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# BRIGHT PENNY

April - June 2023

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

## Corpus Christi, A Place in the Sun

### Director's Update

Spring is here and good weather is on the way! It was a rough winter for much of the country and the warm rays of the sun will help brighten today and the days ahead. Thoughts of sitting on a beach in Corpus Christi in September have brightened my day and we look forward to reuniting with old friends again in the near future. Registrations for the reunion are underway and we hope to see you all at the Omni Hotel in September! Reunion information is available on the Berkeley web site and in the "Corpus Christi 2023 Reunion" article in this newsletter. There is also a 2023 Corpus Christi Reunion Registration Form on page 4 of this newsletter.



Our reunion activities will kickoff with the Bull Session on Thursday evening September 14th, and we are always looking for more photos, videos, and of course sea stories to enhance the event. The association will have cruise books, videos, and other memorabilia available for you to review. The Ship's Store will also be open with inventory available for purchase, so leave a little extra room in your luggage. Other reunion activities are listed in the Corpus Christi 2023 Reunion article.

For many years the Bright Penny featured an article titled "In the Spotlight", and we eventually ran out of volunteers for future articles. These articles introduce former crew mem-

bers and tell us a little about their days in the Navy (particularly aboard the Berkeley) and their lives afterward. Many former shipmates have been added to the Berkeley roster in recent years, and so I am asking for volunteers so that we can resume these articles in future newsletters. For examples of the "In the Spotlight" articles, look back at Bright Penny newsletters prior to 2014 which can be viewed on our web site. If you would like to volunteer, contact me at [alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com](mailto:alphawhiskey.ddg15@yahoo.com).

The 2023 USS Berkeley Master Roster is currently being updated and we would like to remind our former shipmates to submit any updates and/or corrections to your roster information by April 15th so that it can be included prior to distribution to our 2023 paid membership in late April. Updates can be submitted through the "Quarterdeck" page on the web site.

### The Year In Review - 1973

The new year found Berkeley in port at Long Beach under the command of Lieutenant Commander Jerry S. Jones, USN. On January 5th, the ship left Long Beach enroute to her new home port in Bremerton, Washington where she had been ordered to commence an overhaul on January 11th at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. After a one-day stop at the Manchester Fuel Pier to defuel, Berkeley arrived in Bremerton on January 9th.

Entering Drydock #6 on the morning of January 12th, the ship was no sooner resting on her keel blocks than

the job of removing equipment and cutting access holes started. The overhaul which was to last until November 1st, gave Berkeley the first Tactical Data Systems designed for a DDG (DDG-TDS), the first production model of the SQQ-23 (PAIR) Sonar, major COMM and EW SHIPALTS, two new Mark 42 MOD 10 5"/54 gun mounts, the TARTAR Digital Update, and conversion of her engineering plant to burn Navy Distillate fuel.

While the shipyard labored, Berkeley's own sailors were busy too. Ship's force work was coordinated with overhaul milestones by use of the computerized SFOMS (Ship's Force Overhaul Management System): Berkeley being the first destroyer to use this management tool originally designed by PERA (CV) for aircraft carrier overhaul management.

After almost five months in drydock, the ship undocked on June 1st to be moored pier side to finish installation and checkout of her new weapons and electronics equipment. Down in the main spaces, the Engineering Department was busy preparing for the first 1200 PSI Propulsion Examining Board Light Off Examination (LOE) administered to a Pacific Fleet ship. Passing the forward plant exam on July 3rd and the after plant exam on August 24th, Berkeley was ready to light fires and make preparations for machinery sea trials.

Underway for the first time in over

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**Ship's History: April 2023**

60 Years Ago, 1963

Detailed monthly ship's history is not available. The ship did transit from the East Coast to the West Coast during the year stopping at many ports.

50 Years Ago, 1973

01 - 30 In Drydock, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard

40 Years Ago, 1983

01 - 20 Overhaul, Long Beach Naval Shipyard  
21 Underway, Sea Trial  
22 Return to homeport, San Diego  
23 - 24 Inport San Diego  
25 - 29 Underway SOCAL  
30 Inport San Diego

30 Years Ago, 1993

In service with the Hellenic Navy of Greece as the H.S. Themistokles  
The Hellenic Navy of Greece decommissioned the H.S. Themistokles in February 2002.

*Continued from Page 1*  
nine months on September 26th, Berkeley conducted three separate sea trials to test machinery, weapons, and electronics. She made and held full power on her first attempt on October 23rd.

On November 1st, the complex overhaul was terminated and a Technical Availability was commenced to run concurrently with an eight-week Operational Program Functional Checkout (OPFCO) on the DDG-TDS.

On November 26th, Berkeley's home port was officially changed to San Diego. That date found the ship steaming in the Straits of Juan De Fuca for four days of independant steaming exercises, returning to Bangor, Washington to start the in-port phase of Weapons Systems Accuracy Tests (WSAT). Several days underway on Hood Canal ranges followed the ship's December 8th arrival at HMCS Esquimalt, Canada for a weekend visit to Victoria, British Columbia.

On December 11th, Berkeley was underway for Nanoose Range where on December 13th WSAT was completed with the successful firing of one tube and one ASROC launched torpedo. Berkeley returned to Bremerton on December 14th to spend the Christmas holidays in that port.

**Corpus Christi 2023 Reunion**

Our 2023 Corpus Christi reunion is scheduled for September 14 - 17 at the Omni Hotel. 2023 Reunion Registration Forms are available on the [www.ussberkeley.com](http://www.ussberkeley.com) web site and on page 4 of this newsletter. Omni Hotel reservations can be made by calling 1-800-843-6664 and informing the agent that you are with the USS Berkeley Association group. We have discounted group rates, and they are available for three days prior and three days after the reunion dates if you care to extend your stay. Room

rates are \$135 + taxes per night for single and double occupancy and include free parking in the hotel garage. Complimentary hotel shuttle service is available from and to the Corpus Christi International Airport. The cut-off date for hotel reservations is August 14, 2023.

Reunion rates for all events including the banquet are \$85 per person for 2023 association paid members plus one guest and \$95 per person for non-members and additional guests. Banquet only rates are \$70 per person for members plus one guest and \$80 for non-members and additional guests. The Corpus Christi Reunion Tour is an additional \$25 per person. All payments for the reunion and optional tour are due by August 31, 2023.

Reunion events begin with the Bull Session on Thursday evening, followed by the group Corpus Christi Reunion Tour and Welcome Reception on Friday, and Business Meeting, Ladies Social and Banquet on Saturday. Reunion events will conclude with the Farewell Breakfast on Sunday morning. All Events registration includes the Bull Session, Welcome Reception, Ladies Social, and Banquet, and does not include the Friday tour or Farewell Breakfast which are additional costs.

The Friday tour is a 5-hour sight-seeing tour which combines history, art, cemetery, and ghost components. We will depart from and return to the Omni Hotel, and we will have a one-hour lunch break. We will be transported on a 32-passenger mini or 56-passenger coach depending on our group size. Tour guides will accompany our group.

Event locations and times will be listed on the reunion itinerary which will be included in the Welcome Packet you will receive upon your arrival at the Omni Hotel, and will be available for pickup in our hospitality suite which is the Bayview Room.



### USS Lexington (CV-16)

**Located in Corpus Christi**, the USS Lexington participated in almost every major World War II naval campaign in the Pacific from 1943 to 1945. The ship was a highly decorated warship, receiving numerous citations acknowledging her exemplary service. As an Essex-class carrier, Lexington is also important for illustrating the development of aircraft carrier design, the refinement of multi-carrier operations, and the integration of aviation as a primary strike weapon in naval strategy.

USS Lexington was launched in 1942, and had a hanger deck capacity for 103 aircraft. Lexington's first air group (AG-16) consisted of 89 aircraft that included 32 F6f-3 Hellcat fighters, 35 SBD-5 Dauntless dive-bombers and 18 TBF-1 Avenger torpedo bombers. The Lexington was decommissioned on November 26, 1991.

The USS Lexington is a museum ship and you can visit her from 9 AM to 5 PM. The admission price is \$18.95 for adults and \$16.95 for seniors (60+).

### Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi

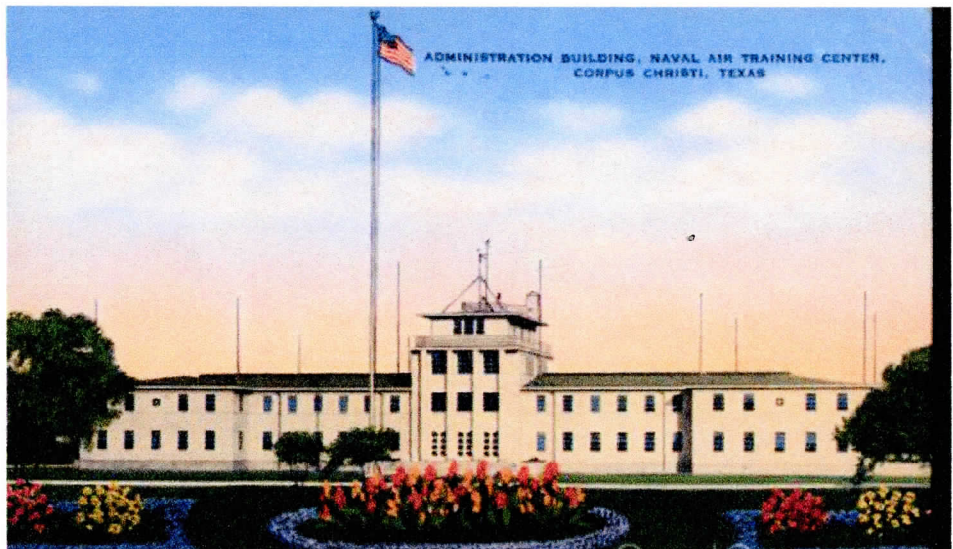
A naval air station for Corpus Christi had been proposed since the mid-1930s; however it remained a low priority construction project for the Navy as late as January 1940. Representative Lyndon B. Johnson made himself a key ally of President Franklin Roosevelt's bid for a third term, and the White House told the Navy Department to consult Johnson, and heed his advice, on Navy contracts in Texas. By February 1940, the project was on the Navy's preferred list.

The official step leading to the construction of the naval air station was initiated by the 75th Congress in 1938. A board found that a lack of training facilities capable of meeting an emergency demand for pilots constituted a grave situation. They recommended the establishment of a second training station, and that it be located on Corpus Christi Bay. NAS Corpus Christi was commissioned on March 12, 1941. The first flight training started in May 1941.

In 1941, 800 instructors provided training for over 300 student pilots a month. The training rate nearly doubled after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. By the end of WWII, more than 35,000 naval aviators had earned their

wings there. Corpus Christi provided intermediate flight training in WWII, training pilots to fly SNJ, SNV, SNB, OS2U, PBY, and N3N type airplanes. In 1944 it was the largest naval aviation training facility in the world. The facility covered 20,000 acres, and had 997 hangers, shops, barracks, warehouses and other buildings.

Future President George H.W. Bush was the youngest pilot to receive his wings at NAS Corpus Christi in June 1943. NAS Corpus Christi was home to the Blue Angels from 1951 to 1954.



Photos: Top to Bottom - USS Lexington (CV-16), Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, the Omni Hotel



### 2023 Corpus Christi Reunion Registration Form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact email or phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Staying at the Omni Hotel? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Reunion (all events including Banquet) 09/14 – 09/17 \$85x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Non-member \$95x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Banquet Only Saturday 09/16 \$70x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Non-member \$80x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner Entrée: (please insert quantity for selections)

Crew Member: Grilled Flank Steak Bourguignon \_\_\_ Chicken Matagorda \_\_\_ Grilled Salmon with Pecan Butter \_\_\_  
Vegetarian Entree \_\_\_

Guest: Grilled Flank Steak Bourguignon \_\_\_ Chicken Matagorda \_\_\_ Grilled Salmon with Pecan Butter \_\_\_  
Vegetarian Entree \_\_\_

Ladies Social (Saturday 12:00 – 2:00 PM) Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Members are those who have paid 2023 dues. If you have paid 2023 dues, both you and one guest will pay the member prices.

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### 2023 Corpus Christi Reunion Tour Order Form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Corpus Christi Historical Tour Friday 09/15 \$25 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed (check or money order payable to the USS Berkeley Association) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail payment to:

USS Berkeley Association  
C/o Gerald Hansen  
6318 S 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53221

All Payments for the reunion and tours must be received by August 31, 2023