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BRIGHT PENNY

July - September, 2022

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

2023 Corpus Christi Reunion Dates & Hotel Are Set

Director's Update

Reunion planning for our 2023 reunion in Corpus Christi, TX is progressing nicely, and the reunion dates and host hotel can be found in the "2023 Reunion Update" article in this newsletter. It appears that we may once again have a reunion where health and travel concerns are not big obstacles. Our 2021 Portland, ME reunion was very successful considering the obstacles that covid-19 created, and we all returned home in good health! So, it's time to begin getting the word out to our Berkeley friends about the upcoming reunion.



Now is the time to order USS Berkeley ball caps and other apparel from the Ship's Store as prices will be increasing soon once we reorder supplies due to significant price increases from our vendors. Some items may no longer be available.

Our association is in good shape and financially sound. We are maintaining a paid membership in the 100-105 range over the past few years but would surely like to see the memberships increase with more of the 1980-1992 crew members becoming involved.

We have made an organizational update by changing the Regional Advisor positions to members of the Advisory Staff. These members help guide our association and plan our reunions. It has been difficult keeping the six Regional Advisor positions filled and it makes more sense having

those who wish to participate involved regardless of what sector of the country they live in. All but one of the previous Regional Advisors are now members of the Advisory Staff and another two members have been added. We intend to keep the number between the current number of five and a maximum of ten.

2022 USS Berkeley master rosters were sent to paid members in early June. We encourage all recipients to check their information for accuracy and contact Al Meier at "alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com" if any corrections or additions are necessary. If you have not received your copy, let me know.

The Year In Review - 1970

USS Berkeley commanded by Commander John F. Frost, III, greeted the year of 1970 in anticipation of the ship's forthcoming deployment in February. Between January 12th and 17th, the ship participated in COMPUTEX 5-70 and upon completion thereof entered a POM and Tender availability period prior to deployment.

Berkeley's fifth WESTPAC deployment commenced February 13th with Commander Destroyer Division 192 embarked as the ship departed Long Beach breakwater. After brief stops in Hawaii, Midway and Guam, Berkeley arrived in Yokosuka, Japan on March 4th and began two weeks of upkeep. On March 16th, the ship departed Yokosuka for Yankee Station to serve as escort for the USS Constellation (CVA-64) until early April when the

USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) relieved the Constellation.

April 16th found Berkeley in port at Yokosuka for nine days of upkeep which ended with a return to the Tonkin Gulf as missile escort for the Coral Sea.

On May 10th, the most demanding phase of the deployment began as Berkeley assumed the role of Naval Gunfire Support Unit off the coast of South Vietnam. For the next thirteen days, Berkeley's 5-inch fifty-four caliber gun batteries hammered away at enemy positions along the coast.

From May 25th through the 30th, the crew enjoyed a well-earned rest in the internationally famous port of Hong Kong. After a delightful visit, the ship again set a northward course for Japan and participated in three days of exercises off the Taiwan Straits prior to entering Kobe Harbor on June 6th. Due to its close proximity to Osaka, Japan, this port visit afforded an opportunity for the crew to visit "EXPO 70".

By June 16th the ship was once again heavily involved in the task of providing gunfire support for allied forces in South Vietnam. After 35 days at sea, a proud but weary crew arrived at Bangkok, Thailand. For five days Berkeley enjoyed the hospitality of one of Asia's most fascinating cities.

Leaving Bangkok on July 20th, Berkeley proceeded to Subic Bay in the Philippines for three days of upkeep before beginning the long

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Ship's History: July 2022

60 Years Ago, 1962

The Berkeley is in Pre-comm
Status. Prospective C.O. is
CDR Wyatt E. Harper Jr.

50 Years Ago, 1972

- 01 - 07 Lionbacker Operation - North
Vietnam - Surveillance Ops
- 11 - 12 Enroute Subic Bay
- 13 - 18 Inport Subic Bay
- 19 - 20 Enroute Gulf of Tonkin
- 22 Inport DaNang
- 21 - 31 NGFS - South Vietnam

40 Years Ago, 1982

- 01 - 16 Dry Dock NR 2, Long Beach
Naval Shipyard
- 17 Unlock from Dry Dock NR 2
- 18 - 31 Continue Regular Overhaul at
Long Beach Naval Shipyard

30 Years Ago, 1992

In July 1992, the Berkeley crew
was training members of the
Hellenic Navy for the planned
transfer of the ship to Greece.

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homeward journey on July 27th. The ship had not only completed a rigorous and demanding six months of operations, but had done so with superiority and excellence in every area.

During the two periods as escort missile ship to the USS Constellation and USS Coral Sea, Berkeley provided the best in close-in missile support to CVA's conducting air strikes and support missions in Southeast Asia. Three search and rescue missions for downed aviators earned the ship special "well dones" from the area commanders. In the execution of assigned missions as Naval Gunfire Support ship, Berkeley operated along the entire coast of South Vietnam, and in one instance was largely responsible for the repulse of enemy ground forces attacking an allied position near the DMZ.

In addition to excellence in Tactical operations, Berkeley's men demonstrated eagerness and concern in the area of international relations with the completion of a project of painting a schoolhouse at the Boy's Reception Center in Bangkok while they were on liberty.

Berkeley arrived in Long Beach on August 14th and commenced a stand-down and leave period for the ship.

In early October, Berkeley participated in type training off the coast of Southern California, and then entered into a period of restricted availability status while undergoing repairs at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard through mid-November. On November 10th, Commander John F. Frost, III, Commanding Officer, USS Berkeley, received the Bronze Star in recognition of meritorious service, exceptional leadership, and initiative while serving as a member of the U.S. SEVENTHFLT from March 1st

through the month of August.

Finished with minor repairs, Berkeley participated in First Fleet exercise COMPUTEX 20A-70 on November 18th and 19th, and then commenced an Upkeep and Tender availability status lasting through December 8th. The remainder of the year was dedicated to type training and upkeep with the ship again preparing to deploy to the Western Pacific in early 1971.

2023 Reunion Update

Our reunion dates are set for September 14-17, 2023 at the Omni Hotel which is located at 900 North Shoreline Blvd, Corpus Christi, TX 78401. Reunion Activities will kickoff on Thursday night with the Bull Session. We are exploring possibilities for our Friday tour which we will announce in the October newsletter. The tour will be followed by the Welcome Reception Friday night. Our Business Meeting, Ladies Social, and Banquet will all take place on Saturday. The reunion will conclude with our Farewell Breakfast on Sunday morning. Times for all the events will be posted on our web site and will appear in a future Bright Penny newsletter.

The Omni Hotel will provide complimentary shuttle service from and to the Corpus Christi International Airport (CRP) from 4:30 AM - midnight daily. The airport is 12 miles away. There are two room choices for single and double occupancy. Choice #1 is \$129 + tax with self-parking in the garage for \$10 per day, and choice #2 is \$135 + tax with complimentary self-parking in the garage. The \$135 rate is best for those who need parking, and the \$129 rate is best for those without parking needs. Every guest room features beautiful views of the Corpus Christi Bay from your private balcony.

From quick casual dining to exquisite fine dining with a view and incredible ambiance, the hotel has everything needed to satisfy any craving. The

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famous Republic of Texas Bar & Grill is one of Corpus Christi's top dining destinations. Located on the 20th floor, this multi-level steak-house offers diners beautiful panoramic views of Corpus Christi Bay. The Glass Pavilion Restaurant offers guests a casually elegant ambiance with a wide variety of menu options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. The Topsider Lounge offers beverages and light fair in a casual environment. Whether you need a quick bite in the morning or a pick-me-up in the afternoon, Morsel's offers specialty coffees and teas, breakfast pastries, salads and more. There is also a variety of restaurants within walking distance of the Omni Hotel.

There are two pricing options for the reunion, the All-Events and the Banquet-Only prices, and they will be posted on the web site in the near future. Those who are 2023 USS Berkeley Association paid members will receive a \$10 discount for yourself and one guest. Any additional guests will pay the non-member prices.

Reunion Planning Updates

Now that we are in the planning stages for the next USS Berkeley reunion in Corpus Christi, we would like to address two of the reunion events.

The Raffle - prizes are raffled off during the Friday Welcome Reception and at the Saturday Banquet. Raffle prizes are the items that are donated to the USS Berkeley Association by its members and/or spouses. These items can be hand-made or purchased, such as gift cards, gift baskets of non-food items, blankets & quilts, etc. We greatly appreciate the donations members have made over the years!

All money made from the sale of

raffle tickets at the current reunion goes directly into the Associations account to help fund future reunions.

We will once again have labeled boxes for each raffle item, and you may place any number of raffle tickets in the boxes for the items you hope to win.

Ladies Tea - at each reunion, the Association provides a complimentary event just for the ladies, and this has been a very popular event. This was historically the "Ladies Tea"; however, some of the ladies who attended recent reunions thought it was a formal event. To help clarify any misunderstandings for attendees and the host hotels, The Association's planning committee has decided to rename the event the "Ladies Social". It is a casual event just for the ladies attending the reunion and will be held on Saturday from noon to 2 PM. The event includes a light lunch and beverages, conversation, and prizes for the attendees.

When registering for the reunion, please be sure to check the box on the registration form for the "Ladies Social" if your guest would like to attend. This will help us provide an accurate head count to the hotel.

Pilot Error Killed the Real Maverick

A recent report from the National Transportation Safety Board concluded that the probable cause of a single-engine plane crash that killed the legendary U.S. Navy F-14 Tomcat pilot, Capt. Dale Snodgrass, on July 24, 2021, was pilot error.

The following investigation didn't reveal any evidence of malfunctions or failures of the flight control system nor evidence that the pilot's seat had moved. Snodgrass was reportedly extremely thorough in performing preflight checks, and in

this instance, failed to perform an adequate preflight inspection before taking off. He failed to "remove the flight control lock before departure, which resulted in a loss of airplane control and impact with the terrain."

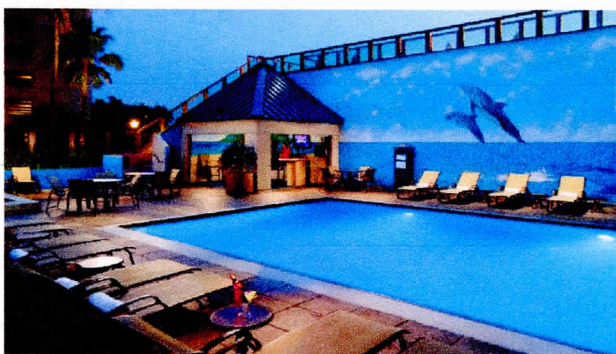
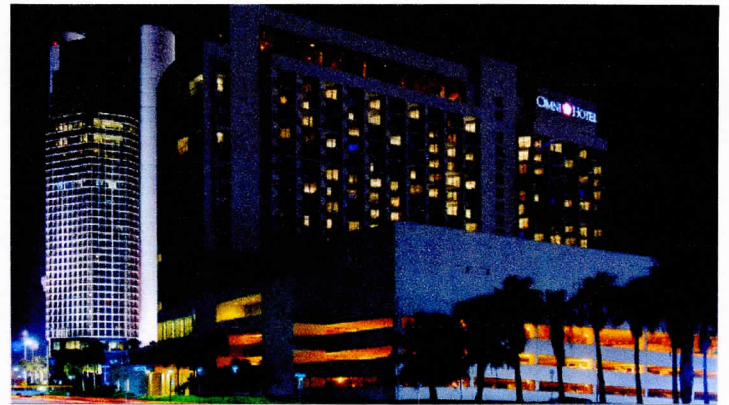
The flight control lock is a device that holds the rudder of the aircraft in the neutral position but still allows for near-full movement of the rudder and tailwheel via the rudder pedals.

Considered one of the greatest fighter pilots of all time, Snodgrass's military career began in the early 1970's and lasted 26 years. He accumulated more than 4,800 hours in the F-14 in both war and peace, more than any other pilot.

Many admirers called him the real "Maverick," the call sign for the character portrayed by Tom Cruise in the blockbuster "Top Gun." Snodgrass was famous for his low-level flybys; however, unlike the unruly fictional character who got in trouble for such unauthorized antics, Snodgrass got his thrills by the book.

One such flyby was captured in a stunning 1988 photo taken by Naval photographer Sean E. Dunn from the flight deck of the USS America (CV-66). Considered one of the most famous aviation photos of all time, it shows Snodgrass's F-14 with its wings vertical, seemingly far too close to the ship and the crew members seen in the foreground. Contrary to rumors that he was grounded for the maneuver, Snodgrass wrote in 1998 that the "banana pass" (named for its curved trajectory) was approved as part of the airshow component of a Dependents' Day Cruise for the families of the carrier's crew.

a source for this article was a July 2022 article at www.military.com



Photos: Left to Right, Top to Bottom –

Corpus Christi Omni Hotel Bayfront Tower,
Republic of Texas Bar & Grill, Omni Hotel
Bayfront Tower (night), Glass Pavilion
Restaurant, Hotel Pool.