

# U. S. S. LOWNDES - APA 154

December 2003 Newsletter

Wm. "Bud" Kautz, CCBW - 34782 Hiawatha Trail, McHenry, IL 60051 (815)344-6326  
e-mail REDLABELBUDDHA@aol.com

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The following members of the reunion group were in attendance in Biloxi, Mississippi:

Lavada Boyer	Bud & Jean Kautz	Warren & Albena Proctor
David & Odess Brinkman	Ed. King	Arthur & Marjorie Rauseo
Jim Chilcote	David & Joanne Long	Earl & Frances Robertson
John & Lebbly Dyer	Clark Martin	Jim & Ina Mae Ross
Dotty Flood	Margaret McGrody	Dallas & Lorene Stratton
Mary Gebhart	Leo & Margaret O'Brien	Bill & Amelia Taylor
Pam Hennessey	Ed. & Dolores Person	Jan & Perry Trober
John & Marilyn Hess	Jenny & Lori Porter	Walt & Jackie Umbarger
Dick & Roseanna Jones		

Jeremy Brinkman (Mascot)

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David & Odess Brinkman	Sterling Hornsby	Lowndes Treasury
Roberta Brinkman Fund	Dick & Roseanna Jones	Clark Martin
Helen Butler (Memory of J. Davenport)	Bud & Jean Kautz	Arthur & Marjorie Rauseo
Howard & Lois Chappell	David & Joanne Long	Bill & Amelia Taylor

### THE ABOVE REUNION MEMBERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE MODEL FUND

Anyone desiring to assist David Brinkman in this worthy endeavor can send contributions to David at: 1074 Tarrytown Lane - West Columbia, SC - 29170.

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David and Odess have been in contact with Ensign Stuart Hyde (Still a working writer and educator) who has been busy going through Lowndes documents on the Web Site (Narrative History, Recollections, Newsletters, photos, Etc.) and Stuart has proposed that he assemble the material already available, as well as additional information to be gathered, into a book about the Lowndes. David has mentioned that through conversations with crewmen at the reunions that there are a lot of good stories not documented yet, so they are in need of shipmates to contribute to this effort and give permission to print/publish already documented items. Specific information now being sought includes where and for how long were members of the Beach Party trained? What training did others have, and where? Are there stories out there about daily life, including relations with Marines, problems with equipment, ways in which crewmen made changes in their living quarters (photos, decorations, etc.?) David and Stuart insist that, in the unlikely event that any money is made, it would go to a charity or an organization to honor the men who served aboard the ship.

*Ed. Note: Sounds like a great way to enhance the memory and perpetuate the history of the Lowndes and the men who served aboard her during World War II. More on this subject on page 5 of this issue of the newsletter.*

At our business meeting in Biloxi it was voted that the 16<sup>th</sup> Reunion in 2004 be held in Branson, Missouri. Jan Trober and Mary Gebhart once again have volunteered to make the necessary arrangements. It was also decided that October be the preferred month. Details will be forthcoming in future Newsletters as soon as they are available.



## Jan Trober

I want each and every attendee to know that it was my pleasure to put together the Biloxi reunion. Each year I am so very happy to have the opportunity to have my life touched and enriched by so many wonderful men and women. I look forward to helping Mary with the coordination of next year's reunion in Branson. I enjoy being able to be part of your reunion group and I really do look forward to seeing each and every one of your smiling faces. You have all become part of my extended family. If you have suggestions or ideas that we can use to make your reunion even more enjoyable, please let us know. We would like your feedback and input, so tell us what you liked, what you would change or what city you would like to visit. I look forward to meeting you all again in Branson in 2004 and hopefully a few more of your shipmates and family will join us.

I have already started to research for next year's reunion. Also looking for attendance gifts for our "door" prizes.

*Ed. Note: This should give our reunion group members plenty of time to make plans to help Jan and Mary for next year.*

## Marjorie Rauseo

Arthur and I had a great time in Biloxi. The girls did a wonderful Job. Bud, Art received the message regarding the hats.

*Ed. Note: Congratulations to a certain member of our reunion group, when playing the slot machine at one of the casinos he hit the "Jack Pot".*

## Marlene Rezza & Ron Schadler

Bud, received your e mail and it was a pleasure meeting you and the others at the D Day museum in New Orleans. Hope everybody enjoyed N. O. Thanks for the USS Lowndes newsletters, they allow me to know about my father's war life.

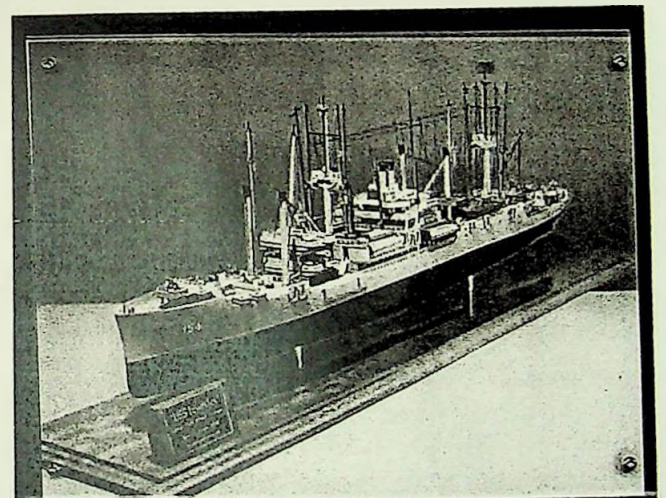
*Ed. Note. Marlene pointed out the brick at the museum dedicated to her Dad, Martin J. Rezza. It certainly was a very pleasant surprise meeting her and her husband Ron.*

## David Brinkman

We enjoyed the reunion, especially seeing everyone. This is something we treasured most. As it is a sort of Dad's legacy to his family...The Lowndes group are wonderful and sweet people. We pray that God will continue to shower His blessing on y'all and keep you healthy and dandy and give you more Lowndes reunions to attend. We look forward to joining you again in Branson, MO. We heard from Dick and Roseanne Jones, it seems after Biloxi they went fishing on the Bayou and caught some big fish! WOW. Jeremy never stops talking about his experience in Biloxi with ya'll. He really enjoyed it.

*Ed. Note: More from and about David later on in this newsletter, he has been a very busy individual.*

The plaque illustrated below was presented to David Brinkman at the Biloxi Reunion in recognition of his work to present for future generations the history of the USS Lowndes.



DAVID BRINKMAN

IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR DEDICATION TO  
PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE  
U.S. LOWNDES - APA 154

FROM THE LOWNDES SHIPMATES  
OCTOBER 2, 2003



## **Bill Dunbar**

My father was Robert Dunbar (Lt, JG), who was aboard the Lowndes from beginning to end. He was a doctor fresh out of medical school and pretty full of himself. Before he died in 1983, he told me a number of interesting stories about the adventures on board, including how his young and rather brash nature was greeted by some of the more seasoned salts. One of his best friends for the remainder of his life was Howard Chadd. For years I have been seeking more information about my dad and his time aboard the ship and I would love to be apprised of any reunions in the Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco areas. If any of the ship's veterans are in those areas, I'd love to contact them. I'd be happy to share some of Dad's photos and would be happy to send copies. Those are of the equator crossing are particularly amusing. Please let me know how I can learn more.

## **Jack Laird**

We are still hanging in there. I am still in fair health, but Marilyn has several ailments. We can't plan ahead very far in regard to making trips, etc.

## **Lorene Stratton**

We had a safe trip home from the ship's reunion. We did enjoy seeing friends again. On Oct. 20-23 Dallas played in the World Series in Mobile, Alabama. His team, Federal Savings, came in first place. They are the 80 years old team. Dallas got 2 home runs. He got a nice trophy and ring. A team from Japan also played in the World Series. They were in the 65 year old group. After the opening ceremonies Dallas went to the Japanese team and asked if any of them were from Amori, Japan. One man's face lit up into a big smile. Dallas told him that 60 years ago he was on a ship that took occupational troops into Amori. He hugged Dallas and asked a Japanese lady to take their picture. He would have been 6 or 7 years old I guess. I thought this was a good human interest story.

*Ed. Note: Yes, Lorene great story.*

## **Thomas Godby**

Since the records have been opened up for everyone to see, I would like to tell "The Rest of the Story". I served aboard the "Lowndes" from the time it was commissioned until after the war on our return to the States. I was absent on leave, and when I returned the ship had left port. I immediately turned myself in to the shore patrol. This was an automatic general court marshal offense. I was sentenced to 14 months in the brig and a bad conduct discharge. I served four months in the brig, and then was transferred to the "USS Hermitage" to complete the rest of my time. I was then discharged with an honorable discharge. I settled in Seattle, WA and shortly after took the exam for Seattle fireman and was hired on Jan. 1, 1947. I was assigned to an engine co. and worked up to driver/pump operator. Eventually, through competitive exams, worked up to Captain where I retired with a disability injury after 24 years and 11 months. Retired Dec. 1, 1971. I was a private pilot and owned my own airplane. I built two experimental airplanes and flew both. I still currently live on a private airpark. I suffered a heart attack in 1995, and had a two way by-pass that restricts me from flying now. One other thing needs to be cleared up. I was a gunners mate 3<sup>rd</sup> class during the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. My cleaning station was the twin 40 on the port bow and my GQ station was the twin 40 aft on the starboard side. Lt. Edgar Hinton and chief Facinoli both told me I had the rating, but I dozed off while on fire watch and Lt. Hinton, leaving the ship on liberty noticed and took the rating from me. I deserved everything that happened to me. I did the crimes and paid dearly for them I harbor no hard feelings to anyone for doing their job.

## **Virginia Duncan**

Mom (Mrs. Florence Richard) is still doing quite well at 103 years of age. Still likes to work word puzzles, take part in activities and enjoy family and friends.

*On September 2, 1945 WWII with Japan ended with the signing of the peace treaty aboard the USS Missouri.*

**William H. Riley**

One of the strongest impressions I have of serving on the APA Lowndes was during the invasion of Iwo Jima. I remember that early in the morning we were served steak and eggs for breakfast, which was a rare occasion. It was just beginning daylight when we arrived in the vicinity of Iwo Jima. I had never seen so many ships in one place at one time. It was a forest of masts. The battle ships were firing over our heads with flashes from their big guns. I remember Lt. Commander Berner, who was in charge of getting the landing craft over the side. One day when we were practicing doing this, he threw his ball cap down on the deck and jumped up and down because we weren't getting the craft in the water fast enough. One day, from off the coast of Hawaii, we were to pick up Marines off the beach and take them on board ship. Robert Hail, who had become a good friend to me, invited me to go with him. He was one of the coxswains on an LCVP. While transporting the Marines, some of them became very seasick. They had to climb up the cargo nets with backpacks and rifles. Some of them were too sick to get up the nets and had to be hoisted aboard ship. After returning to ship, the call came over the sound system for Riley to report to the executive officer. I was told that I was not to leave the office again, where my duties were supposed to be fulfilled. Our ship was loaded with wounded Marines. They were brought aboard the ship with a pulley attached to the side of the ship, which was safer than using the boom. Besides, there were too many to do it that way. Many of the Marines whom we had befriended never returned to the ship and probably never made it through the fighting. The raising of the flag on Mt. Suribachi was sobering to witness. When all the ships were ordered out to sea, our anchor was lodged in volcanic ash and could not be pulled up. We sat like sitting ducks, so to speak. An expected air attack from Okinawa didn't happen, otherwise we would surely have been sunk. We received some shelling from Mt. Suribachi, but it fell short because we were out of range. Actually our ship was at greater risk at Okinawa.

I served as a junior officer on the Lowndes from commissioning in Astoria, OR until she returned to San Francisco in August 1945. Chaplain Obrestad, a good and supportive preacher, was also responsible for morale. I felt little was done to keep up our spirits so, when he left the ship and the Captain (or Executive Officer) appointed me as Morale Officer, I thought I could do better than he. BOY, I was wrong! My first effort was to stage boxing matches on one of the hatch covers; Our ship's carpenter rigged a ring, the electrician installed overhead lights, someone found a gong or bell, and we were in business. For a few nights, at least. I was summoned to the Executive Officer's presence. "I want the boxing matches cancelled". Aye, Aye, Sir, but may I ask why? You don't question a superior officer, Ensign. Yes sir. "But I'll tell you why. It's too dangerous. The men get so excited that someone is bound to be lost overboard sooner or later". Yes sir, I will comply. My next great idea was basketball games in one of the holds. We began a tournament, which lasted a few days, when I was again summoned to the Exec's office. "Cancel the basketball games at once". Yes sir, but may I ask why? They are very popular. "Ensign, you don't question authority!" Aye, Aye sir. I turned to leave. "Ensign Hyde, I'll tell you why I don't want those games to continue. The bulkheads are solid steel-someone will sooner or later get his skull crushed or his arm broken". But, sir we've padded all the bulkheads with mattresses. "ENSIGN HYDE, I TOLD YOU I DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING TO YOU". Aye, Aye, sir. My recollection is that I tried other things, all of which were vetoed. Like Chaplain Obrestad, I just gave up trying. I never again questioned the efforts of the blessed Chaplain, who most likely had good ideas, and also found them unacceptable. I also remember long conversations with a shipmate who I believe was in communications. I remember him as "Rusty". Can anyone give me a clue as to his full name?

*The cruise liner Queen Elizabeth 2 moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel fuel it burns.*



## History

### Disposition of the USS LOWNDES-APA 154

On 17 September 1983, the USS LOWNDES, then located in the James River Reserve Fleet of Fort Eustis, Virginia, was traded, pursuant to Public Law 95-177, by the Maritime Administration to Connecticut Transport, Inc., New York, NY, together with nine other vessels, in exchange for the tanker CONNECTICUT. The 10 traded-out ships were all considered surplus to the needs of the Government, and therefore available for scrapping. The LOWNDES was immediately sold and transferred by Connecticut Transport, Inc., to S. A. Desbar, a Spanish corporation, for scrapping in Spain. This scrapping was completed as of 16 January 1984, in Spain.

*Above information from Bob Rampy of Anchor R Services and relayed to Dan Wisdom.*

### Stuart Hyde

My present feeling is this: We should not assume that we will produce a manuscript that will be embraced by an established publisher. Instead I feel we should work patiently to collect and assemble the hundreds of diverse bits and pieces that, together and effectively arranged, will tell the story of our ship and its crew. Perhaps its eventual "audience" will be to surviving crew members and their families. To me, this would be enough to justify the effort. So much of the collection of data has already been done. We don't begin with a blank page, although there are many blank pages that remain to be written. I see the story beginning in July, 1944 with the launching of the Lowndes, and then following its adventures from that date until its decommissioning in April of 1946. In between, I see one chapter for each month, plus an epilogue dated January 16, 1984, when it was broken up for scrap metal. Some chapters would be brief, others (February and March, 1945) would be very long.

*(Ed. Note: See article above on this page and page 1 of this newsletter. Please let us have feedback regarding this project.)*

## Leo O'Brien

Since our return from the reunion in Biloxi we have been to Portland, Oregon to visit our son Gerry and his wife Alanna, and most importantly Aiden Michael O'Brien, our first grandchild. Needless to say, he is one in a million. The weather for this time of the year was unusually warm and sunny. , in fact it was the warmest month of October in history. We were lucky after such a great time and weather in Biloxi. We really enjoyed this Lowndes reunion and the Robertson girls made everyone seem welcome with their planning the pizza party and the fun they brought to the banquet. We also enjoyed the breakfast with Pam and her two daughters. We are looking forward to Branson next year. Bud, I would like to thank you for all the work put into the reunion group and that is not to say Jean is not an important part in the effort.

*Ed. Note: thank you Leo for the plaudits, Jean is definitely a major help in my duties as CC&BW.*

### Donald H. Furth

I was a plank owner of the USS Lowndes and remained on board until she was decommissioned in 1946. At the time I was an EMT1c. Just before I joined the Navy I was in college. In fact I enlisted in the reserves in the fall of 1942 and went to boot camp in San Diego, I was just 19. I had lived my entire life in Los Angeles, California. After my discharge in May of 1946 I returned to school to finish as a major and went to work for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, CA in computing in 1952. Five years later I joined IBM and spent the balance of my working life there. I do remember Stuart Hyde and Fred Gideon and would be happy to share my e mail address (surrydon@hypernet.com) with former Lowndes shipmates.

*(Ed Note: Please check updated Reunion Group roster list for additions and changes and make note of new members addresses and phone numbers.)*

First golf course in the US was opened on July 18, 1893 in Wheaton, Illinois.

**David Brinkman**

From the first mailing, I just got a response from Ensign Raymond D. Martin (Who now goes by Dean Martin). This is the first response from an officer (I'm sure Stuart Hyde will be happy to hear this.) Stuart, do you remember this fellow Boat Crew Officer? Mr. Martin was on the Lowndes from September 1944 to November 1945. His hometown (and current home) is Tacoma, WA. Before the war, he was attending Pacific Lutheran College until he was called up at the age of 20. After the war he returned to Tacoma and finished his education, "thanks to the G.I Bill". After college he became a school teacher and worked for 39 years in the Tacoma Public Schools. His wife (Mildred) also graduated from PLC and was a teacher for 34 years. To quote Dean Martin's words:

"I was so excited when I received your (David) letter with APA-154 on the letter IO shed a few tears when I saw the ship's picture. The web site has brought back memories of long ago and I am shocked of a return to the USS Lowndes – APA-154 and the wonderful crew. It was such an honor to serve my country in WWII and be a member of the staff of the USS Lowndes – APA 154. We were a close knit crew that had a vision and never departed from it, even though we had some difficult times during the war years (I was a boat crew officer). The experience I gained during the war years has been helpful all my life. I thank the Lord he gave me this opportunity to serve my country and be a part of the USS Lowndes."

Odess and Jeremy are having a great time in the Philippines. I had to stay home and work (that's right, Bud, I really do have a job) and to sell my parents house and move an accumulation of 30 years into our house. I did manage to get some Lowndes calendars in the mail. Sent out only about 50 of them. Maybe next year we can get them to everybody.

*A current Reunion Group roster and an updated e mail address list is included with this mailing of the newsletter.*

My kudos to you gentlemen for putting such a wonderful online history for the ship my dad served on from commissioning to de-Commissioning. He is Jack D. Gatewood. Living and doing fine, still working in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has some really cool photos that over the holidays we will scan and email them to David Brinkman. He has lost a lot of his memory of those days. I think he just wanted to block out the horrors and move on with his life. But, I am very proud for you guys to have put up such a vital part of history on the net. I hope that some provision has been made so these pages don't "disappear" from the net one day, as your crew is dwindling. Thank you again.

**Donald Lorenzi**

Really enjoyed the calendar, what a great and unique idea, brought back a lot of memories. This is a keeper. Thanks much, David.

*(Ed. Note: David put a lot of time and effort into this project. To those of you who have received a copy of the calendar I'm sure your reaction will be similar to Don's. Our memories are slowly fading as time goes by and calendar should make us think a bit harder to recall events of the long ago past. Now, maybe I can receive items for the newsletter that are of interest to the Reunion Group.) How about it fellows?)*

**Reuben Johnson**

This has been a good year in that we have been in good health. As you know, we don't travel. Dorothy doesn't like it so we stay at home and enjoy that. I'm sure our ship's company had another happy and rewarding reunion again this past year. This is really great! Thanks to the Kautz' and the many dedicated shipmates keeping everyone on the button through the newsletters and their efforts in providing items of interest to share with future generations, progress isn't it?



## **Bill Taylor**

Bud, it was good to see you, Jean, your daughter Pam, and grand daughters Jenny and Lori. That is a great added benefit to our Lowndes reunions, getting to meet family members of our old shipmates. (I do mean old). I am sure that others will be writing you with comments about the reunion in Biloxi. Amelia and I enjoyed every aspect of the reunion and I want to thank Jan Trober and Mary Gebhart for the big part they played in making our 15<sup>th</sup> reunion a success.. I'm sure you were involved, and to anyone else involved in the planning of the Biloxi reunion. Someone has to do the work. For me, the highlight of the 3 days was our time spent in the National D-Day Museum. I hope to be able to go back some time. David Brinkman continues to make many contributions to our Lowndes Reunion Group, and I want to publicly state my appreciation. It was great that David, Odess and Jeremy could be in attendance and join in the Lowndes activities. I'll close by saying to everyone that attended the Biloxi Lowndes reunion. It was great to see all of you.

*Ed. Note: It was at the first reunion in St. Louis that Bill came up to Jean and I and handed us a birth announcement of Pam that we had sent him over 40 years previous to that reunion.*

## **Frances Robertson**

We enjoyed being with shipmates and families in Biloxi. Wished I could have got along better. Earl was a bit perturbed because he was the wheel chair pusher. (*Poor guy*) but he was grateful for the use of one at the airport. God willing nothing else will happen. I've been to Branson and Silver Dollar City several times and could go again and again. It's nice now not to have to use a wheelchair, walker or cane, so I guess I'm on the road to recovery.

## **Leo O'Brien**

Biloxi was the greatest.

*A man of few words, short, brief, terse concise, crisp, abrupt and to the point.*

## **Betty Erlandson**

Joe was in the hospital since last March 28<sup>th</sup>. He came home Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> in a wheelchair and on oxygen 24/7. The vets hospital has been a great help.

## **Jackie Richards**

Wally and I had some health problems this past year. I had triple bypass surgery June 16<sup>th</sup>, rehab for 30 sessions, back to work for the school lunch program the middle of August and doing well. Wally had a mini stroke the day after Thanksgiving and was hospitalized overnight. A scan ruled out a hemorrhage of the brain. He had been down on his hands and knees pulling up staples and nails, plus chipping up floor tile in an old farm house when the stroke took place. His only symptom was loss of memory of part of the morning and afternoon. Now he is on a daily aspirin and no more jobs requiring him to be down on the floor on his hands and knees. We hosted Wally's army reunion in Columbus last September. Wally's mother turned 103 Oct. 29, '03. She is an amazing woman and quite capable of taking care of her needs.

## **Sally Cary**

We're moving for the third time. Hope. This is the last time until I move back to Pennsylvania. New address:  
1297 E. Avenida Fresca, Casa Grande,  
AZ 85222, (520)316-0245,

## **Shirley Wetzell**

My dad (Sterling Hornsby) has been getting the newsletters, and saved them all. I've been putting all the information together – he never really talked about a lot of what he went through during WWII until the last few years. He had surgery last year and there were complications, in intensive care for 17 days. He asked me if I could track down Billy Biggers and not sure how to do this.

*Ed. Note: Haven't been able to find Billy using an old address.*

Jan. 2004-8

**Ruth Anne Frieden**

**RESULTS of DAVID BRINKMAN'S EFFORTS  
LOCATING FORMER SHIPMATES:**

Through his expert knowledge of the computer contents he has been able to locate the following former crew members of the USS Lowndes or members of their family:

Ensign Stuart Hyde  
586 Chapman Dr.  
Corte Madera, CA 94925  
(415)924-9467

Donald H. Furth EMT1c  
1526 Newberry Neck Rd.  
Surry, ME 04684

Neil C. Grohs SF3c  
21010 W. Langell Valley Rd.  
Bonanza, OR 97623

John M. Dinis PhM3c  
57 Higland Dr.  
Wilkes Barre, PA 18705

Louis R. Swain CBM (Beach Party)  
2296 17<sup>th</sup> St. LN  
Bradenton, FL 34205

Martin E. Guerry GM2c  
2736 Fenway Ave.  
Chesapeake, VA 23323

Dean O. Martin COMM  
4114 S. 17<sup>th</sup>  
Tacoma, WA 98405

Bill Dunbar (son of Lt. Jg Robert Dunbar)  
2503 31<sup>st</sup>. Ave. W.  
Seattle, WA 98199

Martin E. Guerry GM1c  
2736 Fenway Ave.  
Chesapeake, VA 23323

As can be noted from the above David has been a pretty busy boy and I know he is not finished yet. At the Biloxi reunion a plaque was presented to him in appreciation for all he has done on behalf of the USS Lowndes Reunion Group. He is in the process of putting together a 2004 calendar with 1944, 1945, & 1946 events from the deck log. It will also include photos of crew members.

I have enjoyed the e mails and learning about the USS Lowndes. You may continue to use my e mail address to contact Jim and Maggie Frieden. I am their daughter-in-law. I would like them to attend the reunions because it has been a while since they have been able to go. I look forward to more history of the Lowndes.

*Ed. Note: Jim hosted our 3<sup>rd</sup> reunion in Fort Wayne.*

**Jerry Michalski**

Sure hated to miss the Biloxi reunion. We're keeping our fingers crossed for the Branson, MO one. Still using my walker. Hope my legs will get back to normal soon.

*Missed you both, hope to see you in October.*

**Mildred Binney**

Buell is still at the Veterans home in Cameron. He holds his own in steady health, the staff there is wonderful and we feel blessed that he can be there. I'm still on the farm and always busy. I had quite a crop of tomatoes and seem to find other produce from nice neighbors and friends. We now have 5 little great grandchildren and 2 more will arrive in 2004.

**Dolores McNamee**

Enjoy the newsletters so very much, sorry I have not responded sooner. My family speak of our last visit with Henry to the Washington reunion and how much joy it gave him to see his shipmates once more.

**Joyce DuBois**

Frank continues to regress but VERY SLOWLY! Hope 2004 is good for all of the Lowndes group.

*Yeah, Joyce, Jean and I both got a big kick out of your greeting card. It's a keeper.*