



WINTER 2015

USS WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION

2014 Reunion in San Antonio, TX Highlights



Front Row (L-R): Nick Hannibal, John Brown Back Row (L-R): Tony Reiter, Ronald Aubry, Herbert Crask, Robert Andler, Joe Variot, Don Seibold, Aubrey Pridgen, Arthur Rinetti, George Gackle

The 2014 reunion in San Antonio, Texas was very well attended (we even ran out of t-shirts!). The trips and tours were great! Thanks again to our reunion committee Tom Reiter, Joe Reiter, and Tim Dege. We also thank Mary Catherine Rudolph for providing a great selection of treats for breakfast in the hospitality room. A final word of thanks is due to all of you who donated to the dedication of the new plaque at the Nimitz Museum.

During the three days in San Diego, the following events were enjoyed:

- Welcome aboard pizza party
- National Museum of the Pacific war where we dedicated a new plaque to honor the USS West Virginia
- Mission San Jose and the Alamo
- Strolls along the Riverwalk and some great food
- Banquet dinner where it was decided that we will have a reunion in 2015 in New Orleans, LA
- Memorial service for crew members who have passed since the last reunion

At the 2014 reunion, taps was played for the following crew members who passed since our last meeting:

Clyde McClain
John Rauschkolb
Marvin Childress
Harry LaRosa
Ellsworth Bergman
Robert McCullough

Don S. Martin
Edward Gomes
Frank Mazur
Ellsworth Woody
Denis Mikkelsen
George B. Torpey

Edward Huber
Dennis Anderson
Victor Delano
Gery Porter
Margot Variot
Carol Gackle

We're getting together again in 2015!

With another successful reunion under our belts, there is no sign that anyone wants to give up! We're planning to have the 2015 reunion in New Orleans, LA.

The reunion committee will be traveling to New Orleans this winter to find some great tours and a place for us to stay.

At the last reunion we thought we would try to put together a reunion that included our sister ships, USS Colorado and USS Maryland. Thus far, we haven't been able to get any contact lists for members of those crews. If you have any leads, please get in touch. If you have a way to publish a note in any of the veteran's newsletters, please let me know - I will provide contact information that can be published. More details about the reunion will be published in the Spring 2015 newsletter.

Easter Sunday 1945

This was a black day in the Wee Vee's case history. It was a lovely day all day over the Island of Okinawa (350 miles from Japan) and things were pretty quiet considering that we were giving the Japs plenty of hell all day long. This was "L" day and the troops had made landings on the Island which is by the way the largest one of the Ryukyu chain of Islands, and they had met little or no opposition up to the time of this writing. It was Easter Sunday and in the States I imagine that the people were worrying more about what they were going to wear in the Easter Parade rather than what was happening in the war zone. But for us our here so close to Japan we don't even realize what Easter, Christmas, or anything else is.

About 0800 on the night 1 April there was 100 planes set out from the Japanese homeland and started down here to see what they could do to even up the score for the hell that we had been raising in their own front yard. Combat air patrol got 77 of these before they got near the main battle force but there were about 30 of those left that got thru to us (the main Battle Fleet) and seeing the Wee Vee setting here looking the NEWEST AND BIGGEST in this force of old Wagons I guess he thought this is my baby so consequently it ended up us being his baby! The starboard battery had opened up and had hit him but instead of coming down he gained altitude right over the ship and at about 2000 feet he leveled with flames coming out of his engine and dived in a straight line for the ship. He hit us on the port side right amidships. He hit among the flag and signal hal-yards of the signal bridge and a group of 20's and a 5" director and really raised hell topside, but he went right through the O2 deck down to the mess deck, fouled up the galley and put it out of commission, the engine tore down another deck put the laundry and tailor shop out of business. He was also carrying a 250 lb bomb with him and that went thru the press shop down to the 2nd (about 20 feet from the radio men's compartment) but did not go off, and a good thing too as the radiomen were all in their sack as a result of having stood watch and watch off for better than 2 weeks.

Total damage done was 4 men killed, 23 injured or seriously burned, galley, press shop, laundry, 5" director, port side of signal bridge, 2 20mm mounts all out of commission. This is the Wee Vee's first hit since December 7, 1941 and in BATDIV 4 a 100 percent hit average. The WEST VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, AND COLORADO, have all been hit by suicide planes now, the Wee Vee only has had one so far and the others two but give us time we know where we stand and we also realize that there is a war going on out here even if they do seem to have a bit of trouble in the states realizing that little fact. ----- HAPPY EASTER if it is at all possible to be happy - maybe in the states but I have yet to see a happy face out here.

Written by Robert Sutherland
2 April 1945
at Okinawa, Japan

USS West Virginia Small Stores

We maintain an inventory of USS West Virginia related items that are available for sale at our reunions or via mail. Use this form to order. Send the completed form along with a check or money order to USS West Virginia Association, Attn: Mike Mullins, 21397 Springwell Drive, Ashburn, VA 20148

*Shipping is a flat \$8.00. Please note available sizes. Call Mike Mullins with any questions or concerns at 610-952-3542.

Item	PRICE	QTY. & SIZE	TOTAL (\$)
USS West Virginia (BB-48) Coffee Mug	\$6.00		
USS West Virginia Polo Shirt pre 1941— L, XL, 2XL	\$25.00		
USS West Virginia Polo Shirt post 1941—M, XL, 2XL	\$25.00		
USS West Virginia Denim Shirt (short sleeve) - L	\$35.00		
USS West Virginia Denim Shirt (long sleeve) - 2XL	\$38.00		
USS West Virginia Jacket— XL	\$35.00		
USS West Virginia (BB-48) Baseball Cap	\$20.00		
Battle of Surigao Strait Baseball Cap (I Was There) w/ Eggs	\$15.00		
Battle of Surigao Strait Baseball Cap (I Was There) w/o Eggs	\$15.00		
Battle of Surigao Strait Baseball Cap (My Father Was There) w/ Eggs	\$15.00		
That Night at Surigao (book)	\$20.00		
The Mountain State Battleship USS West Virginia (Book)	\$18.00		
Mountaineer Battlewagon (Book)	\$7.95		
USS West Virginia Crosses the Equator 1940 (Book, Reprint)	\$25.00		
USS West Virginia Crosses the Equator Again 1944 (Book, Reprint)	\$25.00		
USS West Virginia Reunion 2004 Tucson, AZ—hatpin	\$4.00		
USS West Virginia 1923/1944 two ship's hatpin	\$4.00		
American Flag Sticker	\$1.00		
USN Iron/Sew patch	\$2.00		
USMC Keychain	\$2.00		
USN Keychain	\$2.00		
SHIPPING	\$8.00	1	\$8.00*
		Grand Total:	

Shipping Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Iwo Jima 70th Anniversary

The Iwo Jima Commemorative Committee is having a three day program in and around San Diego, CA from March 4-8, 2015. They will have tours of Camp Pendleton and MCRD San Diego. A memorial service and banquet will also take place. If you are interested, contact Gail Chatfield at 858-792-8897. The event is open to family members as well. They're putting together a historical display and are looking for memorabilia, photos, and stories from those who were present during the Iwo Jima invasion. If you'd like to contribute to the historical display, please contact Dan Zepeda at 951-201-6251.

Annual Dues

January is here and it is time again for everyone to send in their annual dues.

Membership is open to anyone and we love to have new members at our reunions. **Annual membership dues are \$15.** Donations are also welcome and sincerely appreciated. This form and your payment will serve an additional purpose for us. It will let us know who you are and what your connection is with the USS West Virginia. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Mike Mullins by phone: 610-952-3542 or by mail at the address below.

Dues will cover the calendar year starting in January.

Send a check or money order payable to **USS West Virginia Association** to: USS West Virginia Association, Attn.: Mike Mullins, 21397 Springwell Drive, Ashburn, VA 20148. Or pay via credit card through our donation page at: <http://www.usswestvirginia.org/donate>.

Please send this section/form regardless of payment method.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership Dues \$ 15, and/or Donation Amount \$ _____

Connection to USS West Virginia: Crewmember Family Friend

If you are a crewmember, please include the following information:

Division _____ Years Aboard 19 _____ to 19 _____

Highest Rate While Aboard _____ Pearl Harbor Survivor: Yes No

All of this information is voluntary. If you would like to send more information or pictures, please send an additional sheet. We would love to add your information to the ship's history.



USS West Virginia Association

Mike Mullins – Curator

21397 Springwell Drive

Ashburn, VA 20148

Phone: 610-952-3542