

THE IRONMAN—A DOUBLE ENDER’S NEWSLETTER

Membership Scorebox	
Current	47
Past Due	98
Snail Mail Ad- dresses Only	87
Email Address	447
Total Shipmates	2,340

Dues Notice!

Please be sure to check your mailing label or email notation.

If it doesn't say **Current** above your name at the top of the label, you should renew your annual dues. To reach the greatest number of shipmates, we will publish the complete Association newsletter to any valid email or snail mail address. Your dues payments make this possible.

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A Moment In History—Qingdao

During the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties, the city of Qingdao, Shandong Province, China, was just a quiet fishing village on the Yellow Sea with an important fortress for coastal defense in northern China. On June 14, 1891, the Qing government established a garrison in Jiao'ao, which represented the beginning of Qingdao as an administrative division in China.

After two German Missionaries were killed by members of the Boxer Movement (the secret society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists – 1900-1901), that all changed. Kaiser Wilhelm (1859-1941) demanded a concession to keep the world safe from the "yellow peril." On November 14, 1897, German troops occupied Qingdao under the pretext of the "Juye Religious Incident" and turned Qingdao into a colony, which caused the "Reform Movement of 1898" by reformers in the Qing Dynasty. and in 1897 was ceded Jiazhou peninsula, including the small city of Qingdao. It was not by accident that the Germans acquired this port town. Baron von Richthofen (the Red Baron) had scouted the area and reported that it made the perfect site for a deepsea naval base, being a port on the Yellow Sea at the entrance to sheltered Jiaozhou Bay. The Germans were also given the rights to build the Shandong rail lines including the one from Jinan (capitol of Shandong Province) to Qingdao. The agreement granted these rights and territories for 99 years. The Germans quickly got to work building the naval base, other military sites like

the post on Signal Hill, a Protestant Church, and numerous official buildings and Residences. (The first brewery in China – Tsingtao – was built here by the Germans in 1903.)

After World War I broke out in 1914, as a member of the Allied forces, Japan displaced Germany as the occupier of Qingdao. The famous "May Fourth Movement" was triggered by the calls for the recovery of Qingdao, which was the watershed of China's contemporary history and China's modern history. On December 10, 1922, the Chinese Beiyang government took back Qingdao as a result of the Washington Naval Treaty and transformed it into a commercial port. The Kuomintang (KMT) government designated Qingdao as a special city in July 1929 and renamed it as Qingdao city in 1930.

Qingdao was occupied again by the Japanese on January 11, 1938 during the Second Sino-Japanese War and remained occupied until the Japanese surrender that ended World War II in 1945.

The tenuous truce (1937-1945) between the Communists, under Chairman Mao Zedong, and the Nationalist Kuomintang, under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, disintegrated immediately upon the conclusion of World War II and civil war ensued.

U.S. Marines landed in Qingdao on October 11, 1945 and accepted the formal surrender of Japanese troops on October 25, 1945. At that time, the Communists forc-

(Continued on page 8)

If you plan to attend the Charleston, SC, reunion October 4th to October 8th, please make your hotel reservations through the Radisson for the USS Reeves room block. This is applied to our comp rates which pay for the hospitality room, banquet room and other amenities. See Page 5 for information.

The President's Page



Greetings to the USS Reeves Family on the start of Summer '12.

I have been waiting and waiting

for the last two years to get around to a newsletter where we can officially say that we are now only a few months away from our next reunion. It was a few years ago at our 2nd reunion (in DC) when we decided that we should take our reunions to an annual status, and that the order of rotation should be east, west, and central. The first rotation worked out pretty well. We started in DC, so that satisfied the eastern thing. We moved on to San Diego the next year and really had a great time with our left coast bound shipmates. The third iteration was about as central to the US as you can get, Chicago. Each site offered us some unique perspectives, and those fortunate enough to attend had a pretty good time at each location.

Participation and interest did manage to get a little lean about the time of the Chicago reunion, so we discussed the implications and voted to skip a year. I'm not going too far into the reasoning, except to say that participation in the association seemed to follow

the example of our economy.- sorta lack-luster. We were all having a good time, but seriously started to wonder if the serious effort (and expense) it takes to pull together a reunion was worth it. So we postponed the 2011 reunion.

The jury is still out on whether that was a good move, but we felt like we did the correct thing at the time. It was the classic question of whether to repeat the same process and hope for a different result. For my part, I found that I actually missed not gearing up for the reunion last year. It felt like something was missing, and also made it pretty difficult to think-up stuff for the occasional newsletter column. I got a chance to write a few stories of Reeves Memories past, like the origin of the Iron Man, but it was hardly a substitute for the effort to get shipmates to the next reunion. That chase to the next reunion is officially back on, and I couldn't be happier about it!

All of us are hoping that the rebound from our one year sabbatical will refresh and energize this group. The Reeves Association needs this influx of energy to get back on her feet, and her shipmates definitely need the chance to sit across from each other in Charleston and enjoy a few stories over a few beers. Let's not miss this moment.

We need you to look forward to being with us in Charleston. Talk to your wives, friends, and long-lost shipmates. Make the case that this will be a lot of fun, and well worth the effort to spend some time in a classic Navy Town, with some classic Navy friends. Please come down and see us in October.

Here's wishing you Fair Winds and Following Seas

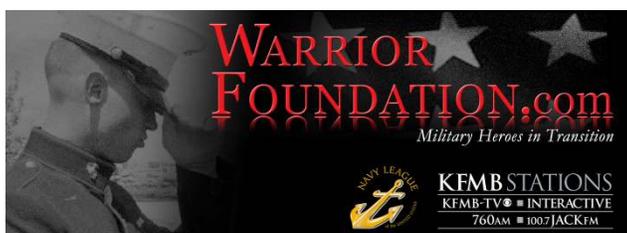
//tom

Have You Heard???

A man walked into a supermarket with his zipper down. A lady cashier walked up to him and said, 'Your barracks door is open.' Not a phrase that men normally use, he went on his way looking a bit puzzled. When he was about done shopping, a man came up and said, 'Your fly is open.' He zipped up and finished his shopping.

At the checkout, he intentionally got in the line where the lady was who told him about his 'barracks door.' He was planning to have a little fun with her, so when he reached the counter he said, 'When you saw my barracks door open, did you see a Marine standing in there at attention?' The lady (naturally smarter than the man) thought for a moment and said . . . 'No, no, I didn't. All I saw was a disabled veteran sitting on a couple of old duffel bags.'

Ed. Is that the origin of the term "Old Duff"? Or is there another connotation?



Mail/eMail/Decklog From Our Shipmates —

Man, I never give it a thought about looking up the Reeves on line. I am so surprised that there is a site for old memories to come back. I left her in Pearl after coming back from nam Dec 20th 1971. I see there is a reunion in Oct and I will be there. I was a cook while on board (CS-3).

Bob Myers

Michael,

I will send a renewal off.

Really enjoyed reading the “Into the Strait of Hormuz-March 1981” as I was active on the Reeves during that time. While I did not have these “Family Grams” I have detailed and abundant pictures of this as well as the crossing of the line ceremony. Will send once I package them together.

Michael R Calloway Sr

Mike

I hope you are doing well. Things have been going good for me. It’s

spring time in NC, although actually it’s felt like spring since February. I am planning on attending the reunion. It looks like I will be able to bring my wife this time.

For some reason, I cannot open the application PDF and when I went on line to try and download it, it wouldn’t work either. Would you please send me another application? I’m not sure what the issue is since the newsletter and the reunion reservation worked fine.

I look forward to catching up with everyone this fall.

Take care

Jeffrey Wofford

Ed. Jeff figured out it was his software. The file opened fine after a fix.

Came aboard in Long Beach, Ca. Took her through the Canal and departed her in Bath. 1969

John Cecil



Certainly before my time—but timeless!

Credit Card Scam

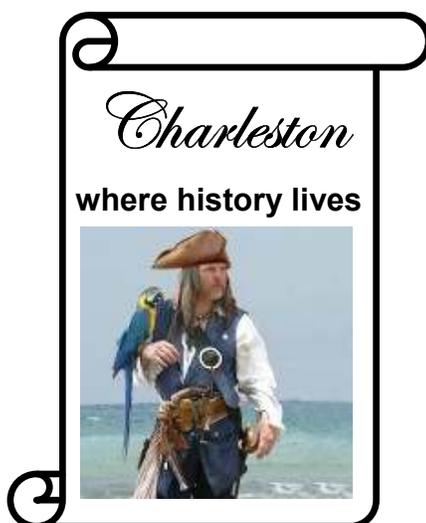
Check your credit and/or debit card statements closely this month. Consumers nationwide are finding charges for \$19.95 or more for credit reports they never ordered. The charges appear to be from Experian, Consumerinfo.com or Creditreport.com. Creditreport.com is part of a family of credit reporting sites belonging to Consumerinfo.com, Inc. an Experian company. Falsely charged consumers contacted Experian at the phone number listed on their debit/credit card statement and learned that their card number was used to purchase a credit report for another person. The false charges likely stemmed from a security breach. If you spot a charge on your statement from Experian, Consumerinfo.com or Creditreport.com, you should:

- Call the number listed next to the merchant's name on your credit or debit

card statements. The representative will ask for your name and debit or credit card number. If your name and the name on the purchased credit report are not the same, a refund will be issued within 7-14 days. The representative may also ask for your social security number for further verification.

- Immediately contact your debit or credit card issuer to report the misuse and request a new card.

- Report the incident to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) through their ID Theft Clearinghouse at <http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft>. This will allow the FTC to identify patterns associated with the unauthorized transactions and investigate the source of the data breach. [Source: Better Business Bureau Scam Alert 16 May 2012 ++]



Reunion Registration Form

The reunion registration form for the upcoming Charleston reunion has been included with this issue of the newsletter.

We have managed to keep the registration cost per person at \$100 as with the last two reunions (San Diego and Chicago). This is due to the willingness of the hotels to provide us with many compli-

mentary services.

While the cost of tour packages has increased a bit, we have to consider the cost of diesel fuel for the buses since it has doubled since our San Diego reunion.

Working with a highly recommended tour agent, and compared to other quotes

we received, we have a very competitive package.

Please consider the Saturday evening dinner cruise in Charleston Harbor. This was very popular in San Diego (70 participants) and looks to be a very good value for our group.

Credit Card Authorized User

When you allow someone to become an authorized user on your account, they're linked to your credit, but you're not linked to theirs. While allowing a family member to take a ride on your credit history is a nice thing to do, and it certainly can't hurt, don't expect miracles. Since they are not liable for the bill – it's still your sole liability – the boost to their credit rating may not be as great as you think.

Experian says on the subject. It's about adding a spouse, but the idea is the same...

Including your wife as an authorized user will help her establish a credit history. Authorized user accounts are included in a credit report and can be considered when making lending decisions. However, an authorized user has no responsibility for repayment of the debt. For that reason, they often have less bearing on a lender's decision, and may not be included in some credit score calculations. Although authorized user accounts are not always included in credit scores, they will result in a credit

history being established and eventually can help your wife qualify independently for her own accounts. In addition, in order for an authorized user to benefit from someone else's credit history, there should be a credit card issued in their name. Without a card issued in her name, FICO – generator of the most widely used credit score – won't count it when they compute her credit score. [Source: MoneyTalksNews Stacey Johnson article 22 May 2012 ++]

Archives

Our shipmate, Kurt Stuvengen, rummaged through the papers that his mom and dad had kept over the years and found every Family Gram that had been sent from the USS Reeves between 1980 and 1986. Kurt then copied every page of those newsletters and forwarded them to the archivist (me). Spending several days reading every one of them, more than 700 shipmate's names were identified and posted to the database.

The listing of shipmates on the website has grown considerably. While we are about 1,700 names short of the estimated 4,000 of those who served between 1962 and 1992, we are a lot closer than we were five years ago.

Copies of those family grams, ombudsman letter and a couple of internal ship's newsletters will be scanned and posted on the website.

Please send copies to the editor of the Association newsletter at:

15709 N Sycamore St
Mead, WA 99021

Tricare Prime Update

As a result of the 2012 NDAA that was passed into law last year, there is a significant change with a deadline to act that is fast approaching. TRICARE Prime has an option in certain regions of the country for beneficiaries to choose the United States Family Health Plan (USFHP) where they are serviced by Johns Hopkins, Christus Health and other medical providers instead of a Military Treatment Facility (MTF). There are six organizations that sponsor the US Family Health Plan in different regions throughout the United States. Members may transfer from one region to another without an interruption in benefits. To determine if you are in one of these regions and the servicing facility go to <http://www.usfhp.com> and enter your zip code. If you sign up for USFHP after September 30, 2012, you will only be able to use it until age 65. TRICARE beneficiaries who either sign up before September 30th, or who are already currently receiving their care via USFHP, will be grandfathered in and therefore allowed to keep USFHP for life.

There are only about 4 months until the deadline. Those affected are advised to educate themselves as much as possi-

ble through TRICARE representatives, pamphlets and web pages and to do the same with USFHP outlets. Then they can make an intelligent decision in the best interests of their particular circumstances. It is impossible to cover all of the scenarios that apply to Prime users as each one has their own set of unique circumstances. Two that might be applicable are:

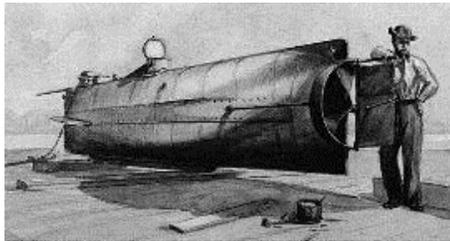
You are currently active duty and by regulation use MTF for you, but elect USFHP for your family. If you retire October 1, 2012, or later you have no choice in the matter; at 65 you (and your spouse) will be moved back into MTF care.

You're retired and already on USFHP before September 30th, but 25 years from now you move to an area that does not offer USFHP. If you haven't paid the Medicare Part B fees (not required while on USFHP) you may have to pay a higher rate to get current with Medicare as you transition back to MTF. [Source: AFSA On Call 23 May 2012 ++]

Welcome to Charleston and the East Coast—Our Next Reunion

Yes, we're going to Charleston for the 2012 reunion. The contract has been signed and the dates are set (October 4th through October 7th).

Back in the day, Charleston had a large Naval Base before BRAC shut it down. Now, the CSS Hunley is the only naval vessel berthed at the former Naval Base in a really, really big fish tank.



CSS H.L. Hunley

Charleston survived the shutdown and still has a tremendous amount to offer. It has been rated as the second most popular destination spot in the U.S., edged out by San Francisco by less than one percentage point.

For the Navy side, there is the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum. Tour the USS Yorktown (CVA-10), USS Clamagore (SS-343), Medal of Honor Museum, Cold War Submarine Memorial and the only Vietnam Support Base Camp in the U.S. It's history you can touch.



USS Yorktown circa late 1960s

History buffs have access to Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, the Battery, Magnolia and Boone Hall plantations, Middleton Place and Drayton Hall, just to mention a few of very many.

Our hotel is very near the airport, so shuttle service will be available. If there is a large enough registration for tours, there will be tours arranged for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

There are some dinner cruises available — can be set up if there's enough interest.

Our hotel rate at the Radisson Charleston Airport is locked in at \$94 per day, and has many amenities included.

Having been personally stationed in Charleston in the late 70's and early 80's, this is a new and revitalized town. First of all, look at the Cooper River Bridge photo below...it's not the same bridge from the forecandle or bridge of a destroyer back when—before BRAC.



Battery Park

If you are a Civil War history buff, this is the place to visit. Ft. Sumter was the opening act of the War Between the States.

And there is so much more to be seen and experienced in Charleston. Hank's Seafood Restaurant by the Charleston City Market probably serves the best she-crab soup in the area.

One of the oldest colonial cities, (Charles Town, established in 1670) Charleston offers a glimpse of our colonial and antebellum past, the battle to keep us together as a young nation, and the reservoir of our earliest heritage.



Fort Moultrie National Monument

Join us for Reunion 2012 in one of our earliest naval seaports.

October in the Carolinas is a great time to visit the Low Country. Strongly recommended:

- Fort Sumter
- A carriage ride
- The Battery and homes South of Broad
- A walk down Legare Street
- Middleton Place
- Poe's Tavern after the beach
- Golf on Kiawah Island

And, lastly
Dinner at the Peninsula Grill

And, it's a great place to meet all of your shipmates. Reservations at the Radisson Charleston: call **(843) 744-2501** and **be sure to mention the USS Reeves Association.**



New Cooper River Bridge



Southwest Airlines began service to Charleston Mar 13th (2011) with 7 daily non-stop flights to four destinations: three to Baltimore/Washington, two to Chicago Midway, one to Nashville, and one to Houston Hobby.

Financials

USS Reeves Association	
FY 2012 (YTD) Income Statement	
<u>Income</u>	
Dues	\$940
Donations	\$415
Reunion	\$4,845
Total Income	\$6,200
<u>Expense</u>	
Advertising	\$54
Newsletters	\$403
Postage	\$164
Total Expense	\$621
Net Income	\$5,579
FY 2012 (YTD) Assets Statement	
Cash Assets	\$5,680
Liabilities	\$93
Net Equity	\$5,567

Charitable/Educational Objectives
 The USS Reeves Association is an educational, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service, FEIN 86-1163983. For that purpose at the 2010 business meeting, it was recommended that future excess funds be used for donations and scholarships as determined at business meetings starting in 2012.

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How Many OPS Guys Does It Take—By Tom Bailey

.... to erect a tent?

Reeves trip to Qingdao in 1986 was a monumental occasion for the ship. We were selected to be the Flagship with CINCPACFLT embarked, and to represent our country in the most visible naval display in years.



Fantail VIP Entertainment “Suite”

From the minute we got word of the mission, all hands (and most of the shipyard workers in Yokosuka) turned-to to get the old girl ready for the occasion. We worked for months to chip, paint, replace, refurbish, polish, and essentially beautify everything in and out of sight. Instant show-piece, coming right up.

There are more than a few memories of what it took to get to Qingdao, but I have one decidedly humorous memory from a completely different perspective. Turns out the Reeves and the Oldendorf (DD-972) were to be equipped with matching tents on their fan-tails to serve as an entertainment suite for all the VIPs. I included some pics of the tents so you can see how elaborate things got. The entertainment for us snipes, however, was watching the OPS guys practice setting up the tent on the fan-tail. They

custom built the tent in Yokosuka, and welded attachment points to the deck. The Operations Guys were then responsible for setting up the tent on the fantail once we got to China..... with the whole world watching. So we got to see the drill in Yokosuka as OPS worked their way through learning how to erect the tent. We got to watch it again and again, until they got it right. By the time we left Yokosuka for Sasebo, the poor OPS guys were worn out from repeatedly unstowing, erecting, and restowing a tent the size of the entire fantail. We got to see it a few more times when we got to Sasebo to pick-up our CINCPAC visitors.

When we finally got to Qingdao, they made us proud, as the tent went right up with a fair amount of precision. The OPS crew had worked their asses off to have it down to a sci-



The Reeves’ VIP Suite

ence. As for the question of how many OPS guys does it take to set up a tent? We figured it was all of them. *Ed. OPS guys are good with puzzles and other off-the-wall stuff!*

Heading For A Real Home

The USS Iowa — the iconic World War II-era battleship that once served as transport to President Franklin D. Roosevelt — left San Francisco Bay on Saturday on its way to its new home in Southern California. Surrounded by pleasure boats and other vessels, the 887-foot long, 58,000-ton battlewagon was towed through the bay and passed under the Golden Gate Bridge at about 2:30 p.m. Crowds watched from both sides of the bridge as the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Sockeye provided an official escort and the San Francisco fireboat Phoenix led the way. At the St. Francis Yacht Club on San Francisco's shoreline, officers and crew members of the USS Decatur, outfitted in their dress whites, saluted as the Iowa drifted past, Rogers said. Club members also honored the Iowa with a farewell gun salute and a signal flag message — 'Farewell My Dear Friend.' "Everything has gone beautifully," said spokesman Bob Rogers of the Pacific

Battleship Center, a nonprofit organization that will operate an interactive naval museum on board the USS Iowa at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro. "The Phoenix was spraying water in every direction. She took her right out the Gate."

The Iowa, first commissioned in 1943 and again in 1951 and 1984, saw duty in World War II and the Korean War. The ship once carried Roosevelt to a summit with Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek. It also took part in escorting tankers in the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war before being decommissioned in 1990. In recent years, she sat in the cold and fog, anchored with other mothballed ships in nearby Suisun Bay. Last year, the Pacific Battleship Center beat out the San Francisco Bay Area city of Vallejo when the Navy awarded the ship to the organization. The center's future plans include an interactive tour experience that will al-

low the visitor to experience what life at sea was like during active duty. Among the highlights will be viewing the inside of one of the main gun turrets, seeing the 17.5-inch armored conning station on the bridge and viewing Roosevelt's state-room. The ship was recently moved to the Port of Richmond, not far from where "Rosie the Riveters" built ships in the 1940s. Workers scrubbed and painted the ship's exterior, replaced the teak deck and reattached the mast in preparation for the museum commissioning in July. The Iowa was scheduled to leave on May 20 but was delayed because of a storm system. As it turned out, its departure came on the same day as weekend celebrations were under way marking the Golden Gate Bridge's 75th anniversary. The trip down the coast was expected to take about four days. [Source: AP article 27 May 2012 ++]

New Westpac Website

Well, it's not exactly a new site.

It's been around since 2008; 11 July 2008 to be exact. It's called the Yokosuka Sailor and can be found on the web at <http://www.yokosukasailor.com>.

There are more than 1600 of us "old codgers" out there—and more memorable stories and pictures than you can shake a stick at. There are probably a whole lot more that are just browsing and not stepping up to the deck log.

Shipmate John Armstrong got me pointed there several months ago. I just keep watching it grow and expand.

If you don't have enough Navy memorabilia on your den wall, here's a new one that pulls everything together. YokosukaSailor is offering a free WestPac'er certificates for all of its members.

It's pretty simple to get one. List your ships that were in WestPac. Send it to John Andresen. He'll provide a high quality jpg file for printing on quality paper.

I'm getting mine for Charleston!



This is the sample you'll see on the YSS (YokoSwab site—my acronym).

John is offering these on a first come, first served basis. I guess that means

he'll continue until paper and postage run out. To keep the program running, you might send a couple of bucks to help defray expenses and keep the Yoko album alive.

A Moment In History—Qingdao (continued)

es occupied most of Shandong Province while fighting with KMT forces for dominance. Under the countenance of the KMT government, striving to maintain a central government presence inside a largely Communist-controlled area, the Marines occupied Qingdao.

Prior to 1945, Qingdao had experienced a sporadic U.S. Navy presence, ending with the departure of the USS MARBLEHEAD (CL-12) in January 1938 as the Japanese invaded Qingdao. With the presence of the Marines in 1945, Qingdao became the site of an important U.S. naval base. In September 1946, the Marines departed Qingdao at which point the military command passed to the U.S. Navy. In 1947, the USS DIXIE (AD-14) was deployed to Qingdao to provide repair services for the U.S. fleet in the Yellow Sea operating area.

The Navy maintained a strong presence in Qingdao, attempting to carry out the United Nations attempts to end the Chinese civil war and provide humanitarian assistance to civilians in the war-torn area. On March 7, 1949, USS DIXIE evacuated American citizens from Qingdao as the People's Liberation Army were advancing on

the city. (USS DIXIE proceeded to Shanghai, which was already in Communist control, and then to Buckner Bay, Yokosuka, and Hong Kong. She reached Subic Bay on July 3, 1949



where she became the temporary headquarters of the American Consul and Charge d'Affaires

On June 2, 1949, Qingdao was the last city in North China to come under complete control of the PLA and was placed under the jurisdiction of Shandong province. The People's Republic of China was founded on October 1, 1949.

The period 1949-1976 was characterized as a closed society in China. Likewise, Qingdao remained a closed port to trade with the Western world. With the death of Mao Zedong on

September 9, 1976, change began to accelerate as China experimented with expanding its economy, opening markets and increasing worldwide trade. Deng Xiaoping instituted reforms that encouraged market socialism. The tense relationship between China and the United States began to ease when the United States extended formal recognition to the People's Republic of China in 1979. China and the United States conducted joint military exercises and exchanged advisors. Port visits to China by combatant vessels of the United States were not permitted

until Peking dropped its insistence on prior notification as to the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard, something that the United States refuses to disclose with respect to any of its ships or aircraft.

On November 5, 1986, the USS REEVES (CG-24) as flagship entered Qingdao harbor, with USS OLDENDORF (DD-972) and USS RENTZ (FFG-46) in the van. The gap beginning with the USS DIXIE's departure in 1949 was now closed.

Thus was REEVES included its own place on a page in world history.

Navy Term of the Day

“As the crow flies” In a straight line, the shortest route between two points. It was common for 18th and 19th century ships to carry crows on board for use as a last resort when other attempts at navigation failed. When released, a

crow will instinctively head to the nearest food supply which would be shore if it is near. Navigators would often time the crow's flight as a means of measuring the distance from ship to shore.



VA Grave Marker Medallion

The Department of Veterans Affairs has streamlined the process for families of deceased Veterans to receive a medallion which can be affixed to grave markers at private cemeteries and indicates the Veteran status of the deceased. "This new form streamlines the ordering process, making it easier for families to order the medallion," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "The families want everyone to know that their loved one was a Veteran. We should help them do that in any way we can." Previously, families ordered the medallion using the form to order a government headstone or marker. VA has introduced a new form – VA Form 40-1330M – for use solely to order a medallion. The older form, VA Form 40-1330, remains in place to order a traditional government headstone or marker.

The medallion is a device furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or grave marker for Veterans whose death occurred on or after Nov. 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Under federal law, eligible Veterans buried in a private cemetery are entitled to either a government-furnished grave marker or the medal-



lion, but not both. The medallion is available in three sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches and 1 ½ inches in width. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word "Veteran" at the top and the Veteran's branch of service at the bottom.

Next of kin receive the medallion, along with a kit that allows the family or the staff of a private cemetery to affix the medallion to a headstone, grave marker, mausoleum or columbarium niche cover. The medallion is available only to Veterans buried in private cemeteries without a government headstone or marker. Families of eligible decedents may also order a memorial headstone or marker when remains are not available for interment. More information about the medallion or headstones and markers can be found at <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmorder.asp>. To download

the VA Form 40-1330M, Claim for Government Medallion, go to <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf>.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. Nearly four million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict -- from the Revolutionary War to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan -- are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres. Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a VA national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible Veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone, grave marker or medallion. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the VA Web site on the Internet at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1-800-827-1000. [Source: VA News Release 22 May 2012 ++]

Shift Colors

To receive the Navy's Shift Colors newsletter via email send the following information to Mill_ShiftColors@navy.mil -- First name; Last name; E-mail address; Title (Mr., Mrs., rank, etc.); and Military affiliation (retiree, surviving spouse, veteran, other). There is no longer any funding for hard copies to be printed and mailed. To receive Shift Colors it does not matter whether or not you're retired, active duty, a veteran, a surviving spouse, or just someone who's interested in receiving the newsletter

(Good News For) Coffee Drinkers

Older adults who drank coffee — caffeinated or decaffeinated — had a lower risk of death overall than others who did not drink coffee, according a study by researchers from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health, and AARP. Coffee drinkers were less likely to die from heart disease, respiratory disease, stroke, injuries and accidents, diabetes, and infections, although the association was not seen for cancer. Relative to men and women who did not drink coffee, those who consumed

three or more cups of coffee per day had approximately a 10 percent lower risk of death. However, the investigators caution that coffee intake was assessed by self-report at a single time point and therefore might not reflect long-term patterns of intake. For details on this study, go to: <http://www.nih.gov/news/health/may2012/nci-16.htm>. [Source: AUSA Family Programs article 21 May 2012 ++]

Ruminations from the Inland Northwest

Where does one begin?

Have you ever gone to a political convention? Well, I did. It seems my wife nominated me for a delegate in my neighborhood caucus back in February. That carried me to the Spokane County convention in March where I was elected to delegate to the State Convention.

Arriving in Tacoma in late May, it was rainy and cold—not exactly tourist weather. So I spent two days inside the Convention Center listening to politicians in office/seeking re-election, want-a-be politicians seeking election and delegates who seemed to be want-a-be politicians. That's a lot of want-a-be's in one place. Not only that, *Robert's Rules of Order* became overwhelming. I mean, I like order and brevity in any meeting. There are way too many *Planning Board for Training* sessions in my receding memory to forget. And those weekly sessions were long and ugly.

However, I watched a professional at work. I'm sure that no one has ever wielded a more deadly gavel as Permanent Chairman than our party leader. (You'll notice that I'm not mentioning which party. You can probably figure it out if you've been watching the National News in the last couple of months.)

Having the opportunity to visit the Left Coast, wife and I decided to visit sister and family down in Corvallis. Brother come north from wine county in California to join us.

It rained.

On Saturday, nearly ten days into our Northwest adventure, it stopped raining so that we could watch grown men, wearing skirts and tossing telephone poles, at the 2nd annual Newport, OR, Celtic Festival. It was nearly as much fun as watching our party chairman smash opponents into instant oblivion with his gavel. I mean, I enjoyed it.

At Sister's, we slept in their travel trailer. It was pretty neat, except at night when my aging bladder didn't care what time it was or where we were at or that it was dark in that mobile cave. Brother had his own camper on the back of his truck. He knew where the head was located!

We led a caravan of two up the Columbia gorge on Sunday, taking 12 hours for a nominally five hour trip. Did I mention an aging bladder?

It didn't rain the whole way that day. In fact, it got down right hot south of the Palouse in the Tri-Cities area.

Well, Brother spent a week visiting every fishing tackle store within 50

miles of Spokane. That included parts of northern Idaho. I spent hours in stores that I'd never been inside of...really! I managed to distract him long enough to visit the casino on the Coeur d'Alene reservation for lunch, of course.

Brother rekindled my interest in fishing, so I resurrected all the old and new fishing gear that I could find, emptying several packing boxes that hadn't made it to the top of the pile.

Brother went fishing down below John Day Dam with Cousin looking for Shad. From what I understand, there was more Shad than a sane man could stand.

Meanwhile, I was stuck with old reels all over my work bench. I've spent a week on the internet identifying them.

Now, I've come up with a new project...clean the reels and mount them into a shadow box, for posterity, of course.

Is there a point to all of this?

It rains all the time in Tacoma and Corvallis. Watch out for gavel-wielding convention chairpersons. There's nothing wrong with beginning another project, even if you'll never finish it. And, watch out for unpacked moving boxes. They reveal more than you bargained for.

AARP Alternative

The Senior Citizens League (TSCL) is a true grassroots organization. Almost one hundred percent of their revenue comes from individual donations, and they do not sell any products to their members. They even refuse outside advertising in their materials. The organization's sole focus is on education and protection of the Social Security and Medicare benefits senior citizens have earned and paid for.

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

Another AARP Alternative

The American Seniors Association (ASA) is known as *the conservative alternative to the AARP*. The American Seniors Association works to fulfill its mission to provide seniors with the choices, information, and services they need to live healthier, wealthier lives.

The ASA offers both a different perspective and member services similar to AARP. They can be contacted at:

<http://www.americanseniors.org/index.php/home>



DoD Benefits Cuts

The Center for American Progress (CAP) released a new study, “Reforming Military Compensation,” that asserts the Pentagon’s FY 2013 defense budget doesn’t go nearly far enough in proposing cuts to military pay, retirement, and health care benefits. Like many previous studies, it’s a compendium of budget-focused assertions that, at best, miss the point and, at worst, misrepresent the role and purpose of current career compensation incentives. Rather than bandying generalities, let’s take a closer look at **specific quotes from the report.**

□ *“When TRICARE was created in 1996, working-age retirees contributed about 27% of their health care costs; today that number has fallen to just 11%. Should the Pentagon’s recommendations [for large TRICARE fee hikes] be implemented by Congress, military retirees would still contribute just 14% of their health care costs, about half of what they did in 1996.”*

First, there was no discussion in 1996 about having retirees pay any percentage of health care costs. Second, MOAA rejects the implied assumption that basing beneficiary fees on a percentage of DoD costs is a reasonable thing to do.

Much of the interim cost increases were driven by readiness needs and the inherent inefficiencies and lack of oversight of the current health care delivery system, and beneficiaries should bear no share of those costs. Finally, unlike CAP, MOAA won’t simply accept whatever statistics DoD chooses to cite without far more information about what those figures did and didn’t count — which defense leaders so far have declined to share.

□ *“Due to the 20-year vesting requirement, Pentagon managers are reluctant to separate personnel who have served more than 10 years but less than 20, not wanting to leave servicemembers without a job and retirement savings. ... This rigidity leaves the retirement program particularly ill-suited for periods in which the force is shrinking significantly, as it is today. ...”*

MOAA hasn’t seen any such reluctance. During the drawdown of the 1990s and the new one now under way, Congress and DoD have exercised multiple authorities, voluntary and involuntary, to separate or retire many, many thousands.

□ *“The Defense Department and Congress can and should mandate that working-age retirees above a certain income level be allowed to enroll in TRICARE only if they don’t have access to other plans through their employer or spouse.”*

Congress’ clear intent always has been that completion of a service career entitles a retired servicemember to TRICARE coverage. Never, ever, anywhere, has anyone in government expressed a caveat that retiree health care coverage is authorized “unless you take a civilian job after leaving service, or unless your spouse has other health coverage, or unless you succeed in life.” The CAP authors would blatantly default on the government’s statutory obligation after servicemembers have fulfilled their end of the career-service bargain.

□ *“[T]he military retirement system ... has remained unaltered not because of its effectiveness but rather due to the political difficulties involved in modernizing entitlement programs for military personnel.”*

Somebody’s not paying attention here. Congress enacted legislation in 1986 that dramatically reduced 20-year retirement benefits — and had to repeal it a decade later after those cuts undermined retention and readiness.

□ *“CAP recommends a three-part transition to a 401(k)-based retirement system:*

✓ *All new recruits would enroll in the new system [with benefits delayed until age 60].*

✓ *Personnel with at least 10 years of service would have the option to transition to a 401(k) or retain their current benefits.*

✓ *Personnel with less than 10 years would transition either to a 401(k) or to a modified [retirement] system...that would provide 40% [rather than 50%] of base pay ... and would pay out those benefits no earlier than age 60.”*

Again, the CAP authors choose to ignore retirement history, proposing far greater retirement cuts than already were proven to undermine readiness. The CAP proposal shows a shocking insensitivity to the fundamental difference between military service and civilian working condi-

tions. Why on earth would anyone choose to pursue a military career and all of its inherent sacrifices if all they would earn is a civilian-style benefit?

□ *“Because of indifference on the part of the Pentagon leadership, virtually any individual who requests retirement after 20 years of service is automatically allowed to leave.”*

It’s hard to conceive any responsible person would put such a sentence in print. Not only do the authors think that 20-plus years of service should only earn a civilian-style retirement benefit, but they also think long-serving servicemembers should be denied the choice to leave active service? Now there’s a deal that would attract America’s sons and daughters to a career in uniform, don’t you think?

□ *“Implemented in 1948, the military retirement system was designed for the draft era, yet it has remained virtually unaltered despite the transition to an all-volunteer force.”*

The CAP authors seem unaware that switching to an all-volunteer force only altered the means of entry into service. The career force always has been a voluntary force. The retirement system was built to attract people to a military career in spite of the unique demands and sacrifice inherent in completing decades of uniformed service. If anything, those conditions are worse today than when the system was established. The hard fact is the current retirement system (together with a bad economy) is the only reason the country was able to sustain the career force through the past decade of war. Had the CAP retirement proposal been in effect during that time, it would have destroyed retention and readiness.

□ *“We would not argue ... that the men and women of our military do not deserve to be generously compensated for their professionalism and bravery.”*

Give us a collective break. The CAP authors would — and do — assert repeatedly and explicitly that career servicemembers’ service and sacrifice for the nation are worth far, far, less than the country is currently compensating them. It’s apparently lunchtime at CAP. [Source: MOAA Government Relations Director ‘As I See It’ article 11 May 2012 ++]



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USS REEVES (DLG-24/CG-24) ASSOCIATION
15709 N Sycamore St
Mead, WA 99021

For further information call or email Michael Robertson at 509-315-8107, fax 703-740-9161

More details online at: michael.d.robertson@comc.asl.net
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