

# USS MASSEY DD-778 ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

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Volume I Issue 22

October 2009

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I congratulate Juan de la Cruz and his lovely assistant Loretta for hosting a great reunion in San Antonio. Through their untiring efforts, those attending enjoyed a wonderful and well-planned reunion in a beautiful, Spanish-American city.

A bus tour gave us an overview of the city. In my opinion, the showpiece of San Antonio is the Alamo with the River Walk a very close second. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the Mariachi Band that performed poolside at the hotel. An added treat for me was attending a Mariachi Mass at Mission San Jose.

The memorial service at the Admiral Nimitz Museum, followed by the dedication of the Massey plaque, was another highlight. Those activities were topped-off by a delicious lunch of Tex-Mex food, for which the area is noted, in the Nimitz Hotel ballroom.

I am thankful for the presence at the reunion of three plankowners: Bob Bergren, Ed Williams, and Jack Zagaros. Also present was Capt. Philip Rush, commanding officer 1963-65. I extend a “welcome aboard” to the first timers who attended. I sincerely hope that you enjoyed the reunion and look forward to seeing you at future ones.

Bravo Zulu to Juan and Loretta!

With that great reunion behind us, Tom and Carole Norman are working hard for another successful gathering of Massey shipmates in 2010 in Charleston, S.C.

Special thanks to Phil Smith for volunteering to host 2011 in Washington, DC and John and Judy Curtis volunteering to host 2012 in Indianapolis, IN.

I thank all the association members who are current with their dues and especially those who add a few extra dollars to help defray expenses. I thank, also, all members who promote the betterment of the USS MASSEY Association with the behind-the-scenes work that you do.

Tom Potoskie  
President

## **SECRETARY'S NOTEBOOK**

I think Tom has said what all who attended the San Antonio reunion feel. A great time was had by all.

For those members who haven't attended a reunion, I urge you to consider attending one of the upcoming ones. I realize that some are reluctant, as was I, to attend, fearing no one will know them. Trust me when I say that you will be welcomed by all who are there and most probably will find a shipmate of yours. We are a far-flung family and pride ourselves on family activities that all may enjoy.

We thank all of you who have brought your annual dues current. I know sometimes these things slip our minds (and if you are like me, so do a myriad of other things, or so my wife assures me), and we try to give you gentle reminders. If you are not sure of your dues status, you may email or call Sue Radziwon who maintains the database.

Presently, 43% of our members pay dues and support the association costs of the remaining 57%. If the dues create a hardship for you, please notify either me or Sue Radziwon so accommodation may be made.

Jerry Goodson  
Secretary and Editor

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## ASSEY HISTORY

non-dues paying members to one edition per year—the February issue. This will cut our expenses, without raising the annual dues and will still keep all informed of association

activities.

I will insert a reminder slip with this newsletter if

### **MASSEY HISTORY**

### **VETERANS' CORNER**

This section will return in the February edition of the newsletter.

### **MASSEY HISTORY**

The following is printed by permission of Mrs. Edward Kenny, widow of Edward Kenny, SO, 50-51. It is printed in its entirety and without editing.

Korea  
December 25, 1950

Dear Mom & Pop,

The time has finally arrived that I can write a letter of decent length, now that the events of the past few weeks have offered me a storehouse of material from which to choose. In the order of events since December 2<sup>nd</sup> when we departed from Sasebo, I will try to give you an accurate picture of what has taken place. I will try especially to relay this story and the events in the order in which they occurred. We had received various reports at Sasebo as to the situation in Korea

but none of us had any definite idea at the time as to how grave our position was along the front. We arrived at Hungnam on the afternoon of December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The port itself had somewhat of an attractive appearance in the late afternoon sun, rolling hills in the foreground gradually rising to the snow-capped peaks in the rear. A very picturesque scene indeed and a far cry from the way it looked December 24<sup>th</sup> and the week or so proceeding that evacuation day. When we arrived at Hungnam we received definite word that our forces were withdrawing from the north and that this particular port had been chosen as the final defense perimeter. We stayed at Hungnam until the 9<sup>th</sup> of December and then proceeded north to the port of Songjin where an evacuation of less magnitude was already in progress. In our company was the USS Lind. It is in the same class as ourselves. By late afternoon the last of the South Korean troops had been evacuated. This particular operation was accomplished without interference of the enemy, who entered the area shortly afterwards. When all of the allied vessels had withdrawn we steamed into the harbor to see if there was any enemy activity that we could possibly disrupt. We dropped anchor in the harbor, and along with the Lind awaited nightfall. Shortly after dark there were reports of enemy small arms fire striking our ship and we proceeded to go to General Quarters. At approximately the same time a truck convoy was reported heading for the town from the hills. Along with the Lind we proceeded into the inner harbor to see what we could possibly accomplish. The bombardment we laid into the area was sensational. In a period of five minutes we alone fired 180 rounds of five inch shells into the sector. I'm sure we will never know the actual results of that particular action because we had no spotter or observer to evaluate any possible hits that might have been made. It was a busy evening and getting to sleep was a blessing. The following morning we again proceeded into the area, only this time we did not enter the inner harbor. That evening we were relieved by another destroyer and then we headed back toward Hungnam and the operation in which we played a greater part and undoubtedly you have read about by now in the local papers. That is where we were when I sent that registered letter, I did not want to mention the object of that operation until it had been completed. Today the operation is entirely completed and therefore I will endeavor to relate it to you as we saw it, and also some of the evacuation activities in which we took part.

We arrived here in Hungnam for the second time on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December and it was on this particular day we received word that the armed forces ashore were planning a major evacuation. This was not rumor but straightforward information and each ship in turn would, during the course of events to follow, receive orders that would aid directly in making this operation a success. . . Our first position was down around anchorage number four with the heavy cruiser Rochester sitting at anchorage number five where she remained for the duration of the operation. We were about 12 miles away from the town of Hungnam and about 3 miles within the enemy's furthest line of advance on the shore. The captain wasn't feeling too happy about that particular position because we were too far away from town. We stayed in that position for approximately a day and a half and then we were ordered to proceed to station number 8 for active fire support of ground personnel. From that day forward until our so-called "D day" we remained in that position and did not have any rest until the complete evacuation had taken place. From that time we fired all night missions in support of the Army's 7<sup>th</sup> Division. The last few days we supported the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, 65<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division. We were in #8 which was approximately 2500 yards from the beach. The firing would begin every evening at ten o'clock and we would fire until seven o'clock the following morning, not much chance for heavy sleeping. This steady pattern on designated target areas was often interrupted by special calls from Army spotters and we would lay salvos into areas and buildings where the Chinese managed to penetrate. On one evening in particular one of our spotters called for a continuous illumination with star shells.

Before he could designate the actual number that he desired he was lost to our communications. The captain decided to supply a continuous illumination until the early hours of the morning. We discovered later the following day that the initiative taken on our part and the light we supplied during the night had been an excellent factor in saving a position. In all sincerity I say that the reports we received from the Army for our firing have been excellent. For instance on one mission alone the spotter reported a troop concentration in a ravine and told us to proceed to fire into that particular area. After firing two, four gun salvos, we were told to cease firing, mission accomplished. When the spotter finally came aboard our ship he said that those two salvos alone had killed 325 Chinese that they were able to account for. On another occasion that same evening in as many salvos, we completely demolished a huge building housing enemy troops. The distance to this target was further than from our house to Main Street, Flushing. That is on the records. This continued day after day, when we stopped firing, the Air Corps would continue during the day, from seven in the morning until evening when we would take over again. Now, understand while this is going on the troops are being evacuated in small groups which means the odds are going up for them and the enemy is getting closer to the beach. Each night as they withdrew a bit more, our rate of fire and fire missions would increase until we were firing more than one shell a minute from 10 o'clock at night until 7 o'clock in the morning. The Army's third division was left on the beach for the final phase. On the evening of December 23<sup>rd</sup> we received word that a complete evacuation would start the following morning. Every ship would participate. The battleship Missouri was sitting out about ten miles at sea firing broadsides into the hills to disperse enemy troops, and don't fall for the lousy propaganda that she leveled the city of Hungnam, because she didn't, and every last guy in this operation can vouch for it. It's admitted she played a big role in holding back troops, but the destroyers did the work on the city itself. The morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> all types of landing craft from LVCP's to LST's were streaming toward the beach. The object was for the big ships, the Missouri, the cruisers Rochester and St. Paul, to fire into the enemy lines, aided by air cover to hold the enemy at bay while our troops left the beach. The destroyers were not to fire a shot until the troops had left and the transports started out the outer channel to the sea; then we were to destroy everything in the sectors assigned to us. By noon the noise and smoke could be heard and seen for a tremendous distance. Before we knew it the beach, docks, everything was abandoned and we received the word to let go. We moved to anchorage #9 the closest assigned position in Hungnam harbor. We proceeded to blast away at cranes, docks, everything of value to the Chinese, while the larger ships fired over our heads into the surrounding hills. It was the noisiest place I've been at. To top our ship's glory off, at approximately 1:30 or 2:00 o'clock the ship in charge of the task group ordered the USS Massey—that's us—to enter the inner harbor and destroy a group of freight cars they knew were on a siding loaded with ammunition. The order was passed and we proceeded in, destroyed the cars and returned to our position at #9. Approximately a half hour later, we received word that more freight cars were observed. The word was passed by the Commander of the Task Group for all ships that were present to cease firing that the USS Massey was going all the way in to destroy more ammunition. We went in a little too far that someone thought we going to run aground. When the captain reversed engines we disturbed the mud on the bottom we were in such shallow water. Then we proceeded to open fire and really raised the devil. When we finally left we had everything burning furiously, cars exploding and the ammunition flying all over the place. The sun was starting to set as we pulled into the outer channel, clear sky on one side and smoke and fire on the other. Shortly after that the whole place seemed to explode. Evidently a whole load of ammunition let go at once. Tracer shells and smoke just rocketed skyward at least 2000 feet into the air. The concussion from the blast was powerful. Not long after that the sun set and the sky was glowing red. We settled down to a good night's sleep and the thoughts of the

excellent turkey dinner that we consumed today. It was the best Navy meal I ever ate. They had everything. All the transports and fighting ships are gone and we are patrolling off Hungnam to prevent any friendly ships from entering who might not have received news of the evacuation. You can well imagine what would happen if a friendly ship sailed in there now.

I'm sorry for not writing sooner than this but you can see we didn't have much chance for delivering mail once the opening phases got underway. I will write John and Kate a letter in a few days. You can let them read this one because I wouldn't be able to write another one this long for quite some time. I will take time now to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The best of Seasons. Greetings to you all.

Love to all, Ed.

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

Since the last newsletter, we have learned of the following deaths:

**William R. Grundy**, GM2, 51-55, March 14, 2009  
**John N. Higby**, EM3, 54-56, July 6, 2009

Let us keep our shipmates, their spouses, families or their significant others, who have entered into eternal rest, in our thoughts and prayers.

#### **THE BINNACLE LIST**

Since the last newsletter, thankfully, we have not learned of any additional shipmates, wives or significant others who are ill.

If you know of a shipmate or a spouse who is ill, please notify me so that the association may send a card. It is important to keep in touch.

#### **ANNUAL DUES**

Make your check payable to: **USS Massey Association** and mail it to:

Sue Radziwon  
538 70th St.

Darien, IL 60561-4052

Your association card and current roster will be mailed to you shortly after receipt.

Your dues cover the cost of newsletters and roster lists. As you know, postage continues to increase and our dues have not. If you are not presently a dues-paying member, please consider becoming one. If the cost of dues presents a hardship, please let us know.

A special "thank you" to those shipmates who included an additional contribution to help defray newsletter publishing costs with their dues.

#### **MAIL CALL**

No correspondence other than that included in the History section, was received since the last newsletter.

If you would like to share information with the membership or to relate stories or incidents from your time on board MASSEY, just email your correspondence to me at [ajgoodson@earthlink.net](mailto:ajgoodson@earthlink.net) or mail me at E. G. Goodson, 491 Fairway Drive, Somerset, MA, 02726-4008.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Give us a hand in finding more shipmates. The more we find, the more old friendships may be renewed and the more memories relived. You may send their names to me, Jerry Goodson; and I will mail them a copy of the latest newsletter, which includes information on how to become a member of the organization.

### **Ship's Store**

Procurement and Supply Officer, Butch Walters, has some MASSEY items on-hand and can order others in your size and colors of choice (in most cases).

To order or for more information contact: **Wilson (Butch) Walters, 906 Vine St., New Eagle, PA, 15067, 724-258-9223, [wcwalters2000@yahoo.com](mailto:wcwalters2000@yahoo.com).**

### **2009 Reunion**

The 2009 reunion was held in San Antonio, TX, September 13-17, 2009 at the Radisson Inn Midtown and was hosted by Juan de la Cruz, MM3, 60-62.

The following had a great time in San Antonio: Bernie Barilla, 54-56, and wife Mary Jane; Plankowner Bob Bergren, 44-46,; Glen Cawley, 44-46, and wife Gloria; Clarence Broussard, 62-65, and Alice Cyack; John Butler, 48-50, and wife June; First Time Attendee James Chessher, 50-54, and wife Dorothy; Marvin Christensen, 48-51, and wife Phyllis; John Curtis, 60-63, and wife Judy; Juan de la Cruz, 60-63, and Loretta Zarate; D'Wayne DeZiel, 50-53, and wife Elaine; George Dienes, 53-56, and wife June; Richard Eggert, 46-48; Al Figaszewski, 52-55; William Frizzle, 62-64, and wife Dolly; Jerry Goodson, 58-62; Robert Grigas, 51-54, and wife Priscilla; Don Heenan, 64-65, and wife Rachel; Edward Holderness, 52-54, and wife Theresa; First Time Attendee Frank Kirk, 48-52 and Daughter; Andy Kubishen, 63-65; James Leber, 54-58, and wife Loretta; Gerald McCloskey, 55-57, and wife Margorie; Tom Norman, 60-62, and wife Carole; William O'Byrne, 53-56, and wife Irene; Gerald Owens, 50-53, and wife Lee; Thomas Parker, 57-59, and wife Nancy; Paul Pavone, 62-66, and wife Kathy; Thomas Potoski, 63-66, and wife Mary Lou; Robert Prentiss, 49-52, and wife Ruth; Robert Radziwon, 68-71, and wife Sue; Gordon Risk, 63-65, and wife Teri; Philip Rush, 63-65; Jerry Sherbondy, 56-58, and wife Betsy; Philip K. Smith, 65-67, and wife Dallas; Philp R. Smith, 64-66, and wife Jerry; David Standley, 64-66, and wife Dolly; Russell Spangler, 57-60, and wife Patricia; Gordon Speer, 50-54, and wife Marilyn; William Thieke, 45-46, and wife Audrey; Thomas Truesdale, 70-72, and wife Kathy; First Time Attendee Robert Wagner, 68-71, and wife Deborah; Wilson Walters, 58-61, and wife Joan; First Time Attendee and Plankowner Ed Williams, 44-46, and Mary Ann DeWald; Plankowner Jack Zagaros, 44-46; Carolyn Zucco widow of Frank Zucco, 65-67.

## **Schedule of Events**

Monday, September 14, 2009

We had a bus tour of a charming city. The style of San Antonio was born of a heritage that combines the charm of the Old World with the spirit of the Wild West. You can taste the spice of life and relive the adventure that created legends.

We visited Mission San Jose where we experienced the beautiful architecture of the old spanish missions. Daily worship at the church still rings the same bells that called the Mission Indians to prayer. We walked the grounds, saw the historic grist mill and paused briefly to see the legendary Rose Window.

Afterwards, we visited the Mexican Market. This is the largest and oldest Mexican Market place outside Mexico City. This colorful place had dozens of shops selling handicrafts and souvenirs. We had lunch during this stop which gave us an opportunity to sample authentic TexMex food. I had a Margarita (What's more authentic than that?) and a Puffy Taco plate. It was great!

We next visited San Fernando Cathedral, which has been the spiritual center of San Antonio for over 200 years. This is the oldest cathedral in the United States and was recently renovated to include 3 new altars done in 24-karat gold leaf. We were allowed to go behind the main altar for a close-up view.

Next came The Alamo, "Shrine of Texas Liberty", first established in 1718 as the city's first mission. The chapel is one of the most photographed facades in the nation. It is best remembered for the battle that was fought there in 1836, forever changing the lives and attitude of the Texans.

Our last stop on the tour was the Buckhorn Hall of Horns and Texas Ranger Museum with its more than 120 years of history "Texas style." There were exotic collections of horns, antlers, cowboy memorabilia and fish from the Seven Seas; all this in a saloon dating back to the 1800's. They also had a large array of ice cold Texas beers, which many of us sampled. (Well, it was a hot day, you see.)

Back at the hotel we had a welcome reception, complete with a Mariachi band performing poolside. That was a really great surprise.

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

We mounted our faithful steeds (busses actually, with seats instead of saddles, which I certainly appreciated), and drove to Fredricksburg. There we toured the Admiral Nimitz Museum of the Pacific War.

Our memorial service was held at the museum, followed by the dedication of the USS MASSEY plaque which was installed on the memorial wall on the museum grounds. Our plaque is mounted in a very advantageous spot in the corner, where visitors may sit to rest and contemplate the hundreds of plaques displayed there.

After touring the Memorial Garden, we had a great lunch, barbecue Texas style, in the Nimitz Hotel Ballroom.

We had ample time to wander around Fredricksburg to stretch our legs, settle our lunches, and allow the ladies to release their pent-up shopping urges before again mounting our steeds.

We had an unscheduled stop in Luccan Boch township, the supposed home of Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings. The “town” had a row of porta-johns, a Texas dance hall, a general store that doubles as the post office and very little else, including population. I think that when Willie and Waylon left, they lost about one quarter of the town population. It was different (I think it was really a smaller version of the thriving metropolis of Woodstock, GA, complete with hitch rails and board sidewalks, near where I grew up in the 40’s and early 50’s,).

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

Association Business Meeting, (see below for details).

Banquet Dinner

Thursday, September 17, 2009

Checkout, vaya con Dios and see you next year in Charleston, South Carolina.

### **Business Meeting**

The annual business meeting was called to order by President Tom Potoskie, who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Tom Potoskie then asked all plank owners present to stand and be recognized. The three plank owners, Bob Bergren, Jack Zagaros, and newcomer Ed Williams stood to a round of applause.

Tom then asked that all first-time attendees stand and introduce themselves, their onboard time and home of residence. James Chessher, Frank Kirk, Robert Wagner, and Ed Williams were welcomed.

The president then called for officers’ reports.

Don Heenan, Treasurer, gave the financial report which showed a balance of \$11,399.14 on August 31, 2009. The report was accepted and filed.

Jerry Goodson, Secretary, read the minutes of the 2008 annual business meeting held in Traverse City, MI. The minutes were accepted as read and filed.

Butch Walters, Procurement and Supply Officer, reported that the unofficial total sales of MASSEY gear at the reunion was approximately \$600. He also reported that he had quantities of several items that he would put on discounted sale at the next reunion.

The association then gave special recognition to the 2009 reunion hosts, Juan de la Cruz and

Loretta Zarate, aided by James and Dorothy Chessher.

**Old Business**

No old business.

**New Business**

A suggestion was made from the floor by June Dienes to send the newsletter by email to those who have an email address to save postage expenses. During the discussion, the Secretary/Editor pointed out that this had been tried, unsuccessfully, in the past. The major drawback to this approach being that members tend to change their email addresses rather frequently and fail to keep him informed of these changes creating lots of wasted time tracking people down. Also, the file is too large for many of the internet providers and it would be difficult to know who did not receive it. He also stated he would take it under advisement.

Tom Potoskie next called for volunteers to host the 2001 reunion.

John Curtis proposed Indianapolis, IN and gave a brief presentation of possible activities and attractions in the area.

Phil Smith proposed Washington, DC and gave a presentation of facilities and attractions of that area.

Bill O'Byrne suggested that Baltimore Inner Harbor be also considered for inclusion in any Washington, DC reunions.

Capt. Philip Rush suggested Philadelphia, PA as a reunion site if someone would volunteer to host it.

A general discussion of the proposed sites was held with questions from the membership and answers from the proposed hosts. After the discussion, a hand-vote was called for each site and a tally taken by Master-at-Arms Paul Pavone.

Washington, DC received 22 votes; Indianapolis, IN received 14. John Curtis was asked if he would agree to host the 2012 reunion in Indianapolis and he did so.

Tom Norman gave a status report for the 2010 reunion to be held in Charleston, SC., with proposed dates of: 9/12-15, mid-October or 10/31-11/4. A hand-vote was taken, tallied by the Master-at-Arms with 10/31-11/4 being selected.

Phil Smith made a motion that we donate \$500 to the Tin Can Sailor organization for the preservation of historical ships. The motion was seconded and approved by hand vote. The Treasurer was directed to send a check for \$500 to the Tin Can Sailor organization.

There being no other business to be brought before the membership, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting and approved by voice vote.

## **2010 Reunion**

The 2010 reunion, hosted by Tom and Carole Norman, will be held in Charleston, South Carolina October 31, 2010 to November 4, 2010.

Details are still being developed, but we do know the following: The hotel will be either the Holiday Inn or the Radisson Inn. Both have free shuttle service from the Charleston airport to the hotel. Room rates will be either \$89/night at the Holiday Inn or \$79/night at the Radisson. These rates will be honored for 3 days before or after the reunion.

Possible activities could be a tour of Old Town Charleston, and possibly a plantation, and a tour of the Yorktown Museum with lunch.

Firmer details will be available in the next newsletter to be published in February, 2010. These details are given primarily for planning purposes and are subject to change as conditions and negotiation dictate.

If you live in the Charleston area and would like to volunteer to help with this reunion, you may contact Tom and Carole at 539A Allens Mill Rd, Yorktown, VA 23692-2239, (757) 877-9035. I'm sure they will appreciate your assistance.

## **2011 Reunion**

The 2011 reunion will be hosted by Phil Smith in Washington, DC. Phil has already inquired as to room rates at several hotels in the area. As we all know, there is much to be seen in our nation's capitol, with many having free admission, since we own much of the town. The surrounding area offers many possibilities as well. More information will be published as it becomes available.

If you live in the Washington, DC area and would like to volunteer to help with this reunion, you may contact Phil at 221 Oak Rd., Drums, PA 18222, (570) 788-3305, [www.smitty778@epix.net](mailto:www.smitty778@epix.net). I'm sure he will appreciate your assistance.

## **2012 Reunion**

The 2012 reunion will be hosted by John and Judy Curtis in Indianapolis, IN. It will probably be held in conjunction with a War of 1812 re-enactment festival held in October each year. There are a number of interesting activities in the Indianapolis area. More information will be published as it becomes available.

If you live in the Indianapolis area and would like to volunteer to help with this reunion, you may contact John and Judy at 408 W. Kem Rd., Marion, IN 46952-2056, (765) 662-1185. I'm sure they will appreciate your assistance.