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# BRIGHT PENNY

July - September 2023

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

## Setting Course for Corpus Christi

### Director's Update

We are eagerly looking forward to our Corpus Christi reunion and another opportunity to see our Berkeley shipmates, those we served with and those friends we have made at the past reunions! This will be the 13th reunion for my wife Tammy and I, and we have enjoyed them all!

The reunion dates are September 14-17, 2023, and a short article, "Corpus Christe 2023", in this issue of the newsletter provides important information regarding the reunion. Additional information about the Corpus Christi reunion can be found on the [ussberkeley.com](http://ussberkeley.com) web site and in the January and April 2023 Bright Penny newsletters which can also be found on the "Newsletters" page at the web site. A 2023 Corpus Christi Reunion Registration Form is available on page 4 of this newsletter.

Our Association is currently doing well, and we remain in sound financial shape; however, there is some concern regarding our long-term outlook. Over the past nine years, paid memberships have declined from over 150 in 2014 to 88 thus far in 2023. This is in part due to the passing of a significant number of former members and the limited participation by crews who were aboard the ship from 1980 to 1992. Paid memberships are the main source of income for the Association and they help pay for our web site and other association expenses in addition to offsetting some of our reunion



expenses. We encourage former shipmates to join the Association and ensure it will be in existence well into the future.

In this edition, we have included articles on the Vietnam Wall and The Year In Review - 1974 (Berkeley History). We hope you enjoy the articles and hope to see you in Corpus Christi in September!

### The Year In Review - 1974

The first day of 1974 found Berkeley making her final preparations for leaving Puget Sound Naval Shipyard under the command of Lieutenant Commander Jerry S. Jones. On January 4th, Berkeley left Bremerton having been there for almost one year and steamed south to the Naval Station Long Beach. After completing the Sensor Accuracy Check Sight Tests (FORACS), the ship departed Long Beach for Seal Beach where she conducted a complete missile and gun ammunition loadout. This evolution lasted one day and then Berkeley steamed south toward her new homeport of San Diego.

On January 18th, Berkeley finally arrived in San Diego. After a two-week upkeep period, Berkeley commenced a five-week period of extensive gun and missile fire control equipment tests known as Ship Qualification Tests (SQT). Berkeley was the first NTDS (DDG) equipped ship to undergo SQT. SQT contained many exercises to test the new system. After four and one-half weeks, SQT was

successfully completed with two successful STANDARD missile firings against the first two drones presented as targets. These missile firings were the first using NTDS (DDG) as a designation source.

On March 19th, Commander Jonathan T. Howe, USN relieved Lieutenant Commander Jerry S. Jones as Commanding Officer, USS Berkeley. Under Captain Howe, Berkeley continued her preparation for REFTRA which commenced on April 1st. The ship's crew and equipment proved ready for the task at hand. After five weeks of extensive training, exercises, and battle problems, which tested every facet of Berkeley's many capabilities, REFTRA ended with the successful passing of the final battle problem.

This did not signal a rest for the crew of the Berkeley. The engineers were deep in preparation for the arrival of COMCRUDESPEC's 1200 PSI Mobile Training Team (MTT). The Weaponers were preparing for a Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (NWAI) which paid dividends as Berkeley completed a successful NWAI on May 24th. Berkeley then began her first of two underway periods with the MTT. The lessons and skills learned during this period were put to the test in mid-June when CINCPACFLT's Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) arrived onboard. After 3 days, Berkeley's engineers proved their

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**Ship's History: July 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 - 31 Inport Puget Sound Naval Shipyard
- 02 - 03 Light-off Examination, Fwd Engine Room

40 Years Ago, 1983

- 01 - 04 Inport San Diego
- 05 - 08 Underway Socal (REFTRA Phase I)
- 09 - 10 Inport San Diego
- 11 - 15 Underway Socal (REFTRA Phase II)
- 16 - 17 Inport San Diego
- 18 - 22 Underway Socal (REFTRA Phase III)
- 23 - 31 Inport San Diego

30 Years Ago, 1993

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

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proficiency by demonstrating, during the most demanding tests and exercises, that they could light off and steam Berkeley's 1200 lb engineering plant safely to the standards of the PEB. Berkeley was the first DDG in the Pacific Fleet to successfully conduct an Operational Propulsion Fleet Examination (OPPE) on the first attempt.

When Berkeley returned to San Diego, she had a scant 6 days remaining for her Pre-overseas Movement (POM) period and to finish her preparations for the first deployment in over twenty months. This time was also used for a mini-SQT to test the ship's TARTAR missile capability. It was also during this period that Berkeley was notified she had won the Squadron "E" for overall excellence as well as individual "E"'s in Engineering and ASW.

On the sunny morning of June 19th, Berkeley departed San Diego for her deployment to the Western Pacific with an interim assignment on the Pacific Missile Range as a participant in FLEETEX 2-74. During this FLEETEX, two TARTAR missiles were successfully fired at incoming drones before Berkeley steamed south to join TG 37.6 for the transit to Subic Bay, R.P.

On July 11th, Berkeley arrived in Subic Bay for a short upkeep period. On July 14th, Berkeley steamed north to Yokosuka, Japan where she embarked U.S. midshipmen for training. After a short visit in Yokosuka, Berkeley headed south and into the Inland Sea to visit Kure, Japan. While in Kure, some Japanese midshipmen were embarked. On the way back to Yokosuka, Berkeley participated in joint operations with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force. Upon arrival in Yokosuka, the Japanese midshipmen were disembarked along with most of the U.S. midshipmen. Three midshipmen did

remain onboard for further training.

After returning to Subic Bay on August 7th, Berkeley spent the next two and one-half months primarily operating out of Subic with the USS Constitution (CVA-64) as a unit of TG 77.6. The at sea periods were a series of complex battle exercises, including MULTIPLEX 1-75 and PASAGA III, which conclusively proved the operational readiness of the Berkeley's crew as well as her new equipment. On several occasions Berkeley assumed the added responsibility of FAAWC where the NTDS (DDG) proved itself more than capable in a multi-threat environment.

On October 27th, Berkeley, as a unit of TG 77.6, departed Subic Bay headed for Singapore. Just before arriving in Singapore, the course was altered further south so that on November 3rd the ship crossed the equator. The majority of the crew were pollywogs but were soon duly initiated into the mysteries of the deep in traditional, spirited and colorful ceremonies.

On November 8th, Berkeley with TG 77.6 departed Singapore for the Indian Ocean to participate in MIDLINK 74. MIDLINK 74 provided outstanding training opportunities with U.S. ships and submarines, as well as a chance to operate with the Central Treaty Organization navies of Pakistan, Iran and Great Britain in a large multi-nation task force. MIDLINK 74 was highlighted by a port visit to Karachi, Pakistan. In late November, Berkeley made a special trip into the Persian Gulf, leading the Constellation on her historic voyage that marked only the second time since World War II that an American aircraft carrier had operated in the gulf. Berkeley's Indian Ocean operations ended with an 11-day upkeep in Singapore. This port visit was marred when on the morning of December 16th, the body

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of MRFN L.J. Balderas was discovered dead in his bunk from an overdose of drugs.

On December 22nd, Berkeley returned to Subic Bay and prepared for her last operational commitment of the deployment, a MISSILEX. On December 30th, Berkeley successfully fired a TARTAR missile at an incoming drone to end the MISSILEX. Berkeley returned to Subic Bay on December 31st to spend the last day of the year and start preparations for her transit back to San Diego to end a very arduous seven and one-half month deployment.

### The Vietnam Wall

A little history most people will never know. Interesting veterans' statistics on the Vietnam Wall.

There are 58,267 names on that polished black wall, including those added since 2010. The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are in alphabetical order. The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon of North Weymouth, MA. Listed as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B Fitzgibbon III, who was killed Sept. 7, 1965.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall. Thirty-one sets of brothers are on the Wall. Eight women, who were nursing the wounded, are on the Wall. 29,996 of those on the Wall were 22 or younger, and 8,283 were just 19 years old. The largest age group, 33,103, were 18 years old. Twelve soldiers on the Wall were 17 and 5 others were 16 years old. PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam, and 1,448 were

killed on what was to have been their last day in Vietnam. 54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. Bealsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost six of their sons. West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation with 711 on the Wall. 244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War, and 153 of them are on the Wall.

The most deaths for a single day was 245. The most deaths for a single month was 2,415 in May 1968.

The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail and stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day 1966. Only three of them returned home.

The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, and Tom Gonzales were boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They played ball on the adjacent sandlot ball field, and they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed.

For most Americans who read this, they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces and we feel the pain that these numbers created. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.

*This Vietnam Wall article is a summary of an article submitted by Ed Codispoti, QM2*

### Corpus Christi 2023

Our reunion dates are September 14-17, 2023 at the Omni Hotel which is located at 900 North Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, TX 78401. Reunion activities will kick off on Thursday evening with the Bull Session. Our Friday tour is a 5-hour sightseeing historical tour, followed by the Welcome Reception on 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. The Omni Hotel will provide shuttle service from and to the Corpus Christi International Airport (CRP) from 4:30 am until midnight daily. Our room rate is \$135 + taxes with complimentary self parking in the garage. Hotel reservations can be made by calling 1-800-843-6664 and inform the agent that you are with the USS Berkeley Association group. The hotel is allowing group rates for three days prior and three days after the reunion dates so that our members can extend their stay if they wish.

From quick, casual dining to exquisite fine dining with an incredible ambience, the hotel has everything needed to satisfy any craving. There are 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, and they are posted on page 4 of this newsletter. Those who are 2023 USS Berkeley Association paid members will receive a \$10 discount for you and one guest. Additional guests will pay the non-member prices.

