



USS Ronald Reagan Commissioned



USS Ronald Reagan during Builder's Sea Trials in May 2003
(Photo courtesy of US Navy)

In a history-making event, the Navy's newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the *USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76)*, was commissioned on July 12, 2003 at Naval Station Norfolk. The *USS Ronald Reagan* is the first aircraft carrier to be named after a living president.

Speakers at the event included Vice President Dick Cheney who was the principal speaker. He spoke of President Reagan's great understanding of the need for a strong Navy to provide for the common defense of the nation. Other speakers included Virginia Gov. Mark Warner and Mr. Thomas Schievelbein, President of Northrop Grumman Newport News, the ship builder.

The strongest response from the audience was reserved for the former First Lady, Mrs. Nancy Reagan. As the ship's sponsor and President Reagan's wife, she received a standing ovation when she stepped up to the podium. She uttered the traditional phrase, "...man the ship and bring her to life!" With that statement, the ship's crew boarded the ship and set her first watch.

Unfortunately, President Reagan was unable to attend. A long-time sufferer of Alzheimer's disease, the 92-year old former president has not made a public appearance in many years.

The Naval Order presence was maintained by Illinois Companions CAPT Roman "Pete" Piotrowski and his wife

Mary, who were official members of the Illinois delegation headed by US House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, IL State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, and Ret. State Senator Bob Michler (also a Companion of the Order). At the Ship's Sponsors Luncheon the day before the commissioning, Pete presented a Naval Order plaque commemorating the commissioning of the *USS Ronald Reagan* to the ship and her company. He also took advantage to remind the Navy Leaguers from Santa Barbara and Norfolk (the main civilian organizations involved)



Mrs. Nancy Reagan speaking at the commissioning of the USS Ronald Reagan.
(Photo courtesy of US Navy)

that the Navy League was started by the Naval Order at the request and encouragement of Teddy Roosevelt. This is one thing they "neglected" to mention in their full page insert in the Commissioning program!

On a VIP tour of ship, Pete and Mary were approached by a Hollywood movie producer, Mr. A. C. Lyles, a Hollywood icon who praised the Naval Order presentation. Rounding out our Naval Order contingent were CAPT Alden "Bud" and Betty Wulff.

RADM Brown's Final Message:

My Fellow Companions,

This will be my last message to you as CG. Following is a recap of a number of important items/issues.

ANNUAL CONGRESS DETAILS

There will be general plenary sessions of the Congress on Friday and Saturday morning. On Saturday morning after the close of the general session, the Historian General William D. Mosher will make a presentation on Oliver Hazard Perry and the Battle of Lake Erie.

The Friday lunch will include invited guest Dr. Robert D. Ballard, the selectee for the Admiral of the Navy George Dewey Award. Dr. Ballard is the president of the Institute for Exploration in Mystic, Connecticut. He is a renowned undersea explorer who was responsible for the locating of the *HMS Titanic*, the *USS Yorktown*, and the German battleship *Bismarck*.

The Saturday lunch will include invited guest Acting Secretary of the Navy, Honorable Hansford T. Johnson, who will participate in the presentation of the Naval Order resolution adopting the *USS Constitution* as the honorary Flag Ship of the Naval Order. The Resolution will be presented to Commander Lewin Wright, USN, the sixty-eighth Commanding Officer of "Old Ironsides."

On Saturday afternoon there will be a three hour symposium presented by the Naval War College that will feature presentations by Dr. John Haddendorf, the Naval War College Historian and chair of the Maritime History Department, Donald Chisholm, Naval War College Professor of Operations and author of a newly released book "Waiting for Dead Men's Shoes: Origin and Development of the U.S. Navy Officer Personnel System 1793-1941," and Dr. George Baer, Chairman Emeritus of the NWC Strategy and Policy Department.

On Saturday evening we will have the Annual Distinguished Sea Service

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CG Final Message...

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Award Banquet. This year's awardee is Admiral James M. Loy, the former Commandant of the Coast Guard and current head of the Transportation Security Administration.

The Congress will close with a special event, brunch aboard the USS Massachusetts (BB-38) moored in Battleship Cove in nearby Fall River, Massachusetts.

During the general sessions on Friday and Saturday morning, we have arranged tours for the spouses: on Friday a tour of the Breakers Mansion and on Saturday a special tour of the Naval War College Museum. Additional details are available on our website at: www.navalorder.org.

Additionally, following are some significant issues for this Congress:

1. The election of officers to serve for the next two years.
2. Site selection for the 2004 Congress and beyond. (San Diego has been approved by the Site Selection Committee for 2004, the New Orleans Commandery has volunteered for 2005, and National Capitol has stepped forward for 2006).
3. Distribution of the revised N.O. Operations Manual on CD-Rom.
4. An update of the Development and Archive Committees.
5. Budget and other financial matters.

It is important that your Commandery be represented at the Annual Congress. Remember – it's YOUR Congress!

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Preliminary Financial Report As of mid-August the Treasurer General reports our equity (assets minus liabilities) as \$26,580.45. Our equity on 9/30/01 was \$19,408.45. The primary reasons for the increase in equity over this two year period are a reduction in operating expenses, an unbudgeted cash receipt of \$3,700 from the Texas Commandery as our share of the profit from the 2002 Annual Congress, and contributions from individual companions.

Registrar General Our Registrar General, Mr. Chris Cummings, had a job relocation about three months ago and fell significantly behind in his time-consuming RegGen chores. As a result, many new members have not received their Naval Order certificates; checks are

late clearing through the bank, etc. Chris is now resettled and reports he is almost caught-up as I write this in mid-August. Chris will be passing the RegGen lead to companion Lt. Phil Ciaffa, Commander of the New Mexico Commandery at the Congress in October. Thanks, Chris, for hanging in there under very difficult circumstances.

Regalia Lt. John Rothrock will be passing on the duties of Regalia Officer effective 23 October 2003. CAPT Stan Ellexson will be selling our regalia items at the Congress as he has the past few years. After the Congress our new Regalia Officer will be SFR Companion, LCDR Matthew S. Gabe, USNR. LCDR Gabe's address and phone number are listed below.

The Turner Book I reported to you in the spring newsletter that final proofing was in progress and when complete the publisher said it would be available for distribution in two months. Regretfully the final steps were not completed as expected and the last section is now being proofed. At this point I am guardedly optimistic that the book will be published and mailed prior to our Annual Congress in October.

501(C)(3) Status Though we got turned down last year by the IRS we have not abandoned this goal. However, I remind you again that in our current category, 501(C)(19), all contributions to the Naval Order are 100% tax-deductible.

Future Direction There are many areas which need continuing attention if the Naval Order is to sustain its size and strength and live up to its mission. I will just mention three here.

1. Membership. The Naval Order, like most similar organizations, desires a sustained growth in which recruitment of new members exceeds attrition. As our membership ages it is vital that we bring on younger people and make the Order better known in the Sea Services so that we can attract more officer and enlisted members. Additionally, emphasis is needed in order to recruit more members from the USMC and USCG.
2. Commandery Development. There is a continuing need to explore potential sites for new Commanderies, such as Hawaii and Seattle, and support their chartering and develop-

ment. However, we must not ignore consolidation of what we already have. Among the two-dozen existing Commanderies, there is a wide disparity in terms of size, level of activity, mission orientation, and committed leadership. If the Order is to succeed as a national organization of consequence, more energy must be directed at helping weaker Commanderies right themselves

3. Fund Raising. An ongoing weakness of the Naval Order is a chronic money shortage at the national level. With few exceptions, this problem flows down to the local Commanderies. Our inability to raise adequate funds does not allow for proper program execution or administrative support. I believe we need to develop a strategy and a plan that will launch a sophisticated, long-term fund-raising effort at all levels of the Order.

CONCLUSION

It has been a distinct honor to serve you as Commander General for the past two years. There are too many deserving companions to thank in the space available in this column, but to all of you who provided such solid support in so many ways you have my sincerest thanks and appreciation. I will never forget you! (I will have more to say on this subject at the Congress.)

Though challenges remain, we are in sound shape administratively, organizationally, and financially. I will be proud to pass the gavel to my fellow companion from the San Francisco Commandery, CAPT Fred Hawkins, at the Congress in Newport on 25 OCT 03.

With best wishes,
T.F. Brown III

Regalia Officer Named

CAPT Stan Ellexson will be manning the booth selling regalia at this year's Congress. After that, our new Regalia Officer will be taking the helm:

LCDR Matthew Gabe, USNR
243 Crestmont Drive
San Francisco, CA 94131
415-955-2587
gabemattthew@yahoo.com

Welcome aboard!

Catching Up with the Commanderies

Florida First Coast. The First Coast Commandery held its 5th Annual Pot Luck Social at the home of Sandy Taylor on Saturday 2 August. Sandy volunteered to host the party and allow all hands to see and enjoy her new Beach House in Atlantic Beach Florida. Her home features a large open deck on the second floor which allows a glimpse of the ocean across the street. Twenty two Companions enjoyed good food and fellowship including new Companions Tony and Sharon Ross and Jim and Arlene Dunlop. Also present were Greg and Anne Streeter, Charlie and Collette Sellers, Brian and Julie Sheffield, Dr Bill and Wanda Bosworth, Ted and Loraine Willandt, John and Carol O'Neil, Pat and Mike Manko, Jodie and Tom Nelson and Bob Beskind. The Pot Luck has become one of the favorite events of the Commandery and is fast assuming the status of "tradition".

Monterey. It with sadness that the Monterey Commandery reports the passing of fellow companions CAPT Thomas L. Conroy, USN(Ret), of Carmel, CA; and, LCDR Sara J. Pekarsky, USN (Ret), of Prunedale, CA. Both companions were secondary members of the SFR Commandery.

Illinois. ILL Companions CAPT Pete

Piotrowski and his wife Mary were members of the official Illinois state delegation for the commissioning of the *USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76)*.



Pete and Mary Piotrowski on the flight deck of the newest carrier in the Navy, USS Ronald Reagan.

San Francisco. Long-time SFR Companion RADM Russ Gorman, USN(Ret) of Danville, California has been chosen for the Alexander Jackson Career Service Award for 2002 by the Naval Services Section of the Reserve Officers Association. The announcement was made by ROA's Naval Services Vice President, CDR Eddie Martinez, USNR of Madison, Mississippi, who is currently on recall to active duty and serving overseas. ROA is the nation's largest

reserve officers association with a five-story headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The Jackson Award was established to honor the career of a distinguished naval officer who served the nation, the Navy, and ROA itself in so many ways during that career.

Texas. Once again, the Texas Commandery was struck by a profound loss. CAPT Carl Ragsdale, USN(ret) passed away on 22 JUN 03. His was a founder of the Texas Commandery and a driver



CAPT Woe King, USN(Ret) speaking during CAPT Ragsdale's memorial service at the USS Texas. CAPT Martine Myers stands at the left.

for many of its most important achievements. His service to the U.S. Navy spanned 42 years, both active and reserve. He will be missed.

Recent NOUS Donors

Here is a list of Companions who have given generously to the Naval Order and have not been recognized to this point:

William Barnsdale – NYC
Jerome Bolick – RAL
John Burrows – NYC
Philip Delgado – NAT
Jack Hilton – NAT
Harold Parnham – NYC
William Powell – ILL
Ronald Pytel – NAT
John Roe – NYC
Thomas Seelye – NYC
Joseph Smith – SFR
Robert Smith - TEX

The Order extends its gratitude to these outstanding individuals.

United States Navy Memorial Foundation Establishes "Navy Log"

The United States Navy Memorial Foundation in Washington, D.C. has established the "Navy Log" in an effort to honor all naval veterans that have served, or that are currently serving, our country. The Navy Log includes Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Mariners.

The Navy Log has thus far collected the names, service information and photographs of over a quarter of a million service personnel. All enrollments form a part of America's enduring naval heritage, a permanent and publicly accessible video register available for reviewing at the Naval Heritage Center next to the Navy Memorial on Pennsylvania Avenue, midway between the White

House and the Capitol, or on the Memorial's Internet web site, <http://www.lonesailor.org/>.

Write:

U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation
Attn: Navy Log,
701 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 123
Washington, DC 20004-2608

or call 1-800-821-8892 ext 730.

ATTENTION COMPANIONS!!!
IGNORE BACK OF THE NEWSLETTER; ADDRESS CHANGES NEED TO GO TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

Mr. Chris Cummings
2111 Carlton Road
Carrollton, TX 75007
Phone: 972-395-4973
Email: ccummings@cwaplaza.com

Marines' Memorial Staff Participates in 61st Anniversary of Battle of Midway

On Saturday, 31 May, the Marines' Memorial staff was very proud to participate in the Naval Services' observance of the 61st anniversary of the Battle of Midway. Admiral James O. Ellis, Commander, United States Strategic Command, was the featured speaker, and the evening was a very touching com-

memoration of the heroism of the Midway Battle Veterans. Admiral Ellis spoke about the relevance of the Battle of Midway to later generations of carrier aviation professionals. He praised the Battle of Midway Veterans and honored those Veterans in attendance with a Strategic Command Coin Medallion and a

framed personal letter of thanks.

Over 180 military and guests attended the event, including 19 Battle of Midway Veterans, pictured at right. Rear Admiral Tom Brown, President of the Mess for the Dining Out, described the heroic actions by the Veterans. As noted historian Walter Lord said: "... *Even against the greatest odds, there is something in the human spirit – a magic blend of skill, faith and valor – that can lift men from certain defeat to Incredible Victory.*"

(Thanks to Crossroads of the Corps, Summer 2003, for their kind permission to reprint story and photo)



L-R: Walt Grist (VMSB-241, Midway), Stan Linzey (USS Yorktown), Bill Lucius (MAG-22, Midway), Roy Gee (VB-8, USS Hornet), Bill Geritz (VP-23, Midway), John Abatie (with gold Chief's markings, USS Phelps), Bill Cullin (in white jacket, VP-44, Midway), Mervin Slater (USS Yorktown), Bob Swan (in gray suit, VP-44, Midway), RADM Tom Brown USN-Ret (planning committee chairman), ADM James Ellis (in white jacket, guest of honor), Ralph Weidling (VS-5, USS Yorktown), Art Lewis (in wheelchair, USS Balch), Forrest Milas (in white jacket behind Weidling, USS Gato SS-212), Lee McCleary (VP-44, Midway), Al Aguilar (6th Mar Def Btn, Midway), Robert Elder (VB-3, USS Yorktown), John Kellejian (USS Enterprise)
Also present but not in photo: Ralph Wilhelm (USS Portland), Dwight DeHaven (USS Yorktown), Albert Powers (USS Balch).

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS

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