



T H E

BRIGHT PENNY

July - September 2017

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

Summer is Here!!!

Summer 2017 Update

Hope you are all enjoying a healthy and happy summer! It seems like just a couple of months ago that we hosted our 2016 reunion in Chicago, but it's been nine months already. Our members recently selected Long Beach as the host city for our 2018 reunion, and reunion planning details will begin appearing in this edition of the newsletter.



Our web site is taking shape, and will hopefully be unveiled in the coming weeks. We have a few challenging tasks to complete, and we could use some assistance in recreating tables such as the Memorial List using WordPress. If you have some time, and would be willing to help finalize our new web site, please send us a message through the web site.

We plan to provide additional Blue Water Veterans information in the next edition of the newsletter. Some Blue Water Veterans may be eligible for VA compensation if it is determined that they were exposed to Agent Orange. We will inform you of any exposure USS Berkeley crews had, and provide sources to contact regarding other ships you may have served on. There was an article in our April 2017 newsletter regarding the Blue Water Veterans.

2018 Reunion—Long Beach Selected as Host City

In what ended as a close three-way battle, Long Beach edged out Both Portland and Seattle who were tied seven points behind. Many of the ship's crew were onboard when the ship was home ported in Long Beach. I for one have not seen Long Beach since leaving the ship in November 1967, and understand it has changed substantially.

The reunion dates won't be firm until we select the host hotel, but the weekends targeted are September 20-23 or 27-30, 2018. Our next step is selecting the host hotel, and we will investigate the possibility of the Queen Mary and all other recommendations sent our way. We would like to announce the host hotel and reunion dates by the October 2017 edition of the newsletter. Posting at the web site will happen as soon as a contract is negotiated.

Long Beach has some attractions such as the USS Iowa BB-61, an updated Ocean Blvd., and a day-trip to Santa Catalina Island that we will consider for reunion activities. There is a "Long Beach Attractions" article in this newsletter which should provide more ideas for your visit.

Long Beach Attractions

There are many things to do in Long Beach, and the following are a few that we have selected.

Aquarium of the Pacific – features 11,000 ocean animals in more than 50 exhibits; it is the fourth largest aquarium in the nation. The Aquarium of the Pacific is a world-class aquarium, exploring the waters

of Southern California and Baja, the Northern Pacific, and the Tropical-Pacific. In addition to the three main galleries highlighting the major regions of the Pacific, the Aquarium features exhibits outdoors, including Shark Lagoon, the Lorikeet Forest aviary, and Our Water Future. Our special exhibits gallery features changing exhibits, and visitors can learn more about veterinary care at the Molina Animal Care Center.

Catalina Express – an island paradise awaits less than an hour away. Cruise across the Pacific Ocean from Long Beach Harbor to the magical island of Catalina. From adventure to luxury, Catalina Island has it all. Visit the picturesque town of Avalon or the rustic village of Two Harbors. Avalon is filled with activities on land and sea. Two Harbors is a spectacular remote location with campgrounds and beautiful beaches. Catalina Island, a wonderful getaway for a day, a night, or a week.

Long Beach Waterfront – The Long Beach waterfront is a sea facing waterfront in southern California. The area is known not just for water views but also restaurants that serve up delicacies by the beach. Among the activities in the region are cycling along the waters, biking and walking along the designated paths besides shopping in boutique and tourist shops that are spread across the region. Some of the remarkable shops of the area are The Pike at Rainbow Harbor and Shoreline Village. Other attractions in the area include The Queen Mary, Aquarium of the Pacific, Shoreline Aquatic Park, and the Parker and Lions Lighthouses. You can also view colorful sailboats,

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Al Meier

Berkeley History April 2017

50 Year Ago, 1967

- 01 - 03 Upkeep, Subic Bay
- 04 - 06 SAR Type Training, Subic Bay
- 09 SAR Type Training, DaNang
- 12 - 21 Sea Dragan Operations
- 23 - 31 North SAR Operations
(COMDESRON 5 Embarked)

40 Years Ago, 1977

- 01 - 12 Pre-Overhaul, Bremerton, WA
- 13 Enter Drydock #4, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard
- 13 - 31 Regular Overhaul, PSNS

30 Years Ago, 1987

- 01 - 31 Ship in USS Steadfast (AFDM 14)
- 01 Move crew and Officers to Berthing Barge
- 06 Complete Shift to Combat Systems Organization
- 25 CDR C.R. Girvin, III Assumes Command USS Berkeley

20 Years Ago, 1997 In service with the Hellenic Navy of Greece as the H.S. Themistokles

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and may spot some seals and dolphins.

Naples Island – is a neighborhood of Long Beach built on three islands located in Alamitos Bay. The islands are divided by canals which open into the bay. Most of the streets on the island have Italianate names. The center of Naples features a large fountain which serves as a popular meeting spot. Long Beach offers gondola trips through the romantic canals of Naples.

The Pike at Long Beach – with a variety of restaurants, the Laugh Factory Comedy Club, ferris wheel and open-air marketplace, The Pike is one of the most unique waterfront locations on the West Coast.

USS Iowa – built in 1940, the Iowa served our country for over 50 years. Visit the new museum in nearby San Pedro.

Queen Mary – visit this famous World War II-era transatlantic cruise ship. Step aboard the floating museum to learn about its' mystery and history. Take a self-guided tour and choose from an array of optional activities and exhibits.

Long Beach Naval Station

The following is a very short recap of the Long Beach Naval Station's history. The Navy had a significant presence in Long Beach spanning several decades. In 1919 the fleet was divided into the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. In 1926, nine battleships and twenty submarines arrived in Long Beach, and in 1932 Long Beach built an \$80,000 naval landing at the foot of Pico Avenue. Long Beach called itself the "Navy Capital of the United States" having nearly fifty ships of the Pacific Fleet anchored in its harbor.

By the late 1930's, Long Beach began to look like a Navy town. About 900 officers and thousands of enlisted men's families were living in Long Beach. The number of ships in the harbor increased monthly, and about 50,000 officers and enlisted men called Long Beach home.

In April 1940, President Roosevelt sent the Pacific Fleet on maneuvers from its Long Beach/San Pedro home base to Hawaii. In May, the fleet was ordered to stay in Hawaii. When Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese in December 1941, many aboard ships on Battleship Row called Long Beach home, and the attack left 160 navy widows in Long Beach.

The Long Beach Naval Shipyard came about in September 1940 when the Navy purchased 104 acres of oceanfront property on Terminal Island from the city for \$1. In February 1943, the U.S. Naval Drydocks opened for business, and two years later thousands of men and women had been hired to work there.

During the war, Long Beach was a prosperous town thanks to the Navy. After the war, the base became the largest single business in the Long Beach area. As the Navy base grew, so did the oil wells that covered Terminal Island. The constant pumping caused the island to begin to sink at an alarming rate. This problem caused damage to the shipyard and decreased fleet support from 1947 to 1950. The Navy inactivated the shipyard in 1950. With the start of the Korean War, the yard reopened in 1951.

The Navy had begun pulling out of Long Beach, and in 1991 it announced that the Naval Station, Naval Hospital and Savannah Cabrillo Navy Housing would be closing. They were all decommissioned in 1994. In 1997, it was announced that the shipyard would close for a final time thus ending more than 80 years of Navy operations in Long Beach. Long Beach is a Navy town no longer.

Some of the inputs for this article were found in a 2011 Press-Telegram article.