

# USS ROCHESTER (CA-124)



Association



Vol. IV, No. 1

# News Letter

May 2017

## From Secondary Conn...

*Garry Phillips*

It has been our goal for several years to make the ROCHESTER reunion a little better than the last, and amazingly we have been successful. Our continued success in no way lessens the reunions that have gone before. Still in some measure they seem to improve each time. Our recent meeting in Charleston followed that pattern and was truly outstanding.

Planning each activity in detail pays off in the end, and we think that we are getting better at it with each reunion. But more important, the camaraderie is the glue that holds the Association together. While we may be getting a little older, it simply makes seeing our shipmates again a little better. My favorite part of the Charleston reunion was getting to visit with several members that I really hadn't known before. On a personal note, on our way home from the reunion, I asked my wife if she had had a chance to meet Ed Whitten. We agreed that he had really brightened up the place! What a pleasure for me to get to know him. As you know, Ed passed away shortly after returning home from the reunion.

At Charleston we had a record number of children, grandchildren, and friends who escorted our shipmates and wives to the reunion. Two special guests who attended, Helen Muci and Sharon Burke, are the widows of two of our shipmates. We enjoyed getting to know each of you and we extend a hearty invitation to join us again in Kansas City. The Association is honored with your presence.

On to Kansas City, Missouri in 2018! With our intrepid Executive Vice President, Pete Russell at the planning helm, checking every box, I'm sure that KC will be another record breaking success!

During the business meeting at Charleston, members elected Rodney Neal as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President. The 1<sup>st</sup> VP's principal responsibility is publication of the Association's newsletter. Retired Captain Neal was a LTJG assigned to B & R Divisions aboard the ROCHESTER from 1958 to 1961. Russell Newman was also elected a member of the Association Board of Directors. Russell served in OR Division from 1959 to 1961.

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## Chaplain's Corner

### KEEPING THINGS UPDATED

One of the little known activities on the ROCHESTER was the function of the Damage Control staff in keeping the bilges dry. Spread out from bow to stern in the lower decks of the ship were tubes about three inches in diameter that went down into the bilges. AS DC staff we had to periodically take a small rod of steel tied to a heavy cord and drop into the tube to go into the bilges to see if they were dry. It would have been a problem if they came up wet.

Our spiritual lives should be examined as we journey through life. David prayed in Psalm 139:23, "Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." David also prayed in Psalm 26:2, "Test me O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind, for your love is ever before me. Let us remember God loves us and wants to keep our spiritual lives up to date.

*Prayerfully submitted,*  
*Frank West, Chaplain*  
[fawest@att.net](mailto:fawest@att.net)

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## Association Newsletter

This newsletter is published quarterly by the USS ROCHESTER Association. The Association's Officers encourage questions and comments. You may contact the Editor by writing Rod Neal, 14300 Chenal Parkway #7018, Little Rock, AR 72211. If you would like to submit an item of information or a story to the newsletter, mail it to the address above or email it to [rdn.crn@comcast.net](mailto:rdn.crn@comcast.net).

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### Association Officers

Garry L. Phillips, President	Pete Russell, Executive VP
Rod Neal, 1 <sup>st</sup> VP	<i>Vacant</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> VP
Joseph S. Hill, Secy/Treasurer	Frank West, Chaplain
William W. Berkley, MAA	Betsy Phillips, Storekeeper
Frank Dayak, Director	Merlin A. Scheller, Director
Charles L. Chipley, Jr., Director	Russell Newman, Director

Association website:  
[www.USSRochester.org](http://www.USSRochester.org)

Rochester Museum and Science Center  
[www.rmsc.org](http://www.rmsc.org)

### Ship's Store

Thanks to all of you who stopped by the Ship's Store at the Charleston reunion. We had great success and sold out of many items. We are planning to add something new to the Ship's Store in the fall of 2017, so be on the look out. In the meantime stock up on golf shirts and tee-shirts for the summer.

If you would like to see our entire line of USS ROCHESTER (CA-124) items, or if you desire a larger size than is listed here, please go online at [www.WSSRochester.org](http://www.WSSRochester.org); phone 731-336-4090, or email me [Eliz\\_Phillips@yahoo.com](mailto:Eliz_Phillips@yahoo.com). I'm looking forward to helping each of you find just the right item to show your ROCHESTER pride!

*Betsy Phillips*

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### Change of Address, Email, and Phone Number

To keep the mail flowing to your in box, please file change of addresses both mail and email, and/or phone numbers with Joe Hill. This should keep the information flowing without interruption in service.

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## Association Dues

**Membership Dues for 2017 were due on January 1, 2017.** Your current status is noted near your mailing address block. If there is a **2015** or **2016** after your name, PLEASE send in your PAST and CURRENT DUES (only \$25 per year) or let Joe Hill know your intentions.

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### Donations Received

The Association wishes to thank the following people for their generous donations:

**Rob Bogan** donated \$25  
**Frank Walling** donated \$63  
**Sonny Howell** donated a roll of stamps  
**Gene Mayo** made a donation  
**Bill Berkley** collected \$78 in donations for the coffee mess. Thanks to all that contributed.

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### TAPS

The following shipmates were reported to have passed away. If anyone has different information, please let us know.

Name	State	Yr	Div	On Board
Arthur F. Dobbins	PA	2017	M	51-55
Andrew W. Gallagher	FL	2017	B	47-51
Gordon S. Lowe	FL	2016	H	53-55
Melvin E. Shipley	IN	2017	B	51-53
Edwin "Ed" L Whitten	GA	2017	A	52-56

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### NEW MEMBERS

Richard A. Carlson and Fran, OR Div, 58-59

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### HONORARY MEMBERS

Charles Lamm – Model of ROCHESTER builder

Charles was motivated to design and build a 6' scale model of the ROCHESTER which he brought to the reunion. It's a beautiful replica of a beautiful ship

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## SCUTTLEBUTT

Found guilty of attempting to incite a mutiny Midshipman Philip Spencer and two seamen were hanged aboard the US Navy Brig SOMERS in 1842. The ship was in transit from Liberia to the Virgin Islands. Spencer was the son of the Secretary of War under President Tyler. He was accused of conspiring with two sailors to kill the officers, seize the ship, and go on a pirating expedition. He was found guilty by a counsel of officers led by the commanding officer, Commander Alexander Slidell McKenzie.

McKenzie recorded the proceeding, “The National flag was hoisted, drums rolled, a gun was fired, and the crew walked away with the whips hoisting the three in the air.” The ship’s captain talked to the crew (obviously an opportunity for delivering a lesson), asked for three cheers, ordered the flag at half mast, and read the service for the dead.

The three were dropped into a stormy sea by lantern light, after swinging all day to make sure they were dead. Upon returning to Brooklyn Naval Yard, Commander McKenzie went before a general court martial on a charge of murder. After a stormy six week trial he was honorably acquitted. Usually after being found innocent in a court martial the accused is commended. This did not occur even though he had some strong connections. One older brother was a US Senator, another brother was Chief Justice of the Louisiana supreme court, and Commodore Matthew Perry was his brother-in-law. Still hanging the Secretary of War’s son turned out not to be a good career move. McKenzie died a permanent commander some six years later.

Submitted by Pete Russell

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## STORIES OF THE ROCHESTER WANTED

We are looking for stories about events that took place involving members of the crew. We need a time and an outline of what occurred and the names of the shipmates involved. Don’t worry if your memory is a little wobbly. If the story is good enough everyone will want to believe it. Send your story to the Editor of the Newsletter (see top left of page two).

## A DESIGN HISTORY OF THE USS ROCHESTER

This is the first in a series about the physical features of the ROCHESTER. This article will review some of the design aspects that make our ship one of the most striking warships ever built. You might want to look at a view of the ship on the Newsletter. The most distinguishing feature is its single stack which facilitates the symmetrical composition of its superstructure. Looking at the ship you will notice that the superstructure rises from fore and aft in a series of steps to a point equidistant from the bow and stern between sky forward and the stack. The superstructure resembles a compact fortress upon which are located all of the ship’s secondary armament as well as most of its anti-aircraft guns. The backward angle of the stack perfectly mirrors the forward angle of the bow and is just one touch that provides a sense of integrated design.

The Germans and Japanese had a few single stack cruisers, but the symmetry was undermined by the fact that the uptakes were visible which made the stacks appear over-sized. These ships all stored and launched their seaplanes aft of the stack, lengthening the distance between the forward and after sections of the superstructure. The British and French cruisers of the time appeared clunky and the German and Japanese superstructures were busy, suggesting that a lot was tacked on as an afterthought. Only the three USS OREGON CITY class cruisers shared the same shape. The OREGON CITY was decommissioned after 22 months and the ALBANY was converted into a missile cruiser in 1958 with a new and bulky superstructure. So the ROCHESTER was alone in retaining its original look over a 15 year career. It’s reward was to be designated a “People to People” ship and in 1960 became the first US Navy ship since the beginning of WWII to have dress ship lighting provided. But that is another story.

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## NAUTICAL TERM EXPLAINED

*Sailing close to the wind* is the risky practice of filling a ship’s sails with wind from an unfavorable angle. There is considerable risk that things can go awry. Over time it has taken on another meaning, of doing something dangerous or possibly illegal

## STORIES OF THE SEA

A sailor walks into a bar and sees a pirate. He is obviously a pirate because he has a peg leg, a hook for a hand and a patch over his eye. Curious, the sailor offers the pirate a drink.

The sailor, "Do you mind if I ask you how you got your peg leg?"

The pirate, "Not at all. I was washed overboard and as me mates were hauling me back aboard a shark bit me leg off."

The sailor, "Blimey, that's a piece of bad luck. What about the hook?"

The pirate, "I got in a fight over a girl and her boy friend hacked my hand off with an axe".

The sailor, "Blimey, that's terrible. How did you lose your eye?"

The pirate, looking embarrassed, "A gull dropping fell into me eye",

The sailor, "How could a gull dropping damage your eye?"

The pirate, looking even more embarrassed, "It was me first day with me hook".

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## COMPARISON OF FIRST ROCHESTER WITH THE SECOND

The first ROCHESTER was a pre-WWI armored cruiser. Our ROCHESTER was the second to bear the name.

First	Comparison	Second
384'	Length	672'
64' 10"	Beam	69'
8,200	Displacement tons	17,000
565	Complement	1100
7" max	Armor	Over 11"
20 knots	Design Speed knots	Over 30
16,000	Design HP	120,000
Coal	Fuel	Oil
(6) 8"/35	Armament	(9) 8"/50
(12) 4"/40	Secondary	(12) 5"/38
(8) 6 pounder		(20) 3"/50
(4) 1 pounder		
(3) 14" Surface	Torpedoes	

## BIOGRAPHIES OF ROCHESTER COMMANDING OFFICERS CAPT AMOS T. HATHAWAY

CAPT Hathaway was born in 1913 at Pueblo, CO. He attended Duke University and the US Naval Academy graduating as an ENSIGN in 1935. He served on heavy combatants until 1942. Promoted to LCDR he was the XO on the DD HOEL. In 1944 he was promoted to CDR and assigned as CO of the HEERMANN, a FLETCHER Class DD.

As CO of the HERMANN he took part in the Battle of Samar when his ship along with three DE's attacked a Japanese force of four battleships, six heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and 11 destroyers in an effort to protect five jeep aircraft carriers composing Taffy III. As the small American force raced toward the Japanese, CDR Hathaway is quoted in RADM Morrison's history of the navy war in the Pacific ..."All we need now are bugles sounding charge". The HEERMANN fired ten torpedoes causing the YAMATO to turn away from Taffy III and not reengage. The DD then took on a battleship and one cruiser at 9,000 yards, followed by two cruisers at 4,000. It receive hits from all four ships, but continued to maneuver so that it could provide a smoke screen between Taffy III and the Japanese ships. The HEERMANN, badly damaged, was the only one of the four attacking ships to survive the battle. CDR Hathaway was awarded the Silver Star.

Following the war CDR Hathaway served as a Battalion Commander at the Naval Academy where he made a deep impression on his midshipmen charges. He served in a variety of ships interspersed with assignments in various logistics activities. He was CO of the ROCHESTER on its last WESPAC Cruise in 1960 and proved himself an able leader of a happy ship. His forte was detail and recognizing and developing talent in the men serving under him.

He retired in 1965 and became a member of the Citadel faculty where he taught math and computer science from 1966 to 1979. He died in 1996 at 82 and is buried in Arlington Cemetery. He is fondly remembered by his students and those who served with him.

## STORIES OF THE ROCHESTER

ENSIGN Mark Buchman arrived on the ROCHESTER in 1959. As a supply officer he was assigned the Ships Service Division. The largest Supply Department unit with 40 men, it provided the services that contributed to a normal and comfortable life at sea. This included the laundry, barber shop, cobbler as well as ship's store. Under ENS Buchman and Chief Creech's leadership all of the Division's its functions were remarkably well run except for the ship's store... it was too well run. It began making money, lots of money.

This should have been a good thing. Ship store profits were allocated to and by the Welfare and Recreation Committee. It had been meeting a couple of times a year, but now began meeting much more frequently. It had become a real challenge to spend all the money pouring in. Micky Mouse and *The Sorceress' Apprentice* come to mind.

The ship began underwriting the costs of tours during port visits. It provided money for, Division parties, and half the cost of the WestPac Cruise Book. Meanwhile whatever ENS Buchman touched continued to turn to gold. He ordered plates with a picture of the ROCHESTER on it and sold out within a week. He had the temper of his clientele... nothing was too tacky. The ship's store was not large, but the dollars generated per square foot would have made Neiman Marcus drool.

As the Business Manager for Cruise Book sales he arranged to have a sales representative in each division and designed a marketing effort that saw more Cruise Books sold than the ship had crew members. Cruise Books became the standard for Mother's Day gifts.

After returning to Long Beach the ship was notified that it was to proceed to Bremerton, WA for decommissioning. This really put pressure on spending the dollars that just kept coming. Once at Bremerton a bowling establishment was reserved for a ship-wide bowling tournament. Ski trips to Mt. Rainier were organized. If the crew weren't having fun, they were thinking about it. There was a great sigh of relief by members of the Welfare and Recreation Committee when decommissioning led to the ship's store closure.

## BIG FOOT COMES TO THE ROCHESTER

Generally the Ship's Doctor, Dentist, and Chaplain are not perceived as overworked. This often means being tagged for the occasional temporary collateral duty. In 1960 on its last WESPAC Cruise the ROCHESTER was named a "People to People" ship which meant visiting ports throughout the Far East and making friends with the various locals. To achieve this we were funded to spruce up the ship including the wardroom.

While some argument exists, it is generally accepted that the Dentist, CDR Koester, volunteered to oversee the redecoration of the wardroom. This was to be accomplished in Yokosuka where the price was more likely to allow a fuller expression of his inner decorator.

The wardroom featured a cluster of overstuffed dark leather chairs and sofas, some low coffee/game tables, and bulkheads that were painted a sea green, such as you might see in a mental hospital to calm the patients. There were three long dining tables bolted to the deck which provided little scope for improvement. After a few weeks of research, shopping and other design work the wardroom was transformed. New chairs and sofas featured blond wood and earth toned woven fabrics. The carpet was a reddish brown, and the bulkheads were now a fairly bright orange, with a yellowish overhead. No sleeping here. Needless to say there was lots of discussion..

Concurrently four contract LTJG's, who shall remain nameless, said farewell and departed for the US and civilian life. They collected in the "O" Club bar where it was decided to leave their mark. Under a false pretense, they returned to the ship around 0200 and painted a series of four foot long brown foot prints, up the orange bulkhead, across the yellow overhead and down the other side. The color effect was deemed magical.

The next morning at breakfast CDR Koester was not amused. Most DO's mindful of their men's curiosity, arranged work chits that allowed a steady parade of the crew through the wardroom. Each crew member passed through twice, coming and going, gawking was in vogue.

**Shipmates and Family Members:**

Please use this form and mail it in with a check for **2017 DUES**.  
Dues are **\$25.00** annually for the period January 1 to December 31.  
Make check payable to **USS ROCHESTER ASSOCIATION** and  
mail to: **Joe Hill, Sr., Treasurer, USS Rochester Association,**  
**4011 Ditty Road, Cookeville, TN 38506-7663**  
Joe may be contacted by phone: 931-432-4848 or  
Email: nitecrawl@twlakes.net

**USS ROCHESTER ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP/ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Newsletters are mailed Quarterly to those former crewmembers, wives, sons, grandsons, daughters, granddaughters, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews who have joined the Association.

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (M)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

RANK/RATE WHEN ABOARD \_\_\_\_\_ RETIRED \_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_

DATES ON BOARD \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ASSOCIATE MEMBER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO ROCHESTER SHIPMATE \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER? \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP? \_\_\_\_\_

**USS ROCHESTER (CA-124) Association**

**SHIPS STORE MAY 2017**

ITEM	Circle desired size				Unit Price	Qty	\$ Total
<b>Golf shirt w/ pocket/ embroidered log</b>	(circle desired color)						
Navy or White	S	M	L	XL	\$29.00		
Navy or White	XXL				\$31.00		
<b>Windbreaker w/ embroidered logo</b>							
Navy	S	M	L	XL	\$32.00		
Navy	XXL				\$34.00		
<b>Adult tee shirt w/silkscreen logo</b>	(circled desired color)						
Gray w/ blue print	M	L	XL	XXL	\$12.00		
Blue w/ gold print	M	L	XL	XXL	\$12.00		
<b>Adult Sweatshirt w/ silkscreen logo</b>	(circle desired color)						
Gray w/blue print	M	L	XL	XXL	\$20.00		
Blue w/ gold print	M	L	XL	XXL	\$20.00		
<b>Adult sweatshirt w/ embroidered logo</b>	(circle desired color)						
Gray w/blue thread	M	L	XL	XXL	\$30.00		
Blue w/ gold thread	M	L	XL	XXL	\$30.00		
<b>Adult hoodie/zipper jacket w/embroidered logo</b>							
Navy	S	M	L		\$32.00		
Navy	XXL				\$32.00		
<b>Ballcap (patch on front; mesh back)</b>					\$12.00		
SUBTOTAL							
SHIPPING (\$5.00 EACH ITEM)							
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT</b>							

**Make check payable to: USS ROCHESTER ASSOCIATION**

Mail form and check to: Betsy Phillips, USS ROCHESTER ASSOCIATION  
 8795 Hwy 54  
 Paris, TN 38242

<b>Mailing Information:</b>	
Your name:	
Your address	
Your telephone number:	

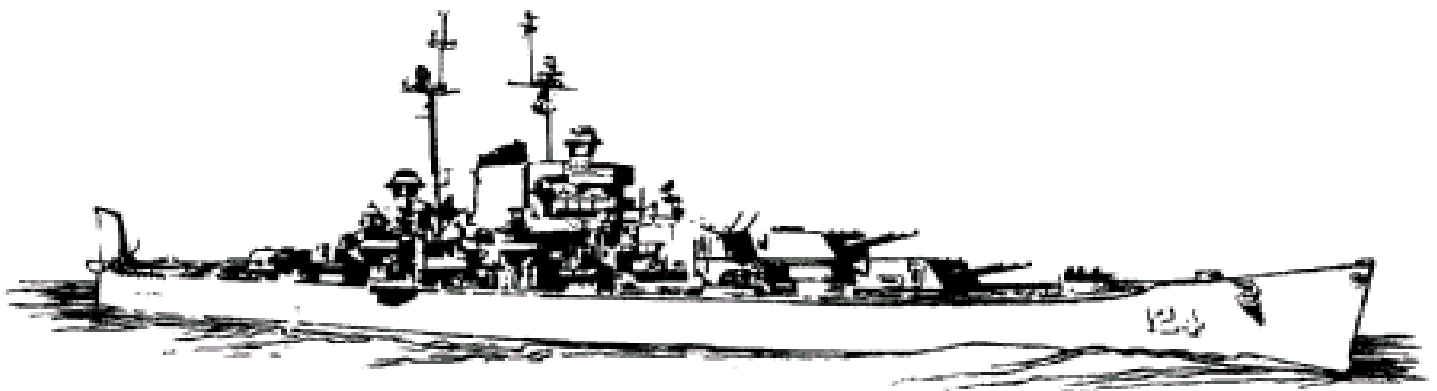
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