

FROM THE QUARTERDECK
AUGUST 2004

Dear Shipmates, Family and Guests:

This letter is more of a reminder than anything. We are trying very hard to book our trips and hotel reservations for the Tucson reunion. We understand it is not until the first week of Nov. But without knowing how many people we have coming it is very difficult for the hotel to hold the rooms requested and still give us the discount rate agreed upon. As of this date we have received back 3 registration forms. The parties handling the transportation must now the number and sizes of busses required for our tours.

Please understand that if you somehow cannot make the trip or tours you will be refunded the advance payment as set forth in the reservation forms.

This should be one of our best reunions, with plenty to do. I am enclosing the hotel and tour forms as some have misplaced the forms in the last newsletter. I had some inquiries as to the departure meeting and breakfast on the last day Sunday morning Nov. 7, 2004. The reason I did not mention it is because we have complimentary breakfast every day. There will definitely be a meeting with breakfast Sunday morning. The time will be 8:30 a.m. We have some very important matters to discuss. Please try to make this meeting.

Rather than continue the story of the USS West Virginia. I would like to review some info submitted by some of our shipmates. There is not enough room in this letter to print all their stories. I will attempt to pick some that might be of interest our readers.

First I want to congratulate Bob Sims for his tireless effort in an attempt to obtain the unit citation we so richly deserve. Thanks Bob, we salute you. Win or loose you have done a great service to us all.

Here is a letter from John Matheson a Pearl Harbor Survivor, regarding the O'hare incident.

The May edition of the Mountaineer contained the account of the feat of LCDR "Butch" O'Hare in shooting down five twin-engine Japanese bombers early in World War II.

The story has a West Virginia angle, and here's how:
After the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, many of the West Virginia crew were moved to the adjacent USS Tennessee. The West Virginia had been moored outboard of the Tennessee, which was adjacent to Ford Island.

Many of us had swum ashore to Ford Island and gathered at one of the buildings at the air station, then transferred to the nearby Tennessee.

After several days, we were moved again, to the Fleet Recreation Center. As ships started to enter the harbor, they put out calls for survivors to fill out their complements. The procedure was to "fall in" and await developments.

One call was for 150 men for the USS Lexington. My buddy Eddie Greene stepped out for "the Lex." but I pulled him back. Shortly after, the USS Minneapolis sought 35 survivors and Greene and I volunteered for the cruiser Navy.

In February, we were in a task force centered on the Lexington and were in the South Pacific. This is when the formation of 18 (as I recall the number) Japanese bombers was detected, and headed toward the task force.

Here is where O'Hare started his feat. His little Grumman fighter dove into the attacking formation, then he would attack from underneath as he climbed into the formation. The Mitsubishi's started to fall.

The ships below were also firing anti-aircraft; I was in an aft fire-control director which controlled the port five-inch; the action was on the starboard side, so we in the director crew observed the entire incident. This was all we could do.

One of the attacking bombers was either badly damaged, or the pilot was wounded, or both, and he was losing altitude. He apparently decided to try to crash the Lexington, but splashed short of the target. (Was this the first kamikaze of World War II?)

In any event, the T.F. escaped unscathed.

Several months later, Minneapolis was again with Lexington, this time in the Coral Sea. The Lex suffered damage that was beyond control, and her crew went over the side. Minneapolis and other ships pulled into position to pick up survivors; some of them were former shipmates from West Virginia, who were now two-time losers in a war that was only five months old.

We put into Noumea, New Caledonia, to put off the Lex survivors.

One recollection of their short stay on "the Minnie" was how they laid currency to dry on overhead steam lines in the crew compartment.

The recollection of O'Hare's feat remains vivid after all these years; having Chicago's major airport named for him serves as a constant reminder.

SUBMITTED BY JOHN M. MATHESON. 6-A DIVISION, USS WEST VIRGINIA
1941

A lot of information, of our ships action, was submitted by W. Lee Andrus. I will include a few highlights in this letter and will bring the whole thing with me to the reunion. He writes as follows:

I have detailed the attacks and the casualties suffered in the operations that we were involved with. I thought it pertinent to show it here to exemplify the battle environment that was present whenever we fired our guns. Here are the casualty totals from the casualty pages of shipboard personnel only.

KILLED	WOUNDED	TOTAL
	Leyte	
1955	1224	3179
	Mindoro	
785	365	1150
	Lengayen Gulf	
1202	1741	2943
	Iwo Jima	
267	518	785
	Okinawa	
4434	5632	10,066

U. S. S. WEST VIRGINIA BB-48 TRACK

ARRIVED

LOCATION

DEPARTED

10 May 1942	Bremerton Naval Ship Yard	27 June 1944
14 July 1944	Port Angeles, Washington	16 July 1944
19 July 1944	San Pedro, California	8 September 1944
14 September 1944	Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii	24 September 1944
5 October 1944	Manus, Admiralty Islands	12 October 1944
18 October 1944	Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands	29 October 1944
31 October 1944	Ulithi, North Caroline Islands	3 November 1944
5 November 1944	Manus, Admiralty Islands	6 November 1944
8 November 1944	Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides	20 November 1944
22 November 1944	Manus, Admiralty Islands	23 November 1944
25 November 1944	Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands	2 December 1944
4 December 1944	Kossel Passage, Palau Islands	10 December 1944
12 December 1944	Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands	13 December 1944
to the Sulu Sea		
15 December 1944	Mindoro, Philippine Islands	16/17 December 1944
19 December 1944	Kossel Passage, Palau Islands	20 December 1944
23 December 1944	Manus, Admiralty Islands	26 December 1944
29 December 1944	Kossel Passage, Palau Islands	1 January 1945
3 January 1945	Leyte Gulf to the Sulu Sea	
5 January 1945	San Fernando Point, Philippine Islands for bombardment	
6 January 1945	Lingayen Gulf, Philippine Islands	10 February 1945
12 February 1945	Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands	14 February 1945
16 February 1945	Ulithi, North Caroline Islanes	17 February 1945
19 February 1945	Iwo Jima, Bonin Islands	4 March 1945
6 March 1945	Ulithi, North Carolilne Islands	21 March 1945
25 March 1945	Okinawa Gunto	7 April 1945 to
chased Yamato returned to Okinawa	8 April 1945	20 April 1945 headed
for Ulith but turned around and returned to Okinawa Gunto		26 April 1945
28 April 1945	Ulithi, North Caroline Islands	14 May 1945
17 May 1945	Okinawa Gunto	1 July 1945
4 July 1945	Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands	3 August 1945
6 August 1945	Okinawa Gunto	23 August 1945
26 August 1945	Yokohama, Japan	20 September 1945
23 September 1945	Okinawa Gunto	24 September 1945
4 October 1945	Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii	9 October 1945
22 October 1945	San Diego, California	30 October 1945
6 November 1945	Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii	7 November 1945

13 November 1945	San Pedro, California	16 November 1945
22 November 1945	Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii	24 November 1945
30 November 1945	Alameda, California	4 December 1945
10 December 1945	Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii	10 December 1945
17 December 1945	San Pedro, California	4 January 1946
8 January 1946	Bremerton, Washington Naval S.Y.	16 January 1946
16 January 1946	Seattle, Washington	-----
9 January 1946	Decommissioned	
1 March 1959	Stricken from the Naval records	
24 August 1959	Sold for scrap	

The above info is from Samuel Elliot Morison's History of United States Naval Operations In World War II, Little Brown and Company, Boston, Mass. 1958, Casualty totals vary widely from different historical accounts, so one must take them with a grain of salt.

The above was submitted by W. Lee Andrus

FROM: JOE VARIOT

A lot of claims have been made by different people, and various ships, claiming to have sunk battleships at Surigao Straits. Following is a true account of the ordinance used.

SHIP	ROUNDS FIRED	TOTAL PROJECTILE WEIGHT
West Virginia	93-16 inch	208,320 lbs.
Tennessee	69-14 inch	103,500 lbs.
California	63-14 inch	94,500 lbs.
Maryland	48-16 inch	107,520 lbs.
Mississippi	12-14 inch	18,000 lbs.
Pennsylvania	0-14 inch	0 lbs.

A 16 inch armor piercing projectile weighs 2,240 lbs. Compared to 1,500 lbs for the 14 inch. Armor piercing. It was noted by those in charge that the USS West Virginia firing was splendid and right on target. Total weight of projectiles fired, 14 inch and 16 inch 531,840 lbs West Virginia 208,320 lbs, all other battleships combined 323,520lbs. The Wee Vee fired approx. two fifths of all the BB's ordinance fired at the enemy. There was 8 inch, 6 inch, 5 inch fired from the cruisers, destroyers, plus torpedoes and more. It had to be pure hell for the Japs.

Japans Battleships Yamato and Musashi carried 18 inch rifles. The armor piercing projectile weight was 3, 219 lbs. These rifles also carried anti aircraft shells to send a barrage of destruction at enemy planes. What a difference a couple of inches in diameter makes. The A.P. shells traveled 45,960 yards at an angle of 45 degrees.

In the name of the President of the United States the Secretary of the Navy present the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION to

THE UNITED STATES SHIP WEST VIRGINIA

For services as set forth in the following

C I T A T I O N

"For extremely meritorious service as a ship in action against the enemy during the bombardment and occupation of Leyte, Mindoro, and Lingayen in the Philippine Islands; the Naval Battle of Surigao Straits; and the bombardment of Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands. In the Battle of Surigao Straits the WEST VIRGINIA distinguished herself by superlative gunnery in the destruction of Japanese naval forces. Throughout all operations the WEST VIRGINIA displayed an outstanding alertness, the energy, zeal and gallant devotion to duty while working under the constant strain of continued hazardous operations. Her conduct and performance have distinguished the WEST VIRGINIA among other vessels performing similar duty and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service.

Enclosure (A)

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USS West Virginia Reunion – November 1-8, 2004
Hotel Reservation Form

Mail to: Hilton Tucson East, 7600 East Broadway Boulevard, Tucson, AZ 85710
Or Call 520-721-5600 ask for reservations or Fax to 520-721-5698

Name: _____ **Sharing with:** _____
Please print clearly

Address: _____ **Zip:** _____
Street or PO Box / City / State

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

Arrival Date: _____ **Departure Date:** _____

of rooms _____ **# of guests in each room** _____

handicap smoking non-smoking king bed 2 queen beds
Please circle your request(s). If room type is not available, nearest room type will be assigned

Confirmation # _____
(for hotel use)

Rate: \$75.00 single or double occupancy, plus 11.5% tax and \$1.00 occupancy tax. Rate will be honored three (3) days before and after reunion dates, based on availability. Additional charge of \$7.00 per person, per day, for the third and fourth guest per room.

Cutoff date: October 2, 2004. Reservations received after this date will be processed on space and rate availability. We can not guarantee the group rate once the cutoff date has passed. All reservations must be guaranteed by a major credit card or first night's deposit. If guaranteeing by first night's deposit please enclose a check with the reservation form.

Credit Card Type: Amex Diners Visa Mastercard Discover

Credit Card Number _____ **Exp date** _____

Name of Card Holder _____

I, the undersigned, hereby assumes liability for, and shall indemnify, defend, protect, save and hold harmless the USS West Virginia Reunion Association and Interstate Hotels & Resorts, Inc., it's parent, subsidiaries and affiliates and their officers, agents, subcontractors and employees from and against any and all liabilities, claims, judgements, damages, and losses, including all costs, fees and expenses incidental thereto, 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** _____

2nd Guest _____ **Date** _____

Signature is required regardless of payment method.

Cancellation Policy: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 48 hours prior to arrival.

Airport Transportation: If need for airport shuttle service is required, please complete the following and return to the hotel by 10/2/04:

Arrival: Airline _____ Date _____ Flight Number _____ Time _____

Departure: Airline _____ Date _____ Flight Number _____ Time _____

Number of passengers each flight: _____

If there is a change or delay in your flight itinerary as you travel to Tucson, please contact the transportation company directly. Call Lionel at 520-631-2293. Should a change occur prior to your travel, call the hotel directly.

Our staff is looking forward to welcoming the members of the USS West Virginia Association and their guests. It is our goal to hear all of you say "this was the best reunion ever!" We will make it happen. Enjoy your trip to Tucson. The welcome mat is out.

REUNION ACTIVITY REGISTRATIN FORM

Listed below are all tour, meal and registration cost for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send completed form or a copy of it along with a check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted) to USS West Virginia Reunion Org. 4564 Cedar River Rd., Mancelona, Mi. 49659. Your canceled check will serve as your confirmation. A full refund will be sent for the above activities if cancellation is received by Oct. 15, 2004. After that date, refund will depend on vendor policies. Our Phone number is 1-231-584-2280. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before Oct. 7,2004. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing.

OFFICE USE ONLY
Check# _____ Date received _____

Cut of Date: October 7, 2004

Price PP No.of Total
People

TOURS			
	Price PP	No.of	Total
		People	
MON: NOV. 1 Round Trip to festivities and "Day of the Dead" Parade.	18.00		
TUES. Downtown Historic Tour	31.00		
WED. Nogales Mexico, lunch and Tubac AZ.	37.00		
WED. Welcome aboard party	—0—		
THURS. Pima Air & Space Museum and San Xavier Mission W/lunch	50.00		
FRI. Sonora Desert/Old Tucson Studios	47.00		
FRI. Southwestern cook out @pool & patio area	16.00		
SAT. Sabino Canyon/DeGrazia Gallery	29.00		
SAT. Banquet (select your entrée)			
Broiled NY Strip	33.00		
Grilled chicken Cordon Bleu	27.00		
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REGISTRATION FEE: Includes administrative, hospitality room expenses, and Entertainment	30.00		
<hr/>			
Total Amount Payable to USS West Virginia Reunion			

PLEASE PRINT

Name(for name tags) _____
 Division _____ Years on Board 19__-19__
 Spouse Name _____
 Guest Names _____
 Street Address _____
 City, State and Zip _____
 Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

USS West Virginia BB 48

REUNION ASSOCIATION

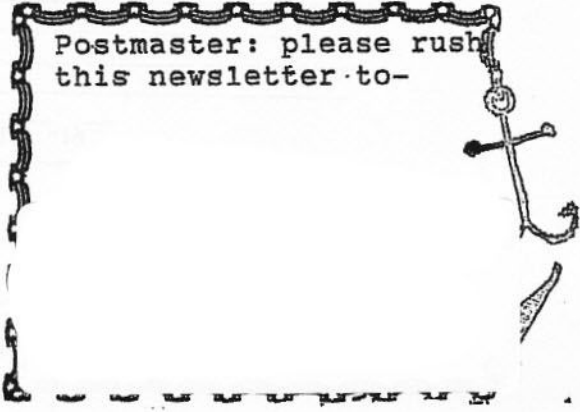
C/O JOSEPH VARIOT
4564 CEDAR RIVER RD
MANCELONA, MI. 49659



Visit the Web site-www.usswestvirginia.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

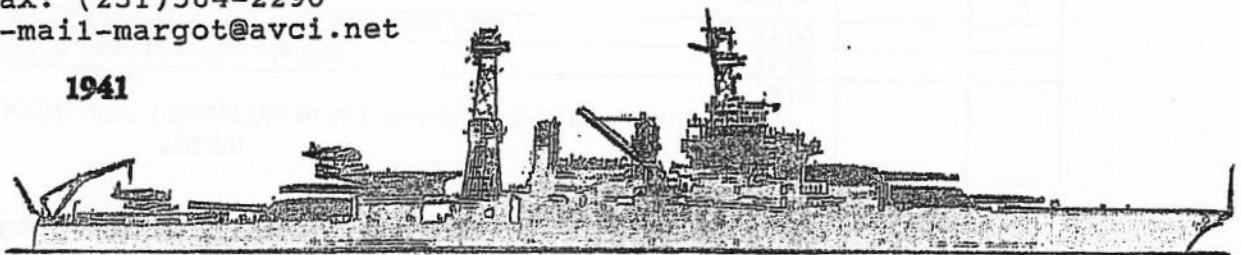
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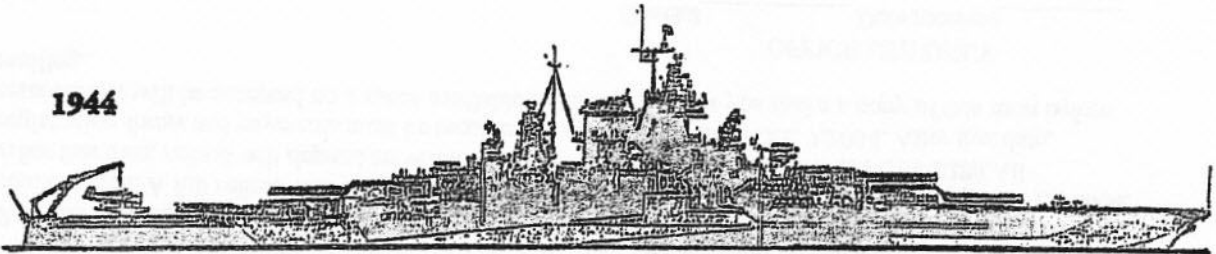
Tele: (231) 584-2280
Fax: (231) 584-2290
e-mail-margot@avci.net

**COLORADO CLASS BATTLESHIP - USS WEST VIRGINA (BB48)
AS OUTFITTED IN THE WINTER OF 1941**

1941



1944



**COLORADO CLASS BATTLESHIP - USS WEST VIRGINA (BB48)
AS OUTFITTED IN THE SUMMER OF 1944**