

U. S. S. LOWNDES - APA 154

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June 2004 Newsletter

e-mail: REDLABELBUDDHA@aol.com

The following reunion members, spouses & guests have indicated attending the Branson, Missouri reunion - Sept. 30 thru Oct. 3, 2004

David, Odess & Jeremy Brinkman
 Sally Cary plus 3(?)
 Mitchell & Norma Jean Chasteen
 Max Cole
 John & Lebbly Dyer
 Mary & Mark Gebhart
 Mike & Pam Hennessey
 John & Marilyn Hess

Jeffrey & Cindy Hess
 Dick & Roseanna Jones
 Bud & Jean Kautz
 Ed. King & L. Boyer
 David & Joanne Long
 Don & Shirley Lorenzi
 Eileen Murray
 Leo & Margaret O'Brien

Warren & Albena Proctor
 Arthur & Marjorie Rauseo
 Keith & Lorraine Richards
 Earl & Frances Robertson
 Dallas & Lorene Stratton
 Bill & Amelia Taylor
 Jan & Perry Trober
 John Vernale

Reservation can be made at 1-417-5767 or toll free 1-800-333-3333

e mail <www.radisson.com/bransonmo>

Be sure to mention USS Lowndes Reunion Group.

Check in is 3:00 PM - Check out 12:00 PM

Please complete enclosed registration form and return to Mary Gebhart as promptly as possible.

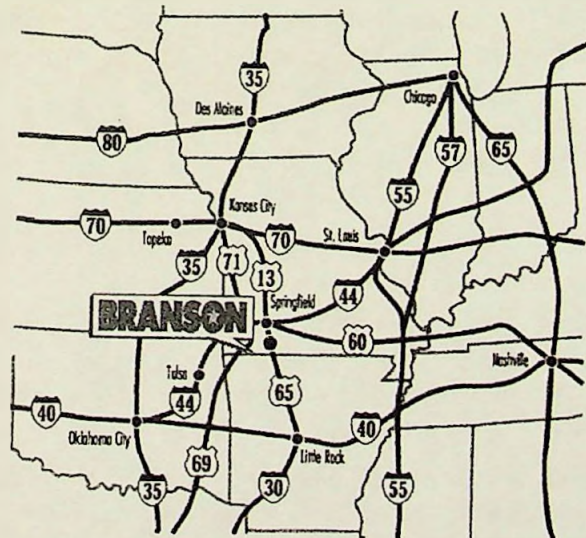
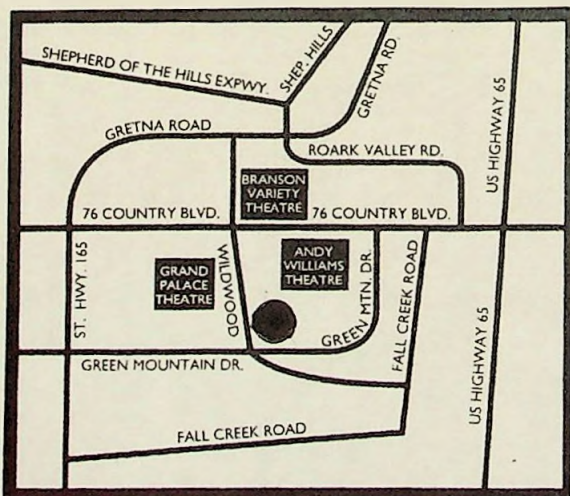
We have some surprises in store for all this year, so you won't want to miss this reunion.

For those of you who will be flying into the Springfield/Branson Airport, there are several shuttle services to transport you to the hotel in Branson which is 54 miles from Springfield.

Tri-Lakes Shuttle	(417)339-4888	\$40 per person, 1 way minimum 2 people	(1 way)
Grayline Shuttle	(800)542-6768	\$36 per person, 1 way minimum 2 people	(1 way)
Jerry's Shuttle	(417)334-5678	\$65 per person, 1 way \$80 for 2 people, \$90 for 3 people, \$100 for 4 people.	(1 way)
Riley's Shuttle	(417)725-6004	\$350.00 for limo or \$175.00 for sedan - 4 people	(round trip)

Maps & driving directions.

The hotel is located off 76 Country Boulevard, on Wildwood Drive. In the heart Of Branson's Theater District.
120 Idlewood Drive, Branson, MO



Jan Trober

Perry and I drove my folks to Oklahoma for Dad's "first time to attend" the USS Oklahoma Ship Reunion. I think it was April 17-20. It was different than the Lowndes Reunion. More attended but it wasn't as well organized (at least I don't think) as the Lowndes. I was glad my Dad went. He needed to, I think. Mary couldn't go this time. We didn't do as well as we have in past competitions. Our dog Sparky got a refusal, but she did take first place in "Pet me, I'm cute to everyone she met. This was at the Purina Farms competition. There were at least a hundred hot dogs there and I ain't talking about the kind you eat.

Robbie was a member of the Oklahoma crew at Pearl Harbor and with several other shipmates were waiting for liberty to start when the bombing started. Planes were coming in low at them as they completed their runs. (See page 3/99-2 newsletter for more details.)

Jan will welcome any and all items for the "The Great USS Lowndes give-a-way" event, to take place during the Branson reunion. Let's all cooperate with her in this endeavor. It has proven to be one of the highlights of our reunion.

She also sends web site addresses and a phone number for anyone interested in obtaining more information regarding the site of our reunion:

Missouri Tourism website <www.VisitMo.com> or their e-mail is <tourism@ded.state.mo.us> and the telephone number is (573)-751-4133.

Thanks Jan.

Arthur Wilson

Received an e-mail and enjoyed it very much. Some things made me think of Iwo Jima. I was a part of the crew on boat # 9 outside davit boat on starboard side. Our crew had been together for quite a long time. We came aboard with another crew and skipper Lt. Comm.

Gardner who became Executive Officer of the Lowndes. After losing our boat with three mortar hits and a hole from a jeep we took over another boat from the Lowndes. So spent another six days doing the job we were trained to do. There are some good stories to tell about our nine days of battle at Iwo and we never had shit in our neck. We were a well trained boat crew and worked together when we were in the boat. Get back later with more.

Strom Thurmond made a surprise appearance at the Myrtle Beach, SC USS Lowndes Reunion (1996) during the Saturday morning breakfast at the hotel. Below is a photo of Strom with Lowndes crewman Fred Brinkman (who as SC agency Director, had the opportunity to work with the Senator).



Strom Thurmond and Fred Brinkman (1988).

Fred hosted the Eighth Annual Lowndes reunion at Myrtle Beach in 1996. He passed away in 1997.

In 1997 Senator Thurmond became the longest serving senator in U. S. history: 41 years and 10 months.

How long a minute is depends on which side of the bathroom door you are on.

Thomas Godby

Lt. Hinton was the gunnery officer. It was one of my duties to take the temperature readings in the ammunition magazine, ready rooms and gun tubs. I had to take the results to Lt. Hinton for his signature and then turn it in to the executive officer. It was usually about 0930 when this was done. The first time I knocked on his door he said, "Come in". He was still sleeping. He said, "From now on don't knock, just walk in". Sometimes I would wake him by just staring at him. He got us some pin-up pictures of movie stars to put up in the armory. He was also a pollywog when we crossed the equator and was initiated by wearing a shelter half and carried a bucket of water and a squirt gun. He would squirt water in the air and say, "I'm a whale, obscenities on Errol Flynn". He took this good naturally. I was sorry to hear that he was killed in a plane crash at such an early age.

Shirley Wetzell

I'm Sterling Hornsby's daughter. He served on the Lowndes and I thought there are some of the things he remembered about Dr. Dunbar. My Dad was very fond of Dr. Dunbar and he got to know Fred Brinkman through Billy Biggers, a PhM who was Dad's best friend. He also agrees that Dr. Dunbar was "full of himself" – and that's exactly why he and Billy liked him so much. They called him "Dr. Dandy Dunbar," with great affection and respect. Dad said he would always treat you if you were sick, but you better watch out if you went to him when you weren't! One of Dad's most vivid memories is how Dr. Dandy stood up for him and Billy when they wanted to go to chief's school. My Dad trained for the Beach Party, but to go to the school he had to transfer to the Signal Corp. He watched the action at Iwo Jima from the bridge. He said that when the wounded started coming aboard the entire medical team spent three days working, with very little time for sleep or anything else except helping their men. From all accounts, David, your father was a fine dedicated person. He made a difference in my Dad's life, for sure.

Getting into Chief's School gave him a chance to better his life. He stayed in the Navy for 20 years, retiring at the top rank for an NCO. He would have stayed in for 30, but Mother was ready to settle down. My Dad is 83 now. He really can't do much writing now because of a hand tremor His body's a little frail now, but his memory is sharp as a tack about those years.

Stuart Hyde

More on the Lowndes project, I've been gathering data on various components, including statistics about the ship itself, LCVPs and LCMs, and both officers and men. My plan is to begin the narrative by describing how the many parts of the manned and battle-ready ship came to together – where the ship was built, and where its elements came from, including the steel, the engines, navigation devices, radar, kitchen (galley) equipment, plumbing, davits and booms, refrigeration, desalination gear (evaporators), and so forth. Then, I want to follow the crewmen – where they came from, where and how long they trained, what specialties they studied, etc. As I've said before, I want to lead the reader through the long and difficult process it took 550 diverse men and a thousand pieces of metal, and tracing how they all came together to create one important unit of a flotilla that helped win the war.

All I can say is good hunting and good luck in this project. Do your best Stu, I'm sure it will be greatly appreciated by all former Lowndes crew men and their families. I know that this is a tremendous project and much of the information can be obtained through all the hard work David Brinkman has expended. I still don't think he has a job, but he has informed that he does so I'll take his word for it. What he has accomplished on the web sites is beyond my grasp. Thank you, David.

Bill Robinson

I still enjoy the newsletters. Appreciate all the time and effort and the labor of love.

"SICK BAY"

John Dyer

Lebby is having a lot of sickness now. Can't sit at the computer very long. Hope to have her well by reunion time. I am doing fine. The world is in a hell of a mess now; it doesn't pay to watch the news anymore, all bad. We had a good, winter weather wise. Hope to see all in Branson.

Rhonal Shy

I won't be able to make the reunion this year. I have congestive heart failure and diabetes, can't go for three days and stay away from my breathing equipment that long.

Bernard Tracz

I'm 77 now and a few months ago my left hip started to hurt. Well now it is an arthritic left hip and I need to give up bowling, which I was pretty good at, keeping a 180 average and up. I live alone with a niece nearby. Still drive and do a little work around the house. Plant about 10 tomato and 15 pepper plants. There is no use to complain, always someone with more troubles than me.

Bernard sent a photo of his house and grounds, sure looks like he does a great job.

Joe Erlandson

Health problems prevent us from attending the reunions.

Mike Michalski

I had written to Martin E. Guerry one of several former crew members that David Brinkman had recently located and received a call from him. It was hard to understand him but before hanging up he expressed the desire that I write to him regarding more about the time aboard the Lowndes.

Yes, Mike, you're correct, This year is Jean and my 60th Anniversary, thanks for remembering.

Walt is doing pretty well. He returned home on Tuesday, April 19. He had on a feeding tube initially. With the type of stroke he had, it affected his swallowing/throat and his balance. His speech is pretty good. He doesn't have any problem expressing himself, he is still struggling with the balance, but able to walk around (no paralysis) as long as he has a cane to hold onto. All in all, we feel he has come a long way. We received the info on the reunion in Branson. Marty and I would like to attend – and bring his mom and Dad (probably the only way they will be able to attend). We are looking at Marty's schedule to see if we can work it in. Problem is, it is difficult to plan too far in advance because something always seems to come up in the military that Marty either has to attend or do.

We all certainly wish the best for Walt and will welcome the Umbarger family to our reunion. It won't be the same without Walt and Jackie

Maggie Frieden

Once again Jim is having his secretary (Me) write you and sending Fred Gideon's obituary. (Page 2004-J). Guess it's a route we are all going whether we like it or not. We aren't too bad for a couple of old people. We both had health tests the other day and Jim had a good report but I haven't heard mine yet, but I think I did OK. I guess they just found another way to make money. Hey!

Frank Wanits

Have been receiving all the mail and newsletters regarding the reunions and the experiences of the crew. It's good to read all the items. Alice and I have a few health problems and don't drive at night or any distance. Fortunately we have family members close by to take the long trips. Hopefully we may be able to get to a future reunion. Enclosed check for my dues.

Mary Fearing

We will not attend the Branson reunion as Dean is having heart problems again.

Rowana Umbarger

An update on Walt Umbarger's progress. He has made remarkable strides since his stroke in December. We are all amazed at his progress given what we were told by the doctors. Just confirms that the doctors don't really know everything! We were extremely pleased with the physical therapy he received at the nursing home that helped him to regain his balance and walk (of course, his determination helped, too!) He can eat and drink normally and has a voracious appetite. He is anxious to get in his new computer and will once again be in contact. We are hopeful that we can make it to Branson, keep your fingers crossed.

Rowana, if it will help, I'll also cross my legs too. Definitely want to see all four of you.

Stuart Hyde

Here is a list of items I need:

- (1) Letters written by crew members to family and loved other ones, including letters written from boot camp, V-12 and midshipman schools, including amphibious warfare training programs, and medical training for corpsmen, and of course, letters relating to life at sea and liberties. Iwo Jima has been documented, but hope for other less dramatic events.
- (2) Fred Brinkman's letter home after Iwo Jima is so informative and moving! Anything else by others would be very informative.
- (3) Information regarding training at Naval training stations, Faragut, Treasure Island, Camp San Luis Obispo, Camp Pendleton in Oceanside and San Diego Amphibious School. Also the many practice beach landing operations with the Marines and Army in Hawaii.

(4) We have lots of great photos, but could use more.

(5) Still hope to get more memories of shore leaves, escapades, and reactions to punishments (especially about a diet of bread and water!), and so forth.

I'll think of other items, but for right now I just want to add that I'm fired up about putting together the history of the USS Lowndes and its crew.

Stuart has volunteered to put this information into a book format available to the Lowndes shipmates and future generations. Any monetary derived from this project will be put into the treasury to help the continuance of future activities. Let's all of us bring forth the many memories we have stored in our noggins to help Stuart.

A bit of trivia:

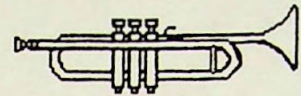
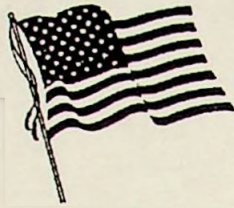
Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of Remembrance for those who have Died in our nation's service.

There are many stories as to its Actual beginnings, with over two Dozen cities and towns laying claim To being the birthplace of Memorial Day.

But Waterloo New York was officially Declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon B. Johnson In May of 1966.

Memorial Day was first proclaimed by General John Logan, commander of The Grand Army of the Republic on May 5, 1868, and was first observed On May 30 of the same year.

October 13, 1775: Birth of the US Navy



TAPS

Fred Gideon

Born August 31, 1921 in Pike County and passed away on February 12, 2004 at his Fort Wayne residence. He was a professor at Purdue University and taught IPFW, retiring in 1988. He received a masters degree from Indiana University and was a WW II veteran serving in the Pacific aboard the Lowndes. He is survived by Peg, his wife of 60 years and 3 sons, 2 daughters, 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Memorials to Fred R. Gideon Scholarship Fund.

James Bernardi

Born on August 28, 1926, deceased July 24, 2003. He is survived by his wife Lois. She writes to say Jim was so proud to have served his country on the Lowndes. Sorry we never made any of the reunions, but he looked forward to the newsletters. He loved his country, God and family. He died a very proud man and we miss him dearly. He had a Military funeral.

David Clark

Please get out to the Lowndes members and email recipients that Thomas Sanders passed away on April 3, 2004. He was aboard the Lowndes when it was commissioned and decommissioned. He very much enjoyed and appreciated the information was sent to him in recent months about the ship. His family and friends will miss him very much.

Have just been informed of the following decedents:



Lt. Robert Dunbar	1983
William Gackstetter	09/02/2003
* Lt. Ed. Hinton	1958
Harley Hughes	07/31/2000
James Pierce	
Ens. Charles Perks	08/08/1945
Ernest O. Scott	05/14/2003

No other information available.

** See page 3 of this newsletter for a short story regarding Lt. Hinton.*

June 2004-7

U.S.S. LOWNDES REUNION TENTATIVE TIME SCHEDULE September 30 – October 4

Wednesday, September 29	Early arrivals
Wednesday September 30	1600 Check in & register – Hospitality room.* Meet & greet party with sandwiches or pizza
Friday, October 1	0900 Board bus to travel to College of the Ozarks, Visit Ralph Foster Museum 1130 Lunch on own at College of the Ozarks 1230 Board bus back to Branson 1330 Tour of Branson 1430-1730 FREE TIME 1730 Board bus for dinner at local restaurant 1830 Jim Stafford Show
Saturday, October 2	0900 Board bus Visit Ripley's Believe it or Not Museum Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum Veterans Memorial Museum 1200 Return to Hotel 1300-1700 FREE TIME 1700 Business meeting  1730 Photo session – Lovelies & Uglies 1800 Banquet – cash bar 
Sunday, October 3	0630-1100 Brunch (Optional) Departure Until next year

Anyone requiring a special diet for the banquet meal, please inform Mary Gebhart so she can make the proper arrangement.

* Hospitality room will be available for our stay.

June 2004-8

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM
USS LOWNDES APA 154
Thursday – Sunday
September 30 – October 1, 2004
Branson, Missouri

PLEASE COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM AND SEND IT WITH YOUR CHECK
MADE PAYABLE TO "MARY GEBHART".

Please have your reservations postmarked by **AUGUST 1**.

Mail to: USS Lowndes 2004 Reunion
c/o Mary Gebhart
5629 Circle Drive
High Ridge, Missouri 63048

If you have any questions, you can email me at mgebhart@sbcglobal.net or you may call me in
The evenings at (636)677-5341.

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NAME OF SAILOR: _____

SPOUSE/GUEST NAME _____

COST PER PERSON FOR ALL EVENTS FOR ALL THREE DAYS (including transportation)	\$160.00
COST PER PERSON FOR SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET ONLY	\$40.00