

The Honolulu Advertiser

MONDAY
June 22, 1998
Final Edition
On Oahu 50¢
4 Pages, 1998

Aloha, Mo

Hawaii welcomes battleship to final port

THE PULSE OF PARADISE

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

JUNE 17, 1998 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON 50¢ ON OAHU



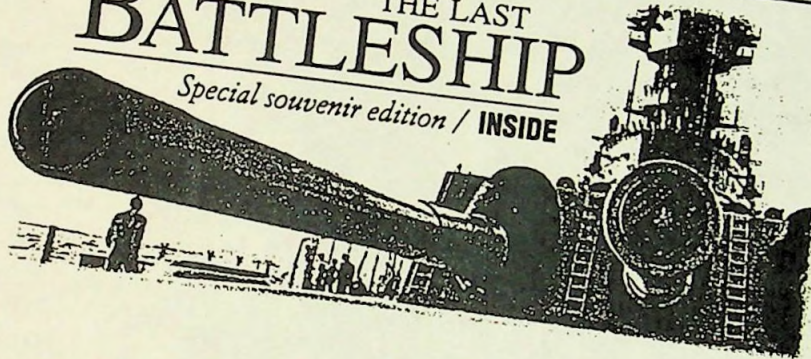
We're a special breed.

Herbert Fahr
USS Missouri Association
president

* Missouri anticipation: Military personnel speak about what the Missouri means to them. A-8

THE LAST BATTLESHIP

Special souvenir edition / INSIDE



SOUVENIR EDITION

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

JUNE 22, 1998 MONDAY AFTERNOON 50¢ ON OAHU

Crowd gathers at Ford Island
PAGE A-7

Arizona welcomes newcomer
PAGE A-7

Magic Island draws thousands
PAGE A-8

Pacific crossing smooth sailing
PAGE A-8



MO TOWN!

Courtesy Ed. McKellar

8/98-2

Schedule for U.S.S. LOWNDES - APA 154 Tenth Annual Reunion.

Outrigger Waikiki Tower

200 Lewers Street

Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii

September 21 - 22 Early Bird Check In.
Monday/Tuesday

September 23 Check in & registration
Wednesday 1500 - ????

September 24 Tour to:
Thursday Pineapple Museum, Schofield Barracks through the
Kolekole pass and then out to Leeward Coast -
Stop at Army Rest Camp at Poki Bay (1 hour on
beach)

Lunch * on the beach at Ed. McKellar's
rented cabin. There will be picnic tables
available and only a very short walk
to the water for those brave enough to
bring bathing suits.

Return to hotel.

September 25 Free time until 1500.
Friday

Board tour bus at hotel for trip to the
Arizona Memorial for a special after hours tour
of Pearl Harbor followed by a visit to the Memorial
and a special showing in the theater.

Short walk to Bowfin Park (across the parking
lot) where the Submarine and Museum will be open
1½ hours.

1800 an open bar ** will be available and a photo
session. Casual wear encouraged.

Business meetings will be held followed by dinner**
and dancing.

2200 Buses will depart for hotel.

September 26 Breakfast buffet at the Kale Hotel with free time
Saturday for rest of the day.
rest of the day.

* Compliments of Ed, McKellar.

** Compliments of Stan Dunn.

Note: Hotel telephone number (922-6424) just in the event that any
of our shipmates or their spouses get mislaid and lose their
way and need directions back to the reunion home base.

The hospitality room will be available during our reunion.

MRS. FLORENCE RICHARDS - Nebraska City, NE - Thanks for the News Letter of the ones who write to you. Am still here in my own home. David Brinkman sent me the tape of the 1996 reunion at Myrtle Beach, S.C. I called his mother, Roberta during Christmas, so nice to talk to her. My son, Keith and his wife, Lorraine are coming for a visit in May. Enclosed check to be used where ever it is needed.

DALLAS STRATTON - Belleview, FL - We forgot to send you a picture of myself and Henry McNamee taken last February. Also a picture of the entrance of Lake Suzy. We enjoyed a visit of our grand son and his wife from Columbia, S.C. and enjoyed our little 8 month old great grand son. Trust all is well with you. We're ready to go to Iowa in May for a few weeks.

FRANK JUDNITSCH - Park Rapids, MN - The News Letter reminded me to send in my 1998 dues. Really enjoy reading it. Glad all that went to the Florida reunion had a good time. We had a mild winter in northern Minnesota, not much snow. We are getting along so-so. Had to visit the doctor a lot this past winter, Dora had a major operation March 3rd, aneurism repaired, gall bladder and kidney removed. When she recovers from all this, will go back in for part of a liver removed. I have to go in for gallstones when she gets well. I stay busy, now that I am *Chief Cook & Bottle Washer. We hope to have a nice summer. Will not be able to attend the reunion, but hope a lot of you will, good luck and health to all.

Editor note: Haven't heard that *expression in a long time.

MR. GEORGE WEICK - Wilton Manors, FL - Received the Lowndes News Letter today and read it from stem to stern with the map and Stan Dunn's letter concerning the reunion in Hawaii. All who can attend will enjoy being there and walking along the beach - it brings back fond memories and a mind's eye view of Diamond Head. Enjoyed the "How the War Was Won" stories. Did you know that there is a hotel built entirely of ice and snow in the arctic - 31,000 tons, no air conditioning and temperature reaches -34° below. In spring it melts and runs into a river. (Source - Christian Monitor.)

JOHN DYER - Jupiter, FL - Hope this finds everybody in good health. Lebbly is having a lot of trouble with cholesterol, in the 350's and the medicine the doctor prescribed she can't take. I'm doing fine. The weather has been good most of the time. "El Nino" has given us lots of rain, north of us lots of damaging storms. We both enjoyed the last News Letter. I am enclosing the cover from a magazine we take, has a photo from McHenry County, IL. We will return to Indiana 2nd week in June. I took an IQ test and the results were negative. He who laughs last thinks slowest.

LAVADA BOYER - Cool, CA - Thank you for accepting me as an honorary member of the U.S.S. Lowndes reunion group. I will be attending the reunion in Honolulu, Hawaii. Looking forward to meeting all of you. See you then.

You feel like the night after, and you haven't been anywhere.

8/98-4

ED. KING - Cool, CA - I will be attending the reunion in Honolulu, Hawaii. Received the News Letter and group photographs taken in West Palm Beach, Florida. Thank you. When we get to Hawaii, I'll try to put the names with the picture. Looking forward to seeing all of you in Hawaii.

Of the native birds, the nene (pronounced "nay-nay"), or Hawaiian goose is the official state bird. The hibiscus is the state flower.

BILL TAYLOR - Elizabethtown - PA - Bud, spoke to Cliff Schaffer recently and he told me about your sojourn in the hospital, hope you're mended by now. (Yep, just about back to normal.) You wanted to know our wedding anniversary date which is June 24 1950. That means that Amelia will be celebrating the best deal she has made this far in her life. Our 3½ year old grand daughter is well aware of the good fortune her grandma has had. She points to a picture she has seen of us and pointed to Amelia and said "This is my grandma, she's married." Then pointing to me she said "And this is my grandpa, he's the Prince." That's PRINCE. What can I say? When you have it flaunt it.

Bud, you said you are reaching the bottom of the barrel for items to put into the News Letters. The above should confirm it.

Note to Bill: "The gleam in your eye is from the sun hitting your bifocals and you burn the midnight oil until 9:00 PM.

FRANK MILLER - Kearns, UT - Just a short note to say "Hello". The other night Frances and I went to a senior citizen center for a dinner and dance. Had a real good time, but the day after we are nursing our aching bones. Hope to see everyone soon. "Bald men always come out on top."

We got word that Ed. McKellar (Cribbage champ) who lives 25 miles from Honolulu had a hip replaced, hope to see him at the reunion.

JACK HOVEY - Pasadena, CA - Have had two weeks of radiation shots. Doubt that we'll make the reunion in Hawaii. Good luck Jack.

DEAN FEARING - Staples, MN - Sure would like to go to the big island, but I won't fly, just can't get used to it, chicken I guess. Hope all have a good time. Keep the News Letters coming.

AGNES BENSIE - Parma, OH - Spent January, February and ½ of March in Florida. Then went on a 16 day cruise through the Panama Canal - GREAT!! Spent Easter week in Myrtle Beach and back just in time to do the yard work! Ugh! Am enclosing several photographs that Ed had. Maybe we can see who they belong to and give 'em to those guys. Won't be able to attend the reunion this year in Hawaii.

Did you know that there are 70,000 nails in the average house?

E. MAX COLE - New York, NY - Hope to walk among the palm trees at Waikiki without being hit on the head by a falling coconut. Will be nice to see the aging shipmates and their Lovelies without crossing my eyes. Speaking of eyes, my sight has been failing so badly I couldn't tell a 20mm anti-aircraft gun from a bosun's mate (they both make a lot of noise). Still, I can get around fairly well, but be sure to get close and call out your name! Will be nice to (almost) see them, as they missed the West Palm Beach celebration. Still care about vessels afloat. Took a cruise from Ft. Lauderdale to Manaus, Brazil up the Amazon this past January. That 1,000 mile trip up the river was a treat. There were several movie stars aboard to entertain. Which reminds me: in the last News Letter it was mentioned those amateur movie people from the Lowndes - Don Macpherson and Edgar Hinton when the real star was me: Max Cole, of radio, TV, movies and high-class carnivals. I was one of the 10 in 20th Century Fox's "Ten Gentlemen from West Point" and an Army fighter pilot (who unfortunately was shot down) in Paramount's "Wake Island." So...you guys and gals take it easy 'til we gather again to tell on each other under the spreading palms.

Ed's Note: Failed to mention in the last News Letter that Lt. Hinton married Hal Roach's Daughter.

BERNARD TRACZ - Campbell, OH - I would like to attend the reunion in Hawaii but due to my allergies which are really bad this past year I can't go. I've been doctoring for over a year and the latest blood test shows they went up instead of down. Taking more tests and need stronger medication.

JIM DAVENPORT - San Antonio, TX - "Remembering Okinawa" We loaded on troops (part of the 2nd Marine Division) at Saipan around March 6, 1945 for the invasion of Okinawa. We left Saipan on March 25th and arrived there April 1st with our boats loaded with Marines and the Beach Party. Made a simulated landing on the east side of the island to confuse the Japs while the real assault was made on the west side of the island. One ship in our convoy was hit by a suicide plane and was heavily damaged. The same procedure was followed the next day with our convoy making simulated landings again on the east side of the island. In the evening of the second day we left Okinawa and layed about 300 miles off the island for 9 days, most of the time in the China Sea. It was at this time that we went through a typhoon - which was something to remember! Heavy equipment was breaking loose down in the holds and working parties were sent below to secure the equipment. It was dangerous work. April 13th we were back at Okinawa and unloaded about half of our troops but left the cargo aboard. After unloading the troops at Saipan we reloaded them on April 27th to take them back to Okinawa but the orders were canceled and on the 29th we unloaded them again with all of their cargo. On June 4th we left all of the war behind and sailed for the Solomon and New Hebrides Islands. Enroute we crossed The Equator and most of us (polywogs) were initiated into King Neptune's realm and became Shellbacks. Had a lot of fun for a change. I am pretty sure of all these dates because I kept a sort of diary in my Blue Jacket manual.

How is it possible to have a civil war?

JOHN VERNALE - Farmington, MA - Sally had another kidney operation four months ago. She feels wonderful as of now but in May or June we have to set up another series of tests and probably another operation. We won't be able to make the Hawaii reunion, regretfully. Sally would love to see Hawaii. Wish all everyone the best and enjoy the reunion.

CLARK O. MARTIN - Richmond, VA - I've just mailed my card to Stan Dunn indicating that I will attend the Hawaii reunion alone. Now I'll go check to see if I have enough frequent flyer miles to get me to and from Honolulu. Best regards.

RICHARD JONES - Independence, KS - No, we won't be making the Hawaii reunion, we're taking a year off. Hope everybody has a good time. Thanks for everything.

BILL RAMSEY - McMinneville, OR - Won't be able to make the Hawaii reunion, not that it wouldn't be a great idea. My problem is that since January I have been battling a melanoma and while surgery has apparently been successful I will be spending the rest of the year on immune therapy. This has thrown several blocks into plans for the year but I guess we will cope. Best of luck for a successful meeting.

J. C. HOLDERMAN - Roscoe, TX - Sorry to be so slow getting this to you, but it seems like the time just flies by and we haven't accomplished much. I joined the Navy 24 July, 1942. I went home on leave before going to sea and married Doris June 3rd, 1944. Returned to Seattle and a week later boarded the USS Lowndes at Astoria, OR in June 1944. I was made and called "Tex, The Mailman". I recall going into Maui, Hawaii to take and pick up mail and was left there when a Marine took my boat to where they were making practice landings in preparation for the invasion of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. I had to spend the night on the island until they came back the next day to pick me up. Boy, did that p--- me off. We then went to the Pacific theater for 1½ years before I was to see Doris again. I was given leave when we docked in San Francisco for one week and I had just returned to San Francisco when the war ended. The USS Lowndes returned to sea for occupational duty to Japan. I was discharged on 5 January, 1946 at Norman, Texas after 3 years and 7 months in the Navy. Doris and I know we have missed all the reunions so far but circumstances beyond our control kept us from attending them. We had really planned on making the one in San Antonio, TX, but Doris was hospitalized with compressed discs in her back and a week later fell and broke her left ankle, then 3 days later broke out with shingles, so this past year we have been pretty well confined at home. Hopefully we will be able to attend one before all have passed on. We do enjoy the updates and quotations from different ones and it was good to talk to you, Bud. We will keep in touch as soon as we move to the Retirement Community in Stephenville, Texas.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT - "Those who have enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy, forget in time that men have died to win them."

8/98-7

JACK B. HOVEY, SR. - Pasadena, CA - It's been a very rocky road for some time now, can't seem to recover my strength and positive attitude. Have a habit of keeping company and rooming with the hospital, yeah and many doctors. I've taken my health for granted most of my life, still have those good days once in awhile but the bad ones are catching up. I miss all of my shipmates and their wonderful ladies, appreciate the News Letters. It doesn't look like Evelyn and I will make the reunion this year, must stay close to my oxygen bottle and doctors. Was unable to make the Iwo Jima survivors and Marine Corps Units 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th this year and it's just down the freeway from me at Camp Pendelton. The most disappointing thing I will have to face is the fact that Evelyn and I will be unable to keep our promise to host next year's reunion in Las Vegas, and we apologize very deeply for that. Besides being blessed with a loving long term lady and wonderful family, the guys and gals that treated us royally at the reunions in San Diego, San Antonio and Myrtle Beach, will always be a treasure to both of us. The host and hostesses of each were to us one of a kind and we thank them sincerely from the bottom of our hearts. But! Haven't given up the idea that I won't see all the good folks, by any means. After giving orders most of my life it seems like everybody tells me what to do now. Thanks to my elite boat crew C. Fesi and L. O'Brien for their calls and cards, a special thanks to R. E. (Reagan) Shy for his concern. Sending a few things from the Iwo Jima bash.

Ed. Note: It isn't too early to see what arrangements are to be made for our 1999 reunion. Let's put our heads together and bring ideas to discuss at our business meeting in Honolulu. If not attending please send me any suggestions and I'll bring them up at the meeting.
Bud Kautz

DAVID LONG - Genesco, NY - Just got back from a two week trip to Colorado and California visiting children and grandchildren. Had a lot of fun. My son in Santa Cruz, CA took me fishing in the ocean and I caught 2 salmon. One was 15 lbs. and he did part of it on the charcoal grill. What a difference when the fish is so fresh. Flew around in his plane and had me take the controls. That was fun. We are still trying to finalize our plans for the reunion. We're going to Australia and New Zealand after the reunion and it takes quite a bit of planning. Looking forward to the reunion.

WALTER UMBARGER - Greenwood, IN - Last year at West Palm Beach I indicated that Jackie and I would attend our reunion in Hawaii I was very sure of that. However recently our business was offered a very lucrative bid which called for additional grain storage, drier, etc. of 400,000 bushel space. This expansion is underway at this time and requires more of my time. Since we have visited Hawaii two times including all the islands, Jackie and I have made the decision not to attend this year. I hate letting Stan Dunn down because he has been the greatest contributor towards the Lowndes reunions and I know I will miss all my shipmates. However, since this expansion needs to be secured by October 10/15th we feel our presence here is mandatory. Bud, we enjoyed meeting your daughters Jackie and Pamela, they are very interesting and enjoyed their companionship. We do hope that everybody enjoys Hawaii, what a place it is, we will always remember it, However, business before pleasure..

***** HOW THE WAR WAS WON *****

DON MACPHERSON - (Cont'd.) They had us silhouetted in the early evening, & we were the center ship of 3 cruisers on one side of the 6 cruiser formation. As I ran up to Turret Two, on my right was a quadruple 40-mm gun shooting at a Jap plane. It had already dropped it's torpedo & it was crossing our bow. The plane was shooting machine guns at the 40-mm gun, but was actually spraying them all over the deck. As I ran up into the bullets I could see tracers because it was almost dark. I knew there were several black bullets between each of the tracers. Suddenly there wasn't anything I could do. I remembered when I was on school playing football, they used to tell me that I was so skinny people couldn't block me. So I turned sideways & didn't get hit. Turning sideways may not have helped. but it obviously didn't hurt. The ship was blacked out & after the lights were turned off in Turret Two I was able to get in. Seemed like I was waiting out there for 20 minutes, but in reality it more like a minute. I felt relieved once inside the turret. All I could do was look through the periscope. Suddenly there was a tremendous shock, as if a giant had picked up the ship & shook it. Then another huge shock occurred shutting down power to the engines & lights. The 1st torpedo hit the after engine room. It flooded the engine room & fire room. Power was rerouted to the forward engine room where 3 boilers were still working. Another torpedo hit the forward engine room flooding it, the No. 3 fire room, aft of the forward engine room, & fire room No. 2. The ship stopped in the water & the other ships went on to do the task we started out to do. 1 or 2 destroyers were left behind to keep track of us. A couple of hours passed & the Japs flew overhead & dropped a flare to mark our location. It was quite unnerving. Later on that night the Louisville, a cruiser, came back & took us in tow by our anchor chain. It towed us south at about 4 knots until the next morning. A tug came out from Guadalcanal & took over the job of towing our ship to safety. The ship was practically sunk at this point. Meanwhile, I'm thinking of all the cokes down in my room that would go down with the ship. Despite the risk, I retrieved them & made everybody in my division drink the cokes. The coke was wonderful to have in the heat & the humidity of the tropics. The next afternoon I went down to the well deck mid-ship where the crew was attempting to reduce the flooding. I worked there for awhile. At 4:00 PM it was time for me to go on watch again. I went to the flying bridge, as the ship was not being steered. All the officers were there & later general quarters sounded again. More Japanese planes were coming at us from the starboard side. Our planes from the Enterprise aircraft carrier intercepted the Jap planes coming to finish us off. All the Japanese planes appeared to be down & amazingly we were not hit. Then we turned & looked in the direction from which the planes had come. There were five tracks of torpedoes coming towards us. We had forgotten that planes travel faster than torpedoes. When the captain saw this he said, "Prepare to abandon ship!" I had two life jackets on & was holding on to a stanchion when the torpedoes started to hit. One hit near the bow & blew water & debris up into the air. One torpedo hit near the back well deck where I had been. I was lucky that I wasn't still there. Three torpedoes hit us. One would've been enough to sink the ship. I looked to the gangway, on the stern of the bridge & decided if I waited my turn I would be under water, so I climbed over the side & down three decks to the main deck. We had lines over the sides in anticipation of this possibility, but I had a problem.

(To be continued.)

8/98-9

***** HOW THE WAR WAS WON *****

BUD KAUTZ - (Cont'd) Part 2

"NINE DAYS IN THE PACIFIC"

Sept 20, 1943 - Managed to save the bucket of water from yesterday and felt a little cleaner. No GQ today. Small stores arrived today and the order I put in for size 8E turned out to be 8F, they'll do. Beggars can't be choosers out here. In **Buna** now after a successful trip to **Finschhafen** last night. Movie tonight "It Happened in Flatbush". GQ half way through but was a false alarm.

Sept 21, 1943 - Standing by in **Buna**. Got underway this morning at 1300 had a GQ, false alarm, again at 1530. As if that wasn't enough, another at 1700, no false alarm this time. Attacked by medium bombers at **Huon Gulf, New Guinea**. The were spotted by lookouts and we were firing before all stations were manned. The planes flew overhead but nothing came of it. Tomorrow promises to be a busy day.

Sept 22, 1943 - GQ at 0230 and lasted 'til 1545 but plenty happened during that time. We were acting as radar guard again approximately 40 miles off **Finschhafen** Any planes coming from **New Britain** or **Wewak** would be picked up by us. In fact, planes were picked up as they left the ground 113 miles away, our radar crew and equipment were the best. This kinda put us where the action is. Chow was passed around to the stations at 0800. Boiled eggs, bread and butter. After 8 hours in the fire room it tasted real good. Went topside for some drinking water and just as I started down the hatch I saw a Jap recon plane with 2 P38's hot on his tail. I'm glad I took my time, he turned out to be no match for our guys and quicker than I can write this, he was on a one way trip to the briny After he had fallen several thousand feet trailing smoke he burst into flames and exploded. Seeing the pieces drift downward and into the ocean was, to me a beautiful sight. Him or us. It was him. Several times dive bombers attacked us and were repulsed by the combined efforts of our 5 inchers and the P47's & P38's. 1 plane came right at our bow but No. 1 5" took care of him. A twin engine bomber was shot down and we took 2 Jap prisoners. A 3rd one tried to get the boys in our whale boat but he didn't have a chance, our guys finished him. 1 of the Japs attempted to drown himself, our bowhook changed his mind with a blow to the head, he wound up with a fractured skull. He had a broken leg but they are so small that an arm splint was used on his leg. The bomber didn't sink very quickly so we were able to get the bomb sight, machine gun & log to turn over to intelligence. The Japs were put into sick bay with guards posted. Some of the crew wished they'd try something, sure wouldn't have got very far. During the attack 3 torpedoes were fired at us - missed. We picked up their life raft which was rubberized and colored red and later when I had time I made a small purse (macrame) for **Jean** and used part of the raft material for the liner.

Note: The above account of my experience in the Navy took place aboard a destroyer - **U.S.S. Reid DD 369**. It was under attack by 5 Kamikaze planes and sunk in approximately 2 minutes in **Suragio Straits** in the battle of the **Philippines** on December 11, 1944. 103 men were lost and 150 survivors including 28 injured were picked up by LSM's and LCI's of the resupply echlon.

OK shipmates: **Don Macpherson** and I have started the ball rolling, now let's hear from the rest of you.

DAVID & JOANNE LONG - Genesco, NY - "Our journey to France" in May & June of 1997.

5/27/97 - Arrived at **Kennedy** airport to learn that our flight to France was 2 hours late. Met our guide at the airport & visited the famous flower market in **Nice**. Then to **Monaco** & the casino at **Monte Carlo**. After a long drive we arrived at our hotel in **Frejus**. We had a grand view from our room of the harbor full of beautiful boats.

5/28/97 - Drove through the most luxurious **Riviera Resort**. Rooms at hotel on the beach go for \$1,000 a night! Visited the **Chateau Grimaldi** (ancestors of the **Monaco Grimaldis**). Walked through the **Picasso** museum..quite a place. Continued on to **Cagnes**, set in a hilly landscape to **St. Paul de Venco**. "This picturesque little town has retained its medieval character with its well preserved walls & a 13th century **Gothic Church**." A visit to the **Chapel du Rosaire** with frescos by **Matisse** covering the walls. He built this chapel & designed the stained glass windows using just three colors- yellow, blue & green. Toured a perfume factory. How they processed the flowers was really interesting. Jasmine flowers were put on a tray of beef & pork fat. New petals were added every day. The fat extracts the essential oil of the jasmine, which are distilled into perfume. At **Vallauris**, we learned how clay was mined & processed until it was free of impurities & made ready for production of ceramics. It was a beautiful drive through the **Estereal Mountains** back to **Frejus**.

5/30/97 - Drove to **St. Tropez**, a haunt of artists & jet setters. Continued on via the **Maures Mts.** & **Draguignan** to the Grand Canyon. On to **Le Thoronet** to see the 11th Century **Cistercian Abbey** where the monks wanted to be isolated from the world. The church was "bare bones" architecture-no statues or adornment of any kind. Needless to say the monks didn't attract any new members & their Order sort of fizzled out & the church was sold. Our guide faced the wall up front while we sat in the back of the church. The acoustics were such that it took 14 seconds to bounce off the barrel ceiling & reach our ears. On to **Marseille** to spend the night.

5/31/97 - We used an electric apparatus in the dining room to boil our own eggs. Today, 2 min. Tomorrow we'll try 3 min. Ferry boat to islands in harbor. **Chateau d'** is famous for association with **Alexander Dumas'** **Count of Monte Cristo**. The city of **Morsel** is built on 1,000 hills. In a fenced in triangle was a WW II **United States** tank! It was stuck there & the city left it where it was--good reminder! **Marseille** is a pretty city. Magnificent fountains & flowers.. Lots of statues commemorating some war.

6/1/97 - Pouring rain. Visited the interesting studio of **Cezzane**. Rain screwed up our schedule. Lunch on the road. On to the city of **Narbonne**. Very good dinner at **Novotel Quarter Plaisance**--quiche, pork, potatoes, creamed cauliflower & salad with fruit & nutmeg ice-cream.

6/2/97 - Still in **Narbonne**. Spent 2 hours at the **Cistercian Abbey of Fontfroide**. The **Abbey** is a 13th century **Romanesque Church** with the finest cloister in southern France. **Rockerfeller** purchased part of this complex & shipped it to **New York**. Now it's "**The Cloisters**" on the **Hudson River**! Even tho this religious order was not supposed to have any decorations, there were some beautiful stained glass windows. We continued on to **Carassone** in the foothills of **Pyrenees**, a complete example of a medieval fortified town--preserved intact. Last stop of the day was the **Caves du Sieur d' Argues** Winery - a place where wine is stored. The **German Army** used this town as their headquarters during WW 2.

6/3/97 - Spectacular trip through the **Pyrees** mountains. Zillions of hairpin turns & switchbacks. Outstanding scenery. Lunch & shopping in **Andorra**. Tax free town. Overnight in **Hotel Carlit** in **Font Romeu**.

6/4/97 - Traveled to **Mont-Luis**, then to **Perpignan**--Citadel & Royal castle in the old town. The drive out of the **pyranees** was a bit hairy, we were almost hit by a gasoline truck on a winding road.

6/5/97 - Left **Narbonne** & drove to **Roquefort** (cheese of the same name made here). Toured the caves where the cheese is stored. Drove through **Millau** & **La Courvertoiaide** to **Montpellier**.

6/6/97 - Full day of leisure in **Montpellier**. We were supposed to meet the mayor, but he couldn't make it.

6/7-97 - Early start to **Arles**, one of the greatest tourist center in France. Open-air market where you can buy almost anything. The walled city is impressive.

More to come.

When house sitting for our son in Fort Wayne we had Jim and Maggie Frieden over for a cook out - steaks no less. They both were in fine spirits and looked very good. They were the first members of the reunion group that had an opportunity to see the photo album of the West Palm Beach, Florida reunion. Doubts were expressed regarding their plans to make it to Honolulu this year because of Jim's work schedule. I must apologize for the late mailing of this News Letter. Time has been at a premium plus a cruise (ship and land) to Alaska interfered with my schedule. And besides!

Just received the following letter from a Marine who was on the Lowndes during the Okinawa campaign.

BILL FLETCHER - Angleton, TX - "Now hear this!" I was a member of the Second Marine Division aboard your ship for 42 days in March and April of 1945. I have read of previous get-togethers of your group in the Leatherneck magazine and should have written long ago. Do you remember the black unit aboard the Lowndes who provided the entertainment on one occasion? I wouldn't have remembered that except I read it in my diary. One of the numbers they sang was "Stalin Wasn't Stalling." Still another remembrance of them was that they were members of an amphibious unit and were unloaded from the ship onto Okinawa on April 13 (Friday). A buddy of mine and I were lowered into the amphib to help the two black crewmen stash their gear on their "Duk"(SP). Does anyone remember the air raid alert that sounded at dusk of that day? We were in this small craft at the time and had to shove off and away from the ship because you guys were manning the fire hoses. Then active smudge pots were put out to hide the ships from Jap planes. These guys couldn't find their way back to the ship when the alert was over - and by this time it was dark. We loaded up several 20's and 40's (and spotlights) before finally going ashore. We got no help from anyone that night and stayed in a cave. We had no weapons, no food and didn't know where the battle front was. Next morning we found a Marine Sergeant who took us to a large lean-to tent where we walked through, passed an old man in his underwear, sitting on a cat and putting on his socks. At the back of that tent was a 2nd Lieutenant whom we quickly saluted. The sergeant told him of our plight and his response was to put us back on the amphib and take us back to the ship. As we passed the old man (now putting on his pants) he must have been 45 years old. Said "Sergeant!!" "Yes sir!!" 'Put these men under arrest until they are back on their ship." On the jeep my buddy asked the Sgt. who was that old man? Sgt's reply - "That old man is General Geiger (6th Marine Division)." We did board around 9:00 PM and the ships screws started turning 15 minutes later - going back to Saipan. There are questions I've had for over 53 years about this incident. Is there anyone in the communications division or anyone else who have any recollections of this event? It would be interesting to hear from any of the Lowndes crewmen regarding this period aboard ship. After returning to Saipan my 8th regiment again boarded LST's (not very comfortable) and made the last island assault of the Pacific war (Iheya Shima) no resistance - then helped secure Okinawa near June 21, 1945. Would enjoy hearing from anyone in the group. If there is another reunion stateside I'd like to drop in.

My address is: 909 Chevy Chase - Angleton, Texas - 77515

Ed. Note: Stan Dunn has informed me that on page 8 of the January News Letter the baker that received a commendation for his successful attempt to rid the flour of Weavels" was Maurice D. Lazenby (CCS(AA)(T). Can anyone define that rating?

ATTENTION ALL SHIPMATES !!

It is extremely difficult to find copy for the News Letter if you don't write to me. Tell me what's new in your world.

We are still missing **MANY** biography data sheets. Please, fellows. Also looking for tales of feelings and experiences of the invasion of Okinawa for another booklet. Similar to the one of Iwo Jima.

Have a good start from Joel Rodriguez, Ed. King, Elliott Pilchard & Jim Davenport. How about it?

An American Flag has been sent to Stan Dunn. It was flown over the Capital in Washington, DC on February 19, 1998.

STATUS of the NAVY as of June 1998:	Ships:	339
Personnel-Active Duty 380,778	Aircraft:	4,666
Officers: 55,533	Deployed:	103
Enlisted: 322,290	Underway:	186
Midshipmen: 2,955	Exercises:	
Ready Reserve Force: 214,011	Carriers/Airwings at sea:	11

THE HONOLULU ADVERTISER June 19, 1998 / HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN June 17, 1998

The USS Missouri left Bremerton's Puget Sound Navy Shipyard on May 23 - on May 26 it traveled up the Columbia River to Astoria, Or. The Missouri was coaxed out of the Astoria, OR port on June 3 by harbor tugs. as it began its final voyage on the high seas - the tow to Honolulu and its museum berth at Pearl Harbor. The USS Missouri has 844 doors and before it could hook up for its journey to Hawaii a crew of eight had to close every one of them. For preservation purposes, every door, hatch had been opened. They had to be closed to make the ship watertight for the 2,300 mile journey. The Missouri is to be restored into an interactive museum in Pearl Harbor. Near the USS Arizona memorial. The battleship was tied to the Sea Victory tugboat with a chain-and-wire towline 4,415 feet long and weighing 81,258 pounds. 30 flooding alarms were installed. The 887 foot ship trailed about a ½ mile behind the 400 ft. Sea Victory.

BB-63 THE MIGHTY MO

June 29, 1941 Launched at New York Navy Yard.
 June 11, 1944 Officially commissioned.
 Mar. 26, 1945 Assigned to Task Gr. 58 in support of Okinawa campaign.
 Apr. 11, 1945 Hit by kamikaze plane during Okinawa campaign.
 Sept. 2, 1945 Site of Japan's surrender marking end of World War II.
 Sept. 1953 Participated in Korean War.
 Feb. 26, 1955 Decommissioned.
 May 10, 1986 Recommissioned.
 Jan. 1, 1991 Participated in Operation Desert Storm.
 Mar. 31, 1992 Decommissioned for second time.
 Jun. 3, 1998 Enroute final journey to Pearl Harbor.

Thanks to Ed. McKellar for the Hawaii newspapers containing the above information regarding the United States last battleship and enclosed headlines.