

U S S McKEAN
DD 784 * DDR 784
SCUTTLEBUTT

Vol I, No. 3

DATE: June, 1999

TO: **ALL CREW MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS**

FROM: Bob Hancock, Reunion Coordinator
2002 Chuli Nene
Tallahassee, FL 32301-5826
(850) 877-0854

ATTENTION! ALL HANDS!!

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NOW, HEAR THIS!!

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The SPIRIT OF THE USS McKEAN DD784*DDR784 has cast off all lines and, once again, is underway, FREE OF PIER 91, in Never-Never Ocean. Special Sea Detail has been secured and the underway watch has been set. By maintaining present course and speed, ETA Baton Rouge, La., 1500 hours, Saturday, September 25, 1999.

As of June 1, a total of 36 shipmates have stated they will be on board for the reunion. (Remember, it's the FIRST ever.) Twenty-one (21) others are planning to attend, another 10 are undecided, and 15 have indicated they will be unable to join us for this occasion. In addition, 41 shipmates have not yet received the previous editions of SCUTTLEBUTT, but they will very soon, along with this edition, the room reservation form, and the information request form.

SCUTTLEBUTT'S initial plan was for this issue to be somewhat small and the next one to be larger. However, plans had to be changed as evident by this mail-out. We hope you enjoy it and find the answers to all of your unasked questions about the reunion-related activities.

The Baton Rouge Hilton Hotel has reserved 30 single/double rooms for us. When those 30 have been filled, another 5 or 10 or 15 will be held for us. However, **the deadline for making your reservation is Sept. 3.** A room reservation form is enclosed. Please complete it and return it with a check or a credit card number to the hotel before Sept. 3; a certified check or money order also will be accepted. The reservation form will explain the steps you need to take. **REMEMBER: SEPTEMBER 3 DEADLINE.** **Note: There is no electronic version of the reservation form. Please call the Hilton at (225) 924-5000.**

Each week, the hotel will send SCUTTLEBUTT a weekly room reservation update. A listing of names of registered shipmates will be sent to SCUTTLEBUTT after August 15. The hotel will try - but not promise - to accommodate reservation requests at the reunion rate after Sept. 3.

ROOM RATE

The reunion rate per room, single or double, is \$65, plus 12.41% tax, or \$73.13; there is no charge for children under 18. Should you desire for three or four adults to share one room, the rate will be \$75., plus tax.

USS KIDD (DD661) AND NAUTICAL

At this time, plans are for only one activity to be away from the reunion base...a visit to the USS KIDD (DD661) and the Nautical Center. Following a tour of the Nautical Center and the KIDD, a memorial service will be held aboard the destroyer.

KIDD

The KIDD, which has been restored to her original 1945 appearance, is an excellent example of the Fletcher-Class destroyers. The Fletcher-Class preceded the "awesome" Gearing-Class destroyer; the McKEAN was of the Gearing-Class. Today, the KIDD is America's leading site for reunions of World War II destroyer crews. She earned eight (8) battle stars in the Pacific Theatre in WWII and was struck by a Kamikaze aircraft which killed 38 crewmen and wounded 50. She also earned four more battle stars during the Korean Conflict.

NAUTICAL

The Nautical Center provides exhibits which reflect many years of military history from the sailing ships of long ago to the submarines of today. And it houses many one-of-a-kind military artifacts and over 40 ship models. One section of the museum honoring the American Volunteer Group's Flying Tigers of WWII fame includes a fully restored P-40 Warhawk aircraft. The center also has a restored A-7E Corsair jet attack aircraft that flew in the Vietnam war.

MEETING ROOM/HOSPITALITY

Our meeting room, which can accommodate up to 80 people, will also be our hospitality room. There will be display tables for photo albums and other mementos you may wish to share (for viewing purposes only!) with your shipmates. Additional space is available if needed. That is another very good reason we need to remember the Sept. 3 deadline. Our banquet on Sunday night will be in the hotel dining room Salon IV.

BANQUET

Speaking of the banquet, SCUTTLEBUTT has arranged for a very talented, "real Cajun" young lady to entertain us during dinner hour. Her light-hearted renditions are most enjoyable. The meal will be a buffet dinner that we believe you will like very much. As for other meals, there is a variety of restaurants within easy walking distance of the hotel. By the way, the Hilton has a delicious \$8.95 buffet breakfast, which is served in the main dining room.

ENJOYABLE BUT NOT EXHAUSTING

We are trying to provide you with a program which will not exhaust you by the end of each day. Baton Rouge has a number of places we wished to include in our schedule, but we have opted not to do so during our FIRST-EVER McKEAN REUNION. So, you all will have more time to visit with each other. A number of us are Plank Owners of the McKean, which was commissioned on June 9, 1945 in Bremerton, Washington. And we have one shipmate coming who was on the de-

commissioning crew in 1981. Let's see now--1945 uh 1999 oops 1981 > Folks! That's a good many years to update ourselves about our ship.

TRUE STORIES

Perhaps this thought should not be mentioned, but here goes! A lot of sea and other kinds of stories have been told to our family members about our "good times" on the 784. What if one or two or more of these historical events don't sound the same during the reunion? Perhaps we should state now that all stories ref the McKEAN are true and nothing but_____!

"DO I HEAR THREE?"

An auction has been planned for Sunday night. The funds will be used to defray expenses for our next reunion. It may be necessary to cover some expenses for this one. But the auction will be fun at the same time. Therefore, SCUTTLEBUTT is asking each shipmate to donate one item that has some \$ value--but not enough to warrant having armed guards in attendance. Maybe a favorite white elephant with faux diamonds for eyes and trimmed in 24k gold (or less). Please! No big stuff like couches or wash tubs. Suggestions: wind chimes, clocks, small paintings and pictures, kitchen stuff, figurines, sports stuff, books, jewelry, handicrafts, NO WEAPONS, bookends, etc.

REUNION EXPENSES

There will be a registration of \$70.00 per person who attends the reunion. Monies collected will be used toward the reunion expenses, such as a round-trip bus ride and admission to the KIDD and Nautical Center; tour of the KIDD, a group photo at the KIDD and a memorial service on the KIDD; setting up and cleaning the Hospitality Room; soft drinks and munchies for the Hospitality Room (hotel rules do not permit alcoholic beverages in the hospitality or meeting rooms); banquet meal and entertainment; mail-outs; long distance telephone charges; and registration materials and supplies. A financial report on all collections and expenditures will be reported via SCUTTLEBUTT as soon as possible following adjournment of the reunion. ***You are encouraged to remit your registration fee to the reunion coordinator as soon as possible; however, fees will be accepted on-site at the reunion.***

DECISION-MAKING TIME

During the Sept. 28 session "Where Do We Go From Here?", perhaps we can address several questions, such as, but not limited to:

- Do we wish to meet together again?
- Should we decide to meet, where and when?
- Who would coordinate the reunion?
- Should we establish an operating expense fund through individual voluntary donations but not abolish the reunion registration fee?
- Should we maintain an updated master crew member listing by adding names and addresses as they become known? Who would do this?

UPDATING

The PLAN OF THE DAY for the reunion was included in the April issue of SCUTTLEBUTT. Copies of the February and April issues will be sent to those whom we have added to the mailing list the latter part of April and May. A slightly revised schedule is included in this mail-out.

SHARE TIME

What was the most unusual event that happened to you while you were aboard the McKEAN? Would you share it with your McKEAN family? If yes, condense it to one to three minutes and send a note to SCUTTLEBUTT. "SHARE TIME" will be a part of "The Way It Was" session on Sunday morning. Your McKEAN family members will appreciate it.

THANK YOU! CAPTAIN

The May 27 mail call included a surprise package from former skipper Andrew Merget, who was the Commanding Officer of the McKEAN from February 1971 until August 1972. Capt. Merget sent a bagful of pins that have the inscription "BIG MACK, USS McKEAN DD784". He included the following note: *"Hi Bob. I found these in an old box in the garage - Perhaps you can pass them out at the reunion - Sorry for some of the rusty ones - a little red lead and Navy grey is needed. Have a great reunion. Andrew Merget, CO McKEAN '71-72."* Capt. Merget's address is 19904-104 Ave., NE, Bothell, WA 98011. What a nice gesture by Capt., Merget. *"To you, Sir, we send our 'Thank you' and we are sorry you will not be at the reunion. We wish you the very best!"*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Capt. Merget is the second former McKEAN skipper who has contacted SCUTTLEBUTT. Previously, we shared "Regrets" received from Capt. J. C. Weatherwax, the Commanding Officer from November 1950 to June 1952.

Several months ago, Wayne Smith or John Hill or Verner Newman III or Vernon Schmidt sent a listing of ALL McKEAN commanding officers, from Cmdr. William D. Kelly (June 1945-Nov. 1946) to Cmdr. R. C. Hanson (June 1980-Oct. 1981). On June 3, SCUTTLEBUTT was informed by Plank Owner Clint Prescott (QM 3/C, 45-46) that Capt. Kelly is deceased.

SCUTTLEBUTT has made several unsuccessful attempts to find ways to get in touch with the skippers or members of their families. Probably the biggest hindrance is that SCUTTLEBUTT operates by "snail mail". Shipmates who have ideas on that subject, please send them to the reunion coordinator (address on page 1) or call (850) 877-0854.

CAPS AND SHIRTS

Here's the scoop on ball caps, T-shirts and golf shirts (with pocket). **Custom caps** are Navy blue, full cloth (not mesh backs), adjustable to fit, with a plain visor. \$16.00 each + \$4.00 S/H. **Golf shirts** are 75% polyester, 25% cotton, in Navy blue or white. They have a pocket and short sleeves. Artwork is above the pocket on the left chest. Sizes SM (40-41); MED (42-43) LG (44-45); XL (46-48); XXL (49-52). \$24.00 each, \$1.50 extra for XXL, + \$4.00 S/H. **Super Tee Shirts** have no pocket, in Navy blue or white. Artwork on left chest, same sizes as golf shirt. \$16.00 each + \$4.00 S/H. Delivery time is eight weeks. We get a reduced shipping charge if all items are delivered to the coordinator, who will deliver them at the reunion site. **ARTWORK** (same for all items): USS McKEAN arched across top, DD-784 placed horizontally across bottom. Name and number embroidered-in sewing, using service gold thread. The ship's silhouette is in silver thread

between name and number. An order form is included on the bottom of the itinerary on the next page.

UNTIL NEXT TIME

SMOOTH SEAS AND CLEAR SKIES TO YOU

Plan of the Day

Saturday, Sept.25

3:00 pm – 10:00 pm Check into hotel, then register for the reunion
4:00 pm – 10:00 pm Hospitality Room open. Set up photo albums and other personal mementos.
Dinner on your own (OYO). Get acquainted time.
10:00 pm – 7:00 am Free time

Sunday, Sept. 26

7:00 am – 10:00 pm Newcomers check into hotel, register for the reunion, then join the group
7:00 am – 8:30 am Breakfast – OYO
9:00 am – 11:30 am The US McKEAN (DD/DDR 784) “The Way It Was”

- Commissioning
- World War II
- Korean War
- Vitenam War
- De-commissioning

12:00 noon – 1:00 pm Lunch – OYO
1:30 pm – 4:30 pm Tour USS KIDD (DD-661) and Nautical Center, Photo Session, and Memorial Services aboard the KIDD
5:00 pm – 7:30 pm Free Time
8:00 pm – 10:00 pm Banquet, and “A Touch of Cajun” – Ms. Ann Vidrine
10:30 pm – 7:00 am Free Time

Monday, Sept. 27

7:00 am – 10:00 pm Newcomers check into hotel, register for reunion, then join group
7:00 am – 8:30 am Breakfast – OYO
9:00 am – 11:30am The Way It Is?”
12:00 noon – 1:00 pm Lunch – OYO
1:30 pm – 6:30 pm Free Time (Hospitality Room Open)
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm **Auction** of McKEAN Family treasures. (Bids limited to \$1000.00 per item.)
9:00 pm – 7:00 am Free Time

Tuesday, Sept. 28

7:00 am – 8:30 am Breakfast – OYO
9:00 am – 11:00 am “Where Do We Go From Here?”
11:00 am Adjourn
11:00 am – 11:30 am Pick up personal items in Hospitality Room
12:00 Noon Check out of Hilton Hotel

BON VOYAGE

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CAP/SHIRT ORDER FORM (Cut along dotted line.) **Make checks payable to reunion coordinator.**

GOLF SHIRT: \$24.00 + \$4.00 S/H

Quantity _____

Size: (circle one) SM MED LG XL XXL (add \$1.50)

Color: (circle one) Navy White

Item total: \$_____ S/H \$_____ Total:\$_____

T-SHIRT: \$16.00 + \$4.00 S/H

Quantity _____

Size: (circle one) SM MED LG XL XXL (add \$1.50)

Color: (circle one) Navy White

Item total: \$_____ S/H \$_____ Total:\$_____

CAP: \$16.00 + \$ 4.00 S/H

Quantity _____

Item total: \$_____ S/H \$_____ Total:\$_____

ORDER TOTAL: \$_____

Send order form and check to Reunion Coordinator, 2002 Chuli Nene, Tallahassee, FL 32301-5826