



"THE MOUNTAINEER"
IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48) REUNION ASSOC.

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The main function of the "MOUNTAINEER" is to keep the crew members of *West Virginia* informed of the events sanctioned by our association and to promote the lore of which each of us had shared.

Our association does not have, or want to have, a dues program. We subsist off the revenue which is derived from our reunions. We are a non-profit organization and as such; we use our funds yearly to purchase a wreath to be placed December the 7th at the Remembrance Garden of the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in honor of all our shipmates, past, present and future.

We also, in addition to publishing the "MOUNTAINEER" twice between each reunion, use our funds to support other memorials that are common to our tenets.

We believe that the primary purpose of our association is to keep the memory of our ship and shipmates alive as long as one of us is still able to do so.

**DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT
MAILING ADDRESS?**

If not please advise us.

From the Quarter-deck!

Officer of the Deck

Robert S. Kronberger

Another great reunion has now come to pass. The fellowship and sea stories was probably greatest we have ever had to date. We had a tour to San Francisco Fishermen's wharf, the waterfront, Chinatown and other great sights. Another tour took us to Napa Valley wine country, where we saw how grapes were grown and wine was made. There was a lot of sampling done at the vineyards and wineries. The country side was beautiful for that time of the year. The next day we boarded the buses again for San Francisco Bay then drew sea legs for a boat trip around the bay.

Friday night we had a "Shipmates Night" topped off with refreshments and a night of entertainment. Our banquet on Saturday night was one to be remembered for a long time. While we dined, our strolling violinist treated us to beautiful dinner music. After dinner we had our remembrance ceremony, led by Postmaster Jim Downing with his crew consisting of Lou Adams, Stu Hedley, Ernie Mangrum, Wallie Morgan and Bill Mc Comas's Daughter. Field Music, Sgt. Dick Fiske sounded "Taps" .Next on the program a

(Quarter-deck, Cont.):

class act song and dance team, they were tremendous. After a few corny remarks and stories from emcee, Ken and June Butts held their famous drawings. On the block was cash, three nights of hotel bill paid, a beautiful quilt by Mrs. Wallie Morgan and Don Seibold provided two reproductions of the W. Va. at Surigao Strait.

June and Ken Butts, with the tenacity of the IRS, handled the raffle situation, therefore aiding in our financial support for the reunion. The funds raised from the raffle along with the profits of the refreshment bar, hosted by Harry Fessler, Joe Kinnaman, Tom Bates, Mickey Michenovich and Ken Butts enabled us to stabilize our budget for the year. I am deeply and humbly grateful to all who were gracious enough to help in making our reunion a great success. We also had a great hospitality room which was full most of the time. We kept the oasis opened as long as there was at least one person to enjoy it. The hospitality room was our central meeting and lounge area.

Sunday morning we had a fine religious service, led by Jim Downing, Stu Hedley and John C. Brown. After the services we were served a delightful breakfast before our business meeting. It was decided that we would hold our year 2000 reunion at Mobile Alabama. We presented Dick Fiske with a check for \$100.00 to provide the wreath that we place on the Arizona Memorial each December the 7th in memory of all our departed shipmates of all times.

(Quarter-deck Cont.)

As the meeting was closing Bob Kronberger announced that due to his age it would be necessary for him to make the 1999 reunion at Salt Lake City the last one that he could manage. He will be of assistance of whoever is selected to be his relief.

THE 1999 REUNION

The 1999 reunion will be held at the Wyndham Hotel in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah, it is a full service luxury hotel. It is just a few steps away from the Salt Palace Convention Center, across the street from the Delta Center, and a block away from Temple Square.

At this reunion we will be holding a memorial service for our Medal Of Honor Recipient, Captain Mervyn Sharp Bennion, Commanding Officer of *West Virginia*, who lost his life at Pearl Harbor. We will also honor all *West Virginia* crew members who have passed away over the years. We will have more on this in our next issue of the "Mountaineer".

CAPTAIN MERVYN SHARP, U.S. NAVY, DECEASED
Born 5 May, 1887, Vernon, Utah, for conspicuous devotion to duty, extraordinary courage, and complete disregard of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty, during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl Harbor, by Japanese forces on 7 December, 1941. As commanding Officer of the *U.S.S. West Virginia*, after being mortally wounded, Captain Bennion evidenced apparent concern only in fighting and saving his ship, and strongly protested against being carried from the bridge.

USS WEST VIRGINIA REUNION ASSOCIATION
Financial Report for 31 October, 1998

Cash Balance 10/31/97	\$ 6555.10
Inventory On Hand 10/31/97	400.00

Income 1998

Small Stores Sales	\$ 400.00
Reunion Registrations	2115.00
Cash Donations	460.00
Reunion Sales	
(Bar.Raffles)	1218.00

Total Income 1998	<u>\$4193.00</u>	\$11148.00
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Expenditures 1998

Small Stores From	
Inventory	\$ 400.00

Donations

W Va Wreath \$100.00

USS Pearl Harbor \$100.00

Navy Memorial \$50.00	250.00
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Postage	96.00
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News Letters (2 Editions)	2431.62
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Misc. Reunion Expenses	316.17
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Raffle Winner (Mailed)	50.00
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Reunion Entertainment	1225.00
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Total Expenses 1998	<u>\$4768.76</u>
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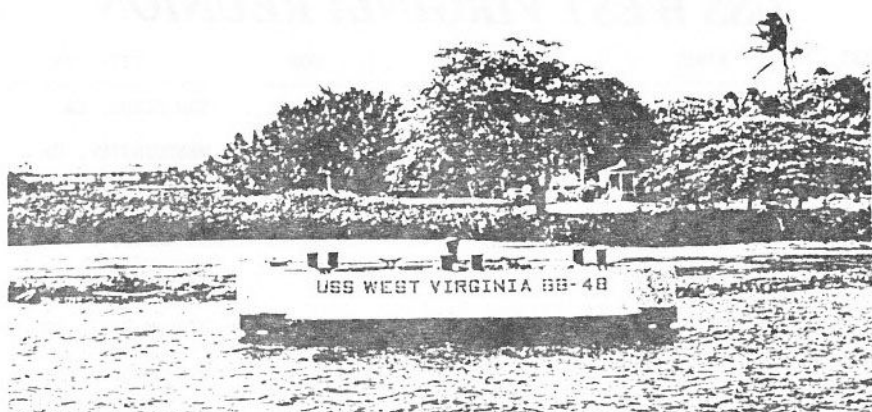
Total Assets 1998

4768.76

\$6379.34

Robert S. Kronberger

Robert S. Kronberger, Reunion Coordinator



Mooring quay of the West Virginia along Battleship Row at Ford Island. Stan Cohen

COMMANDING OFFICERS USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48)

Captain Thomas J. Senn, USN:	1 Dec 1923 – 5 May 1925
Captain Arthur J. Hepburn, USN:	5 May 1925 – 5 Jun 1926
Captain Wat T. Cluverius, USN:	5 Jun 1926 – 15 Jun 1928
Captain Orin G. Murfin, USN:	26 Jun 1928 – 15 Jun 1929
Captain Edward D. Constein, USN:	15 Jun 1929 – 26 Jun 1930
Captain Cyrus W. Cole, USN:	26 Jun 1930 – 12 Jan 1932
Captain Walter S. Anderson, USN:	12 Jan 1932 – 14 Dec 1933
Captain Harold R. Stark, USN:	14 Dec 1933 – 17 Oct 1934
Captain Roscoe F. Dillen, USN:	17 Oct 1934 – 9 Jun 1936
Captain William R. Furlong, USN:	9 Jun 1936 – 21 Jun 1937
Captain William O. Spears, USN:	21 Jun 1937 – 14 May 1938
Captain Henry M. Jensen, USN:	14 May 1938 – 5 Jan 1940
Captain Henry T. Markland, USN:	5 Jan 1940 – 12 Aug 1941
Captain Mervyn S. Bennion, USN:	12 Aug 1941 – 7 Dec 1941
Lieutenant Commander William White, USN:	7 Dec 1941 – 15 Nov 1942
Commander Levi J. Knight, Jr., USN:	15 Nov 1942 – 10 Jan 1944
Commander Gerald J. King, USN:	10 Jan 1944 – 15 Jan 1944
Captain Herbert V. Wiley, USN:	15 Jan 1944 – 2 May 1945
Captain Raymond W. Holsinger, USN:	2 May 1945 – 17 Jan 1946
Commander Richard S. Andrews, USN:	17 Jan 1946 – 9 Jan 1947

MUSTER LIST AT SANTA ROSA USS WEST VIRGINIA REUNION

LAST	FIRST	DIVISION	YOB	CITY, ST
ADAMS	LUTHER	6; A	1940-41	SAN DIEGO, CA
BAGLEY	AARON	N	1940-41	WESTMINSTER, CA
BATES	TOM	ASSOCIATE MEM.	.	SANTA ROSA, CA
BOBICK	ARNOLD	B	1938-41	EL CAJON, CA
BOYD	ALBERT	4th; L	1941	AMARILLO, TX
	TOM	S	1944-46	JERSEY CITY, NJ
BRAY	RAYMOND	R	1938-41	VICTORILLE, CA
BROWN	JOHN	CY	1939-43	LAFAYETTE, LA
BUTTS	KEN	B	1940-41	MT. VIEW, CA
CAMM	JAMES B.	6th; R	1938-44	CAMARILLO, CA
CAOLO	MICHAEL	VO4	1939-40	DALLAS, TX
CRUMPLER	CHARLES	CR	1940-41	SMITHFIELDS, NC
DOWNING	JIM	2 MAILCLERK	1933-43	COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
FESSLER	HARRY	6B	1941	WINDSOR, CA
FISKE	RICHARD	MARINE	1940-43	HONOLULU, HI
FRENCH	JOHN	C	1942-45	SACRAMENTO, CA
GACKLE	GEORGE	S	1944-46	EDINA, MN
GALLUP	BOB	HONORARY SHIPMATE	.	La PLATA, MD
GALVIN	PATRICK	7th	1944-45	GREAT FALLS, MT
GOEBEL	CHUCK	7th	1944-46	SANTA ROSA, CA
HANNIBAL	NICK	B	1934-38	FAIR OAKS RANCH, TX
HAYNES	G.H.	E	1936-40	FT. WORTH, TX
HEDLEY	STU	3rd	1940-41	SAN DIEGO, CA
HILL	KEITH	BAND	1941	HONOLULU, HI
JONES	FORREST	F	1943-47	CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA
KADER	LEWIS	SSML3C	1943-46	UPLAND, CA
KINNAMAN	JOSEPH	S	1940-41	SANTA ROSA, CA
KOCH	GEORGE	A	1943-46	MILWAUKEE, WI
KOVACHEK	E.E.	AVIATION UNIT	1944-45	REDLANDS, CA

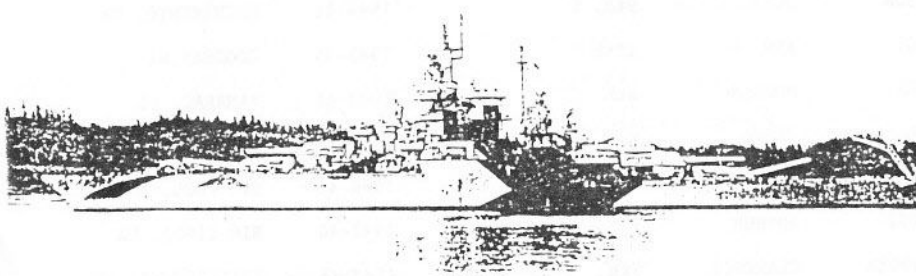
(Roster Cont.)

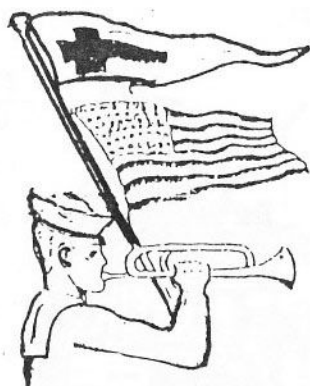
LAST	FIRST	DIVISION	YOB	CITY, ST
KRONBERGER	BOB	B	1940-43	BIG BEAR CITY, CA
MANGRUM	ERNEST	5th; VA	1939-41	BOISE, ID
MARTIN	R.A.	H	1940-43	MEHAMA, OR
McCOMAS	BILL	E	1936-40	VERDEN, OK
McNEILL	JIM	S	1940-45	BARBERTON, OH
MEYER	ALTON	CY	1945	BATON ROUGE, LA
MILLER	DON	M	1940-41	SAN FRANCISCO, CA
MORGAN	LESTER	R	1944-46	SPOKANE, WA
	WALLIE	N	1939-41	FEDERAL WAY, WA
NELSON	ERNEST	1st; R	1942-47	STOCKTON, CA
NEWBERG	PETE	E	1942-45	BAKERSFIELD, CA
NORMAN	WALTER	MARINE	1941-42	PINE LEVEL, NC
O'NEILL	JACK	N	1939-43	CHULA VISTA, CA
ODOM	ARCHIE	CS	1935-39	KENT, WA
PASSOTH	FRED	F; FLAG	1936-41	SONOMA, CA
PAUL	JOE	F	1938-40	BENICIA, CA
PLAISANCE	JEMY	MARINE	1943-45	NEW IBERIA, LA
PORTER	GERY	M	1941	HEMET, CA
POTTER	JAMES	3rd; R	1929-36	LAS CRUCES, NM
POULSON	JOHN	9th; S	1944-46	SACRAMENTO, CA
POWELL	KEN	11th	1943-45	GOODMAN, WI
PULVER	MORGAN	8th	1943-46	TAMARAC, FL
REECE	JAMES	E	1934-38	GRAPEVIEW, WA
REITER	TONY	4th	1944-46	ST. PAUL, MN
RINETTI	ARTHUR	F	1943-46	RIO LINDA, CA
RITTINGER	CLARENCE	5th	1943-46	CHILLICOTHE, OH
ROCKETT	DICK	H	1941	TACOMA, WA
ROSEBOOM	WILLIAM	11th	1943-45	NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

(Roster Cont.)

LAST	FIRST	DIVISION	YOB	CITY, ST
SEIBOLD	DON	A; B; E; M	1944-46	BROOMFIELD, CO
SIMS	R. T.	S	1942-45	AMARILLO, TX
SNYDER	LLOYD	BAND	1941	NEWTOWN, PA
SPENCER	HERB	11th	1943-46	SANGER, CA
STEFFEY	G.W.	S	1942-45	SPADE, TX
THORPE	JAMES	4th	1944-46	MILWAUKIE, OR
VARIOT	JOSEPH	5th	1944-46	MANCELONA, MI
	MICHAEL	.	.	SEABROOK, TX
WEBB	ARLOW	AVIATION	1943-45	WESTLINN, OR
WILKINS	DON	1st	1940-41	ANTIOCH, CA
WOODY	ELLSWORTH	YOEMAN C; R	1935-38	WILLIAMS, CA
WYMASTER	GEORGE	F; FLAG	1936-41	CHARLESTON, SC

BROWN	John	2nd & B	1944-46	Nelsonville, OH
STUMP	Phillip	B	1940-41	Medford, OR
MICHENOVICH	Tom	R	1940/41	Hermosa Beach, CA
PROFFITT	Floyd C.	4th		Santa Barbara, CA
WOOD	"Ced"	A & B	1940-41	Moraga, CA
SARAGUSA	Joe	11th	1944-46	Overland Park, KS
RAUSCHKOLB	John	CS	1938-42	San Rafael, CA





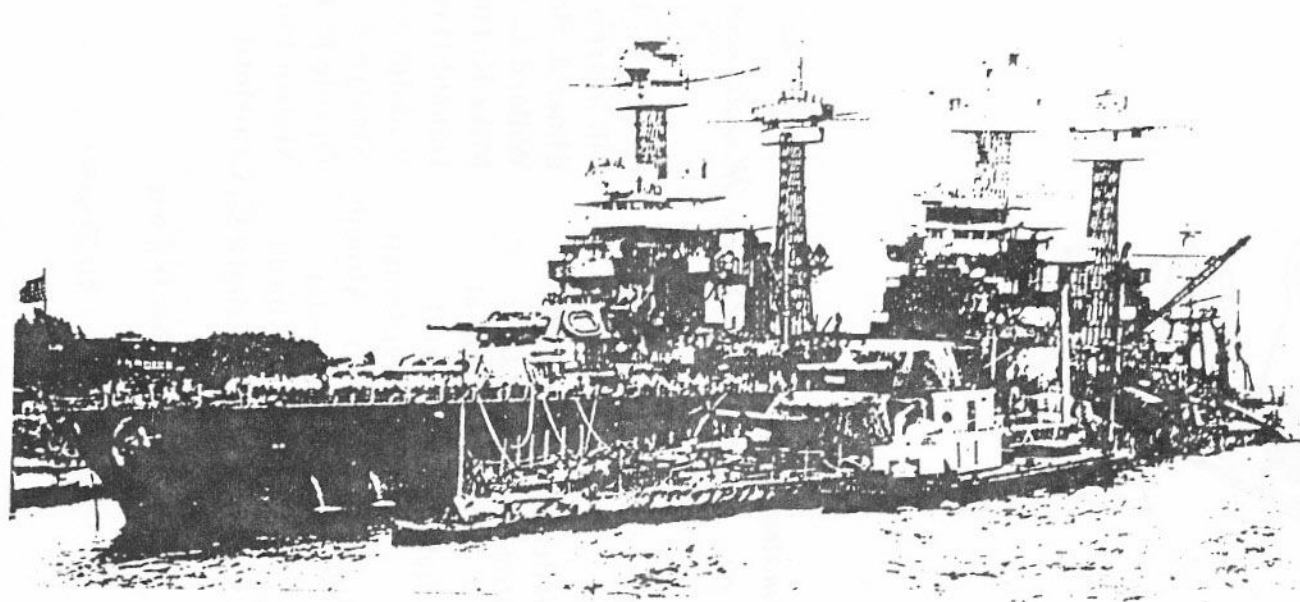
*"Our Shipmates That Have Entered into Eternal Rest
Since Our Last Edition Of The Mountaineer"*

Vernon Sparks	James Edgar Timm	Ralph M. Beebe
Lowell Noble	Herbert Ruiz	Bill Morris
Robert F. Goetler	Samuel Ferguson	Elmer J. Bobick
Floyd H. Bruton	Robert E. Dace	Willard L. Erwin
J. C. Mook	Douglas Connal	Mike Kotsmith
Edmund Caufield	George Boroff	Donald Davidson
Earl Bishop	William Hardeman	Rudolph Gobbeo
Charles Nicholas	W. R. "Blitz" Altman	Strulyn C. King
Norman Lee	James T. Fowler	Orville R. Glass
Stanley Jacqot	William C. Gibson	Melvin Portner
Liano S. Andreoletti	Richard C. Crawford	

"May They Rest In Peace"

"They are Gone But Not Forgotten"

AFTER THE FIRES WENT OUT



The *Tennessee*, relatively undamaged, looks down on the *West Virginia*, sitting on the bottom.

PORTHOLE VIEW OF HAWAII

For many years the Hawaiian Islands were just a remote spot on a map in the minds of most Americans. For the many Americans who had only read about, heard about, or watched movies of the American Territory of Hawaii, many were convinced that these faraway places in the Pacific Ocean were exotic, peaceful, sleepy, balmy, easy going tropical islands of paradise. Customarily most Americans thought only of grass shacks, dugout canoes, surfboards, expansive sandy beaches, beach boys, luaus, hula dances and grass skirts. Many of these views were erased by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. While a good bit of this lore was true, the sailors manning the ships of the Pacific Fleet ;along with those who were stationed ashore, they seemed to have a far different view of Hawaii as a vacation paradise .

My first observation of the Island of Oahu was in the early thirties as the Pacific Fleet visited this beautiful oasis of the sea during their spring maneuvers. At that time the majority of the ships were required to anchor out in the deep waters off Lahaina Roads. It was a long ride ashore to liberty in Honolulu by motor launch; of course it was welcomed after the many days underway. My ship, a destroyer, was lucky as we were assigned a berth near the Dole Pineapple Factory.

Hawaii seemed like heaven at that time, there was very little naval activity there, other than Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, the Submarine Base , Naval Air Stations at Ford Island, Kaneohe Bay and John Rodgers Airport (Now Honolulu International Airport), the Ammunition Depot at Lula Lei and several other naval commands.

The main attractions for the wealthy tourists vacationing from the mainland and other parts of the world, mostly on the luxurious Matson Liners with their five day

(Porthole View of Hawaii, Cont.):

voyages to Hawaii from the California mainland was visiting the sandy beaches of Waikiki (The sand was hauled there by ship to cover the coral beach), Diamond Head, the Aloha Tower, and other places of exciting interest while investigating the local color and culture.

The visiting sailors, shore based sailors and other military personnel stationed around the island concentrated in the down town section around hotel street on their off duty leisure time. Please do not confuse yourselves by believing that the name Hotel Street alluded to the tourist trade bedrooms. It did of course have hotels that were bedrooms, their primary purpose was for short periods of occupancies. The other main recreation areas for the visiting sailors was the honky-tonk bars along the well walked narrow street, the most prominent bar of course was Bill Ledders (it looked like one out of a south seas movie). The most famous of the eateries was Wo Fats, whose preferred customers were the Chiefs and Warrant Officers, along with the officers off the merchant ships; the Black Cat on the other end of Hotel Street across from the YMCA was the one most frequented by enlisted men. Of course you are wondering why the enlisted men did not visit the beautiful and luxurious Royal Hawaiian or the Moana Hotels and sit under the banyon trees for relaxation, mainly they could not afford the existing tariff and secondly this part of the island was generally frequented by officers, the upper crust and scions of society, in fact this part of heaven was unofficially out of bounds for the likes of me.

The local Kanakas were extremely vicious in their dealings with the military, every once in a while you would read where a dead sailor or soldier was pulled out of the canal along River Street. Liberty on Hotel

(Porthole View of Hawaii Cont:)

Street was in reality a test of your health or endurance., only the fittest of the species survived. Every part of the street was filled with danger. It was either the Shore Patrol, the cops, bouncers, bar girls, cab drivers, houses of ill repute, island toughs; or sailors, soldiers or marines carried away with inter-ship or inter-service discussions that put your well being in jeopardy. If you passed this gauntlet safely you would more than likely lose out to the islands biggest hurdle -- booze.

My next visit to the island was a couple of years later when I was on my way to conquer new liberty ports in the orient. Nothing much had changed on Oahu, the native houses for the most part were still crudely constructed buildings on stilts, the poi still tasted like wallpaper paste, they were just beginning to work on one of the cane fields next to the shipyard that ended up two years later as Hickam Field, an Army Air Base. This time the transport I was riding, the Henderson, was tied up in the shipyard. the only transportation to town was by bus, the Wahoo Cannon Ball or the 8 seater cabs leaving from the main gate. The liberty routine was the same as before.

My next experience on this beautiful tropical isle was during the military build up period at the end of 1940, just prior to WWII. Hickam Field was completed, as was Block Center and Aiea Hights swimming pool. The situation in town was pretty much the same with the exception that I was now a 1st Class Petty Officer, and as such I had more money to spend, overnight liberty and as most servicemen , we were now accepted out at Waikiki Beach. We could sit under the banyon tree and hobnob with the swells (of course they didn't like it much). The influx of ships, sailors and marines made the island paradise pretty well crowded and the

(Porthole View Of Hawaii, Cont.)

favorite watering holes became overcrowded. The military, realizing this, began to construct recreation centers and curtail liberty. Once in a while you could see the China Clipper arrive out by the Pearl City Tavern or you could beer up at the tin roof in the Shipyard. Of course you were always welcome at the Marine Canteen or the Submarine Base for a cool Primo or Royal Beer.

The natives were always happy to see the ships put to sea as were the shore duty sailors, resident marines and soldiers. By the time the war started the local entrepreneurs made sure that there were a lot more bars, restaurants and houses of ill repute available for those willing to pay the price. The Shore Patrol and Police got meaner, and prices for everything got inflated. There were more fights among the servicemen, and the local hoodlums became afraid to venture into the established military liberty domains.

11

The start of WW₂ brought many changes to the island paradise, martial law was declared, the island became a staging area for the Pacific Area. The influx of troops, the buildup of the shipyard and all the other military establishments caused the liberty for the seagoing sailors to be more curtailed and revised to a four section schedule, with only one section of a ships company going ashore at a time (which usually meant that if you were lucky, you may get ashore every other time the ship entered port). Liberty hours were usually from 0900 to 1800 when all service men were required to be off the streets. Blackout went into effect at dusk. The bars limited the visiting sailors to 2 drinks at a sitting, then they were required to leave the establishment. The lines leading into

(Porthole View of Hawaii, Cont.):

the downtown recreation centers (houses of ill repute) consisted of men of all ranks and services. Officer and Enlisted alike were required to observe to no line-jumping protocol. The Military built new recreation areas at Fort De Rūsey and further down Kapalani Blvd. to a place called the Breakers. All you could buy there was beer and food. The Military brought out name bands of the era, and the USO also attracted some warriors. The submariners and airdales were automatically placed in the Royal Hawaiian Hotel or at Kaneohe Bay for their stay in port. They lived the life of a plutocrat while the rest of us labored to get our ships ready to go to sea again. The restaurants had a hard time feeding the local populace and really did not want to be bothered by the troops. This was easy to understand as most of their food came from the mainland and they only received what the military allowed carried in the freighters servicing the area. This type of liberty and recreation prevailed for the duration of the war.

A side note is that the IRS had a problem trying to decide how much tax revenue was owed by the body shops of area around Hotel, River and Barretainia Streets. Their solution was to look at the records of the laundry establishments, find out how many towels they processed for the various houses, they multiplied that by three dollars and established a tax base.

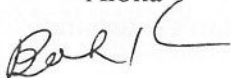
After the war was over I made several trips into Hawaii and things had changed considerably, Honolulu was like downtown San Diego. The living style there was just about like the mainland only more expensive and harder to get around.

(Porthole View of Hawaii, Cont.):

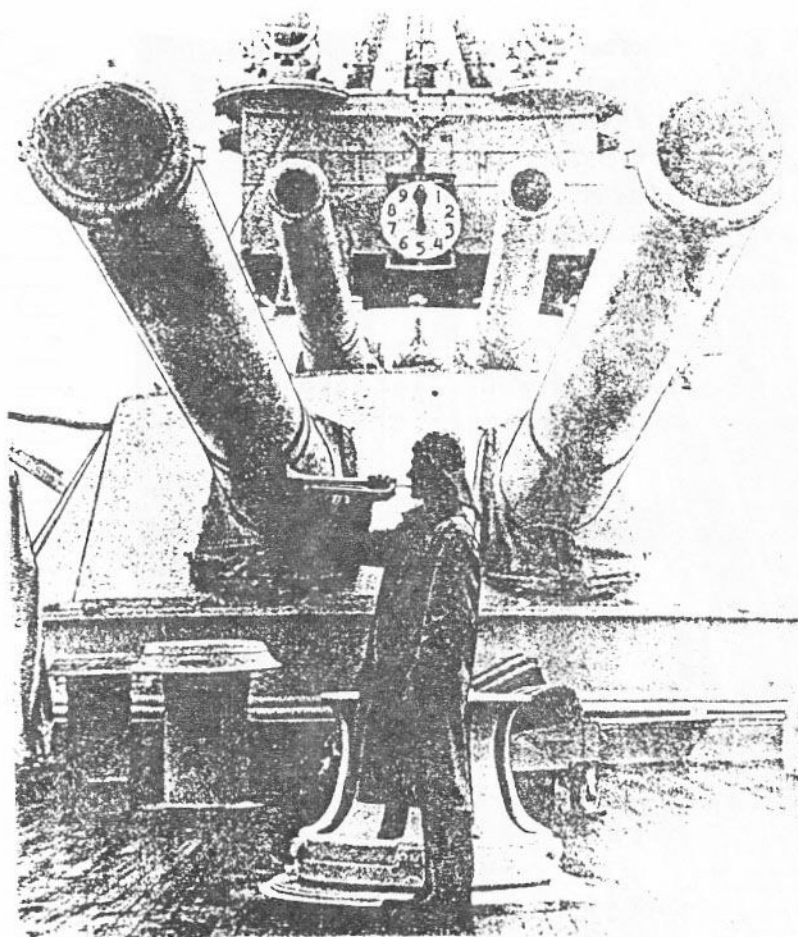
unless you went by bus. The local bus system was one of the best in the world and you could travel any where, on a good schedule, for a quarter. The last ship I was attached to was home-ported in Hawaii, and we were for the most time berthed at Ford Island tending to Destroyers. Nothing much had really changed except the Wahoo Cannon ball no longer ran, it's routes were taken over by trucks. The Pearl City Tavern and Monkey Bar burned down a couple of times and was rebuilt. The Pan America Airways Clippers were out of existence and most everyone had a car to drive on the rough coral and lava paved freeways. The city of Honolulu extended from Diamond Head to Pearl City. The kanaka bullies were replaced by hippies and mainland beachcombers. The island was alive with tourists, mostly Japanese and the military built the magnificent Hale Koa Hotel at Fort De Rusey for all rates and ranks, giving the best break to those in the lower ratings.

After I retired in December 1970 I made several trips to Hawaii, my last being the 55th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. On this trip I found that most of the nonmilitary establishments were owned by the Japanese. Almost all of the advertising was printed with Japanese Characters. Most of the food fare was oriental. The Japanese bought with money what they could not take by force. It was a cement jungle with high-rise hotels and other types of tall buildings taking up almost every square inch of ground available. Gone are the days where the Aloha Tower was the tallest building on the island and you could lay on the sand unmolested;.

Aloha

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bob K.', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Bob K.



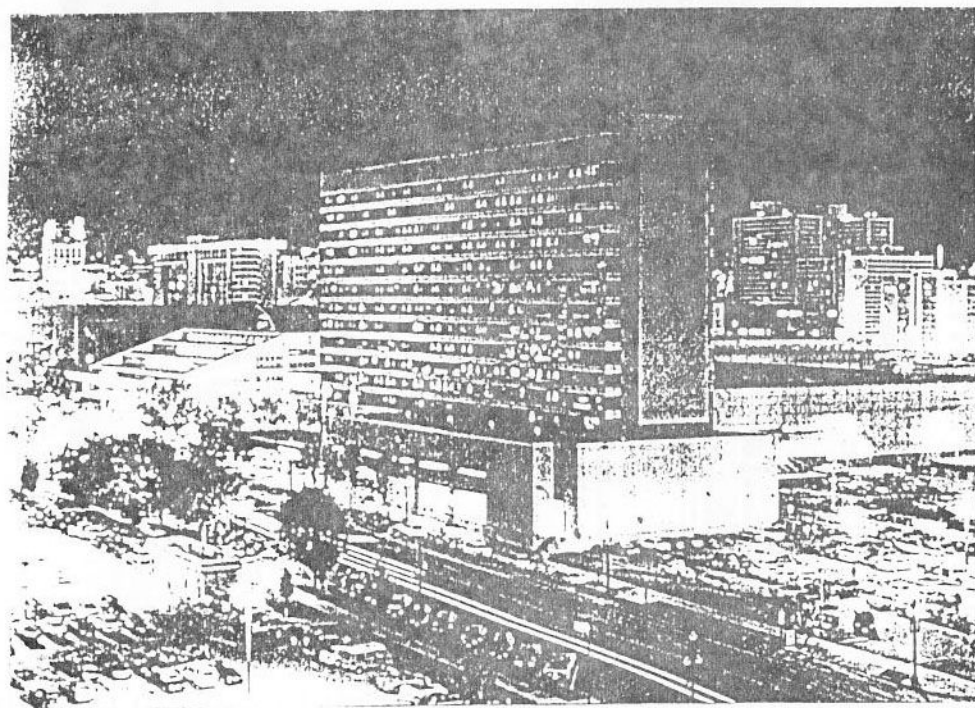
**VISIT THE
U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA BB-48
MUSEUM**

924 Emerson Ave., Parkersburg WV 26104

**Do you have any USS W. VA. memorabilia cluttering
up your attic? The USS West Virginia museum
would love to display it for public view.**

Wyndham Hotel

DOWNTOWN



**1999
Reunion**

**August 24th
to
August 30th**

**Wyndham Hotel
Phone Number
(801) 531 7500**

215 WEST SOUTH TEMPLE • SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84101

USS West Virginia BB 48

REUNION ASSOCIATION

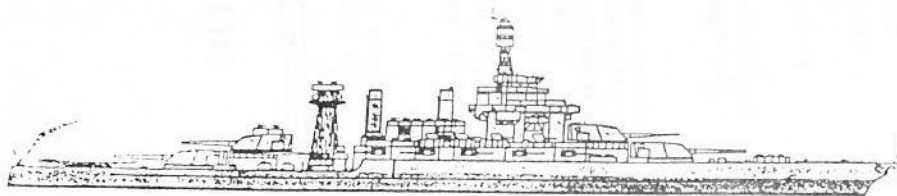
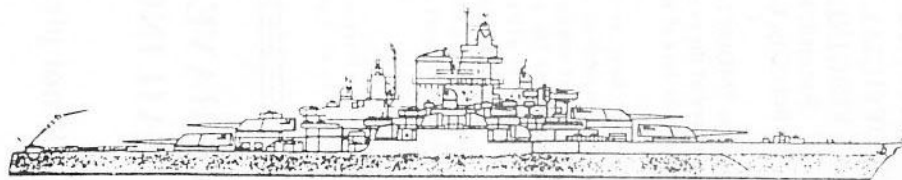
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