



THE BRIGHT PENNY

Jan. - March 2014

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE USS BERKELEY (DDG-15) ASSOCIATION

Jacksonville Reunion Update

Planning for our next reunion in Jacksonville, Florida is in process, and gaining momentum. The Crowne Plaza Jacksonville-Riverfront is our host hotel, and our reunion dates are September 25 – 28, 2014. We will kickoff activities on Thursday evening with the Bull Session which has been a very popular event. The Hospitality Suite will open Thursday afternoon, and this is where you can pick up your Welcome Packet, view USS Berkeley cruise books and other historical information, visit the Ship's Store and visit with other attendees.



The cost for the reunion will be \$80 per person for all hotel events, and \$65 per person for the banquet only. The hotel events planned for the reunion include the Bull Session, Welcome Reception, Ladies Event, business meeting, a ACVA (Adams Class Veterans Association) and/or JHNSA (Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association) briefing, and the Saturday night banquet.

Tours are in the planning process, and we hope to have the tours and associated cost listed on the web site in the next few months. Tour

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Jacksonville's Naval History

Following is an overview of the U.S. Navy history in the Jacksonville area, and the primary focus is on Jacksonville Naval Air Station and Mayport Naval Station.

In the late 1930's, aggressive lobbying by the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce helped persuade President Roosevelt and Congress to establish a Navy complex in Jacksonville. A \$15 million congressional appropriation and a \$1.1 million bond issue provided large tracts of land along the St. Johns River and Ribault Bay that were turned over to the Navy. Jacksonville Naval Air Station became the first and only military installation ever established in the U.S. as a result of a gift from local citizens.

By the end of WW II, more than 11,000 pilots and 10,000 air crewmen had earned their "wings" at Jacksonville NAS. The vast majority of these young men saw combat. Over 30,000 gunners were also trained. The roster of early war graduates included Joseph Kennedy Jr., the son of America's ambassador to Britain.

The Kennedy family has enjoyed a strong connection with Jacksonville area bases. As a young Navy officer, John F. Kennedy was once hospitalized at Jacksonville NAS after he was involved in a PT boat mishap. The designation of Mayport Naval Station as home port for the USS John F. Kennedy continued that relationship. Jacksonville NAS also played an important role in supporting the Vietnam war effort.

In response to the U.S.'s entry into WWII, three runways over 6,000 feet long were in operation at Jacksonville NAS, as were sea-plane runways in the St. Johns River. Overhaul and repair facilities were built to rework the station's planes, and today it is named the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast.

In 1946, the Navy established the Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Team in Jacksonville. Their first air show was at what is now Craig Municipal Airport at the corner of St. Johns Bluff Road and Atlantic Blvd.

By 1949, nearly half of the Navy's aircraft on the East Coast were stationed in Jacksonville. A year later, Congress passed an emergency appropriation bill that provided almost \$2 million to dredge and construct a carrier pier at Mayport. Naval activity intensified in the 1950's because of the demands of the Korean War.

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Al Meier

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information will also be included in future newsletters. We are attempting to organize another DDG tour (the tour of the USS Stockdale in San Diego was very popular), and that is our primary focus at this time. Tours that we are considering are a tour of St. Augustine, and a Budweiser brewery/Jacksonville city tour. Since we are still in the early stages of tour planning, we are open to other suggestions.

Hotel reservations can be made now by calling 1-888-233-9527, and give our group name of USS Berkeley Association. Room rates begin at \$95 + tax for single and double occupancy. There is complimentary parking, and a complimentary hot breakfast buffet in the American Grill. A 20% discount is available in the American Grill restaurant.

Missing Cruise Books

Four more cruise books are now available at our web site, and only four Berkeley deployment periods with missing books remain. If anyone has the 1968, 1974, 1979-80 or 1988 cruise books, please let us know. Please contact us at alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com. If possible, we would like to borrow the books for scanning, and we will cover the shipping costs.

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The proposal for a full-fledged base at Mayport, which had been submitted to Congress in 1948, included an additional \$15 million for major upgrades to Jacksonville NAS, Green Cove Springs Auxiliary field (later Lee Field) and a Navy oil terminal near Blount Island. Mayport is now a major Navy base (third largest naval surface fleet concentration in the U.S.) with a protected harbor that can accommodate aircraft-carrier sized ships. The USS Lake Champlain was the first carrier to call Mayport its home. Due to the decommissioning of all conventionally powered carriers by the Navy, no carriers are presently assigned to Mayport. However, in 2010 the Quadrennial Defense Review Report stated that a nuclear carrier would be home ported at Mayport. This would help protect the fleet against a potential terror attack, natural disaster or accident, and all carriers were currently based at Naval Station Norfolk.

The Navy continued to grow in the Jacksonville area throughout the 1970's and 1980's, especially with the activities of King's Bay Naval Submarine Base in St. Marys, GA, about 40 miles to the north. The base is currently (as of 1999) the home port for 10 Trident nuclear submarines. The annual economic impact, in 1999, from King's Bay was conservatively estimated at \$6.1 billion.

During a 1991 operation against Iraq, called Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. Marine Corp Facility at Blount Island shipped more cargo to the Persian Gulf area than any other

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Ship's History January 2014

50 Year Ago, 1964

In Long Beach Naval Shipyard to complete a few items still amiss from the shipyard period in San Francisco the preceding summer. This period began immediately after Christmas 1963, and extended over an interval of six weeks.

40 Years Ago, 1974

01 - 04 Inport Bremerton, Washington
04 - 07 Enroute Long Beach, CA
07 - 16 Inport Long Beach
17 Loadout Seal Beach
18 - 31 Inport San Diego, CA

30 Years Ago, 1984

01 - 02 POM inport San Diego, CA
13 - 19 Enroute Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
20 - 25 AIREM, SHAREM, BGAREM ASW operations off Hawaii
30 - 31 Inport Pearl Harbor, HI

Remembering Dave Oldham



Dave Oldham passed away peacefully in his sleep on Thursday January 2, 2014. Dave was 78 years old, and proudly served his

country for 20 years in the Navy. Dave served aboard the USS Berkeley as a RD1 from 1965 to 1966.

After his Navy career, Dave worked on bridge construction for the Union Pacific Railroad. He is well known for his love of anything Irish, and it was a rare day when he wasn't dressed in something green. Dave was well known for his smile and "a top of the morning to you" greeting.

Dave was born in Pueblo, CO on September 15, 1935, and passed away in his home in Yuma, AZ. Dave is survived by his sisters Peggy Oldham of Joplin, MO and Patsy Valencia of Pueblo, CO; children Jacqueline Strange of Garden Grove, CA, Alexis McMannis (Craig) of Winters, CA, and Race Oldham (Tesa) of Salt Lake City, UT; 9 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his loving pet and best friend, Consuela.

Dave is the First Class front and center in the above photo.

ACVA Update

2013 was a very successful year for the Adams Class Museum project in Jacksonville Florida. The Adams Class Veterans Association and the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association have noted these accomplishments among others:

1. A Jacksonville City Ordinance was unanimously passed supporting the installation of former USS Charles F. Adams (DDG-2) as the centerpiece of a downtown museum.
2. The Downtown Investment Authority unanimously passed a resolution supporting the project.
3. Overwhelming support for the project in a poll conducted by the Jacksonville Business Journal. Of all the projects proposed for downtown, the ship museum gained 62% support vs *all* other proposals.
4. Hosting a triple Adams class reunion
5. Numerous other successful activities such as the Salute to Veterans Road Race, and the Fall Party at the Shipyard.

Our Association will hold its next reunion in Jacksonville September 25 - 28 2014. The ship will be delivered to Jacksonville in late 2014 or 2015. It is unlikely that she will be there during our reunion, but the JHNSA and

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U.S. port.

On December 6, 2013, the USS New York (LPD-21) was the first of a three ships assigned to an amphibious ready group to arrive at her new homeport of Mayport. The USS New York is unique in that steel from the World Trade Center, destroyed on 9/11, was used in her construction.

Today, Jacksonville NAS stands at the forefront of antisubmarine readiness. It is home to Patrol Squadron Thirty (VP-30), the Navy's largest patrol squadron and the only P-3 Orion and P-8 Poseidon Fleet Replacement Squadron. Jacksonville NAS is also a Aviation Maintenance training facility for several aviation ratings.

There are approximately 14 combat ships homeported in Mayport, and that includes four DDG's. The DDG's homeported in Mayport include the USS Carney (DDG-64), USS The Sullivans (DDG-68), USS Roosevelt (DDG-80) and USS Farragut (DDG-99). Mayport Naval Station is also home to the U.S. Fourth Fleet, reactivated in 2008 after having been deactivated in 1950.

Through it all, Jacksonville continues to be the most sought-after duty station of Navy men and women.

Sources for this article include the Florida Times Union articles, the Military.Archives.com and the Mayport Naval Station web sites.

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the ACVA are enthusiastic about supporting us. They will be providing a briefing to us after our Saturday morning business meeting. Also note that the management of the hotel we have selected, the Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront, is on the board of the JHNSA.

As always, your membership and support of the ACVA is encouraged.



**Crowne Plaza Jacksonville
Riverfront**



**USS Adams NorthBank Rendering-
Final**