

FROM THE QUARTERDECK

Greetings shipmates, where ever you are. I want to apologize for the time lapse since the last news letter. We had a good many things planned for this year before taking over the helm of our reunion organization. There has been a lot of manipulation of our time in order to do all we had planned. The future will allow more time for this very important matter.

In the last letter we had a survey of a few matters for future consideration. First of all the response to our need for funds to continue the newsletter. Our shipmates came through in fine order. Those of you who may of overlooked this matter may respond at the next reunion (cost in \$5.00)

Next the matter of getting together with our sister ships the Colorado and the Maryland. The majority of the crew thought it would be a good idea. I have since talked to chairpersons of both ships, they too thought there could be such an undertaking. Of course their crew members would have to vote on such a matter.

The matter of small stores reopening was overwhelming. We will certainly do so.

In talking to the reps of the Colorado and the Maryland, I told them of our plan to meet in Mobile and our itinerary. Both ships had recently had their reunions in Mobile. They agreed that it was

probably the most desirable get together they have had. Their program was much the same as ours. It looks like a great time and a memorable reunion.

Just hung up the phone with Mike Hulen, the man who is working on the Surigao Straits reunion. He told me to pass the word on to all, there will be a one year delay. Don't give up. The new target date will be October 2001.

I just received a letter from Arlow Webb with the response to his request for the Unit Citation recommended by Adam. I.C. Sowell in February 1945 for our actions in the Phillipines at Leyte Gulf, Suriagao Straits, Mindoro Island and Lingayen Gulf. The request was denied. Hats off to Arlow Webb, who put in a lot of time and effort to obtain this recognition. Senator Byrd of West Virginia was a great help in obtaining an answer from the Dept of the Navy. Thanks Guys.

A letter from Alton Meyer and some detailed information on how to obtain the Navy Combat Action Ribbon. You must have served Dec. 7, 1941 - April 14, 1946 or June 27, 1950 - July 27, 1954. Write to Chief of Naval Operations (N09B33), 2000 NAVY Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20350-2000 using Standard form 180 (enclosed run a couple of copies for future use) a copy of Naval personnel Form 553 or Defense Dept. DD 214 or DD 215. No other awards may be requested in conjunction with the C.A.R. If you cannot provide these documents, you may request personal record info, from the St.Louis Records Center. Thanks Alton.

You may request the Phillipines Presidential Unit Citation from the Phillipines Embassy, Washington, D.C. by simply sending a copy of your discharge showing you received the Phillipines Liberation Ribbon, along with a check for \$7.00 made payable to the Phillipines Embassy.

Once you have obtained this medal and ribbon you are eligible to receive the Phillipines Independence Ribbon and Medal.

There are a good many medals available in commemoration of WWII, The Asiatic Pacific, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and others.

For more info write to Medals of America Press, 1929 Fairview Road, Fountain Inn, S.C. 29644-9137 ask for their latest catalog along with a check for \$3.00. They are printing a new book the 5th edition of Medals of America, ready in about 2 or 3 weeks. Hard cover \$29.95 soft cover \$24.95
Call toll free 1-800-308-0849 with credit card info. This is very extensive with tons of information.

Another good source is a Catalog, Pieces of History, P.O. 7590, Cave Creek, Az. 85327-7590. Call 1-480-488-1377. Tell them you need the catalog U.S.A. Medals, cost is \$2.00

Almost all reading gives credit for only 5 battle stars. But in reality there is 8 earned.

1. Pearl Harbor
2. Midway

3. Leyte Gulf
4. Surigao Straits
5. Mindoro Island
6. Lingayen Gulf
7. Iwo Jima
8. Okinawa the history of our ship is not well recorded.

I have been in touch with the Naval Institute, the V.F.W. the American Legion, the Amvets and on the Internet history of WWII U.S.S. West Virginia. Hopefully we will have some announcements of our reunion. You can do your part by asking your local paper and the largest paper your reading and ask if they will make a community service announcement as follows: Reunion Notice WWII Vets. Crew of U.S.S West Virginia, BB-48, Sept 5-10 2000. Mobile Alabama, Contact: Joe Variot, 4564 Cedar River Rd, Mancelona, Mi. 49659, Phone 1-231-584-2280, E-mail-margot@avci.net

For those of you who may have missed the December 1999 issue, of The Legion Magazine. There is a nice article about Bob Kronberger. Will try to fit it all in.

We should have a good turn out for this reunion if we can get the word out to enough people. So do what you can to make contacts. We had a lot of newsletters returned. We also tried to find some of the addresses on the Internet and some of them were returned also. Here is list of names for ones returned. Maybe some of you might know where they can be reached:

Mr. Albert Doblestein, Spokane WA
 Capt. Gordon S. Wiley USNR Ret, Monterey, CA
 Mr. Claude Babock, Reno, NV
 Mr. Percy h. Dunkle, Port Ludlow, WA
 Mrs. V.M. Yelton, Virginia Beach, VA
 Mr. James Baker
 Mr. Frank Peldowski, Maripose, CA
 Mr. Crumpler, Smithfield, NC
 Mr. Archie Odom, Federal way, WA
 Mr. Harvey Hill, Saluda, VA
 Mr. George Deering, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Mr. M.J. MC Cray, Port Orchard, WA
 Mr. Leonard H. Case, Murphy, NC
 Mr. O.V. Jacobson. Castro Valley, CA
 Mr. Marlin Skoberg, Williston, N.D.
 Mr. Donald Seaman, Medical Lake, WA
 Mr. William Keith, Marshfield, MA
 Mr. Sam Romano, Green Valley AZ 85614
 Mr Jay Fuller, Kitrell, NC
 Mr. Frank Pelatowski, Mariposa, CA

Mr. Marion W. Skogberg, Winston, Nd
Mr. Daniel S. Bishop, Clearwater, Fl.
William V. Stein, Bakerfield, CA
Mr. D.L. Wilson, Oakwood, TX
Mr. William J. Keith, Marshfield, MA
Mr. Raymond Tart, Pittfield, MA
Mr. Gordon Rude, Portland, OR 97201
Mr. Robert Nethery Watson, Apple Valley, CA
Mrs. Kay Peterson, Colorado Springs, CO
Mr. E.G. Winstead, Middletown, OH
Mr. Frank Ross Fullmer, Salt Lake City, UT
Mr. H. H. Helzer, Pheonix, AZ
Rev. Wallis Schmidt, Midland, TX
Mr. Jerry Lemberger, Overland Parkway, KS

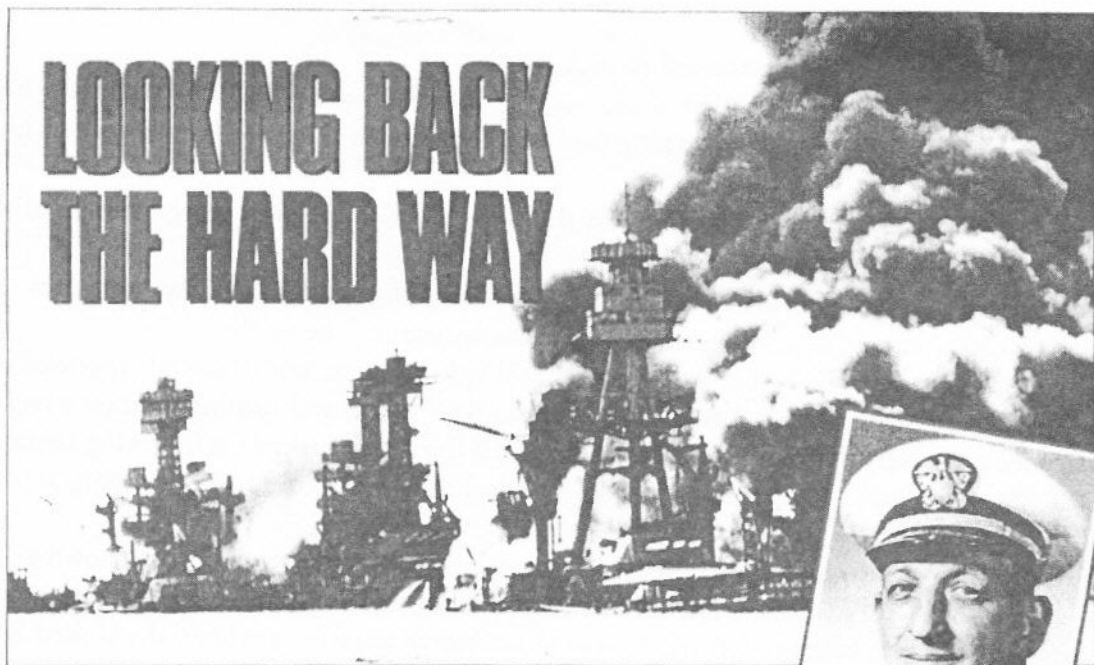
There was a lot of comments made by different people, who live in the area of Minneapolis, MN about promising activities in the area for 2001. Please come prepared with your ideas.

The USS West Virginia won the American Defense Cup in 1925 for scoring the highest merit for all guns at short range firing. Also she won the Battle Efficiency Pennant for Battleships this honor was the coveted meatball. She won it again in 1927 and 1932 to tie the world record she then went on to win it again in 1933 to set a new record. Things then must have been much the same as they were under Capt. Wiley in WWII practice, practice, and practice.

Get your reservations for the hotel and activities sheet in as soon as possible, Cut off date is Aug. 4, 2000. Hope to see everyone in Mobile. Have a good summer.

The USS West Virginia, BB48 reunion for the year 2000

Sept. 5-10
Clarion Hotel
Bel Air Mall @1-65
3101 Airport Blvd.
Mobile Alabama, 36606
Tel (334) 476-6400 or Fax (334) 476-9360



For Robert S. Kronberger, Christmas is a time for festivity, family and loved ones mixed into a cocktail of loneliness and despair that streak back to Dec. 7, 1941.

Like everyone else who survived Pearl Harbor, he hates to drink the cocktail.

But it is the condition for his being alive.

One hundred sixty of his USS West Virginia shipmates died in the Japanese bomber, fighter and submarine attack that demolished and battered 18 American warships and killed 2,113 sailors and Marines in the sunken hulls, oilcoated harbor, and on the piers and docks and hangars of the Hawaiian Navy base.

Kronberger's father, Sam, and brother Edward were on the same Pacific fleet ship docked in the calm and serene harbor. Sam was a chief petty officer and Edward a seaman assigned to the gunnery department, Robert served as first-class watertender and petty officer-in-charge of the boiler room.

The sun rose over the Hawaiian Islands at 6:26 that Sunday morning, about the time Robert Kronberger returned on the milk boat from shore patrol to the USS West Virginia.

"It was a bright, clear and peaceful tropical morning," he recalls. "Under the light northeast trades, surrounded by green sugar cane fields and covered by cumulus clouds over the Koolaus, it seemed the least probable place on earth for a war to start."

Kronberger climbed onto his ship, weary from his long and arduous night of duty. Meanwhile, beneath the water surface, two-man Japanese submarines launched from larger fleet subs converged on the harbor entrance.

"Once back aboard my floating home, I decided to forego breakfast for much-needed sleep," Kronberger recalls. "I made my way down four decks to the floorplates of the fireroom. I spread out a piece of canvas on the deck and laid down for a snooze."

Forty-five minutes later, loud speakers bellowing from the officer on deck awoke him.

"The ship started exploding, shaking and rocking," Kronberger recalls. "Our electric power and lighting went out. Six or seven torpedoes struck us broadside. The steel bulkhead gave way to sea water."

A projectile zeroed in. A hit would have wiped out Kronberger, his father and brother. It was a 16-inch armorpiercing explosive that struck the No. 3 turret, near where all three were located. It proved to be a dud.

In the dark, Kronberger and his crew made their way up 40 feet of ladders, through the air locks and the

armored hatch as explosions continued to rock the ship.

ABANDON SHIP. On the weather deck, his first impulse was to find his father and brother. But he followed orders to abandon ship, leaping into flaming waters. A motor launch picked him up at Ford Island.

Not until 10:30 p.m., upon returning to the ship, did Kronberger with great relief discover that his father and brother were okay.

"Having been relieved of my frustrations, I was then obligated to assist my shipmates on firefighting, removing casualties and other tasks surrounding the holocaust," he recalls.

Two nights later, Kronberger and others were still fighting fires. Several aircraft appeared over the pier of the shipyard. They made a left turn, passing over sunken vessels and turning on their navigational lights.

"Immediately every usable gun in the harbor opened fire and destroyed the incoming aircraft," Kronberger recalls. "Soon we were deeply saddened to learn that the aircraft were American, flying in from the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*."

This was just the beginning of 1,364 days of death, misery and broken hearts known as World War II.

But in Kronberger's words, "The calculated treachery of the Japanese Empire did not pay off." It is something he cannot forget or forgive. And to those Americans who condemn the United States for the use of the atomic bomb, he says, "They need only to remember that if there had not been an unwarranted and unprovoked bombing of Pearl Harbor, there would not have been any bombs dropped in Hiroshima or Nagasaki."

KEEP AMERICA ALERT. Today, Kronberger and his son David, both retired from the Navy, are members of The American Legion's Big Bear Post No. 584 in California. Kronberger's grandson Daniel just graduated from Recruit Training and will be the fourth-generation Kronberger in the Navy, adding to 208 years of family service.

Kronberger is a founder and president of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, which began with a remembrance party in 1954 and now has 9,109 members and chapters in every state. The group's slogan is "Keep America Alert!" The survivors have been involved in dozens of patriotic ventures.

For them, Christmas is a time to give thanks and celebrate with family and friends, but also the dark and poignant memory of a surprise attack that knocked the globe from its pedestal of innocence into the largest and most violent conflagration in the history of mankind.

Peter B. Rose
Assistant Editor
The American Legion
for God and Country

**USS WEST VIRGINIA BB-48
CLARION HOTEL - MOBILE, AL
SEPTEMBER 6 – 11, 2000**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

- 1:00 Arrivals and registration until 6pm.
Hospitality Room open.
Evening and dinner on your own.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

- 10:00 Registration continues until 11am and again from 3pm – 4pm.
Hospitality Room open.
12:00 Lunch buffet which will include soup, ham, turkey, and roast beef platters, cheese, assorted breads and rolls, coffee, iced tea, and dessert. After lunch enjoy dancing to your favorite music from the 1940's and today!

Beau Rivage Casino in Biloxi

- 4:30 Board bus for the Beau Rivage Casino in Biloxi.
5:30 Upon arrival you will be given a Players Club Card, which includes \$10 of free play. This Mediterranean-style, single-level casino offers seventy gaming tables and over 2,000 slot machines, as well as dining options from twelve distinctive restaurants. You'll find everything from a cafe nestled in the atrium gardens to a lavish buffet featuring made-to-order cooking stations. Complete your meal with dessert at Scoops, an old-fashioned ice cream parlor, where you can delight in the antics of mimes, jugglers, and musicians. Next, enjoy time to browse in one of several specialty shops that offer a variety of unique items and gifts. Or, simply relax and enjoy the classic melodies and muted jazz vocals with garden views and the intimate atmosphere of the Atrium Lounge. If entertainment is your game, consider taking in the casino's featured show, *Alegria* by Cirque du Soleil. This spectacular combination of music, acrobatic acts; choreography, lighting and sound will keep you spellbound in the 1,500-seat showroom. It is recommended that tickets be purchased in advance; the current price is \$48.15. Please call 888-566-SHOW for rates, times, and availability.
9:30 Reboard bus to return to hotel by 10:30pm.
\$19/Person includes bus, escort, and players club card worth \$10 of free play. Dinner is not included.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

- 9:00 Registration continues until 10am and again from 5pm – 6pm. Additional registration times will be posted at the reunion if necessary.
Hospitality room open.

Pensacola

- 10:30 Board bus at the hotel for Pensacola.
11:45 Enjoy a deluxe deli buffet lunch at the Mustin Beach Officer's Club.
1:00 Visit the Museum, which captures Naval Aviation's entire heritage with over 100 planes representing the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Soar with the Blue Angels in this dazzling seven-story glass and steel atrium. The West Wing is devoted almost entirely to WWII carrier aviation and showcases a full-size replica of the USS Cabot aircraft carrier island and flight deck, the Corsair, Avenger, Hellcat, and several others. For a nominal fee, enjoy the featured IMAX presentation *The Magic of Flight* at 2pm.
3:15 Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 4:30pm.
Note: For those interested, and if interest warrants, your guide will take you on a driving tour of Pensacola with free time at Historic Pensacola Village. Museum admissions will be on your own (time permitting).
\$31/Person includes bus, guide, and lunch.

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

Please read instructions on the reverse. If more space is needed, use plain paper.

PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 COMPLIANCE INFORMATION. The following information is provided in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3) and applies to this form. Authority for collection of the information is 44 U.S.C. 2907, 3101, and 3103, and E.O. 9307 of November 22, 1943. Disclosure of the information is voluntary. The principal purpose of the information is to assist the facility servicing the records in locating and verifying the correctness of the requested records or information to answer your inquiry. Routine uses of the information as established and published in accordance with 5 U.S.C. a(4)(D)

Include the transfer of relevant information to appropriate Federal, State, local, or foreign agencies for use in civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations or prosecution. In addition, this form will be filed with the appropriate military records and may be transferred along with the record to another agency in accordance with the routine uses established by the agency which maintains the record. If the requested information is not provided, it may not be possible to service your inquiry.

SECTION I—INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much as possible)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (Last, first, and middle)		2. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	3. DATE OF BIRTH	4. PLACE OF BIRTH
5. ACTIVE SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that ALL service be shown below)				
BRANCH OF SERVICE (Also, show last organization, if known)	DATES OF ACTIVE SERVICE		Check one	
	DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER	ENLISTED
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. RESERVE SERVICE, PAST OR PRESENT <i>If "none," check here</i> <input type="checkbox"/>				
a. BRANCH OF SERVICE	b. DATES OF MEMBERSHIP		c. Check one	
	FROM	TO	OFFICER	ENLISTED
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERSHIP (Check one): <input type="checkbox"/> a. ARMY <input type="checkbox"/> b. AIR FORCE <input type="checkbox"/> c. NONE				
d. STATE	e. ORGANIZATION	f. DATES OF MEMBERSHIP		g. Check one
		FROM	TO	OFFICER
				ENLISTED
				<input type="checkbox"/>
8. IS SERVICE PERSON DECEASED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <i>If "yes," enter date of death</i>			9. IS (WAS) INDIVIDUAL A MILITARY RETIREE OR FLEET RESERVIST <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

SECTION II—REQUEST

1. EXPLAIN WHAT INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS YOU NEED, OR, CHECK ITEM 2, OR, COMPLETE ITEM 3		2. IF YOU ONLY NEED A STATEMENT OF SERVICE check <input type="checkbox"/> here	
3. LOST SEPARATION DOCUMENT REPLACEMENT REQUEST (Complete a or b, and c.)	<input type="checkbox"/> a. REPORT OF SEPARATION (DD Form 214 or equivalent)	YEAR ISSUED	This contains information normally needed to determine eligibility for benefits. It may be furnished only to the veteran, the surviving next of kin, or to a representative with veteran's signed release (Item 5 of this form)
	<input type="checkbox"/> b. DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE	YEAR ISSUED	This shows only the date and character at discharge; it is of little value in determining eligibility for benefits. It may be issued only to veterans discharged honorably or under honorable conditions; or, if deceased, to the surviving spouse.
	c. EXPLAIN HOW SEPARATION DOCUMENT WAS LOST		
4. EXPLAIN PURPOSE FOR WHICH INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED		6. REQUESTER	
		a. IDENTIFICATION (check appropriate box)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Same person identified in Section I <input type="checkbox"/> Surviving spouse	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Next of kin (relationship) _____	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____	
		b. SIGNATURE (see instruction 3 on reverse side)	DATE OF REQUEST
5. RELEASE AUTHORIZATION, IF REQUIRED (Read instruction 3 on reverse side)		7. Please type or print clearly — COMPLETE RETURN ADDRESS	
I hereby authorize release of the requested information/documents to the person indicated at right (Item 7).		Name, number and street, city, State and ZIP code	
VETERAN SIGN HERE <input type="checkbox"/>		TELEPHONE NO. (include area code) <input type="checkbox"/>	
(If signed by other than veteran show relationship to veteran)			



**U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA
REUNION ASSOCIATION**



**C/O JOSEPH VARIOT
4564 CEDAR RIVER ROAD
MANCERLONA, MI 49659**



THE MOUNTAINEER

