



T H E

# BRIGHT PENNY

October—December 2019

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

## Portland, Maine Reunion—Hotel and Dates!!!

### Director's Update

Hope you all are enjoying the final months of 2019, and are looking forward to a healthy and enjoyable 2020! Next



year we will host our reunion in Portland, Maine, and look forward to seeing many of our shipmates again! Our Portland reunion will be October 15-18, 2020. We chose to move the reunion into October to experience the fall foliage which will be a beautiful backdrop for the event. There is a "2020 Portland Reunion Hotel & Dates" article in this edition of the newsletter, and most of the current reunion information can be found there.

Our new web site has been in service for approximately one year now, and most of the issues with new software have been resolved. We appreciate any feedback, positive or negative, that is provided so that we can maximize the web site's effectiveness.

Our annual distribution of the USS Berkeley Master Roster occurred a few months later than normal this year. It made sense to conduct a search for updated contact information for shipmates that we had not heard from in the last 2-3 years. We used a couple of search engines that have been found to be very reliable, and those are PeopleSmart and BeenVerified.

The 2019 master roster was sent out with both prior and new contact information (primarily address and in some cases phone number) for those that we found more current listings for. We also discovered that approximately fifty-five shipmates had passed away, and their information is still listed on the master roster along with the dates they passed. Those shipmates will be removed from the master roster, and moved to the Memorial page on our web site by year's end.

We are approaching year's end, and will be sending out "Dues Reminder" post cards in early December. We urge you to renew your Association membership for 2020. Paid memberships allow us to maintain our web site, provide yearly master rosters, and help fund future reunions. Those who have paid 2020 dues will receive a \$10 reduction on fees for the Portland, Maine reunion. Current Association dues are \$40, and they can be paid to the USS Berkeley Association, and mailed to Gerry Hansen at 6318 S. 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Milwaukee, WI 53221.

### 2020 Portland, Maine Reunion Hotel & Dates

October 15-18, 2020 are the dates for our next reunion in Portland, Maine, and the Best

Western Merry Manor Inn in South Portland will be our host hotel. The October dates were selected to take in the fall foliage which should be beautiful that week! The Merry Manor Inn has hosted more than 125 military reunions, mostly Navy and Coast Guard, since 1998. They have an impressive list of reviews from those groups. The Merry Manor Inn was completely remodeled in 2018 and 2019, and all rooms feature free super high-speed wifi, microwaves, refrigerators, Keurig coffee makers, in-room safes, 55 in. HD TVs, hairdryers, and irons & ironing boards.

The Merry Manor Inn provides great room rates (\$119 + taxes per night) including a free full American buffet in our hospitality suite each morning, and free transportation to and from the Portland International Jetport, bus stations, and the Amtrak station. Free parking is also included, which is not the case with most other area hotels. Their location is minutes from the Maine Mall (shopping and dining), close to Portland's Downtown District and Old Port, and minutes from area beaches and lighthouses. We will post a list of the hotel's amenities on the web site.

*(continued to page 2)*

**USS BERKELEY  
ASSOCIATION**  
5052 Mertola Drive  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762  
408-656-3879



Al Meier

E Mail: [ddg15@ussberkeley.com](mailto:ddg15@ussberkeley.com)  
Website: [www.USSBerkeley.com](http://www.USSBerkeley.com)  
Annual Dues: \$40.00  
Director: Al Meier  
Asst. Director: Dale Johnson  
Secretary: Pat Clark & Tammy Meier  
Treasurer: Gerald Hansen  
Membership Committee Chairman: Al Meier  
Regional Chairmen:  
Northeast: Francis Almeida  
Southeast: Francis Sholly  
North Central: Larry Norris  
South Central: **Vacant**  
Northwest: **Vacant**  
Southwest: Todd Frazier  
Ship's Store Mgr: Gerald Hansen  
Bright Penny Editor & Publisher: Al Meier  
Webmaster: Gerald Hansen

Newsletter Distribution: to current (paid) dues members e-mail in pdf form and to non-e-mail members via U.S. Mail.

**Berkeley History  
October 2019**

50 Year Ago, 1969

- 01 – 23 SQT
- 24 – 26 Inport San Diego
- 27 – 31 Refresher Training (San Diego)

40 Years Ago, 1979

- 01 – 02 U/W Transit to Subic, RP
- 03 – 12 U/W Transit To Yokosuka, Japan
- 13 – 21 Inport Yokosuka, Japan
- 22 – 31 U/W Ops with USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63), South China Sea

30 Years Ago, 1989

- 01 OHOP to Seventh Fleet
- 13 U.S. Navy's 214<sup>th</sup> Birthday
- 29 Missile Offload, USS Mount Hood
- 01 - 30 Underway: PACEX-89, Seal Operations
- 31 Inport: Hong Kong

20 Years Ago, 1999

In service with the Hellenic Navy of Greece as the H.S. Themistokles

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Gerry Hansen and Al Meier will visit Portland October 17-22 to review possible tours, and make arrangements for the reunion. There is a "Maine Maritime Museum and LL Bean Tour" which goes to Bath, Maine and covers much of the ship-building history in that city. The tour includes a narrated boat trip on the Kennebec River where you can learn about Bath Iron Works, and see destroyers being built up close.

There are a couple of other tours that the Merry Manor recommends, and helps coordinate. The "Trolley Tour of Portland & Harbor Cruise" which includes a 90 minute guided trolley tour of Portland. During the trip you will drive through the Old Portland Exchange, Portland's restored waterfront district which features hundreds of shops, restaurants, lounges and galleries. Some of the attractions on the trip are the Victoria Mansion, the Portland Museum of Art, The Portland Observatory, the Longfellow House and the statue of Longfellow. A highlight of the trip is a visit to the Portland Headlight located at Fort Williams Park. Then you can enjoy lunch and shopping on your own in Portland's Old Fort Exchange. After lunch, you board the Islander for a 90 minute narrated tour of Casco Bay. On the cruise you will get to see the islands of Casco Bay, the Portland skyline, and lighthouses along the rugged coast of Maine. The tour concludes with a short trolley ride back to the hotel.

There is also a "Lobster Bake & Tour of Kennebunkport" tour that the hotel recommends. They will assist us in setting up any of the three tours recommended. If there is enough interest, we could do tours on both Thursday and Friday. A minimum of 35 people is required for any of these tours. The hotel offers us group room

discounts both three days before and after the reunion dates, so come early and stay late!

**Naval History of Bath, Maine**

Ship building in Bath, Maine dates back over four hundred years to 1607 when a group of Englishmen built an ocean-going pinnace named Virginia at nearby Popham Beach. Bath, situated on the Kennebec River, protected from stormy seas and with a gradually slopping shoreline throughout most of its length, is geographically ideal for ship building. In addition, in the early days of ship construction, there was an abundance of wood for frames, planking, cabins, and masts.

Ship building in Bath became continuous from the 1740's on, primarily sloops, schooners, and brigs used by local entrepreneurs to carry locally produced products to the coastal centers of the colonies and the West Indies. After the Civil War, Maine built over half of the ocean-going wooden sailing ships in the United States, and Bath built over half of those. The largest sailing vessel ever built in the U.S., the six-mast schooner Wyoming, was launched from the Percy and Small Shipyard in 1909.

Bath Iron Works is a major U.S. shipyard located on the Kennebec River and was founded in 1884. BIW has built private, commercial, and military vessels of which have been ordered by the United States Navy. The shipyard has built and sometimes designed battleships, frigates, cruisers, and destroyers, including the Arleigh Burke-class which are currently among the world's most advanced surface warships. In World War II, ships built at BIW were considered to be of superior toughness by sailors and Navy officials, giving rise to the

*(continued to page 3)*

(continued from page 2)

phrase “Bath-built is best-built.”

In 1899 the shipyard began construction of the Georgia, the only battleship ever built in Bath. This effort dominated the shipyard for five years until it was launched in 1904, and it was at times the only ship under construction. The company continued to rely on Navy contracts which provided 86% of the value of new contracts between 1905 and 1917. The shipyard was at its peak production during World War II (1943-1944), and launched a destroyer every 17 days.

In 1995, Bath Iron Works was purchased by General Dynamics. In 2001, the company completed a four-year effort to build the Land Level Transfer Facility, which is an enormous concrete platform for final assembly of its ships, instead of building them on a sloping way so that they could slide into the Kennebec at launch. Hulls are now moved by rail from the platform horizontally onto a moveable dry dock. This greatly reduces the work required in building and launching the ships.

In 2015, BIW signed a Navy contract for new destroyers, littoral combat ships, and new landing craft. BIW has delivered the USS Rafael Peralta (DDG-115) and USS Thomas Hudner (DDG-116), and is currently building the USS Daniel Inouye (DDG-118) and USS Carl M. Levin (DDG-120). The DDG buy from Bath also includes the USS John Basilone (DDG-122), USS Harvey C. Barnum (DDG-124), and USS Louis H. Wilson Jr. (DDG-126).

Four of the Charles F. Adams-class destroyers were built in Bath, and they include the USS Charles F. Adams (DDG-2), USS John King (DDG-3), USS Sampson (DDG-10), and USS Sellers (DDG-11). BIW also build the USS Stockdale (DDG-106) which many of us had the privilege to tour during our 2012 San Diego reunion.

## U.S. Navy’s Most Potent Weapon

The Ohio-class submarine is America’s secret weapon to beating China or Russia in a war. Getting the immense firepower of the Ohio SSGN to bear on the enemy’s access-denial barrier is greatly facilitated by the sub’s stealth. The sub is much harder to detect than the various Navy Tomahawk-armed surface combatants, and this eases considerably its penetration into an enemy’s inner sanctum. Soviet/Russian hunter-killer boats loitering near American bases have often been said to lose contact with the Ohio subs soon after they leave port for deployment. In the open sea, the Ohios operate almost silently.

What is quite apparent in the defense community is that the relatively short striking reach of the U.S.’s large-deck aircraft carriers would mean that they would have to operate well within the enemy’s A2/AD envelope, making them vulnerable to attack. Therefore they are unlikely to participate significantly in the first days of war.

The U.S. possesses two deep-strike capabilities that stand a much better chance of circumventing the access-denial barrier: the Air Forces stealth bombers, and the Navy’s Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles which are deployed on cruisers, destroyers and submarines. The Ohio-class nuclear-powered cruise-missile submarine is undoubtedly the most potent as well as being the most survivable, owing to its extremely low observability. Therefore, with its stealth and firepower, the Ohio SSGN is the ideal counter A2/AD naval platform in the U.S. arsenal.

The Ohio SSGNs were originally ballistic missile subs before they were retrofitted in the early- to mid-2000s. The conversion modified 22 of the subs 24 missile tubes to receive a special canister that enables the storage and launch of seven TLAMs (Tomahawk land-attack cruise missile) each, with the additional two silos being adapted to support special operations for at least 66 Navy seals. So after the conversion, the subs can

carry 154 TLAMs. The subs can launch their entire arsenal of Tomahawks in as little as six minutes.

The U.S. SSGN’s TLAM payload makes it unrivalled in terms of land attack compared to other similarly- armed U.S. Navy assets. Given that a typical U.S. carrier strike group consists of a Ticonderoga-class carrier and two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, their combined Tomahawk payload might not even match that of just one Ohio SSGN. Also, the stealth of the Ohio SSGN means it can launch its cruise missiles from a position further within the enemy’s A2/AD envelope.

Deployment of the USS Florida to Operation Odyssey Dawn was the first time an Ohio SSGN was in combat. 50 of the 112 TLAMs that were used to cripple Libya’s air-defense network came from the Florida. So in the onset of that campaign the undersea forces were called upon to attack land targets in Libya.” The Florida fired 93 of the 199 TLAMs used during the two-week-long Operation Odyssey Dawn.

The four American SSGNs currently in service are scheduled to retire in the 2023-26 time frame without a like-for-like replacement. The Ohio SSGN’s supposed replacement, the VPM-equipped boat cannot stack up in the terms of firepower, as its TLAM inventory is only ¼ that of the Ohio. Money being spent on building the new Gerald R. Ford-class flattops might be better spent on acquiring many SSGNs.

## Vernon Rice Obit

Vernon E. Rice who served aboard the Berkeley as an RM1 from 1982 to 1984 passed away on October 2, 2019. Our condolences to his family and friends.