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BRIGHT PENNY

July - September 2026

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

Planning Underway for 2027 Charleston Reunion

Director's Update

Hello Shipmates!

Planning has started for the 2027 reunion! I have been in contact with the Military Reunion Network, and they are assisting with our search for a host hotel and providing options for the reunion tour. If anyone is in the Charleston, SC area and would be willing to help with a hotel review or suggest a tour site for the next reunion, please let me know.

It seems amazing that the reunion will be in just a little over a year from now. I know most of us require time to plan our trips, so Elray, Jeff and I are hoping to get dates set as soon as possible. With the Iran conflict currently paused and gas prices starting to drop, this should be good news for airline tickets as well.

With July 4th having just passed, I hope you all enjoyed the holiday and celebrated the 250th in style with family and friends. Remember this great country and everything it stands for; what those before us, with us, and those in the future will have done to keep this country great.

Jeff Williams now has the Ship's Store goods in his possession. To contact Jeff for an order or to inquire about getting new products added to the store, either call him at 918-637-9822 or send an email to randrmechanical@cox.net.

As always, I look forward to seeing you in 2027 at the reunion.



The Year In Review, 1986

The USS Berkeley under the command of Commander Richard K. Farrell, began the year in her home port of San Diego. The ship's schedule for the year included numerous major inspections, Fleet exercises and a overseas deployment.

The Berkeley's first underway commitment began on January 14th with an ammunition onload at North Island followed by an NGFS exercise. Berkeley returned to port on February 13th. The ship got underway again on the 19th, beginning two and a half weeks of Refresher Training exercises and drills, returning to port on weekends. Refresher Training was successfully completed on March 7th, bringing the ship and crew back to a high state of operational readiness. LCDR Jerry A. Rudd relieved CDR S.D. Butkus as Executive Officer on March 1st.

Berkeley's OPPRE began on March 19th and was successfully completed on March 21st. Berkeley then participated in READIEX 86-3 from March 24th until April 14th. During an upkeep period in April and early May, Berkeley crew attended schools and underwent other forms of training.

May 9th found the Berkeley getting underway for Pearl Harbor for participation in RIMPAC '86, a multinational exercise. The ship arrived in Pearl Harbor on May 16th, where she remained until May 28th. Upon arrival in Hawaii, officers and enlisted men began briefing and

training for the exercises that involved navies from four countries on the Pacific Littoral. The crew's off-duty time was not wasted, as the Berkeley softball team captured first place in the RIMPAC '86 tournament.

RIMPAC '86 began on May 28th. Berkeley sortied from Pearl Harbor as part of the Orange Forces, the aggressors in the exercise. The Berkeley's actions and activities in the exercise, including an unscheduled stop in Lahaina, Maui, were varied and well executed. The ship left Pearl Harbor on June 25th in transit to San Diego.

The ship arrived in San Diego on July 3rd. During the remainder of the month, she underwent preparations for over-seas deployment including a maintenance period with the USS AJAX. On July 26th, the ship was dry-docked to repair some long-term rudder problems.

A Going Away party was held at Admiral Baker Park on July 25th for all crew, family and friends.

Berkeley left dry-dock on August 11th and was underway to Seal Beach for a weapons onload. The crew, especially the engineers, was hard pressed to make the necessary last-minute repairs and preparations, but the ship got underway on schedule. After the weapons onload, the Berkeley departed for WESTPAC on August 12th transiting the North Pacific and Bering Sea. The crew was kept busy with GQ drills, UNREPS, plane-guard, and various drills.

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Ship's History: July 2026

60 Years Ago, 1966

- 01 - 12 Long Beach, Leave and Upkeep
- 12 - 15 In Port, San Diego
- 19 - 31 Preparation for CNO Project D/S 368, Long Beach Naval Shipyard

50 Years Ago, 1976

- 01 - 13 In Port, Subic Bay. R.P.
- 14 - 19 Underway, TYT, SCS
- 20 - 21 Enroute Kaohsiung, Taiwan
- 22 - 25 In Port, Kaohsiung
- 26 - 29 Underway, SHARKHUNT XVI
- 30 Enroute, Subic Bay
- 31 In Port, Subic Bay

40 Years Ago, 1986

- 01 - 03 Enroute San Diego
- 03 - 31 In Port, San Diego

30 Years Ago, 1996

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

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The Berkeley pulled into Pusan, Republic of South Korea on September 11th to a welcoming ceremony that included local dignitaries and both Korean and U.S. military officers stationed in Korea. On September 5th, Captain R.S. Watkins, Commander Destroyer Squadron 17 embarked while the ship was in Sasebo, Japan. Berkeley departed Sasebo on September 17th, entering Yokosuka two days later for a conference with the Japanese prior to an ASW exercise with the Japanese Self Maritime Defense Force. After a week-long exercise, Berkeley arrived in Yokosuka to refuel.

On October 5th, Berkeley made a port call in Subic Bay, R.P. The ship got underway again on October 9th bound for Chinhae, South Korea for pre-exercise conferences, followed by ASW exercises conducted jointly with the South Korean Navy. The ship returned to Chinhae on the 20th for a critique of the exercises, departing the same day and returning to Subic Bay on the 24th. Berkeley got underway on the 25th to conduct NGFS training at Tabones. Berkeley's crew scored a 99.7% overall score, resuting in high praise from Commander Farrell and Commodore Watkins. Berkeley returned to port on the 26th, remaining in Subic through the end of the month for maintenance availability.

The ship got underway again on November 7th, stopping briefly at the ammunition anchorage in Subic Bay before heading to Singapore. Berkeley arrived at Sembawang Shipyard in Singapore on November 12th, remaining there through the 13th. It was on the way to our next commitment, an exercise with the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, that the ship crossed the equator. Following the exercise with Brunei's Navy,

Berkeley hosted the U.S. Ambassador to Brunei, Ambassador King, on board for the exercise critique with several ranking officers of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces. Following the meeting, Brunei Armed Forces sponsored a party on the beach for both the USS Berkeley and the USS Bradley crewmen. Berkeley continued from Brunei to the coastal town of Phattaya Beach, Thailand, anchoring on November 23rd. There the crew enjoyed liberty and celebrated Thanksgiving. The ship was underway again on November 28th.

After leaving Thailand, Berkeley headed north to Hong Kong. Enroute, the ship participated in a Freedom of Navigation exercise off the coasts of Kampuchea and Vietnam. In Hong Kong, Vice Admiral Davis, COMNAVSURFPAC, inspected the ship and talked to crewmen. Berkeley departed Hong Kong on December 10th, arriving in Subic Bay for a second upkeep availability which began on December 12th. The ship remained in Subic through the 27th, enjoying the Christmas holiday, and accomplished a great deal of needed work. Berkeley departed Subic Bay on December 27th, with the intention of arriving in Chinhae, South Korea prior to New Year's Eve. However, engineering problems on board a ship in company forced a brief return to Subic Bay, delaying the arrival in Chinhae until January 2, 1987.

History of the U.S. Navy Part 8

The U.S. Navy next entered the Battleship Age which was a relatively short era lasting about 50 years, from around 1890 to about 1940. Battleships represented the height of a particular kind of naval warfare-ships with guns fighting other ships with guns.

The first American battleships were the Maine and the Texas, both commissioned in 1895. They estab-

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lished the tradition of battleships being named for states and cruisers for cities. The architects that designed the early battleships struggled with finding ways to employ three different elements of warships in that era: the naval broad-side, revolving turret, and long-range capability of the new heavy guns.

The compromise was to build a ship with a mixed battery. The first American battleships had four large rifled 10-inch guns housed in two turrets, plus six 6-inch guns and a dozen or so smaller guns. The turrets were placed on the sides of the ship: a forward turret on the starboard side, and the other turret further back on the port side. This was awkward and didn't last.

At the time, these battleships were the largest ever built for the US Navy, and each displaced about 6,500 tons. The next three battleships, the *Indiana*, *Massachusetts*, and *Oregon*, all launched in the late 1890's, displaced more than 10,000 tons. These ships had a more symmetrical and modern look. Many historians consider them to be the first true American battleships.

The first generation of battleships had their baptism of fire during the Spanish-American War in 1898. The national enthusiasm generated by the victories during the war gave added impetus to further naval expansion. Another big boost came from the rise of Theodore Roosevelt to the presidency.

Roosevelt had been a naval enthusiast all his life. He served as McKinley's assistant secretary of the navy when the Spanish-American War began. Determined not to miss out on the action, he resigned his post and helped recruit a cavalry regiment famously known as the Rough Riders. As a rising politician,

he ran with McKinley on the Republican ticket in 1900. When McKinley was assassinated a year later, Roosevelt became president.

From the beginning, Roosevelt urged Congress to speed up the construction of more battleships. He felt that other countries should know that the United States could defend its interests. Roosevelt advocated a more assertive foreign policy, one that employed the navy as an instrument of diplomacy. One outcome of this new policy was a treaty with Panama that led to the completion of the Panama Canal and granted the United States control of the canal zone.

In 1907, Roosevelt ordered the Atlantic battleship fleet to undertake a goodwill tour into the Pacific. He was eager to show off America's big stick, and a lengthy cruise would provide an opportunity to test the ability of the new ships to sustain themselves on a long voyage. All 16 battleships were painted white, and this became known as the cruise of the Great White Fleet.

The fleet left Norfolk, Virginia, in December 1907. It headed south, stopping in Rio de Janeiro, transiting the Strait of Magellan, then up the coast of Chile to Valparaiso, before steaming north to California and Washington. They then crossed the Pacific, making stops in New Zealand and Australia and then Yokohama, Japan. The visit to Yokohama was somewhat stressful as American relations with Japan had become severely strained. Japan, like the United States, was an emerging naval power.

Leaving Japan, the fleet headed south to Manila in the Philippines, America's outpost in the western Pacific. It then returned by crossing the Indian Ocean, transiting the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean,

and steaming back across the Atlantic to Norfolk, completing a circumnavigation of the globe that lasted 14 months and covered 40,000 miles.

The United States and Japan were not the only countries building up their battleship fleets. Britain's Royal Navy was still the most powerful maritime force in the world, but Germany, under Kaiser Wilhelm II, was attempting to challenge it and began building battleships as fast as the United States. Ironically, an innovation by the Royal Navy appeared to give Germany a chance to catch up.

From the first, battleships had carried a mixed battery. They had a few very big guns plus a dozen or more smaller guns for close-in defense. However, a confrontation between fleets was likely to be decided by the big guns before the two fleets ever got close enough for the smaller guns to become a factor.

Congress authorized the construction of two battleships armed only with the largest caliber guns in 1905, and they were laid down in 1906. However, they were not completed until years later.

The British launched the first all-big-gun battleship, the *Dreadnought*, in 1906. It had ten 12-inch guns, which gave it the firepower of two to three conventional battleships. From 1906 onward, all battleships were classified as either dreadnoughts or predreadnoughts. All existing British and U.S. battleships were predreadnoughts, and that encouraged Germany to believe it now had an opportunity to close the gap.

The result was an arms race that produced mainly dreadnought-type battleships. It increased tensions between Britain and Germany and

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resulted in Britain seeking alliances with France and Russia. This resulted in the great powers of Europe being in opposing camps and was a key factor in the outbreak of World War I.

America's first dreadnought-type battleship was the USS Michigan which was launched in 1910. Three more of this type of battleship were commissioned later that year, and ten more over the next 5 years.

Another significant change in this era was the shift from coal to oil. Oil fuel produced an increase in speed which could be critical in naval battles. This change was easy to make for the U.S. Navy since at the time America was the world's largest producer and exporter of petroleum oil. The change greatly affected foreign relations for countries such as Britain and Japan which depended on imported oil.

The war which began in 1914 was predominately a land war. The United States remained neutral in the beginning. Most Americans were in support of the Anglo-French Allies and viewed Germany as the villain. This perception was reinforced when Germany introduced a program of submarine warfare in 1915 and sought to impose a blockade by using what they called U-boats.

U-boats were fragile and had small crews, which made it difficult to come alongside a merchant ship to inspect its papers and possibly put a prize crew on board. Some merchant ships had deck guns, and when a U-boat surfaced, they would blow it out of the water. U-boat skippers quickly realized that their best chance was to shoot first, a protocol known as unrestricted submarine warfare.

The British viewed this as inhumane.

The sinking of the British passenger ship Lusitania on May 7, 1915 confirmed this charge. Nearly 1,200 people died, including 128 Americans. President Wilson issued a stern warning to Germany regarding its policy of unrestricted submarine warfare.

U.S. attitudes were hardening, and Wilson began to argue for national preparedness - not to enter the war but to defend the United States in case Germany won the war. The best way to prepare for such an eventuality was to augment the Navy. The Naval Act of 1916 authorized 10 additional dreadnought-type battleships, 6 battle cruisers, 10 regular cruisers and 50 destroyers.

In February 1917, Germany's U-boats resumed their assault on trade vessels. President Wilson broke diplomatic relations, and in April asked Congress for a declaration of war. Once the United States joined the war, Admiral William S. Sims met with British admirals to discuss how the U.S. could help. Sir John Jellicoe, commander of the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet, informed him of the extent of recent U-boat success and confided that if it was not reversed, Britain would be forced to surrender by the fall. What was needed was not more battleships but more escorts to fight the U-boats.

The U.S. sent a squadron of destroyers that arrived on May 4, 1917. This was hardly enough to solve the U-boat crisis, but once the Anglo-Americans established a convoy system, ship losses dropped dramatically. The small American destroyers guarded the convoys, including the troop ships that brought doughboys to France for the land war. Another U.S. Navy contribution was the laying of an enormous mine barrage between

Scotland and Norway, across the exit from the North Sea, to keep the U-boats penned up.

As the land war ground on to its end in 1918, the new battleships and battle cruisers that were authorized in 1916 remained unfinished. What would become of them? The answer will be revealed in the next segment of this series.

Charleston Attractions

The most meaningful attractions in Charleston for former Navy men cluster around the city's deep maritime and military history - and several of them are genuinely world class.

Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum - This is the must visit for any former sailor. It's one of the largest naval museums in the country and includes the USS Yorktown (CV-10), USS Laffey (DD-724), USS Clamagore (SS-343), Vietnam Experience Exhibit, and Medal of Honor Museum.

Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historic Park - two forts stand at the entrance to Charleston Harbor. Patriots inside a palmetto log fort, later named Fort Moultrie, defeated the Royal Navy in 1776. As Charleston blazed a path toward secession to preserve slavery, construction on a new fort, Fort Sumter, proceeded. The Confederacy fired on the U.S. garrison of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861 opening the Civil War.

Charleston Navy Yard Historic District - This area preserves structures from the old Navy Yard, including dry docks, warehouses, and administrative buildings. It's not a traditional "attraction," but history buffs appreciate walking the grounds and seeing remnants of the Navy's presence.