleston, SC 29418.

Our special room rate is **\$129.00** per night plus tax, which includes two full breakfast buffets per room daily. For those of you who choose to arrive early or stay after the reunion ends, the same room rate will be available for three days prior and three days after, based on availability. Parking at the hotel is complementary.

SCUTTLEBUTT

Son of a Gun! – “*Naval Customs, Traditions, and Usage*” 1934



In the early days, sailors were permitted to keep their wives aboard ship. Lord Exmouth, after the bombardment of Algiers in July 1816, reported that “Even British women served at the same guns as their husbands and, during a sea battle of many hours, never shrank from danger but animated all around them”.

The British Admiralty issued an order in 1830 prohibiting officer’s wives from being carried in men-of-war; however, in many cases the order was ignored. The term “son of a gun” was actually used to refer to children born along the guns of the broadsides. The old universal definition of a man-of-war’s man was: “Begotten in the galley and born under a gun. Every hair a rope yarn, every tooth a marlin spike; every finger a fish hook and in his blood right good Stockholm tar”.

A British officer commanding a brig off the Spanish coast in 1835 wrote in his diary: “This day the surgeon informed me that a woman on board had been laboring in child for twelve hours, and if I could see my way to permit the firing of a broadside to leeward, nature would be assisted by the shock. I complied with his request, and she was promptly delivered of a fine male child. The gunnery department made a perfect score!”

Submitted by Pete Russell, “E” and Fox Divisions, 1958 - 1961

Attention All Hands

The USS Rochester Association is looking for your help. When we convene in Charleston, South Carolina in September the Association will be electing a new slate of officers. Officers can be elected from the Active and Associate Members in good standing.

One such office with a vacancy will be the 1st Vice President. The duties of this office is to publish the Association Newsletter on a quarterly basis. It is a very important task that keeps the shipmates informed of what the Association is doing, updates on what other shipmates are doing, and items of interest to all. I think we can all say we enjoy the tidbits of information gathered and submitted each quarter. For

some members, it is a vital link to a very important time of their lives.

Cindy Cargill, the person who currently puts all information into the Newsletter format you see each quarter, has agreed to help and work with the new 1st Vice President, if so desired.

We also need a 2nd VP. The duties of the 2nd VP is to interface with the City Museum in Rochester NY. The City of Rochester has graciously allowed a portion of the museum for the history of the USS Rochester. Over the years the museum has collected numerous USS Rochester artifacts that have been donated by shipmates, their families, and others. This is a very important part of keeping the USS Rochester ships so named alive and providing significant history. Items of interest about the museum would make interesting articles for future Newsletters.

If you can serve the Association as either the 1st or 2nd VP by publishing the Newsletter or interfacing with the Museum, please contact President Garry Phillips and let him know.

Submitted by: Gordon Cargill, “E” Division

Chaplain’s Corner

ANCHOR

Two items on the “Rochester” would have often been overlooked due to the many other items of interest. They were the two anchor’s mounted on the bow and attached to heavy chains. At a moment’s notice they could be dropped to keep the ship secure and safe from drifting.

The writer of Hebrews states, “We can be encouraged because we have hope as an anchor of the soul firm and secure.” I think of Priscilla Owens who wrote in 1882, “We have an anchor that keep the soul, steadfast and secure while the billows roll, anchored firm and deep in the Saviour’s love.”

Many issues come our way today revealing we need an anchor. It may be health, finances, family or social concerns. In the storms of life we can identify with Psalm 46:1 and 10 “God is our refuge and strength. Be still and know that I am God.” By faith it is helpful to use the chain of faith to stay connected with the anchor.

Prayerfully submitted, Frank West, Chaplain
fawest@att.net

From the Members...

The following article was submitted by CDR John Kirk Ferguson, USN (ret) who served aboard U.S.S.



Rochester from 1959-1961 and later, following other Fleet assignments, served in the Republic of Vietnam as Commander, Strike Assault Boat Squadron TWENTY operating in the Mekong Delta. Kirk lives in Riverside, CA and is a member in good standing of the U.S.S. Rochester Association – *Edited by Pete Russell*

The Japanese Surrender Ceremony on Board USS MISSOURI (BB-63) September 2, 1945.

The ceremony was supposed to have been conducted on board USS SOUTH DAKOTA (BB-57), Admiral William "Bull" Halsey's flagship. He was SOPA (Senior Officer Present Afloat) in Tokyo Bay, so all arrangements were made to transport the VIP's to SOUTH DAKOTA on board gigs, barges, yachts, etc. A day and a half before the ceremony was to take place, the Secretary of the Navy was briefing President Truman in Washington DC on the details. When the briefing ended, the President asked if USS MISSOURI (BB-63) was also anchored in Tokyo Bay, to which SECNAV answered, yes, but since MISSOURI did not have a flag officer embarked, the obvious selection had been Admiral Halsey's flagship, SOUTH DAKOTA. According to the story, President Truman responded that Missouri was his Home State, and he wanted the ceremony changed from SOUTH DAKOTA to MISSOURI...and so it was. Kirk's understanding is that there's no mention of this in military historical records since it was a politically sensitive issue.

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*The following is an excerpt from information received by Jess Johnson about Sidney Thompson, a JG on board the Rochester.*

From the Library of Congress, Congressional Record, 105th Congress, March 21, 1997  
Tribute of Sidney A. Thompson.

"On Sunday, May 18, 1997, Sidney A. Thompson is retiring from the Los Angeles Unified School District after a distinguished and exemplary career spanning more than 40 years. Born in Los Angeles, CA, on May 9, 1932, Sid graduated at the age of 16. After gradu-

ation, Sid was faced with genuine conflict concerning his career choices. Imbued with a deep love of the sea, yet keenly aware of the necessity and importance of a college education, he arrived at the perfect solution to combine both dreams. He successfully passed the entrance exam for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, located in Kings Point, NY, but was forced to sit out the year since he was not yet 17.

Sid graduated from the academy in 1952 with a Bachelor of Science Degree and soon thereafter enlisted in the U.S. Navy, rising to the rank of lieutenant. He was stationed aboard the USS Rochester during the Korean War.

Following his tour of duty, he returned to Los Angeles. In 1956 he joined the faculty of Pacoima Junior High School where he taught mathematics, rising to department Chair. While at Pacoima, he entered California State University, Los Angeles, earning a master's degree in school administration in 1960.

Between 1965 and 1976 he served as Assistant Principal and Principal in the district. His impressive administrative and managerial skills led to his promotion in 1976 to the post of Deputy Area Administrator of area 2.

On October 5, 1992, Sid became the 42nd Superintendent and the first African-American to lead the Nation's second largest school district. Sid was a strong, forceful, and effective advocate on behalf of children and viable educational policies designed to enhance their potential for future academic success. Because of his dedication, his love of education, and his leadership, the children of Los Angeles are better prepared to face the challenges of the future.

Included in his retirement plans, Sid and his wife, Julia, set sail on their beloved sailboat 'Hararim'."

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It Was My Duty!!!

The Rochester departed Long Beach CA in June 1950 on what was to have been a six-month "Goodwill Cruise". We proceeded to Sangley Point Naval Station near Manila, the Philippines. Shortly, the Korean War broke out and we headed to Buckner Bay, Okinawa to rendezvous with the rest of the U.S. 7th Fleet, as Seventh Fleet Flagship with Admiral Struble aboard.



While lying at anchored there, the signal light at the very end of the yardarm burned out. Being in charge of main deck lighting and above it was my responsibility to make the repairs. Power was cut off on the main mast, I put on the climbing belt, and went up the mast to the yardarm. From there I shinnied out to the very end and changed the bulb. What made this more memorable (and scary!) was the fact that the ship had a gentle roll at anchorage which gave me quite a sensation!!! Replacing other bulbs out due to the vibration from all the firing became more routine after that event.

On another occasion, while at sea during a storm, the windshield wipers went out on the bridge. Making that repair on the bridge, with all eyes peering on, was just a little stressful.

Submitted by Frank Dayak, EM2, "E" Division, 1950 - 1952.

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## Age-Activated Attention Deficit Disorder (A.A.A.D.D.)

This is how it manifests:

I decide to water the garden. As I turn on the hose in the driveway, I look over at my car and decide it needs washing. As I start towards the garage, I notice letters sticking out of the letter box. I decide to go through the post before I wash the car.

I lay my car keys on the table, then sort the post. There's a couple of bills so I'll pay them. I put the junk mail in the recycling bin under the table, and notice that it's full.

So, I decide to leave the bills on the table and do the recycling first. But then I think, since I'm going to go to the recycling site near the post box I may as well pay the bills first.

I take my check book off the table, and see that there is only one check left. My new checks are in my desk in my office, so I go to my desk where I find the can of diet coke I'd been drinking.

I'm going to look for my check book but first I need to push the coke aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. The coke is getting warm, and I decide to put it in the fridge to keep it cold.

As I head toward the kitchen with the coke, a vase of flowers on the side catches my eye--they need water.

I put the coke on the side and discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers.

I set the glasses back down on the side, fill a jug with water and suddenly spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table.

I realize that tonight when we go to watch TV, I'll be looking for the remote, but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the lounge where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers.

I pour some water in the flowers, but quite a bit of it spills on the floor. So, I put the remote back on the table, get some paper towels and wipe up the spill.

Then, I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the car isn't washed, the bills aren't paid, there is a warm can of coke sitting on the side, the flowers don't have enough water, there is still only 1 check in my check book, I can't find the remote, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys.

Then, when I try to think why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day, and I'm really tired.

I realize this is a serious problem and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my e-mail....

*Submitted by.....*

