USS Macdonough Reunion Association Newsletter - Fall 2011

President's Column

Victory At Sea - by Lee Blankship

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of **Larry** and **Peggy Wessinger** and host **Brian Forrester**, the 2011 Reunion cruise aboard the Carnival Freedom was a phenominal success. I suspect that if our experiences aboard the Mighty Mac had been anything similar to those aboard the Freedom, there would have been 110% re-ups!

Almost everyone flew or drove to Ft. Lauderdale a day early in order not to miss movement, and we met in the hotel lobby in the evening for a brief gathering, followed by instructions by Brian regarding who, what, how, when, and where to board the ship the following morning.

Saturday, March 26 found us all anxiously driving or being driven to the Port to drop off our pre-tagged luggage, climb the gangways, check in by group number, and (finally) board the ship. Of course, Freedom wasn't the only ship departing on Saturday and may not even have been the largest, so the traffic in the Port area was pretty hectic. But we all embarked, passports and Fun Passes in hand, with time to spare. Observation #1: The ship's arrival lounge was only slightly less ornate than an average Chiefs' Mess. Observation #2: I kinda miss haze gray . . . .

Having boarded the ship, the first seamanship evolution was . . . FOOD on the Lido Deck - a variety of different cuisines from vegetarian and Indian to hot dogs and hamburgers and pizza, with carts sagging with our just desserts. Food certainly got everyones' minds off of getting underway and maneuvering out of the harbor. And shortly after the all-you-can-eat buffet lunch, we adjourned to (of course) the Posh Dining Room for dinner. The Mac reunion group was conveniently seated together at the 6:00 pm sitting so that after dinner we could go forward and up several decks for the endless soft ice cream. Clearly, Carnival Cruises was intent on keeping us well-fed!

Clearly, Carnival Cruises was intent on keeping us well-fed

Sunday was a pleasant day at sea with three full meals and several snacks tucked in between. The Executive Board met briefly, followed by the Annual Business Meeting in the Dynasty Room. **Larry Wessinger** was recognized for hosting the cruise and was presented with an executive BBQ tool set (actually it was a picture of the tool set, but the real tool set was subsequently presented after we returned home) by immediate Past President **Jerry Turner**. In addition, **Ken Brown** and **Peggy Wesssinger** were recognized for their years of service to the Association as Secretary and Assistant Secretary, respectively. After discussion, the Association decided to hold the 2012 Reunion in Grand Rapids, MI, with **Al** and **Linda Buchanan** and **John** and **Kathy Curtin** hosting. **Lee Blankenship** was re-elected Association President for a second (and final) 2-year

Continued on page 2

2012 Reunion

Join us for the 2012 Macdonough Reunion in Grand Rapids, Michigan! Our hosts will be Al and Linda Buchanan.

See pages 6 - 7 for more information

Victory At Sea (continued from page 1)

term; **Fred Steinke** was re-elected Association Vice President. There being nothing further for the good of the order and, since it was nearing dinner time, the meeting was adjourned.

Monday was a second equally pleasant day at sea. Observation #3: Sometimes more food is NOT a good thing, even when it is well-prepared. If anyone was wondering why the ship seemed to list to starboard (right side) and down at the bow (uh, the pointy end), that's where my cabin was. And if the various buffets and seconds were not enough, my cabin steward made sure that I had all sorts of additional treats in case famine overtook me.

Tuesday was spent in St. Thomas USVI (ah, the Champagne Catamaran to St. John); Wednesday found us in Antigua (crazy zip-line jungle canopy course); and Thursday was in Tortola BVI. Sights were seen, tours were taken and enjoyed, souvenirs were purchased, and not-a-few rum punches were quaffed while everyone enjoyed shore leave.

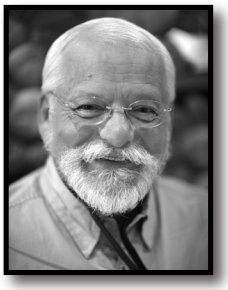
Friday was again a day at sea, and it was very easy to fall back into shipboard routine, primarily because the Plan of the Day (POD) was filled with various meals, between-meal snacks, and post-meal meals and (so-I-was-informed) non-calorie desserts (so long as eaten aft of the Lido galley after 2200 (10:00 pm local ship's time)). Sandwiched (so to speak) between the various meals was our solemn Memorial Service. The list of our fallen shipmates grows each year; the names familiar as recited; the memories of their vitality, their shennanigans, their contributions, and their service to our country and to each of us are a constant reminder that the bell will also toll for us.

Saturday was our final port-o'-call at Nassau, Bahamas; the crystal clear waters were bright blue; the sun was warm under the corrugated metal roofs of the trinket vendors; and the Atlantis Resort beckoned a number of us.

Sunday was an early morning return to Ft. Lauderdale for debarkation and clearing customs. When asked if I had anything to declare, I stated, "Yes, I ate too often and too much!" So much for the previous 40-inch (now 44-inch) waist. That was followed by the crash of several duty-free bottles of quality hooch two queues over with the predictable and unprintable roar of someone who must have been a BMC in a previous life . . . .

For those of you who missed the cruise for whatever reason, you missed a great time with terrific longtime and new shipmates, family, guests, and friends. We saw some wonderful ports, engaged in exciting activities, enjoyed very good shipboard shows, participated in "interesting" games, ate (and ate and ate) phenomenal meals, and generally relaxed at every opportunity. The reality, however, is that a Macdonough reunion is much more than what we do when we get together each year - it is who we are, who we've become, and the shared memories we have of each other that bring us together each year. Please be part of our reunion in 2012 when we invade Grand Rapids!

Lee Blankenship



POSTSCRIPT

I returned to Ft. Lauderdale to discover that my mother in Atlanta, GA, had been hospitalized and had decided to enter the local hospice after more than a year of declining health. Airline tickets were changed, bags were re-routed, and I traveled to Atlanta instead of San Francisco. I was able to spend some quality time with my mother and family for several days. I returned to California for a weekend of necessary meetings and again returned to Atlanta with Susie, my wife, and was able to be with my mother when she began the next stage of her life. Myra Espe Blankenship died peacefully at the age of 89 years, 8 months, and 14 days.

My family, Susie, and I appreciate your cards, notes, emails and expressions of sympathy during our time of loss. And I appreciate the Association's "angle-iron telegraph" that spread the news so quickly and quietly. To each of you, "Thank you very much."

Lee Blankenship and Family

Membership Corner

We currently have:

- 732 Active members
- 107 deceased
- 33 missing
- 51 contacted but not interested.

Over the years we have lost 33 members due to undeliverable mail. I have exhausted all means of locating these people. If you know where they are now, please let me know. Please remember to send me, or any Officer of the Association, any change of address. The Post Office only forwards mail for one year after they receive your change of address but they do not inform us of any changes. That is up to you.

Thank you.

Bob Kahle, Membership Chairman

DUES

Every year at this time a reminder has to go out for dues. According to our "Bylaws and Constituion" our dues are supposed to be paid by Jan.1 for that year's membership.

Our dues are still $20.00 per year. The check should be made out to:

The USS Macdonough Reunion Association
c/o John Curtin
6938 Maynard Rd.
Portland, MI 48875

In Memorium

Name	Rate	Years aboard	Date of death	Comments
Carl H. Altenburg	CWO4	83-84	01-22-2010	Not a member
Keith Goppert	MM1	90-91	02-18-2010	Not a member
Randy Hargenrader	Unknown	74-?	10-20-2009	Not a member
Claude W. Kendrick	YNC	66-?	2001	Not a member
William T. Landry (Bill)	MMCM	61-64	06-28-2011	One of the original Association members. (note: he came from the USS Decatur which was my first ship)
Bill Stone	SKCM	61-62	08-2010	
Goticiano Tulabing	SD3	69-70	05-06-2008	Not a member



In Memoriam: Our shipmate and close friend, Bill (William T.) Landry passed away June 28, 2011. Bill was a plank owner on the DLG-8 and one of the original members of the Association. At one point he was the only officer/executive of the group. Bill was a vital link from when the Association first started until his death. Bill was someone we all looked forward to seeing at every reunion and was someone who brightened up every reunion he attended. He is survived by his wife, Trish (Patricia); sons, William II and Daniel (Heidi); sisters, Patricia, Frances; and five grandchildren.

He will be missed.

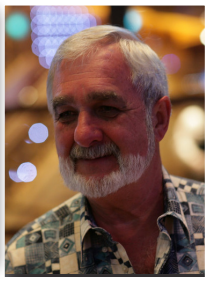
2011 Mac Cruise Reunion



2011 Mac Cruise Reunion









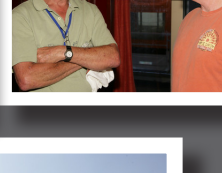


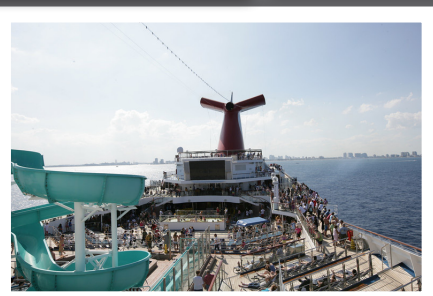









2012 USS Macdonough Reunion
Proposed Schedule

June 24-28, 2012

We will be staying at the County Inn Suites. Room rate will be $87.00 plus tax/night. This rate is good from June 20-June30, for those who wish to come early or stay longer.

Calendar

June 24:	Arrival check in time is 3 PM. There will be a mixer that evening either a pizza party or possibly a Whitecaps baseball game (depending on the schedule).
June 25:	Visit to downtown Grand Rapids at your leisure, many museums memorials and the River Walk, will meet at the Gerald R. Ford Library & Museum 2:00 PM for tour. *5:00 PM* Memorial Service in the Ford Museum Auditorium, following the memorial service we will lay a wreath burial site. Dinner on your own.
June 26:	Day in Saugatuck for shopping, eating and wine tasting. Also optional activities dune rides, beach time, fishing, or tour of the Keewatin Maritime Museum.
June 27:	Frederick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park. Tram rides, walking tours and lunch at your leisure. (This is only about 5 minutes from the hotel.) *6:30 PM* Banquet in the banquet room at the hotel.
June 28:	Farewell breakfast.

Information

- The hospitality room will be available whenever we are at the hotel.
- Breakfast is included in the price.
- There are fully accessible handicap rooms available, make your needs known.
- Reservations can be made by calling 616-942-700 or tool free reservation line 1 800 456-4000. Be sure to ask for USS Macdonough Reunion.
- Complimentary shuttle service form the airport is available on June 24. Please request this at the time you make your reservations
- Other amenities are: indoor pool, whirlpool, fitness center, business center and free wireless internet service.
- The cost for the other activities have not been finalized yet, this is the information we have available to date. We are meeting with Grand Connections next week in regards to our transportation needs and to finalize some of the other arrangements. We look forward to you all visiting our beautiful state!

Visit the website below for information on local activities and attractions:

http://www.experiencegr.com/

Pure Michigan

Come One

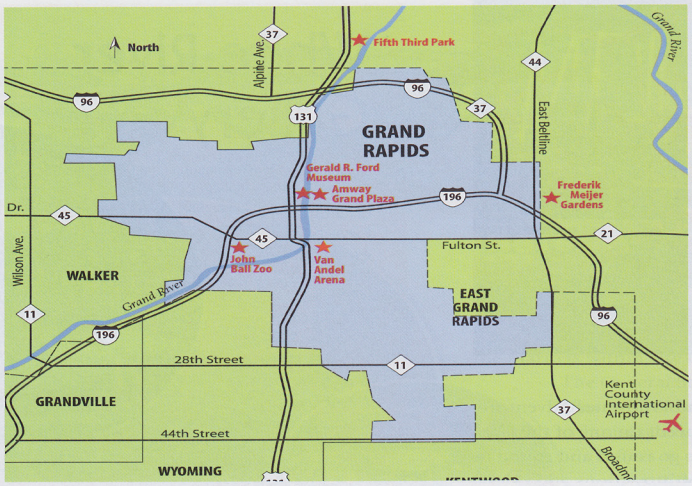


Come All

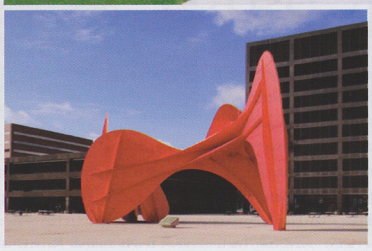




GRAND RAPIDS









welcome to Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids is a big city in the heart of West Michigan. The second largest city in the state (more than one million residents in the metro area), Grand Rapids offers big-city amenities and excitement — within easy access to west Michigan's abundant natural wonders — lakes, rivers, streams, forests, dunes and year-round outdoor recreation. But it's never lost its small-town friendliness, charm and affordability. Here, in the shadow of skyscrapers, fishermen cast for trout, salmon and steelhead in the Grand River as it threads it way through the vibrant city. No wonder Field & Stream Magazine named Grand Rapids America's 6th Best Fishing City.

The very walkable downtown is home to hotels, restaurants, museums, and sports and entertainment venues within a five-minute walk of each other. And some of Grand Rapids' other unique attractions are less than a ten-minute drive away--including Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park (one of the Midwest's most popular tourist spots) and John Ball Zoo (one of the nation's oldest urban zoos). And as for shopping: Grand Rapids' 19th- and 20th-century history as the "furniture city" preserves its station as a place where antique, art, and furniture selections are outstanding.

2011 Mac Reunion Cruise & Dinner





















2011 Mac Reunion Cruise & Dinner

























More photos can be seen here: http://www.camerabean.com/US-Navy

USS Macdonough Reunion 2011
Business Meeting
Aboard the Carnival Freedom

Welcome: Lee Blankenship

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Officer Introductions
- Newcomer Introductions: Bill Dolan and Jill Byerly, Fritz and Joanne Loeffler.
- Attendance recognition: This is the 16th reunion. Pins were given to those who served 16 and every year less. A special presentation was made to Lloyd who served in the Army. He received a special Army pin.

Officer Nominations/Elections (all were unanimously elected): President: Lee Blankenship; Vice President: Fred Stienke; Treasurer: Larry Wessinger

Appointed Positions: Bob Kahle: Membership; Mike O'Shea: Webmaster; Al Buchanan: Chaplain

Special Presentation of Clock/Barometer to:

- Ken Brown, outgoing Secretary who spent untold hours putting together the newsletter, sending jokes and serving as the Reunion Association secretary for five years
- Peggie Wessinger, fabulous minute keeper
- Bob Kahle, member finder extraordinaire, moved us from 100 to 700 members through his dedicated efforts. Bob, in turn, that Tillie for her patience while he searched for more members.
- Peggie and Larry Wessinger, wonderful Reunion hosts

Treasurer's Report by John Curtin: Our heads are above water. Income is from dues and the auction. Expenses go for the newsletter, stamps printing, mailing, memorials, host gifts and necessary prepaid reunion expenses.

Secretary's report by Ken Brown: Thank you. Glen's making Tshirts. $10 each, $5 for mailing. Glen will donate the difference!

Membership Report by Bob Kahle: In 2008 we had 483 members. We now have 705 and a list of members by state is available. Bob makes 150-200 calls per weekend. He reports that it has been a pleasure finding shipmates.

Webmaster's Report by Mike O'Shea: www.macdonough.org To see the crew roster, you will need the password and user name. You can email the president and get those. Once in the website you can update your information. The updates will be sent to Bob Kahle. Will be adding photos.

Cruise coordinator, Brian Forrester: Please use the hospitality room; Memorial Service will be Friday 1 PM; Cocktail Party will be Friday at the '70's disco;Instructions for disembarkation tomorrow and receiving your shipboard credit.

Ship's Bell will be auctioned. Patches are available from Jerry Turner. $8.50.

Future Reunions:

2012 Reunion- Al and Linda Buchanan. It's looking good for Grand Rapids. $950 per couple. Activities can include the Gerald Ford memorial museum, Saugatuck – handout gave information.

- 2013 Reunion: Myrtle Beach. Peggie and Larry Wessinger will host.
- 2014 Reunion: Possibly Seattle/Bremerton

Meeting was adjourned.

USS Macdonough Reunion Association

Executive Committee

Here are the shipmates to contact for memberships, address changes, obituaries, complaints, questions or kudos

President: Lee Blankenship
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Secretary: Gary Beanland
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Chaplain: Al Buchanan
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USS Macdonough Reunion Association

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