



KNOX KNEWS

DEC 2016

The October-November-December issue of TIN CAN Sailor had a very fitting letter under MAIL CALL written by *Del Mancuso DK2, USS Hamner (DD-718)* reprinted here.

I would like to piggy back on Owen Hayes' well-written article "What Is a Reunion?" (re:Jan/Feb/Mar 2016 issue). I had a great deal of interest in this Snippet having returned from my ship's reunion in 2015 at San Diego. Reading Hayes' article and thinking of my own recent experience, I was struck by how destroyer reunion is unlike any other types of reunion. All Tin Can Sailors should be privileged to have the opportunity to attend at least one of their ship's reunions. Having left my ship and active duty in 1958, I attended my first reunion in 2006. I was fortunate to reconnect with a few shipmates from Supply Division, who were aboard during my 3 years on the *Hamner*. We had great fun recalling common experiences both on the ship and ashore (some versions clouded by time and failing memory systems). We also became acquainted with *Hamner* shipmates of other times.

Nearly a decade had passed until I attended my next reunion in 2015. Life and health issues prevented my buddies from attending the 2015 reunion. Those renewed bonds remain very much intact via email and phone calls. The 2015 San Diego "Homecoming" homeport reunion, turned out to be very special. A very close shipmate, Don, who had never attended a ship reunion decided to attend. We had worked together in Supply Division for 3 years, sharing many experiences both at sea and ashore. In 1958, I left the young ship and eager to restart my civilian life. The years passed and we lost contact. Now, the image is one of a couple of old guys, nearly 80 years of age, trying to see those two young sailors through 60 years of living. It took only a matters of minutes, when familiar speech and voice patterns engaged, recalling *Hamner* experiences, as if it were only yesterday. Our conversation turned to wondering about how San Diego had changed since the 1950s.

It occurred to me as we were discussing San Diego as we had, about exploring so many sea ports half way around the world so many years ago. A notable change was my 7 Seas Locker Club (now a glass sky-scraper in its place). In the 1950s, enlisted men leaving the ship on liberty

and leave, had to be in dress uniform of the day. Locker Clubs provided a place to ditch your uniform and change into your civilian clothes stored in your rented locker. Kind of like your home on the beach. It was rented for the time your ship was stateside. Living on opposite sides of the country, Don and I are looking forward to our next reunion in October 2016 in Norfolk. We will be reconnecting with shipmates we met at last year's reunion and new acquaintances. I have asked Tin Can Sailor friends why they have not attended their ship's reunion. The usual response has been, "It's been so many years since leaving the ship, I won't know anyone and I'll feel out of place". That may apply to Battleship, Carrier and Cruiser duty. I believe, the common shared characteristic of destroyer duty allows all Tin Can Sailors to be shipmates in common, no matter the era of service. In short, a tour of duty on a U.S. Navy destroyer can be summed as: A well trained team of 300 individuals living and working together, day and night within the confines of a 300 foot piece of rusty iron surrounded by thousands of miles of ever changing seas, occasionally making port in many lands with many diverse cultures". Having done duty on any U. S. Navy destroyer is the common ground to share similar experiences no matter the number on the hull or year of service.

On a personal note, allow me to make a case for you to attend your destroyer's reunion even if you are the only individual to attend from your era. After settling into my room at the reunion hotel, I was eager to locate the *Hamner's* Hospitality room. Stepping off the elevator, on the main floor, my attention was attracted to the sounds and activity coming from the open doors of a large conference room. Passing the room, I noticed the navy décor and heard the loud sounds of navy type conversations. Tired from my cross-country flight, I was relieved to be able to relax and search for my buddy, Don. The large room was crowded. I entered the room and made my way to a table with a few empty chairs. One of the guys invited me to join them. Someone asked, "When were you aboard ship?" I responded "in the mid 1950's" Someone inquired "were you on the ship before she was FRAMmed?" I replied "yes" and the exchange continued along the line of our shipboard experiences. Suddenly after about fifteen minutes, I noticed I was surrounded by individuals wearing hats and shirts and other signage reading "USS *Frank Knox* (DD-742). I said, "Hey guys, I apologize for not being very observant, I believe I've happened on the wrong ship reunion." I'm here to attend the USS *Hamner* DD-718 reunion. They all laughed in good humor and advised me that the *Hamner's* room located on one of the hotel's upper floors. I thanked them for their hospitality. I made my way to the elevator to the *Hamner's* hospitality room where I picked up a *Hamner* hat at the ship's store.

How was dialog possible between strangers? Granted certain facts in common provided a basis for exchange, i.e., the *Hamner* and *Knox* were both Gearing -class destroyers, both ship underwent the FRAM process during the 1960 and both operated in the WestPac with the 7th Fleet during the 1950s. On some level your destroyer sea duty is forever an integral part of you, whatever the length of your service. By sharing your Tin Can experiences, much is given, much is received. Consider attending your ship's next reunion. A great deal of planning and effort is expended to produce a successful reunion agenda. Often a large participation results in a more successful reunion.

As soon as you receive the reunion information make your plans to attend with us and some of your former shipmates at Chicago. YOU WONT BE SORRY!! A great program has been provided and it's guaranteed a good time. Make your plans NOW.

**STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING! Check the Master Roster! Check YOUR Entry,
Is everything up to date and correct? Send ALL corrections to:
HARRY CHANDLER, 15 SUMMIT RIDGE COURT, LAKE OSWEGO, OR 97035 or
email hchandler64@gmail.com**

Where Do I Send It?

Anything you need to send to the association

STEVE CROSS VP Communication, 510 Rutgers Road, La Jolla, CA 92037,
MARGARET WATSON VP Finance, Dues 3421 NW Coronado St., Corvallis, OR 97330
VAUGHAN KRUGER VP Reunion Coordinator, 4530 32nd Ave. Seattle, WA 98199
HARRY CHANDLER VP Membership, 15 Summit Ridge Ct., Lake Oswego, OR 97035
ROBERT WOODARD VP Ships Store and Memorabilia. 5724 Nonnie Ave. Sacramento, CA
95841

LOOKING FOR "LOST" SHIPMATES !!!!!

Mail has been returned for the following

JOHN W. BARTLETT, 4205 BRANDIES AVE, ORLANDO, FL 32839
DR. WILLIAM DALL, 3921 ISLA CUIDAD CT., NAPLES, FL 34109
TRACY E. HORRIE, 8710 OLD AMAZON RD., GARDINER, IL 60424
ROBERT L. KAUSEN, 516 W. BAYHILL DR., NAMPA, ID 83685
HAL CHEETWOOD, 33330 KENWOOD CT. LAKE ELSINORE, CA 92530
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If you are in touch with any of these shipmates please contact Harry Chandler,
Returned mail "Not Deliverable As Addressed" Inform Harry Chandler
15 SUMMIT RIDGE CT., LAKE OSWEGO, OR 97035

26TH REUNION USS FRANK KNOX IS NOW HISTORY

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 CORAL WOODARD.

YOU should have been with us!

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Robert Summers	STG3	06/67-07/69
Ed Lowery	F1	08/46-03/48
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George Tom Slaught	SOG1	09/50-12/51
John F. O'Rourke	MM3	11/46-12/47
R.E. Horton	BM1	06/66-12/66

Grant To Them O Lord

And Let Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them

May their Souls Rest in Peace and be escorted to the Supreme
ADMIRAL of the UNIVERSE