



February 2011

KNOX KNEWS

The “Dues Renewal” notice went out in November and once again MICHAEL WATSON of Corvallis, OR was the first to return dues. We did have several members on the 20th anniversary cruise re-up during the cruise. Remember to tell your shipmates that if they are not receiving the Newsletter it is because they are delinquent ONLY PAID UP MEMBERS RECEIVE NEWSLETTERS.

Received a email from BARBARA BRADEN stating husband JACK L. BRADEN PN2 6/49 -6/53 is in poor health currently residing at a nursing facility and consequently is dropping his membership. Those who remember Jack might want to drop him a line at jlbraden@msn.com Jack was with us at the Seattle reunion in 2000.

SHIRLEY WELLS informed me that husband WILLIAM O. WELLS SC3 10/49 – 10/52 passed away September 5, 2010 after a long illness. Pulled many a happy liberty with BILL and his cousin PAUL during our time aboard the Knox. Condolence card was sent to Shirley from the membership.

Received email from RICHARD SHAW who was on the U.S.S. McKEAN DD-784 when we had the December 1950 encounter outside of Sasebo, Japan. He sent attachment concerning KEN SEWELL’s trip to Japan searching for sunken ship. You might want to go to <http://wreckdivingmag.com> for some very interesting photography. Also the November 2010 issue of WRECK DIVING MAGAZINE has the article concerning the two destroyers encounter as we were leaving port to rejoin Task Force 77 with the carriers. Ken is still planning to publish the account of the expedition and what they found on the bottom of the ocean.

Also received notice that RAYMOND M. DIEMERT ET3 (7/53 – 8/54) passed away May 20, 2010 after a long battle with cancer. Condolence card sent to Mrs. Diemert.

Another sad notice received, CLIFFORD L. JENSEN LTJG (7/53 – 6/54) passed away

December 22, 2010. *There is a streak of the sea
that glistens in grey at the edge of the sky, it has a dark wall reminiscent of land, that is
where my longing seeks repose, before it flies homewards.*

By Edith Sodergran

Condolence card sent to Ken Jensen family.

FYI

BILL RHODES, Atlanta, GA sent the following information:

USS FRANK KNOX DD 742

Division of Naval History
Ships' Histories Section
Navy Department

HISTORY OF USS FRANK KNOX (DD 742)

Completed in time for the final phases of World War II, the destroyer USS FRANK KNOX remained on active duty with the fleet, earning four Battle Stars for her service in the Korean theater of operations.

The destroyer, named for the late Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, was built by the Bath Iron Works Corporation of Bath, Maine. Her keel was laid on 7 August 1942, and Secretary Knox's widow, Mrs. Annie Reid Knox, christened the ship as it slid into the Kennebec River on 17 September 1944. USS FRANK KNOX was first placed into commission on 11 December 1944. Commander Joel C. Ford, Jr. was the ship's first commanding officer.

Early in January 1945 the ship reported to Bermuda for her shakedown cruise, during which she was put through tests and exercises designed to mold her crew into a fighting unit ready for any emergency. Returning to Boston for a post-shakedown yard period, the ship got underway for the war zone in April.

San Diego, California, was her first port of call in the Pacific, and from there she steamed to Pearl Harbor, arriving on 16 May 1945. More qualification tests followed until 28 May when she left for Ulithi with USS CALIFORNIA and SOUTHERLAND.

From Ulithi FRANK KNOX steamed to San Pedro Bay, Leyte, where she paused for a tender availability alongside the USS PIEDMONT. On 25 June she arrived at Manila, returning to San Pedro Bay on the 26th. As July opened, she put to sea for her first war operations, the carrier strikes against Japan.

Since FRANK KNOX had been equipped as a radar picket ship and fighter director ship, she was on station almost continuously, steaming well in advance of the

carrier groups in order to detect and intercept any Japanese planes attempting to raid the fast carrier task force. The force headed directly for Japan, with little hope of concealing its location from the Japanese.

On 10 July 72 enemy planes were destroyed on the ground and extensive damage was inflicted on the industrial installations in the Tokyo area. Five days later the battleships WISCONSIN, IOWA and MISSOURI, together with their screening destroyers, shelled Muroran, Hokkaido, wrecking steel mills and oil facilities in the city. On the 17th the 16-inch guns of the battleships blasted the Hitachi Mito area of Honshu, northeast of Tokyo. In this bombardment British battleships joined the United States forces, all units shelling the Japanese homeland at will without opposition.

The Yokosuka Naval Base in Tokyo Bay received the carriers planes' attention the next day, and one of the two remaining Japanese battleships, NAGATO, was put out of action. On 24 and 25 July the Inland Sea between the island of Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku was penetrated, with especial attention given to blasting the Kure Naval Base, where six major fleet units were badly damaged and 258,000 tons of naval shipping were either sunk or put out of action to finish off the threat of Japanese sea power.

Back again on 28 July, the force worked over merchant shipping and railroad installations. The United States force lost 36 planes to 144 enemy planes downed. Tokyo was struck again on the 30th.

The first week of August brought an unprecedented typhoon, which forced the fleet to stand out to sea to ride it out. The mass barrage of destruction was resumed on 9 and 10 August with an attack on northern Honshu. Against almost no airborne opposition, the carrier planes destroyed 397 enemy planes and damaged an additional 320.

The final blows continued until the "cease fire" order on 15 August. Since 10 July the force had destroyed or damaged 2804 enemy planes, sunk or damaged 148 combatant ships and 1598 merchantmen, and rendered the same "honors" to 304 locomotives while striking additional blows at industrial targets. FRANK KNOX, while steaming on "Watchdog" and plane guard stations, had rescued four pilots, while her fighter-director team directed the destruction of 10 enemy planes.

Following the Japanese surrender, FRANK KNOX remained at sea with other fleet units until 27 August, when she entered Sagami Wah. On 1 September she entered Tokyo Bay, where she was on patrol when the instrument of surrender was signed on aboard the USS MISSOURI.

She remained on occupation duty in the Orient until 4 January 1946, when she steamed back to the United State. FRANK KNOX then operated out of San Diego, California, until November 1946, when she sailed for a tour of duty in China.

A collision with USS HIGBEE while Enroute to Pearl Harbor delayed her arrival

until February 1947. The destroyer then visited Chinese and Formosan ports and operated in Chinese waters until June 1947 when she returned home via Japan and Pearl Harbor.

FRANK KNOX remained in the San Diego area with the exception of a visit to San Francisco with the fleet for the California-Navy football game in September 1947, and a cruise to Seattle in October for Navy Day. In June 1948, she sailed for her second China tour of duty.

During this tour, FRANK KNOX sustained structural damage due to heavy weather and spent a month in Japan at the American Naval Repair facilities at the Yokosuka Navy Yard before returning to her base in Tsingtao, China. In February of 1949 she returned to San Diego via Japan and Pearl Harbor. Operating out of West Coast ports, she conducted underway training, spent one month on a midshipman cruise to the Canal Zone, and received a routine overhaul in San Francisco.

In the summer of 1950 the Communists poured over South Korea, and on 5 July FRANK KNOX was dispatched to the war zone. From 4 August 1950 until 21 March 1951 she supported the United Nations forces in action in Korea, conducting shore bombardment, acting as plane guard and picket destroyer, and steaming on reconnaissance patrol in the Formosa Straits.

The destroyer then sailed for San Diego, where she remained from April until August 1951. She proceeded next to Pearl Harbor with Destroyer Division 112, acting as a "Ready Division." Returning to the mainland in October, she conducted routine underway training until early December, when she entered the Mare Island Naval Shipyard for a routine overhaul and the installation of more modern anti-aircraft guns.

The ship left the yard on 14 March 1952, and proceeded to San Diego for a period of intensive training. On 19 April she left the United States for a second tour of Korea.

Assigned to fast carrier Task Force 77, she operated Off Okinawa in June and July on anti-submarine patrol. Later in July, in company with Destroyer Division 112, she bombarded Communist shore installations and gun placements off the East coast of Korea. Returning to her carrier task force, she rescued five men from the USS BOXER on 6 August, when a fire on the carrier's hanger deck forced them overboard.

In September the division was assigned to patrol duty in the Formosa Straits. During this period she visited Hong Kong before steaming back to Wonsan to participate in a mock invasion. The invasion force, composed of battleships, cruisers, destroyers and a large amphibious group, undoubtedly forced the Communists to reshuffle their troops, relieving the pressure along the actual battle line.

FRANK KNOX steamed over 50,000 mile during this period, a distance equal to twice around the world. She was at sea 145 days of the 182 days she spent in the Western Pacific, remaining at sea 38 days during one cruise. Replenishing at sea 25 times, she fired over 1300 rounds of fire at enemy forces.

On 2 November 1952 the destroyer left the Western Pacific for her home port of San Diego. Since that time she has operated out of San Diego, and in April 1953 entered the yard at San Francisco for a limited availability overhaul.

As of July 1953 the ship was still active with the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

USS FRANK KNOX earned one Battle Star on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participating in the following operation:

1 Star/Third Fleet Operations against Japan – 10 July - 15 August 1945

She received the Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia, for the following periods: 2 September 1945 – 4 January 1946; 23 -25 February 1947; 18 – 22 June 1947; 31 July – 15 August 1948; 5 November – 6 December 1948; 31 December – 1948 – 6 January 1949; and 9 – 12 February 1949.

The ship was awarded the Korean Service Medal for the periods 4 August – 4 November 1950; and 13 December 1950 – 21 March 1951. Four Engagement Stars on this medal were earned for participation in the following operations:

1Star/North Korean Aggression – 6 August 12 September 1950, and 18 September - 3 October 1950

1Star/Communist China Aggression -- 21 December 1950 - 24 January 1951

1 Star/First United Nations Counter Offensive – 25 January - 15 March 1951

1 Star/Inchon Landing -- 13 - 17 September 1950

For the period 5 November to 12 December 1950, USS FRANK KNOX received the China Service Medal (Korea).

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STATISTICS

OVERALL LENGTH	391 feet
BEAM	41 feet
SPEED	35 knots
DISPLACEMENT	2420 tons

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Compiled: July 1953

While on the subject of Pearl Harbor:

NOW HEAR THIS!!!! FOR YOUR INFORMATION

As mentioned in the November Newsletter there is talk about the possibility of some members going to Hawaii for the 70th anniversary of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and the fact that the U.S.S. FRANK KNOX was in Tokyo Bay for the signing of the Japanese surrender. Several guys have done some footwork, BOB SUMMERS, DON SNIDER and KEN ARTHURS and if you are interested in making to trip for the commemoration drop me a line or contact any of the above three, addresses are in the Master Roster. Nancy and I are making plans to attend. Hopefully we can get a group of shipmates together for the trip. Perhaps something like the week of December 4 -10. As of now Bob Summers has secured 30 seats and feels we can get more if need be. Bob and Don have discovered that military retirees can reserve as many as four rooms, one for themselves and three others, so if we can have several retirees reserving rooms accommodations can be had. Make your plans NOW, as we MUST know how many are interested in the trip. You can contact ROBERT SUMMERS at 800 Seaspray Lane # 102, Foster City, CA 94404 (650-577-9056) email <bob.summers@sbcglobal.net> DONALD SNIDER at 1867 Hwy 52 E, Portland, TN 37148 (619-421-3651) email elroyds@gmail.com, KEN ARTHURS 98-351 Koauka Loop #C1408, Aiea, HI 96701 email <kca@mac.com> and ORV KRIEG, 585 Sky Harbor Dr. #125, Clearwater, FL 33759 (727-724-1279) orv.nancy@verizon.net ***THIS IS NOT THE ANNUAL REUNION – THIS IS SEPARATE JOURNEY. THE REUNION AS STILL PLANNED FOR RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA WITH SOME GREAT TOURS.*** Invitation will be coming out soon to the paid up membership. Understandable if you cannot make both events but wanted you to know the plans.

Received email from Plank Owner AMOS WHITMAN;

ORV & NANCY

Hope you had a wonderful cruise. Just want to report the doctor says I have no more cancer. It has been a tough year with four surgeries in the past nine months. I know that many more folks are in worse condition. Talked to RICHARD GREENE a couple weeks back. Hopefully we can attend next year reunion.

Have a Merry Christmas

Amos & Elizabeth

Just received another sad notice;

JAMES W. LEWIS, JR. ETR2 aboard 9/64 – 9/65 passed away December 12, 2010 condolences sent to family from membership.

Received email of "explanation of God. "It was written by 8-year-old Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, CA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment.

One of God's main job is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to their mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people,; like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Athiests are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.

Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. The finally got tired of him preaching and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they

were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.

His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go on the road anymore. He could stay in Heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of by himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one is on duty all the time.

You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

If any of your buddies says to you he hasn't seen the Newsletter ask if they have paid their dues. ONLY those members paid up receive the Newsletter AND also receive the Invitation to attend a reunion! Remind 'em to pay up.

From **BILL FELL & JAMES S. BOYD**

Command separates the “Unlucky” from the “Lucky!”

American Destroyer “William Porter”

From November 1943, until her demise in June 1945, the American destroyer “William Porter” was often hailed—whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships – with the greetings: “Don’t shoot, we’re Republicans!” For a half century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation. A Miami news reporter made the first disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer’s crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice.

In 1943, the Willy D as the Porter was nicknamed, accidentally fired a live torpedo at the battleship Iowa during a practice exercise. As if this weren’t enough, the Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time, along with Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and all of the country’s W.W.II military brass. They were headed for the Big Three Conference in Tehran, where Roosevelt was to meet Stalin and Churchill. Had the Porter’s torpedo struck the Iowa at the aiming point, the last 60 years of world history might have been quite different.

The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns, but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads. This destroyer was placed in commission on July 1943 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy’s fast career

track. In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew. The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa. The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa, the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship’s side and her anchor tore down her railings, life rafts, ship’s boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor, but her career of mayhem had begun. Just twenty four hours later, the four-ship convoy consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers and two other destroyers was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. As they were going through a known U-boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defense.

Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced anti-submarine maneuvers. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The “safety” had not been set as instructed. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become side-tracked. Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn’t lashed down. A man was washed overboard and never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers. The Captain, by this point was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa on the Willie D’s difficulties. It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk. But, no, she sailed on.

The morning of 14 November 1943 dawned with a moderate sea and pleasant weather. The Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda, and the president and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, Iowa launched a number of air balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the president was proud of his Navy. Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J. King, the chief of Naval Operations; large in size and demeanor, a true monarch of the sea. Disagreeing with him meant the end of a naval career. Up to this time no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean. Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker watched the fireworks display with admiration and envy. Thinking about career redemption and breaking the hard luck spell, the Captain sent impatient crew to battle stations. They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity.

Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship, which, even though 6,000 yards away, seemed to blot out the horizon. Lawton Dawson and Tony Fazio were among those responsible for the torpedoes. Part of their job involved insuring that the primers were installed during actual combat and removed during practice. Once a primer was installed, on the command to fire, it would explode shooting the torpedo out of its tube. Dawson, on this particular morning, unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3. Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing, "Fire 1, Fire 2," and finally, "Fire 3." There was no fire 4 as the

sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whoooooohhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo. Lt. H. Steward Lewis, who witnessed the entire event, later described the next few minutes as what hell would look like if it ever broke loose. Just after he saw the torpedo hit the water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, "Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?" Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through history...although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal 'Damn the torpedoes' figured centrally within. Initially there was some reluctance to admit what had happened, or even to warn the Iowa. As the awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of the imminent danger. First, there was a flashlight warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated it was headed in another direction. Next, the Porter signaled that it was going in reverse at full speed! Finally, they decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence. The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "Lion (code for the Iowa), Lion, come right." The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first. Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo. Meanwhile, on the Iowa's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive maneuvers, all of her guns were trained on the William D. Porter. There was now some thought that

the Porter was part of an assassination plot. Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed.

The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it." Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the a US Navy. The ship was surrounded by Marines when it docked in Bermuda, and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened. Torpedoman Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake.

The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy. Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years of hard labor. President Roosevelt intervened; however, asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident. The destroyer was banished to the upper Aleutians. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any for the ship and anyone who came near her. She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was re-assigned to the Western Pacific. Before leaving the Aleutians, she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired

into the front yard of the American base commandant, thus rearranging the flower garden. In December, 1944, she joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft. Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers.

In April, 1945, the destroyer was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa. By this time, the greeting "Don't shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing. But the crew of her sister ship, The USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire.

On 10 June, 1945, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally) attacked underwater. A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defense. Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter, but just at the last moment veered away and crashed along side the unlucky destroyer. There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight, but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible location.

Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water.. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.

HELP WANTED

A reminder went out February 1st that DUES ARE DUE and since the following were returned "NOT DELIVERABLE AS ADDRESSED, MOVED LEFT NO ADDRESS, ATTEMPTED - NOT KNOWN"

- MICHAEL ANDERSON COSTA
MESA, CA
- H.M. BATES FORT MYERS
- A.L. CHENOWETH, HOISINGTON,
KS
- RAY COX, BELLA VISTA, AR
- JOHN GRECIO, BUFFALO, NY
- RAY HART, MINERAL WELLS,
WV
- HIRAM LIGGET, JR
CHESTERFIELD, MO
- HARVEY MARKLEY, SEATTLE,
WA
- DAVID RANDALL, GLENOMA,
WA
- ALFRED SEYMOUR ST. LOUIS,
MO
- THOMAS WOLFE, FREEMONT,
OH

Send me ANY information you may have on these shipmates. THANKS.

*Fair Winds
&
Following Seas*

"May the Lord fill our sails with fair wind,
Support our hulls in inviting seas,
Guide our hands upon the tiller toward
pleasant places,
And bring us home, O Lord, to a safe and
loving harbor."



