

SPRING 2013

USS WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION

2013 Reunion will be in San Diego, CA September 20-22

Plans for the USS West Virginia Ship's reunion are now in place. Mark your calendar and we hope as many as possible can attend and join in the fun. Sunny San Diego, CA will host the reunion. We suggest Thursday, September 19 as a travel day to San Diego as activities are planned for Friday and Saturday, September 20 & 21, 2013.

We will stay at the Crowne Plaza - Mission Valley located at 2270 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108. Their telephone number is 619-297-1101. When making your reservations be sure to mention the USS West Virginia reunion. The daily room rate is \$101 plus tax for single through quad occupancy. This special rate is also available three days before and three days after the reunion for those who wish to come early or stay a few days after the reunion to take advantage of the area's many attractions. Each spacious room has a private patio or balcony, large flat screen TVs with free premium channels, internet access, and individual climate control. The hotel boasts a relaxed, south sea island atmosphere with swimming pools, two restaurants, coffee shop, lounge, and market. The Crowne Plaza Hotel offers many nearby attractions, shopping, and eating opportunities.

We chose San Diego for its warm, sunny climate and the many nearby places of interest, especially the military facilities. We have planned activities that will take advantage of the best the area has to offer.

On Thursday we will have a pizza party and happy hour in our complimentary hospitality suite.

On Friday, after the complimentary continental breakfast we will board a private motor coach for a city tour and luncheon. The tour includes a visit to the Veteran's memorial at the top of Mount Soledad, and a tour through La Jolla, Coronado, Balboa Park and Gaslamp District. Lunch (included) is at the Bali Hai restaurant with panoramic harbor views. It will be a leisurely day with a return to hotel at 2:30PM to refresh and enjoy happy hour. The \$49 pp cost includes the guided tour, bus, and lunch.

On Saturday we have planned a tour of the USS Midway. The ship is a handicapped accessible museum. The tour includes an audio guide. After the tour we will re-board the motor coach for a short ride to the harbor cruise. This narrated harbor tour passes by 5 military installations and offers great photo opportunities. A box lunch and beverage is included in the \$49 price. We will then return to the hotel for the memorial service.

After happy hour in our hospitality suite we will have the Saturday evening banquet at 6:30PM. The on-site private dining area offers grilled tri-tip steak, chicken, salmon and mushroom ravioli. This sit down, plated dinner includes all the fixings and non-alcoholic beverages at a cost of \$39 per person.

Sunday will be a leisurely day with complimentary continental breakfast in our hospitality suite. Those who do not travel home on Sunday can take advantage of the many, nearby area attractions including: Old Town, San Diego Zoo, Sea World and beaches.

Make plans now to attend, see your great buddies again and take in the sights of San Diego!

Your Reunion Committee (Tom Reiter, Joe Reiter, and Tim Dege)

Commentary about the Philippine Island Invasions, January 1945

Written by Francis T. Kleber, ENS, USN, Age 20, while serving aboard USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB48)

S - Day Minus 3, January 6, 1945, and I'm sitting here in Radio One sort of breathless after having churned down here from topside. We have bombarded in Lingayen Gulf this morning, our ship, the USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB48), and several others comprising the pre-landing bombardment unit which has flung steel at the town of San Fabian and surrounding targets. I have suddenly gotten the urge to write and while I don't know if this particular document will ever be disclosed, I am continuing - - perhaps to calm down - - and perhaps just because I feel like writing. I have no hopes of entering the literary field, however, once before, under similar circumstances, I felt the urge to do some creative work.

It was at Leyte Gulf during the initial landing phases on A-Day, October 20, 1944, just after all the news commentators who arrived en force on the AGC command ships had started their barrage aimed at listeners all over the world. Using a multitude of radio circuits, they were letting the world know that a landing operation eclipsing the famous D-Day affair in Europe was now in progress in the Philippines. I had a strange feeling while on condition watch up on the bridge. I watched some of the action: ships' guns firing, close air support runs by dive bombers, visible hits on targets ashore, smoke, haze and noise; but at the same time on a bridge radio voice circuit, I heard a civilian broadcaster giving his listeners in the States a moment by moment, eye-witness account of what was happening at Lingayen Gulf. This play by play description of a wartime amphibious landing done almost in a sportscaster's manner just rubbed me the wrong way. I was intrigued with the idea of aping his efforts and recording my own broadcast on some blank discs which I had purchased at Pearl Harbor. The idea fell through, however, and my opening words a la Walter Cronkite of "This is Francis Kleber broadcasting to you from Leyte Gulf on A-Day!" failed to find themselves preserved in wax for the listening ears of the world.

An so it is once again that I have turned to an expression of my feelings. This time it's in a little more serious tone since my would-be attempt at Leyte some months ago was intended mainly as a protest against the almost commercial-like atmosphere which seemed to surround the conduct of the war on that particular occasion. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if those same newscasters and commentators have commercial sponsors in time for the next few landing operations.

A few moments ago as I ran from the quarterdeck to my little "hole" down here in the Crypto Center of Radio One, I was scared. As the 5"/38 anti-aircraft guns were firing and I was dashing down three decks, I pictured a "Jap" plane flying down the gun barrel of each one as it fired. I hate to run like that each time the firing begins, but I am only a liability to the ship topside since my General Quarters station is in the Crypto Center. I'll be glad, in a way, if I ever get assigned to the Gunnery Department, and maybe have my GQ station on some gun mount. Then, I'll be an active participant in the retaliation, be able to see what is going on, and I won't get the feeling of an animal returning to his cave when trouble appears.

War certainly brings a host of new experiences to the average human being. One of our ships, the USS OMANEY BAY, a jeep carrier, was sunk the day before yesterday, and we received a large number of its survivors. As a whole, I thought it was quite remarkable that they were all so well composed after such a harrowing experience. They were delivered to us by a destroyer skipper who came alongside in the blackest of nights handling his ship like a 16 year old boy handles his 28" bicycle. I saw the survivors the next morning after all had enjoyed a good night's sleep. Their composure after bumping shoulders with the Grim Reaper was remarkable.

While on the quarterdeck before going to General Quarters, I gazed over at the Lingayen sector and saw large pillars of smoke rising above the haze which had settled over that area. Later on this afternoon we are to head back to our bombardment station to complete our ammunition allowance for the day; Our VO pilots get quite a workout during air spotting operations flying the OS2U, "Kingfisher" aircraft. We have only three pilots, and today, for instance, the senior pilot will go up twice, putting in around 6 hours flying time. That may not seem like such a long time to the reader, but it's quite exhausting to sit up there, fly the plane, spot for our main and secondary batteries and keep a weather eye for Jap planes and flak.

From indications thus far, this landing and phase of the war will be bitterly contested, and the Japs will probably be more fanatic than ever before. Their strength in the Philippines is weak, but it appears as if they realize their plight and are ready to fight to the last man without surrender. Although our carrier-based air strikes in the Luzon, Visayan and Formosa areas have been most crushing, the enemy is still able to muster a few planes and to use them very effectively, making the air threat an ever present possibility. Their strength in the Islands, as I have said, is low, so very low that most of the people in the U. S. would be amazed to learn of its small potential. This does not preclude the probability of bitter combat as was the case in the Palau and Saipan engagements when "all organized resistance" had ceased long before all cave inhabiting Japanese troops were eliminated.

The word has just been passed to "Prepare to launch two aircraft" which means that it won't be long before we begin the second half of our scheduled bombardment for today. I have "cooled down", I guess, and so this narrative will have to wait until once again I become literary minded.

2013 Reunion Activity Registration Form

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and the total amount. Send that amount payable to **USS West Virginia Association** in the form of a **check or money order** (no credit cards or phone reservations) to: USS West Virginia Association, c/o Mike Mullins, 2933 Cottonwood Lane, Chester Springs, PA 19425. Your canceled check will serve as your confirmation. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **September 1, 2013**.

DATE	PRICE (\$/PP)	NUMBER	TOTAL (\$)
09/19/2013 Thursday Welcome Aboard! Pizza Party in the Hospitality Room 6PM	\$ FREE		
09/20/2013 Friday City Tour and Luncheon Load bus at 9:30AM, Return at 2:30PM Hospitality Room open on return	\$49.00 pp		
09/21/2013 Saturday Tour USS Midway and Harbor Cruise Lunch included Load bus at 9:30AM, Return at 3:30PM Hospitality Room open on return	\$49.00 pp		
09/21/2013 Saturday Banquet Dinner at 6:30PM Hospitality Room open on return	\$39.00 pp		
Registration	\$25.00 pp		
-----	-----	TOTAL	

For hotel reservations at the Crowne Plaza - Mission Valley , call 619-297-1101. The special group rate is \$101.00 per night. This rate is good for three (3) nights before and three (3) nights after the reunion events. In order to obtain your special group rate, guests need to identify themselves as being associated with USS West Virginia.

ATTENDEES (For name tags)

NAME _____

DIVISION _____ YEARS ABOARD 19 ____ to 19 ____

GUEST NAME(S) _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME & PHONE _____

INDEMNITY CLAUSE (Must be signed regardless of payment method)

I, the undersigned, hereby assume liability for and shall indemnify, defend, protect, save and hold harmless the USS West Virginia Association and the Crowne Plaza - Mission Valley , its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates, and their officers, agents, subcontractors, and employees, from and against any and all liabilities, claims, judgments, damages, losses, including all costs, fees, and expenses incidental there to caused by or arising out of the gross negligence or willful misconduct on my behalf and which are in any way related to the services or goods contemplated by this agreement.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PRINTED NAME _____ PHONE _____

San Diego is Waiting for Us Will You Join Us?

2013 USS West Virginia (BB-48) Reunion - September 20-22, 2013

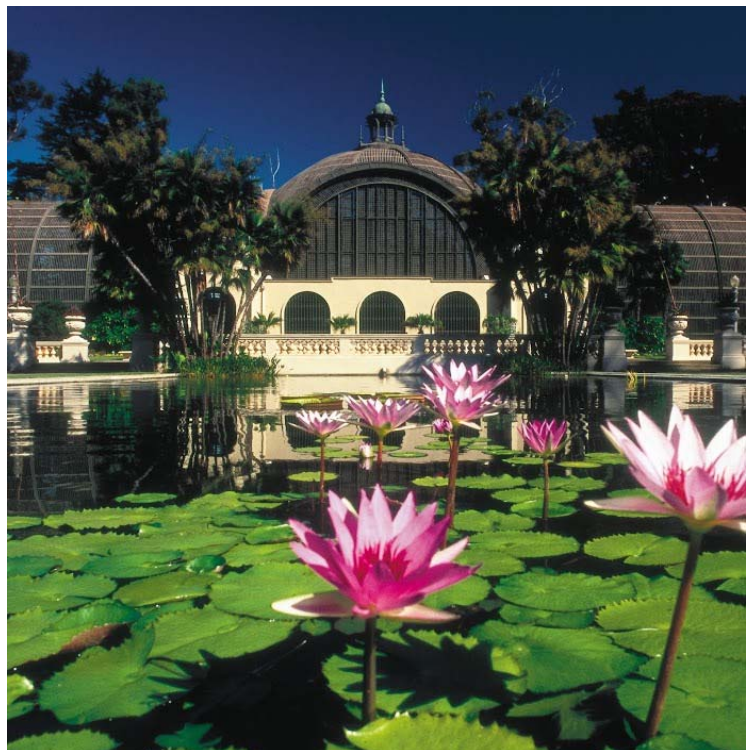


USS West Virginia Association

Mike Mullins – Curator

2933 Cottonwood Lane
Chester Springs, PA 19425

Phone: 610-952-3542



We're on the Web!
www.usswestvirginia.org

The USS West Virginia Association's collection of information and artifacts is kept in the care of Mike Mullins, Curator. Our web site is one of the largest online collections of information about a battleship that you will see anywhere.

The aircraft carrier USS Midway (CV-41) (*above*) and Balboa Park (*below*), two attractions that will be enjoyed during the 2013 reunion in San Diego, CA.