

USS KNAPP DECEMBER NWF CALL LETTERS



NEWSLETTER 2011 #44



FLAG HOIST

Hi Shipmates:

Veteran's Day is celebrated with more fanfare and pride than in years past and I think that is due in part to the national tragedy of 9/11. There is also more interest shown in troops departure and return than when we served. I gave my usual Veteran's Day talks to the respective 5th and 6th grades of my two daughters who both teach in this area. I have about sixty photos about the Knapp and her crews from 1943 to 1957 and they are projected on a large screen and I furnish the accompanying narration. My daughters assure me the kids enjoy it and they seem to be evidenced on page 3 and the following sample letters:

Dear Mr. Smith, I thank you for the interesting slideshow. It was cool in many ways, especially the destroyer ship model! I wish I had a model like that. Thank you for serving our country. If you didn't serve our country, I think I would not be here today. Sincerely, Avery.....or I would like to thank you for coming in from your busy schedule to come in and teach us about Veteran's Day. I think it was cool for you to come in and tell us about your life in the navy and on the Knapp, a fletcher class destroyer. You are the person I salute. America thanks you and the Knapp for serving our country. Sincerely, Harley.....

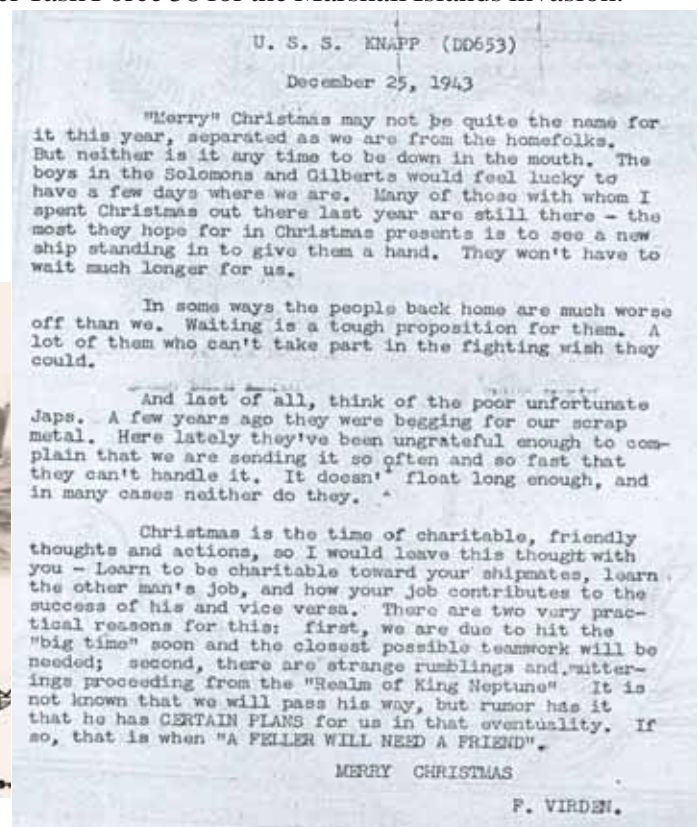
One of the things I point out during my presentation since it is close to the holidays is the time we spent away from our families. Most of the time the Knapp was in commission, she was either out to sea or in a foreign port for the holidays.

GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

1943 - The Knapp departed from Boston on 11-26, the day after Thanksgiving and arrived in Pearl Harbor just four days before Christmas and departed on 1-26 with Carrier Task Force 58 for the Marshall Islands invasion.

The crew enjoyed a traditional Christmas dinner that included turkey, ham and all the trimmings. Below

is a postcard that originated from the WWII era or one of the earlier reunions, and the ship is pictured in the WWII configuration. The message on the right is from Captain Virden and the crew had to be thinking that for some of them it might be their last Christmas.



1944- This Christmas the crew had a great deal to be thankful for because they had just experienced a sailor's worst nightmare and were all still alive to celebrate the holiday. The USS Knapp was part of Task Force 38 that got caught up in Typhoon Cobra known more by the popular name of Halsey's Typhoon about 300 miles east of Luzon in the Philippine Sea on December 17th and 18th. Winds of over 100 mph and rolls of 70 degrees were experienced by the Knapp and other destroyers. The destroyers Hull, Monaghan, and Spence were sunk with close to 1,000 sailors lost or missing at sea. The Knapp spent the next few days looking for survivors and were able to save a few. When the Knapp got back to Ulithi, **Lloyd "Red" Speulda** said "They announced that anyone wishing to attend church services on one of the larger ships to fall in on the starboard side. I thought the ship developed a starboard list there were so many volunteers".

1945- The Knapp sailed into Tokyo Bay on September 1st for the Japanese surrender. The Knapp sailed for the USA on December 12th and arrived in San Diego on the 21st so the crew spent their first Christmas home since the ship was commissioned in 1943.

1951- The USS Knapp was back in commission and after a shakedown cruise to Cuba the ship was back in Charleston, SC for a major overhaul. Most of the single men stayed aboard ship so their married shipmates could spend Christmas with their families. The crew hosted a Christmas party for under-privileged children that was duly noted in the local Charleston newspaper. A Christmas tree was put on our mast by **John Dunnigan** and **Charlie Nappi**.

1952- After participating in the largest NATO exercise in history (Operation Mainbrace) and after stops in England, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, France, Gibraltar, and Italy, The USS Knapp dropped anchor at Piraeus, Greece on December 20th. **Frank DeCicco** related the following: "Captain Heine hosted a Christmas party for 100 Greek orphan children in our mess hall and had me and **Charlie Nappi** wrap the 100 presents. The cooks made vanilla, strawberry, and chocolate ice cream and these 5, 6, & 7 year olds were afraid to eat it because they had never seen ice cream, but an explanation and taste overcame their concerns. Most of the crew went to the Greek Orthodox church and some went to a party hosted by the American Embassy, so it was a memorable Christmas. The photo on the right shows some of the Knapp crew on a tour in Greece during that time frame.



1953- This Christmas found the crew in two places according to **Kirk Newell** who said: "I went on liberty with a bunch of other guys and when we got back to the docks, the Knapp was gone. We were told the ship had gone on a rescue mission to pick up some marines. We all spent Christmas in the barracks on the base in Yokosuka, Japan. The Knapp and the rest of the crew were underway between Japan and Korea. The photo on the right (r to l) top **John Cannella, Bob Hurte** and bottom **Fred Shepherd, Dave McNamara, Bud Engle** and our South Korean allies.

1954- The Knapp ended her long cruise on 10 March in Fall River, MA. After overhaul in Philadelphia, the Knapp cleared Newport, RI November 30th and became part of DesDiv 212, DesRon 21 of the Pacific Fleet and Christmas was spent in California.

1955- The Knapp sailed for the Far East spending time in Japan, Philippines, and patrolling the Taiwan Straits and returned to the states for Christmas in California. The Knapp went into inactivation overhaul in 1956 and out of commission for the last time in March of 1957.





These girls just heard the great news that the USS Knapp crew was coming to Myrtle Beach, SC, so don't disappoint them. **MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!** The other photo shows the sunrise you will enjoy every morning at the Sand Dunes Resort.



The 6th grade class of Cindy James at Norwood Elementary School on Veteran's Day as they learn about the USS Knapp DD-653



Pictured above is Robert Klages LTjg. and two photos he took with the his explanation as follows:
"At that time, the Knapp was on a "Speed Run" from Bermuda to Newport, RI;. The distance was eight hundred (800) miles. The Knapp did 39.9 knots (about 43 mph) on the run. That was a fantastic speed for the distance. The Knapp was very fast compared to other Destroyers. Ed Blauvelt was Chief Engineering officer at the time." Note the black smoke billowing out behind the fantail. It looks like we were laying down a smoke screen.
Both Ed Blauvelt and Bob Klages were graduates of the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY.

REUNION UPDATE.....The following people have already made their reservations for the Myrtle Beach Reunion.....**Ralph & David Barrer, Ed & Peggy Ferreira, R. G. & Glenda Floyd, Leney Gawenus, Ken Huffman, Fred & Linda Kauffman, Pete & Marianne Loscheider, Bill & Kathy McGovern, David McNamara, Alex Mihalsky, Ray & Bernadene Miller, Dick & Theresa Munley, Kirk Newell, Pete & Betty Pultz, Bill & Diane Ringel, John C. “Smitty” Smith, and Pete & Jan Smith.** This list is current as of September 19th, and adds up to 28 people and 17 rooms booked, which is an early indication that we will have a good turnout for this reunion. All shipmates and widows are welcome along with family members, relatives, and friends. **The hotel website is www.sandsresorts.com/resorts/sandddunes**

RESERVATIONS.....

The dates for the reunion are **May 31, June 1 & 2, 2012**, which is a **Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.** Their Central Reservation number is toll free **1-800-599-9872** and you must state the name of our group **“USS KNAPP DD-653 REUNION”** in order to receive the quoted Kanpp reunion rates. All reservations must be guaranteed by one night’s deposit to be received within five days of the reservation date or a one night’s deposit charged to a major credit card at the time of the reservation. Advance deposits will be credited to the last night’s stay as indicated by individual reservation request. **The special Knapp room rate of \$69.00 per night for an ocean front room is good for three days prior to and three days after the reunion dates.** If you have any questions regarding the reunion, you can contact me at **309-266-9391** or cell at **309-258-1157** or e-mail at **eps@mtco.com**

The sooner you make your reservations, the easier it will be for me to plan the activities. As I indicated in the last newsletter, most of the agenda has been planned, however I need to get the final cost figures before I make any firm commitments on things other than the hotel. I will have final cost figures and have them in the next newsletter.

After you have made your reservations, I would appreciate it if you would contact me and let me know your arrival and departure dates along with how many rooms you have booked and the name of those in your party, so we can make arrangements for name tags, welcome gifts, meals, transportation, etc. We are looking forward to seeing you all in Myrtle Beach.

TAPS.....

Ronald B. Weems SM1c 43-45..... We received a call from Kathy Weems that Ron passed away Thursday November 17, in Poway, CA. He was buried with full Military Honors at the former Miramar Naval Air Station base. Ron was a former member of what was known on the Knapp in WWII as “The Bridge Gang.” He also had the distinction of being the only crewmember in the history of the USS Knapp to be awarded the “Purple Heart” for shrapnel wounds he received in battle. Ron was a consistent supporter of the Knapp Association and he and Kathy were co-host along with Jack and Jeanne Eagan of the 50th Anniversary Knapp reunion held in San Diego, CA.



John Cannella RM3c 52-54..... We received a short note in the mail informing us that John had died on September 20, 2011 and the note was signed “John’s Niece” with no additional contact information. John lived in the San Francisco area but I was unable to locate an obituary. John was a radioman striker when I first met him and most of the time was assigned to my watch in the “Radio Shack.” John always lightened up those long late night watches with his stories and humor. We also pulled more than a few Liberties together. John will be missed by all his friends and shipmates.



WEBSITE UPDATE.....

Some much needed updates will be made to our website during the winter months when I have more time. There are a lot of photos that need to go on that have been sent to me by shipmates. We also need to change the history of the Knapp on our website and this has been pointed out to me **O. J. Jack King** on more than one occasion. The history as it appears now is not only incorrect but also incomplete. The ship earned nine battle stars and the history consists of mostly the basic facts of times and places, but leaves out interesting details like Typhoon Cobra (Halsey's Typhoon) of 1944 and the Rogue Wave of 1953. We need to capture some of this history before we don't have anyone left who can remember it. I need some input from all of you and we need to talk about this at our reunion. The following are some recent postings on our SHIP'S LOG:

From.... Terry Williamson - Mesquite, TX - e-mail: tkwmson@gmail.com

"My dad served on the USS Knapp in WWII and I found a picture of him on this site I have never seen before. What a gift to have today. He was **Johnie Lee King** and is now deceased. Tomorrow is Pearl Harbor Day and I am reminded of all the men who served during WWII to protect our shores. Thank you one and all."

From.... Scott F. Brady - Keansburg, NJ - e-mail: scottso65@hotmail.com

"I hope to make it to your reunion in Myrtle Beach this year. My dad **Pete Brady** served on the Knapp. I would love to meet the men who may have served with him. Stay well sailors."

From.... Anita Kinzalow-Smith - Atlanta, GA - e-mail: goldiemae1@bellsouth.net

"My deceased husband, **Roy Frank Kinzalow** served aboard the USS Knapp between 1943-1945. I have been to one reunion in New Jersey in the early 80's. This was a wonderful experience to meet all the guys that were there that served during WWII. I remember the name "**Wicky**" **Wichenhouser**. On this memorable day (Veteran's Day), I would like to thank each and everyone for your service!! Does anyone out there remember Roy (Frank)? God Bless America".

If you have any information for these folks, please contact them via e-mail or send the information to me and I will contact them.

MAIL CALL.....

The economy has impacted the receipt of dues and donations just like everything else so if you owe dues (which are still only \$20.00) for the coming year or can afford to make a donation, I would appreciate hearing from you.

I did hear from the following people since our last newsletter: **Stu Jacobs, Alex Mihalsky, Tom Hume, John C. "Smitty" Smith, Ken Row, Dick Munley, Bill Ringel, Tom Butorac, and Robert Klages. Jim Jackson** will be unable to join us for the reunion next year, but he sent a generous donation to help with the cost of the hospitality room. **Marjorie Hurte**, widow of **Bob Hurte** sent a generous donation for our Memorial Fund.



The photo on the left is of **Ron Weems SM2c, James Eyman SOM2c, and Leslie Grossman RM2c** taken at the Hollywood Palladium on Feb. 27, 1945. The photo on the right is **Harley Gobbel, Dick Munley, Ken Ashley, John C. "Smitty" Smith, Dave McNamara, Kirk Newell, and Ken Huffman** taken in the shipfitter shop located on the aft starboard side in Sept. of 1952. Munley told me: "I always saw Smitty sitting on the work bench, but never actually saw him do any work." Is that really true Smitty?

MAIL CALL.....Continued

We also received this note from the daughter of the late **Charlie Dietz**: Happy Veteran’s Day to all the USS Knapp Vets! Thank you all for the sacrifices you made for this country to live free and safely! Thank you as well for being such wonderful brothers to my Daddy! He did love you guys. Have a wonderful Veteran’s Day.

Frank Decicco asked me if I knew the whereabouts of **Paul “Sam” Martin** who worked for him in the “Deck Gang.” I remember Sam was from Danville, IL and was a nice guy. He was short of stature but a darn good Baseball player. I could also use help in locating **Leslie Grossman, Harold “Dan” Daniels, and Roland St. Hilaire**. Their mail has all come back to me with no forwarding address.

I also heard back from Anita Kinzalow-Smith whose posting on our website appears on page 5. From the reunion she attended in New Jersey in the 80’s she also remembered **Frank Applegate and Tony Capriglione**. She sent me the group photo below and identifies her late husband **Roy “Frank” Kinzalow** as the sailor in the upper left of the top row. I don’t have the identity of the others and it was probably taken in 1945.



There has also been talk and information passed around concerning the big wave or as it is technically known as a Rogue Wave that hit the Knapp and caused damage like that shown on the right. I have already heard from **Bob Klages, Stu Jacobs, Pete Pultz, Ken Huffman, Frank DeCicco** and others. I would like your input on this and Typhoon Cobra or “Halsey’s Typhoon from the WWII crew because both of these incidents should be part of the revised history that I plan to write for our website. The next issue of the newsletter will have the complete story of the Rogue Wave along with another featured sea story that will be taken from a book written by **Lloyd “Red” Spelulda**, so until the next exciting issue.....



WE WISH YOU



AND



AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL ABUNDANTLY NOW AND THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR

PETE AND JAN