



Leaky Weeks Almanac

USS John W Weeks
Association

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Dear Weeks Shipmates and Friends

This year's reunion in Harrisburg PA was a roaring success! I would like to give credit to Dave Kurtz for working with our planners in organizing the tours for our members. He also was responsible for selecting the excellent entertainment for the business meeting and banquet. We had several new people come to this reunion; however, we also missed several of regular attendees due to illness. Our turnout was slightly less than we had last year. The "Welcoming reception" was a hit, it gave our members a chance to renew friendships and make new ones in an informal setting.



A four foot scale model of the Weeks was donated to the Association by Eric Perryman. The model was built for his Dad who served aboard the Weeks during WWII. A picture is posted on the website. The model will be on display at the Maritime Museum in Port Huron, MI. Later it will be moved to the Weeks Museum in New Hampshire. Dennis Derr visited us on Wednesday and shared with us various memorabilia that his Dad passed down to him. His Dad served during WWII.

The membership voted to have next year's reunion in Port Huron Michigan. The reunion will be hosted by Alan Cutcher. The reunion is scheduled for September 23-27, 2015. All the details will be in the May newsletter and on the website.

There were changes to our officers that will take place this year and in 2015. First Bruce Neidemire stepped down as Treasurer and will be replaced by Jerry Wester. Jerry will also hold his current job as Secretary until a replacement can be found. In the future dues and monies should be sent to Jerry. I want to thank Bruce for serving the last five years as Treasurer; I am going to miss working with him. Also, I want to thank Jerry for stepping forward to take this job. The next newsletter in 2015 may have a new format and the way it is distributed. It will be handled by Dave Kurtz and Ray Goodmuth. See Dave's note on newsletter distribution. I will be stepping from the position of President at the 2015 reunion. I will be working my way out of the position over the next year. I served for twelve years, now it is time for someone else to take the job. At this point in time I don't have replacement, the Association will be ran by the VP and Directors if no one volunteers for the position. For awhile I will still maintain the Weeks website.

In the meantime, if there are concerns or if you just have questions; feel free to contact me or other Officers.

Thanks again for your support,

Len Budzynski

NEWSLETTERS AND DUES

As discussed at our business meeting at the reunion and as stated in our by-laws, members are reminded of the following policy. ONLY MEMBERS WHO ARE UP TO DATE ON THEIR DUES WILL BE RECEIVING THE WEEKS NEWSLETTER WITH ONE EXCEPTION. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PAY DUES, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT ONE OF THE OFFICERS AND TELL THEM THIS. Shipmates in this category will not be forgotten and will continue to receive the newsletter. This policy will go into effect for the first newsletter in 2015 and all ensuing issues. Dues are \$25 per year and checks may be made payable to the John W Weeks Association and forwarded to our new treasurer and former secretary Jerry Wester at 2590 N. Sylvan St., Little Canada, MN 55117. Questions on this policy may be addressed to any of the officers listed on the back of this newsletter.

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Port Huron, MI REUNION

Sept 23 - 27, 2015

We are looking at several hotel options.

Reunion Forms will be in the May 2015 newsletter and on our website.

See you there!

Attention!

Please make sure that we have your correct home address and email address! We continue to have newsletters returned because the member moved and didn't notify us or the post office of their new address or change their email address. If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, contact Dave Kurtz.



WEEKS MUSEUM MEETING

Alan Cutcher, Board Director, has been diligently working with the WEEKS Museum and State Park in Lancaster, New Hampshire relative to housing John W Weeks memorabilia whenever that sad time arrives that we must dissolve our association. He has set up a meeting at the WEEKS Museum for June 26, 2015. Please mark your calendars if you are interested in attending. All board members have been invited and any shipmate in the area is also welcome to attend the meeting. Details will be forthcoming at a later date but we do know that descendants of John W Weeks will be attending including his Great-grandson who is a volunteer at the museum.

Please let Alan know if you are planning to attend this. He can be contacted at the telephone number or email address listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Plans are in the making for the possibility of holding a mini-reunion in conjunction with the Weeks Museum meeting. Details will also be coming on this at a later date.

HARRISBURG-HERSHEY REUNION 2014 REVISITED - *By Dave Kurtz*

I thought I would take a stab at writing the traditional article on the reunion. Ray and Harriett Goodmuth have written them over the last couple of years but they had already written an article in this newsletter on the Goodmuth-Wester trip to Normandy Beach so they get a pass.

Overall, I thought it was a very good reunion. I have heard nothing but positive responses. The accommodations and food were good and everyone seemed pleased with the tours and events. I had a minor disappointment with the reader board. The hotel agreed to run photos of the Weeks on the reader board located near the hotel registration area throughout the week if I could put them on a jump drive. That was done but they appeared to be technically challenged on this. Oh well. The hospitality room was nice and was overstocked as usual. It seems that as we get older as a group we eat and drink less which is not a bad thing.

Let me stress the importance of your comments both positive and negative. They are extremely important on making each reunion a better one. Take a minute and forward your thoughts to me or any of our officers. I know that Alan Cutcher started working on the Port Huron reunion upon arriving home from Harrisburg. I think that this will be a reunion you won't want to miss.

On future reunion sites, Alan has said for several years that we should consider smaller cities. I have always agreed with him and the Harrisburg Reunion appeared to confirm the positives of a smaller city. Harrisburg was the smallest city ever chosen by us for a reunion. It also brought to light the importance of having our reunions at a site where at least one shipmate lives or is very familiar with the area. Live and learn. I think we are on to something here. I have a feeling that the next reunion will include an ice cream social.

I think we found the right touch for the Welcome Dinner. A fairly light meal and a time for shipmates and family to renew friendships and conversation appeared to work out well. I was going to give an introduction to the area but saw that all seemed to be enjoying each other in conversation so I let it go. The group is fortunate because you didn't get to hear my sick jokes. Fear not. I have saved them. I did prepare booklets for the hospitality room with useful information on the area. I know that many of you read them but I am thinking of sending them out in a separate email/ mailing especially if you did not get a chance to read the local history tidbits. Bob

Michaels has helped in adding some interesting information from what was originally written.

The new and improved Gettysburg Battlefield experience was a good one. The private concerns and the National Park Service were in discussions for years in attempting to come up with a finished product that we experienced. Many of us have taken in Gettysburg many times but they

don't match up with the experience now. The redone Cyclorama is fantastic and I always feel that I could spend an afternoon in that room.

The movie, gift shop and museum are also good improvements but without a doubt the biggest difference is the tour guides. Our tour guide Les was extremely knowledgeable and his guidance brought us an understanding of the three day bloodbath like never before. We often forget that in that brother to brother battle that really determined the outcome of the war and the direction of our country, over 51,000 died. It was the bloodiest battle in our country's



May I have your undivided attention

great history. The only downside to the improvements is that we are removed from downtown Gettysburg and we must satisfy our hunger in the onsite cafeteria.

Judy and I didn't go on the Hershey Tour but everyone told us it was a good one and included lots of chocolate at the tasting event. I drove my van to Chocolate World at lunchtime to see if anyone would want a ride anywhere but I had no takers so I sat down with some and enjoyed a good hot fudge peanut butter sundae with them. It was indeed a full day tour. One surprise to me was that more people were not interested in shopping at the Chocolate World gift shop or at the Hershey Outlets.



HARRISBURG-HERSHEY REUNION (Continued)

It was so nice that the sons of two shipmates came to our reunion to share various items. Both found out about our reunion by finding our newsletter on the Net. Eric Perryman drove up from Washington, D.C. to give us a four foot model he had made for his Dad. Alan has made arrangements for this to be our first donation to the Weeks Museum. Dennis Derr also came to the hospitality room on Wednesday and shared with us various memorabilia that his Dad passed down to him. A special thanks to both these guys. John and Debby Santopietro invited all attendees to their house for a picnic spread and what a spread it was. We had found out at our Mini-Reunions in Harrisburg what fantastic hostesses these two are. I was really pleased that shipmates from all eras attended this function. I believe 23 were in attendance. Thanks John and Deb for the invite and for the delicious food including John's special corn chowder.



OK class...listen up!



Relaxing at John & Debbie's home

clowns are veterans and the one was "Boss Clown" who is retired Navy.

I knew the group would enjoy Jay and the Jingos. They are great entertainment at a good price. Jay performs regularly before veterans groups and is always booked months ahead.

I think all who attended got a good flavor of the Harrisburg Area and understand why we have now been discovered. The area is making many top ten lists of places in the U.S. to live and to retire to. We have the small city of Harrisburg, small communities and towns all growing together, many things to do and lots of history, easy access to all large venues and cities, and, if you feel like a drive in the country, all you have to do is drive one mile in any direction. Open land, small farms and mountains are in view when the humidity lets up. Shipmates and significant others sampled local products such as white birch beer and Yuengling beer, the oldest brewery in America located north-east of Harrisburg.

I hope you enjoyed your time here as much as I did in helping to make it enjoyable. And thanks to all those who helped to plan the reunion especially Carolyn of the Military Reunion Planners and Len.

It sounds like several people took tours of the State Capitol and experienced the beauty of that special building. I heard one small complaint that a couple's tour time got messed up due to some bad information. These things have happened to us in our travels and I wish they didn't happen but unfortunately they do. We had a group of 22 attendees travel to Gabreillo's Italian Eatery for good food and good service including a server with a great sense of humor.

Some shipmates also took in Troeg's Brewery where we enjoyed the craft beer but ate way too much food. It was a nice feature that our hotel was located where many could walk to an eating place or take a very short drive to one.

Two clowns from the Zembo Shrine added some levity to our business meeting by breaking in to the meeting room to the surprise of most. Paps and Soks provided balloons to many and did a skit or two. Both



Our officers hard at work



Leaky Weeks Almanac





OUR VISIT TO NORMANDY - *By Ray Goodmuth*

Recently, Harriett and I along with shipmate Jerry Wester and wife Shirley, embarked on a 12 day river boat cruise on the upper Seine located in the Normandy area of France. We booked our trip through Vantage Worldwide Travel and boarded our boat, the MS RIVER VENTURE, at Conflans which is located a short distance from Paris. While we enjoyed the many scenic towns and villages along the river including the city of Paris, our primary goal for making this trip was to experience the Normandy coast and its beaches that were involved in the D Day landings as this year marks its 70th anniversary. The mission was coined Operation Overlord by the planners. The beach assault was originally scheduled for June 5, 1944, however, weather conditions forced postponement until the next day.



Our tour guide, Naomi, did an outstanding job of giving us interesting facts related to that fateful battle. She kept us thoroughly informed as we worked our way through the major points of interest including the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial where too many soldiers, sailors and airmen are laid to rest. Adding to the drama of D Day were stories related to us by Naomi about her grandparent's experiences fighting against the Germans with the French Resistance.

Our first stop was the Memorial Cemetery located just above Omaha Beach. A short walk from the cemetery grounds gives one an expansive view of the beach and waters edge that on D Day ran red with American blood. Standing on the overlook one can easily understand how formidable a task it was for a soldier to slog his way into France from a landing craft, with a fully loaded pack through cold water, loose sand, beach obstacles and finally over the bluffs to gain a foothold on French soil, all the while taking intense cannon, mortar and machine gun fire from fortified German positions. We returned from the overlook to the cemetery to witness a memorial service honoring those brave souls sadly located just behind us under the many gravestones. Two fellow passengers from our boat presented the ceremonial wreath. One of the two, Jerry from California, was stationed aboard a Navy tanker in the Pacific during WWII. We used our remaining free time to walk the perfectly aligned rows of headstones, taking note of names and hometowns. One particular marker made obvious by its gold lettering is that of General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. It's ironic that after having survived the first wave of D Day landings with his men on Utah Beach, he died of a heart attack a month later outside Saint Mere Eglise.



One can't help but to be emotionally moved by the supreme sacrifice these men and women gave for their country. It stuns the senses to see so many grave markers neatly laid out on a sea of green knowing that beneath each one lays the remains of a brave American. We followed our memorial visit with a delicious lunch at the Hotel Restaurant de la Mer located in a scenic fishing village known as Grandcamp-Maisy. After lunch we traveled to Pointe du Hoc where US Army Rangers accomplished the seemingly impossible mission of scaling steep cliffs with ropes and ladders to destroy a coastal battery while under intense enemy fire. What's visually striking about the point is that the landscape was left intact after the battle. The area is littered with deep depressions from both aerial bombs and naval shells. Scattered among the numerous craters are damaged and destroyed bunkers. The irony of this assault was that once the Rangers secured the point there were no big guns to be found as they had been previously moved some distance inland. They were later located by the Rangers and disabled with thermite grenades. A



few hundred yards back from the point, near the entrance to the site, are the notorious hedge rows. Close study of these centuries old natural land borders helps one to better understand why it was so difficult to advance quickly against the enemy. They are quite dense with thick, tangled and impenetrable growth making it difficult even for tanks to traverse.

From Pointe du Hoc, we drove over to the town of Arrormanches which is located on the shores of Gold Beach. It was here that shortly after a beachhead had been established, the British began construction on a temporary artificial harbor to enable supply movement from ship to shore. A similar harbor was constructed off Omaha Beach by the US.





OUR VISIT TO NORMANDY (Continued)

Both were an impressive accomplishment considering the enemy's ongoing efforts to throw the allies back into the sea and the extreme weather conditions that the channel is known to generate. Remnants of the harbor remain just offshore and are easily seen from the town. Located at the shore break are washed up barges from the original construction.



Later in the afternoon we left Arromanches for our return trip to La Havre where our boat was docked. Along the way, we passed Juno and Beach Sword Beach. These along with Gold Beach were assaulted on D Day by the British, Canadians and Free French troops.

A NEW RECRUIT - *By Jean Fitzgerald*

The night was quiet and dark. The ship was the destroyer tender Yosemite (AD-19), length 530 feet, beam 73 feet, 46 officers, 979 crew. The year was 1970, and we were sailing alone from our homeport, Naval Station Mayport, at Jacksonville, Florida, to Guantanamo for refresher training. I had retired to the sea cabin and was awakened by a voice at the door saying, "Captain, the port lookout thinks he saw a flare in the distance." I walked to the pilot house a few yards away, confirmed the lookout's report, and ordered the officer of the deck to bring the ship around and head in the direction the lookout had reported.



In twenty minutes or so, we sighted a small boat and three men on its deck frantically waving to us. The sea was too rough for us to put a boat in the water, so we eased alongside and lowered some lines over the side. The three men jumped into the water, seized lines, secured themselves, and were hoisted aboard.

The owner of the boat was twenty-four; the other two men were younger. The owner reported that they had sailed from Michigan, had used up their fuel and run down their batteries, and that the boat had been damaged and dismantled in heavy weather. He asked me if we could tow the boat. I said we could not but that we could sink it or report its position. He chose the latter. As we resumed course

and speed, we sent out a report giving the name and location of the boat and identifying the three men we had rescued. (The boat was not within U. S. Coast Guard territory.) Our passengers were treated as welcome guests. On their second or third day on board, the boat's owner, who was a college graduate and well-spoken, asked to meet with me. As we met and sat down to talk, he said he was impressed with the ship's operations and personnel and wanted to join the Navy. At first, I was stunned by this statement, but I soon began to appreciate it, unexpected as it was. We were still underway, and after an exchange of messages with higher command (our first message began, "This is a very unusual request"), we received permission to enlist him and did so. We kept in touch for a while, and over the months that passed I learned that he attended and finished boot camp and later entered the Reserve Officer Training Corps program, graduating at the top of his class.



More than forty years have passed since that quiet and dark night, but the memory lives on.

Captain Fitzgerald passed away on December 7, 2014, see page 7 for obituary .

NEW MEMBERS

- | | | | | |
|---------------|----|---------|-------------|--------|
| Daniel Nutter | E4 | 68 - 70 | Donald Shaw | 62- 62 |
|---------------|----|---------|-------------|--------|



If you know of any of our shipmates or family members that are sick, in the hospital, or deceased; please contact Bob Miller or Len

THE ON THE MEND

Vinnie Dematteo - Prior to our Harrisburg reunion, Vinnie Dematteo fell in a parking lot and hit his head and broke both wrists. Vinnie and Thelma rarely miss a reunion and they were missed in Harrisburg. I know that we all wish Vinnie a fast and complete recovery. He is at home now and he and Thelma are looking forward to the reunion in Port Huron. Get well wishes can be forwarded to him at 7417 Blue Skies Drive, Spring Hill, FL 34606 or vdematteo@tampabay.rr.com.

Taps

Dudley Overmyer - Ron DePass informed us of the passing of shipmate Dudley Overmyer on October 6. Dudley was one of the original Weeks crew members. Condolences may be sent to his widow Kristie Overmyer at 6508 Crosswoods Circle, Citrus Heights, CA 95621-4307.

Carl Santee - Bob Mauger informed us that shipmate Carl Santee passed away on September 27 at Hundred, West Virginia. Carl was a BT2 who served on the Weeks 1968-70. He also did a tour of duty in the Army. Carl was predeceased by his wife Paula.

Bruce Campbell - Bruce Campbell's sister Sandra Hays informed us that Bruce passed away at the VA Hospital on July 13. Bruce rarely missed attending a Weeks reunion. He served on the Weeks 1951-54. Sandra's address is 1461 Five Forks Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455-4246 and her telephone number is 757-36

Jean Fitzgerald, Captain of the USS JOHN W WEEKS [DD 701] passed away at the age of 88 on December 7, 2014. He served on the WEEKS from 1963 -1965. The WEEKS was his first Command was his favorite Command he admitted. He retired from the Navy in 1974 after 31 years of service.

While in the Navy he was in charge of three destroyer divisions and later served at the Pentagon and at the War College and after retirement he made his home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Within 2 days of retiring he became president of Tracor Marine which ran a full service shipyard and a fleet of oceanographic vessels.

In 1980 he founded Broward Navy Days, an annual event in Fort Lauderdale, that promotes the presence of the Navy and Coast Guard in the area. In 2012 the Captain and his wife, Carol moved to Jacksonville, Florida to be closer to their two sons and grandchildren.

The Captain attend the WEEKS Reunion in Charleston and the Reunion in Jacksonville. In Jacksonville he was honored by a reception held by his former shipmates and he told a lot of stories that even his wife and sons never knew about.

Alan Cutcher,YN2 always mentioned the positive effect the Captain had been on his life and he became close friends of the Captain and his wife, Carol.

Funeral services were held December 12th and he was laid to rest at Jacksonville National Cemetery. Condolences can be made to Carol Fitzgerald, 5200 San Jose Blvd., Apt. 5, Jacksonville, FL 32207

USS JOHN W WEEKS MODEL DONATED TO OUR ASSOCIATION



This four foot scale model of the Weeks was donated to the Association by Eric Perryman. He had the model built for his Dad who served aboard the Weeks during WWII. Howard Perryman was one of the original Weeks crew members.

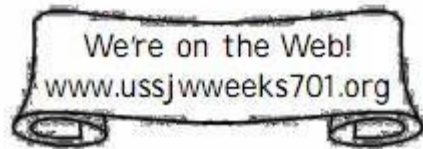
The model will be on display at the Maritime Museum in Port Huron, MI. Later it will be moved to the Weeks Museum in New Hampshire. Additional pictures of this well built model is posted on the website.



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