



We are publishing the USS Taylor (DD/DDE-468) Reunion Association Newsletter as a forum for disseminating information concerning the activities of the Reunion Association and its members particularly as it relates to reunions as well as the maintenance of a high level of interest in the history of the USS Taylor (DD/DDE-468) and the men who served on her. We ***encourage and welcome*** informational contributions, including articles, from members at any time. Please submit comments, inquiries, or possible contributions to Ms. Dorothy Davis at shipsahoy16@gmail.com. No political commentary, please.

2021 REUNION CANCELED



In our May 2020 edition we reported that in reaction to the COVID 19 pandemic we had rescheduled our reunion by one year, now to go from 26 August thru 30 August 2021. Then, in our August 2020 edition, we reported that we would make a final go/no go decision as to having a 2021 reunion in November. Based on feedback from members and on our extrapolations of the current COVID 19 situation we have notified the Central Hotel and Conference Center that we are canceling our 2021 reunion.

Our hope was that the additional year from August 2020 until August 2021 would provide sufficient time for our government and national medical authorities to resolve the COVID 19 situation such that our members would feel safe, and be safe, attending our reunion. Some of our members did express an intention to attend the 2021 reunion. Another opinion was that, without receiving a vaccine, attending a reunion could not be considered. Yet another opinion was that a meeting during which masks had to be worn while social distancing and cleaning protocols practiced would not be an event worth attending.

What is becoming “clear” is just how “unclear” the future situation is. Essentially there is no national plan for combating COVID 19 — a lot of noise — for a reunion planner to sort through. COVID 19 continues to spread in the U.S. — it is not going away — and what the situation will likely be during August 2021 is not predictable, by us, anyway. There is currently hope about a vaccine being available by the end of this year, but it is questionable that all our attending members could be able to get their vaccination(s) before an August 2021 reunion and, with about 50% of our population not believing in vaccinations, would everyone get it? Add to that the reunion planning frustration of having our Point of Contact, our “hand holder” on the Hershey-Harrisburg Convention and Visitors Board dismissed, with her position abolished. Also check out this video, posted by the Military Reunion Network, about the charter bus industry (copy and paste into your browser)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QR1IEUSGuuM&feature=youtube>. In this video, Peter Pantuso, President of the American Bus Association’s company predicts that up to 40% of small bus companies will be going out of business. If our bus company happens to be one of these, the bus company will certainly not coordinate with our reunion group prior to declaring bankruptcy.

It would be nice if we could wait a little longer to make this decision, at such a time when the future might be clearer. Unfortunately, the fact that we have cancellation penalties imbedded in our contract with the hotel, penalties that increase over time, makes further delay inadvisable. We need to protect our bank account, consequently we will be processing refunds to those who paid and didn't receive one earlier.

FUTURE REUNIONS

This was to be my (Jim O'Neill's) last reunion as a planner. We have been looking at other options for future reunions.

* **Merge with the USS Taylor (FFG 50) reunion** — We had that opportunity offered to us in 2016 right as the FFG 50 was going out of commission. The FFG 50 veterans even went so far as to hold a “tolling of the bell” ceremony for *our* deceased veterans during *their* decommissioning ceremony. The case for such a merger considers that a group of younger sailors might have added a level of high energy and volunteerism to our reunions and, in return, we could have helped them through some of the pitfalls of organizing and of reunion planning. The membership felt, however, that just having the same name was not a strong

enough linkage between the two ships and the resulting reunion would not be an event that they would care to attend or support. So we declined the offer.

*** Merge with another destroyer reunion** — There are several destroyer reunion groups looking for mergers in order to boost attendance. For example, the USS Jenkins (DD-447) reunion has merged with the USS Fletcher (DD-445) & USS O'Bannon (DD-992) reunions. In this arrangement the Jenkins attendees are voting members and the Fletcher and O'Bannon attendees are associate members. They have informally extended an offer to us.

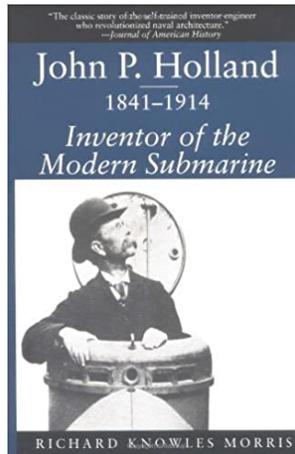
Also the USS Cogswell (DD-651) and the USS Wedderburn (DD-684) have merged reunions and are looking for more attendees. In fact, the USS Cogswell (DD-651) Planner has issued an invitation to any members of our reunion association, so desiring, to participate in their June 7, 2021 to June 9, 2021 reunion in Bellview, WA. The Cogswell's hotel contract is less stringent than ours by allowing them to wait until 30 days before the start of the reunion to make a final go/no go decision. I have a copy of the signup flyer and can email you a copy if you are interested — just let me know. Your direct liaison with the Cogswell (DD-651) Reunion Association will be required in order to attend.

If we were to go with an option like either one of these for the long term we would still need a volunteer to act as a planner representing our USS Taylor (DD/DDE-468) portion of the reunion.

*** Merge with Tin Can Sailors (TCS)** — TCS holds reunions every year for all destroyer veterans. COVID 19, however, has forced the cancellation of the 2020 TCS Reunion. We have not seen any information on their next reunion but we are on their list to be notified. TCS does all the planning and collects the (bulk of) the funding. Individual ship organizations may organize under that umbrella. TCS reunion planners dole out hospitality space based on hotel capacity and individual ship attendance level. TCS seems to be very flexible and Individual ship reunion organizations are free to join in the common activities or create their own. Yes, booze is allowed in the hospitality rooms.

*** So What is the Plan?** — We are sitting out the current COVID-19 situation. We have received full refunds of all deposits and have funds to apply to a future reunion or two. In the long term we are looking to merge with TCS. This is the approach that our members have been informally discussing over the last few years. In the meantime, while we are talking to TCS, however, and as August 2021 approaches, we will revisit the possibility of scheduling an August 2022 reunion at the same hotel in Harrisburg, with the same basic schedule as what we had previously planned. The Best Western Premier has bent over backwards to be fair to our group but stated that, right now, was too early for them to commit to supporting an August 2022 reunion for us — we'll see eventually.

BOOK REVIEW



A classic of maritime history updated with new information, *John P. Holland, 1841–1914* is the sole full-length biography of the Irishman whose technological innovations led to the launching of the first modern submarine in May 1897. While David Bushnell may be considered the father of the submarine, Holland devised the technical improvements that enabled a craft to operate equally effectively whether submerged or surfaced, and it was his design that the U.S. Navy purchased in 1900. Richard Knowles Morris draws on diaries and papers left by his grandfather, a longtime friend of Holland and a superintending engineer of the Holland Torpedo Boat Company (later Electric Boat), to trace the inventor’s eventful life. Morris recounts Holland’s early years, his frustration in dealing with the Fenians and the U.S. Navy, and his company’s negotiations with Japan, Great Britain, and Russia for Holland boats. Of particular interest is the selection of photographs that offer an enlightening pictorial of early submarine history.

Many who attended the Charleston, SC reunion in 2014 will remember our tour of the Warren Lasch Conservation Center, the restoration facility for the CSS Hunley. While the Hunley design proved effective for its one mission during our Civil War, the USS Holland (SS-1) was the first submarine actually commissioned in the U.S. Navy and was of the modern “porpoising” design type that is still in use today. The book, overall, is a tutorial on submarine design evolution as well as an interesting read.

UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

In August, **Jack Meyer, LTJG 65-67** reported that he had escaped the fires in Napa, CA only to run into another one in Carmel.



Adam Housley @adamhousley · 56s

#meadowood across the valley from St Helena. I just left there...they couldn't save it. :(#glassfire



In October Jack reported that the fires are mostly out. "It's been a long month. We belong to the health club at Meadowood. We won't be going there for a while."

Barth A. Rullo, RD3 68-69 called to advise that he had been successful in obtaining 100% VA disability benefits for Agent Orange exposure during the ships last cruise prior to being sold.

MEMBERSHIP

We have published our 2018 membership directory. All those who attended the 2018 reunion have received a copy (one per family, however). All our members with internet can access the online directory at <http://usstaylor468.org/directory/>. For the Alpha Directory the username is bkatzusn and the password is hongkong. TOP SECRET.

Carl C. Fisher, S02 55-57 joins us for email from Texas.

WEB SITE

ORAL HISTORIES — Our web site home page <https://usstaylor468.org/> has added a link to oral histories on the home page. So far we have four entries, and are looking for more contributions. If you would like to add your memories please contact Bob Cashin at rlcashin@verizon.net. He will send you a small digital handheld recorder with instructions in a package enclosing a postpaid return mailer.

MODERNIZATION — We are in the process of modernizing the USS Taylor (DD/DDE-468) web site. We plan to bring the site up to date with current technology, eliminate redundancies, provide for more flexibility, easier management, and longevity. At this point, the strategy is to rebuild the site in WordPress software, which is the leading web site building software today. This will enable us to present the site at full width, instead of the narrow width we have now. It also allows much better and simpler access for us to make simple edits ourselves. We described the changes in greater detail in our August 2019 NEWSLETTER. All the changes

will help to give us more security and longevity. Our goal is to have the new site ready for presentation in the summer of 2021.

ASBESTOS

We received the following letter from LCDR Carl Jewett. We have not vetted him as a service provider and, therefore, have not put his information on our web page as he asked, but are providing his information as a “possible” source of help in case someone is searching for information on an asbestos related VA claim

My name is Carl Jewett. I am a retired Naval Officer and a VA Accredited Claims Agent specializing in asbestos related VA claims.

I'm writing you to ask a favor. I've been doing veteran outreach for several years now to get the word out to the veteran community in order to let them know that if they have been diagnosed with an asbestos illness, I provide free assistance in filing for VA benefits. This outreach campaign has been very successful, and we now have hundreds of veterans related websites linking to my veteran's page here <https://www.mesotheliomaguide.com/veterans/> including a link from va.gov promoting my free veteran services.

That said, I get asked all the time by veterans how to find a good veteran friendly mesothelioma law firm. So recently, I had an article written by our senior writer to cover information about legal options available to veterans that I think addresses this question.

That article can be viewed here: <https://www.mesotheliomaguide.com/community/5-tips-choosing-best-mesothelioma-lawyer/>. I think this article could really help veterans with asbestos illnesses to better understand what to look for in a law firm.

My motivation here isn't totally selfless. I'm hoping that if I can get enough veterans access to this information online, I won't have to field so many of these questions on the phone or by email.

I'm hopeful that you will help me to get the word out by linking to this article of our site on your resources page here. " <https://usstaylor468.org/links/>

If you could help me out in this endeavor, I would greatly appreciate your help, and will have one of our IT folks provide you with whatever technical stuff you would need to add a link to this blog. Please feel free to call, email or text me if you have any questions.

Thanks in advance and keep up the good work you are doing for our fellow veterans.

Very Respectfully,

Carl Jewett
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PURCHASE FLAG REPLICA

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Bob Cashin is offering to produce a photographic replica of our World War II flag for any member interested. The photo is 16" X 12" — the frame makes it a few inches larger on each side — and is the same as the one we auctioned off at the Colorado Springs Reunion. The cost is \$130 payable to Robert L. Cashin. This is the same price as the auction price. Any excess over the cost to produce and ship the replica is a donation to the reunion association.

HISTORICAL PHOTOS

We are always looking for photos documenting the History of the USS Taylor (DD/DDE-468) and those who served on her. Indeed, many people have already shared their photos and we have them on file. **Dick Schermer, LT 59-61** provided the following photograph which was taken in the early 1960's. It looks like part of a Pollywog initiation in honor of crossing the equator. Do you recognize anyone?



LIFE STORY

The following story which appeared in the Orlando Sentinel on November 11, 2007 was written by Lori Carter. Clinton Howard Westbrook was an RD2 on the Taylor serving on board from 1942 thru 1946. He was one of our plank owners. He passed in 2008.

ALTOONA -- For years, this Pearl Harbor survivor has shared his story with schoolchildren.

Clinton Westbrook was 23 and assigned to the USS Arizona on Dec. 7, 1941, when a recent job transfer, he said, likely saved his life. Westbrook had been in the radar division, deep in the ship, but was moved to deck duty.

That morning, Westbrook and another man were in a 50-foot motorboat alongside the USS Nevada when Westbrook saw the planes. He thought it was a practice attack and told his shipmate, "It looks like the flyboys are early today."

Then one plane banked to the side, and Westbrook saw the Japanese red sun.

"They aren't ours," he said. "Let's get . . . out of here."

Westbrook, 88, and a resident of Waterview Terrace in Altoona, joined the Navy at 21, just out of high school. In his 27-year naval career, it's the Pearl Harbor attack he will never forget.

It began just before 8 a.m., when nearly everyone was asleep.

Suddenly, he said: "We realized that we were at war. Adrenaline kicked in. You didn't think what you had to do -- you did it."

Westbrook and others went into rescue mode. His white uniform was soon unrecognizable from the oil, blood and dirt. The sounds of explosions and rounds of ammunition soon turned to the sights of fires on the ships and the water, and of the wounded and dead.

It was over a little after 9 a.m.

"Everything got quiet," Westbrook said. "That's when my ears hurt."

After three days of special duty, Westbrook finally got back to the administration building.

"I changed my status from MIA to alive," he said.

Westbrook said several months later it was found that he had shrapnel in his right eye and a bullet in his right shoulder. He went on to participate in 23 campaigns in World War II, including the African invasion and recovery of Wake Island survivors.

And he was on the USS Taylor, one of three ships that escorted the USS Missouri into Tokyo Bay for the surrender. Near the end of his career, Westbrook, who retired as chief petty officer, was stationed in Sanford from 1960-63. His family made a home there, and he eventually joined them full time when he retired in 1967.

He began to share his war stories after a teacher noticed his bumper sticker: "USS Arizona survivor." That teacher asked him to speak at Heathrow Elementary. He lectured there and in other Seminole County schools for many years.

Denise Glum, teacher and organizer of the yearly veterans' program at Heathrow Elementary in Lake Mary, said it's "a pleasure for the teachers and staff to have a World War II veteran who was present at Pearl Harbor come and share his experiences with the students. He has an enthusiasm that is evident to the children and a way of speaking to them that makes the history come alive."

Westbrook, who recently received his Purple Heart, has gone to reunions at Pearl Harbor four times and to reunions in Tucson, Ariz., nine times.

In 1997, Westbrook was one of several people invited to Japan to meet Japanese aviators.

He was able to speak with the lone survivor of the aviators who sank the USS Arizona. Through a translator, Westbrook was told: " 'You have come. We have talked. Now, I'm ready to go up.' " That man then pointed to the heavens.

"It was quite an emotional experience," Westbrook said.

He also has shared his military memories on documentaries -- one scheduled to air this year on the History Channel and others that were aired on the Discovery Channel.

Westbrook also keeps busy with his coin and stamp collections, and displays replicas of old Chevrolets -- including Corvettes -- Fords, fire engines, military aircraft and spacecraft.

Westbrook said he's never really had dreams about Pearl Harbor, because "I've always been able to talk about it."

TAPS — IN MEMORIAM

We have become aware that the following individuals (previously not reported) have passed away since our Nashville reunion:

Jack Clendenin — Jack was a BTFN who served on board in 1969.

Charles C. Goebel — Chuck was an RD3 who served on board from 1966 thru 1969.



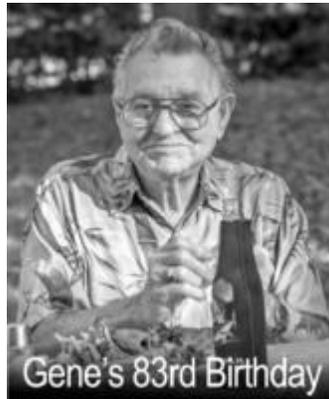
Joseph A. Jurkowski — Joe was a LTJG who served on board in 1956 and 1957.



James Stidham — Jim was an S1C who served on board from 1944 thru 1946. He attended, and was the star of, our 2014 reunion in Charleston, SC.



Eugene T. Trahan — Gene was an MM3 who served on board from 1954 thru 1957. He was an avid supporter of the USS Taylor (DD/DDE-468) Reunion Association and consistently attended reunions.



MISSING IN ACTION

There are several Taylor sailors whom we used to have contact information on but who have now dropped out of our sight. If anyone has any new contact information or knows something that happened to them please pass it on to us.

Thomas E. Anderson — Thomas was an MM3 and was on board from 1964 until 1969. His last known address is in St. Petersburg, FL.

Carl Augusta — Carl was a GM3(T) and was on board from 1943-1945.

Donald A. Ballard — Donald was an STG2 and was aboard from 1962-1964

John D. Deardorff — John served onboard during 1956. His last known address is in Panama City, FL.

Gerald P. Kelsh — Gerry was a LTJG who served on board from 1956 - 1958. His last known address is in Springtown, PA

Lester Marney — Lester was a BT3 who served on board from 1958 - 1960. His last known address is in Tehachapi, CA.

Billy W. McCuiston — Bill was an E4 who served on board from 1953-1955. His last known address is in Marietta, GA.

Jimmie D. Mclemore — Jim was an ET2 on board from 1952-1954. His last known address is in Livingston, TX.

Ronald K. Miyata — Ronald was a SA who served on board in 1966. His last known address is in West Covina, CA.

Norman L. Rice — Norman was a BM3 who served on board in 1963. His last known address was in Lemon Grove, CA.

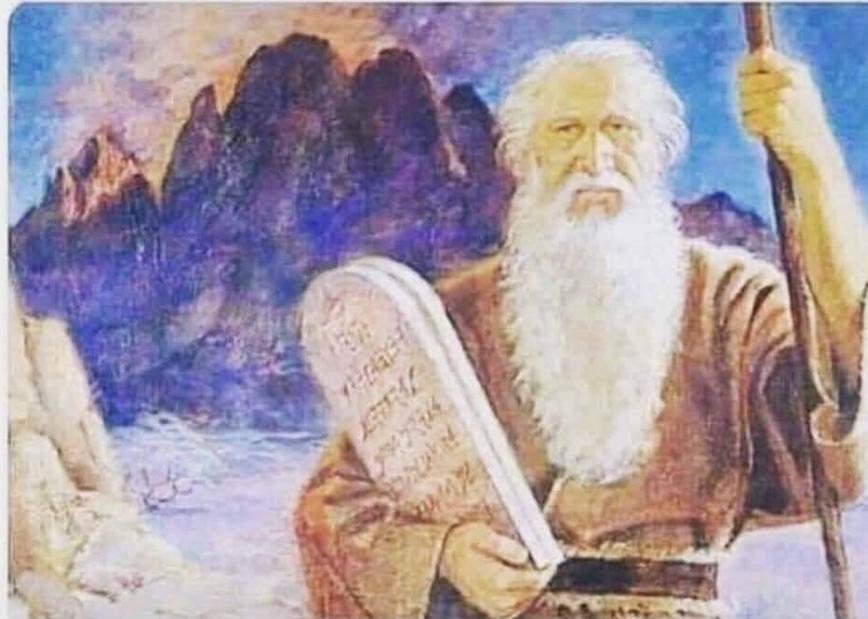
Clifford H. Santiago — Cliff was an SM1 who served on board from 1961-1964. His last known address is in Chula Vista, CA.

Donald L. Underwood — Donald was a QM3 who served on board from 1954 thru 1956. His last known address is in Deming, NM.

Charles Cameron VanWye — “Little Bit” was a seaman and Korean War Plank Owner who served on board from 1951 thru 1953. His last known address is in Riverbank, CA.

Sidney J. Wallace — Sid was an FC1 who served on board from 1942 thru 1946. He is a Plank Owner whose last address was in Bakersfield, CA.

So technically Moses is the first man to download files from the cloud using a tablet.



Visionary
Thoughtful
Forward leaning
Inquisitive



THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY TO DO THIS.

Leader
Insightful
Flag material

fraser © 2011

slacker
Whiner
Trouble maker
Malcontent
Lazy



THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY TO DO THIS.

Questions authority
N.J.P. material