To the Mount McKinley shipmates and their families

Time is like a flowing river, no water passes beneath your feet twice, much like the river, moments never pass you by again, so cherish every moment that life gives you and have a wonderful New Year.
This Newsletter is dedicated to all the men who served on these extraordinary ships in service to their country whether in time of war or peace.

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**Navy News**

**USS Somerset (LPD 25)**

81202-N-QM691-1048 VALPARAISO, Chile (Nov. 19, 2018) Sailors and Marines man the rails aboard the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25) as the ship is underway off the coast of Valparaiso, Chile during a parade of ships, Dec. 2, 2018. Somerset is part of Littoral Combat Group One, which is deployed in support of the Enduring Promise Initiative to reaffirm U.S. Southern Command's long standing commitment to the nations of the Western Hemisphere. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Andrew Brame/Released)

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This Newsletter is dedicated to all the men who served on these extraordinary ships in service to their country whether at times of war or peace.

President’s Report

Fellow shipmates:

I would like to begin with wishing everyone a very happy and healthy new year. We continued with our traditional new year’s eve seafood dinner and a small family gathering. Champagne at midnight, and we are generally in bed around 1:00am. Pork and sauerkraut on New Year’s day and the new year has officially begun. Plus, we always give thanks to our military who are stationed around the world, and for our first responders here at home.

Hopefully, everyone had the opportunity to watch a variety of celebrations around the world and see the fireworks. And that everyone was able to wish their families and friends a happy new year.

On reunion news, as of this writing, we don’t have a hotel locked in just yet, but I am working on a couple possibilities that look good. I will have details for the next reunion in the next newsletter.

As everyone knows, we are in the midst of a government shutdown, well not a complete shutdown, but very close. However, it is my sincere hope that both sides will soon come to an agreement that is best for the country and everyone involved. So many people and businesses are being affected. People who rely on public assistance are not seeing any funds in their banks, small businesses are beginning to feel the pinch. So again, we are all hoping for the best.

January is the month that many new office holders will be taking the oath of that office. Here is Ohio, and in many other states, new governors, congressman, senators, etc will be sworn in and begin their terms in office. I wish them all success as they begin their service.

Membership Secretary Wes Brubacher has some important information for the new year, so please take a moment to read what he has published.

Again, my best wishes to you all for a great 2019. I wish you all well and look forward to the next reunion. And speaking of reunions, I have received few proposals from hotels in Jacksonville and I will be making a decision by the end of this month and I will be able to get all the information to Mike to publish in the next Masthead.

Best wishes to all,

David Long
**History of The USS Mount McKinley**

*(part 1)*

**USS Mount McKinley (AGC-7/LCC-7)** was the lead ship of the Mount McKinley class of amphibious force command ships. She was named after the highest mountain in North America. She was designed as an amphibious force flagship, a floating command post with advanced communications equipment and extensive combat information spaces to be used by the amphibious forces commander and landing force commander during large-scale operations.

**Launch and commissioning** Mount McKinley (AGC-7), was laid down as Cyclone, a transport, on 31 July 1943 by North Carolina Shipbuilding Company, Wilmington, North Carolina; launched on 27 September, sponsored by Mrs. T. L. Lainer; renamed Mount McKinley on 27 December 1943; and commissioned at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard on 1 May 1944, with Captain Roy W. M. Graham in command.

**World War II** After a brief shakedown cruise, she departed Norfolk 8 June 1944 for Hawaii, arriving at Pearl Harbor on 27 June. Mount McKinley got underway on 20 July, for Palau with Amphibious Group 5 embarked.

The assault force arrived off Peleliu 15 September, with ComPhibGru 5 directing the landing of the 1st Marine Division. On 28 September, Mount McKinley proceeded to nearby Ngesebus Island to provide shore bombardment coordination.

Mount McKinley left the area 14 October after Peleliu and the other main islands of the chain were secure. After a stop at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, the ship sailed to San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf, for the assault on Leyte and Ormoc. While in San Pedro Bay, the force was under constant air attack, but Mount McKinley was not hit. On 15 December the ship participated in the invasion of Mindoro and proceeded to Lingayen Gulf to direct shore bombardment on 9 January.

After directing an unopposed landing at San Narciso, near Subic Bay, the command ship returned to Leyte Gulf.

On 21 March 1945, Mount McKinley proceeded to Kerama Retto off the southern coast of Okinawa. Six days prior to the last major assault of the war, Mount McKinley directed the landing of the 77th Infantry Division. For the next two months, the ship remained at anchorage at Kerama Retto, threatened by constant air attacks. On 22 May, she sailed for Saipan, thence to Pearl Harbor and San Francisco, arriving in CONUS 23 June.

**Postwar** In overhaul for two months, she deployed 20 August. Arriving Sasebo 23 September, she participated in landing occupation troops there and at Kure. Returning to the United States 12 February 1946, she sailed in the early summer for Bikini Atoll where she was flagship for Operation Crossroads. Admiral William H. P. Blandy, commanded Joint Task Force 1 during the atomic tests, set his flag aboard Mount McKinley. Following the atomic bomb test in July, the ship operated out of San Diego for the next 18 months.

In early 1948, she was the command ship for the atomic bomb test at Eniwetok. Upon completion of these tests, she returned to San Diego to resume coastal operations.
**Korean War** On 20 May 1950, *Mount McKinley* was underway for WestPac to conduct training operations with the 8th Army. On 26 June, the ship proceeded from Japan to direct the landing of American reinforcements at Po Han at the beginning of the Korean War. In early September 1950, General Douglas MacArthur was on board, directing the amphibious assault at Inchon which forced the Communists to retreat north. The next assault was against the heavily mined port of Wonsan.

When communist Chinese troops entered the war, and American troops were pushed back to the Hungman beachhead, *Mount McKinley* assisted in the evacuation. In late January 1951, she assisted in the transfer of thousands of Korean refugees to Cheja Island.

On 7 June 1951, *Mount McKinley* sailed from Yokosuka and entered Mare Island Naval Shipyard 3 August for an extensive overhaul. *Mount McKinley* departed for WestPac, 6 March 1952, returning to the States 30 January 1953. While in Mare Island Naval Shipyard, a helicopter deck was installed on the fantail.

*Mount McKinley* sailed again, 27 October 1953, for her third tour of duty in the Korean War area, arriving Yokosuka 16 November. From then until her departure for the States 30 July 1954, she was involved in fleet and amphibious exercises off Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. After arrival in San Diego 18 August, the remainder of the year was spent in local operations and a month-long training exercise off Hawaii in October.

In the spring of 1955, *Mount McKinley* served as flagship for Operation Wigwam, an underwater atomic bomb test in the central Pacific. After a yard overhaul in the summer of 1955, the amphibious flagship returned to WestPac in January 1956 for a three-month period. In April, she was press observer ship for further nuclear tests.

**Atlantic and Mediterranean service** On 3 June, the ship returned to San Diego and was detached from the Pacific Fleet 1 September. She arrived Norfolk 20 September via the Panama Canal.

The following 9 January, the command ship deployed to the Mediterranean. While in the eastern Mediterranean, the ship rescued the crew of a burning Greek fishing vessel, extinguished the fire, and towed the damaged vessel into port. After conducting NATO and fleet exercises in the Mediterranean, she returned to Norfolk 19 June. September and early October were spent in Operation Strikeback and other NATO exercises in the eastern Atlantic. *Mount McKinley* was anchored in Portsmouth Navy Yard to provide command and control for parts of the 'Orange' opposition naval forces during Operation Strikeback.

In January 1958, *Mount McKinley* deployed to 6th Fleet, operating with the Amphibious Ready Group in NATO and U.S. exercises. Due to return to the States in June, the ship's departure was delayed due to increasing tensions in the Middle East. The ship served as an afloat headquarters for the Marine force landed in Lebanon during the crisis of July 1958. She returned to Norfolk 16 August.
This Newsletter is dedicated to all the men who served on these extraordinary ships in service to their country whether in times of war or peace.

Deceased Shipmates

James Schaadt
of Nazareth, Pa.
Member #1222 on Mt Mac ‘65-‘67 RD2 OI Division

Dwight Janzen,
of Spokane, Washington
Member #238 ‘48-’53 ME3 R Div.
Dwight was a long time very active Association member, Past President, Secretary, Nominating Chair and a generally good person.

Wes Weeks,
Of Cullman, Alabama
Member #839 ‘49-’51 RMSN CR Div.

Welcome Aboard!

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**USS Mt McKinley Financial Statement as of 12/31/18**

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<td>Net 2018</td>
<td>$-</td>
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<td>Total 2017</td>
<td>$21,832.67</td>
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From your Membership Secretary—

"Dues Due" emails, and letters for those who don't have email, have been sent to 57 Association members who owe dues for 2019. It would be greatly appreciated if your dues, along with the requested update information, are sent to me as soon as feasibly possible. The update information is particularly important if any of your contact, as well as the other, information has changed during the past year(s). Please, make your dues payment check out to the USS Mount McKinley Association, not to me.

Remember the "Shipmate Story" that was done about now 95 year old Bob Mattia, 44-46, back in the Spring 2018 edition of the Masthead? Very recent word from his son Tony says that Bob is doing o.k. at the nursing home where he is now living. And Tony adds that "the hat still makes its presence heard!" The hat he refers to is one of our musical Anchors Aweigh hats that was sent to Bob for his birthday.

It’s been a long time since an update of Association “Life” member information has been attempted. Therefore would all you “Life” members please send me your name, current address, mailing address if it is different, telephone/cell number and email address. Any other pertinent information about your present status would also be helpful.

Think Jacksonville and we'll all meet there this September!

Wes Brubacher, Mt Mac '60-'61

Words of wisdom

As we grow older and wiser we realize a $300 or $30 watch - - - they both tell the same time.

Whether we carry a $300 or $30 wallet/handbag - - - the amount of money inside is the same.

Whether we drink a bottle of $300 or $30 or $3 wine - - - the hangover is the same.

Whether the house we live in is 300, 3,000 or 30,000 sq. ft. - - - the loneliness is the same.

And we realize our true inner happiness does not come from the material things of this world.

Whether we fly first or economy class, if the plane goes down - - - we go down with it. Whether we fly first or economy class, if the plane reaches its destination - everyone arrives at the same time.

Therefore . . . we should realize that when we have mates, buddies and old friends, brothers and sisters, with whom we can chat, laugh, talk, sing, talk about north-south-east-west or heaven and earth -- that is true happiness!
USS Mt McKinley Association Our Purpose:
To Promote Patriotism and Camaraderie among those who served on board the USS Mt McKinley during that ship’s 25 years and 10 months active service to the U.S. Navy from May 1st 1944 to (commissioned) to March 26th 1970 (de-commissioned)

2019 Reunion in..
Jacksonville Florida

We are home to 22 miles of beaches, 40 miles of the Intracoastal Waterway, 50 public boat ramps, and the longest stretch of the St. Johns River in the state of Florida. Jacksonville is the birthplace of the Salt Life movement and Florida’s best water-sports getaway!