



T H E

# BRIGHT PENNY

October—December 2020

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

## It's Almost Over!!!

### Director's Update

2020 is entering its' final quarter, and that is good news to many of us! It has been a difficult year for many people with the outbreak of the corona virus, country-wide social unrest, and the numerous wild fires on the West Coast (that have burned over one million acres in California alone).



I hope that our Berkeley shipmates and their families are doing well, and have remained out of harm's way. We are hoping that our lives return to normal very soon, but we're not sure what that normal will be like. 2020 for many will be a year we would like to forget.

Our 2020 reunion was postponed, and rescheduled for October 14 – 17, 2021 at the Merry Manor Inn in Portland, Maine. Plans for the reunion have been made, and an article summarizing the details will appear in the January 2021 newsletter. Almost all reunion information that has appeared on the website or in recent newsletter articles still applies. Reunion information is currently available on the web site. It will be at least 3 years between our last reunion in Long Beach and our next one in Portland, so we plan to make it memorable!

As we look forward to 2021, some new Association plans should be a primary focus. Have you been part of an organization that conducts

events and provides newsletters such as the Berkeley Association? What do other organizations do that may be of interest to our Association? Over the years, we have expanded our reunion activities, and the changes have been well received by attendees. If there are other changes we could make, please provide some recommendations. Are there any recommendations for our website or the Ship's Store? Let us know!

We could definitely use some assistance on generating more newsletter articles. In years past, we featured "In the Spotlight" articles about Berkeley sailors, and "Berkeley Beauties" articles about the special ladies that have become their partners. Other possible articles to consider would be stories about fathers, brothers or other family members who were in the military service, and possibly some military humor. As we have mentioned in the past, our newsletters, along with our reunions and master rosters, are the primary focus of our Association. We would like to add value to all of these areas, but we need your assistance to make that happen! We are not looking for a long-term commitment, just an article or two would be greatly appreciated! If you are willing to contribute, please contact Al Meier at

[alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com](mailto:alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com)

A new article, the "Year in Review – 196x" will debut in January 2021. The article will highlight each year's events, and will begin with 1962 and provide the following year in the following newsletters.

### Blue Water Navy Update

The VA and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) are working to determine ship locations and digitize more than 1,800 vessel deck logs. The information in these ship's deck logs will be used to determine qualifying ship locations in accordance with the law. The VA will have these ships mapped with precision providing a comprehensive view of their locations.

The VA estimates that there are between 420,000 and 560,000 Vietnam-era Veterans who may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans. The law provides benefits to survivors and dependents of those veterans with confirmed service and whose claims would have been granted as a result of the new law.

The previously named organizations have already assisted in the granting of more than 22,524 claims since January 1, 2020. The effort digitized more than 29 million images from Navy and U.S. Coast Guard deck logs. It has also provided ship name, date and

*(continued to page 2)*

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(continued from page 1)

coordinates to feed the claims-related technical processing system that identifies vessels that may have traveled within the offshore waters of Vietnam. This process ensures that Rating Veterans Service Representatives have the evidence needed to render a decision. NARA is in the process of redacting the images to make them publicly accessible on the National Archives website. VA works with Veterans Service Organizations and other partners to ensure veterans and survivors are aware of the changes and know how to determine eligibility for disability compensation or Dependency for Indemnity Compensation when filing a claim. If veterans, survivors or dependents have previously filed and were denied a claim, they can file a supplemental claim. The VA recommends veterans work with an

approved claims representative or VSO to determine if they qualify. For more information visit [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp).

*Information for this article was taken from an article at [www.blogs.va.com](http://www.blogs.va.com) dated September 30, 2020.*

### Berkeley History October 2020

#### 50 Year Ago, 1970

- 01 – 04 Leave and Upkeep, Long Beach
- 05 – 07 Type Training
- 08 – 09 Weapons Off-load, Seal Beach
- 10 – 31 RAV, Long Beach Naval Shipyard

#### 40 Years Ago, 1980

- 01 – 06 Inport NAVSTA San Diego, CA
- 07 – 10 U/W SOCAL Opareas
- 11 – 14 Inport NAVSTA San Diego, CA
- 15 Inport San Diego, CA – OPPRE
- 16 – 17 U/W SOCAL Opareas – OPPRE
- 18 – 20 Inport NAVSTA San Diego, CA
- 21 – 23 U/W SOCAL Opareas
- 24 – 30 Inport NAVSTA San Diego, CA
- 31 U/W SOCAL Opareas

#### 30 Years Ago, 1990

- 01 – 05 U/W: Mobile Training Team
- 06 – 11 Inport San Francisco, CA Participating in Fleet Week
- 11 – 19 Inport Alameda, CA
- 20 – 24 Underway NOCAL: Shipboard Training
- 25 – 29 Inport Alameda, CA
- 30 – 31 U/W NOCAL: Operational Propulsion Plant Exam.

#### 20 Years Ago, 2000

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

### New Federal Veterans ID Card

The VA began issuing ID cards back in 2018, and a number of veterans have received their cards. It takes up to 60 days to receive the card, so they have updated instructions for applying for the VA ID card.

Congress passed the Veterans Identification Card Act in 2015. The act authorized the VA to begin issuing a national veterans identification card (VIC) to all veterans with an honorable discharge. The bill authorized the VA to issue the ID cards in early 2016, but the process took much more time to develop and implement.

There are a couple of options veterans could use to prove their military service which includes the “VA Health Identification Card” (used for health care if eligible) or a state-issued driver’s license with a veterans designation (not all states currently offer this). Many veterans who weren’t eligible for the VIC cards had a difficult time proving their military service, and often carried a DD Form 214 which contains personal information that should be kept secure. The Veterans ID Card is for identification use and proof of service only, and cannot be used for benefits through the VA or to access military installations. The cards will contain a photo of the veteran, their name, and a non-Social Security identification number.

To apply for the new VA Veterans ID Card, you need to apply online at the VA website. You will need to add your email address to a wait list, and the VA will contact you. When applying you will need a copy of a state or federal ID card (driver’s license, state-issued identification card, or passport) and a photo of yourself, you will need to create an account or sign in at <https://www.vets.gov/>, you will need to verify your identity, and submit your VIC request. The photo you provide must have been taken in the past 6 months.