



# NAVAL ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES



## 2016 Winter Edition



New Orleans “THE BIG EASY” hosted us during our fall 2015 Congress. The highlight of any Congress is the awards banquet and installation of a New Commander General. Despite the venue’s “distractions,” this year was no exception.

Mr. Frederick W. Smith, founder and CEO of Federal Express Corporation was presented with the Admiral of the Fleet Dewey Award (see 2015 Autumn Edition). Two very special and deserving individuals, Admiral James G. Stavridis, USN (Ret) and MCPON (SS/SW) Rick West, USN (Ret) received the Officer and Senior Enlisted Distinguished Sea Service Awards respectively. Excerpts from their official biographies and personal memoirs follow:

James George Stavridis is a 1976 distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He earned a PhD and Master of Arts from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in International Relations in 1984. He now serves as dean of the Fletcher School. He is also a 1992 distinguished graduate of the United States National War College.



Stavridis was born in West Palm Beach, Florida. His Greek grandfather had escaped to the United States from a pogrom in the Ottoman Empire. He is married to Laura Hall, author of Navy Spouses Guide.

His 2008 book, *Destroyer Captain: Lessons of a First Command*, goes into detail about his Greek origins. He has served on the staffs of the Chief of Naval Operations and Secretary of the Navy and has commanded the US Southern Command, the European Command and as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. He is also Chairman of the Board of the U.S. Naval Institute.

Rick D. West was born in Rising Fawn, Ga. He immediately entered the US Navy upon graduation from Northwest Georgia High School. He attended recruit and Quartermaster training at Orlando, Fla., and Enlisted Submarine School at Groton, CT.

He was Chief of the Boat aboard the *USS Portsmouth* (SSN 707). He was Command Master Chief (CMC) at Submarine Squadron (COMSUBRON) ELEVEN, when he was selected as COMSUBPAC Force Master Chief. He attended the Senior Enlisted Academy in Newport, RI before he reported as the CMC to *USS Preble* (DDG 88). Following his *Preble* tour he served as the Pacific Fleet (PACFLT), Fleet Master Chief and then the 14th Fleet Master Chief for Commander, US Fleet Forces Command. He became the 12th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on 12 December, 2008.



He belongs to the National Commandery Command of the Naval Order.



Captain Michele Lockwood, USN, (Ret) of the San Francisco Commandery assumed the helm from Captain Vance Morrison. She looks forward to an exciting and productive term. See pages 2 and 3 for her “first” report and our strategic plan.

Don’t forget to mark your calendars for Waikiki/Pearl Harbor, 19-22 October 2016.



## Commander General's Report to the Order

### Partnering for Success

As CAPT Vance Morrison stepped down as Commander General last fall, he entrusted the leadership of the Naval Order to me. I am proud to be a member of this organization and am honored to be its new Commander General.

CAPT Morrison had developed a Strategic Plan at the beginning of his tenure as Commander General which will continue to be our guide through my next two years with a heavy emphasis on membership, recruitment, and retention. In setting the stage for success in this area, we have expanded the role of Vice Commander General – Communications to include chairmanship of the Communication Committee. We are privileged to have FLTCM (SS/SW/AW) Pres Weaver, Jr. leading the effort to provide effective, timely, and coordinated communications among all members in the Naval Order as well as potential members, especially active duty personnel, reached through social media.

To aid in this effort, John McKnight has assumed management of the Naval Order website, and together with his wife and fellow Companion, Ariel McKnight, are in the process of giving our website a facelift and modernizing its “look.” With John and Ariel in supportive roles to advise Commanderies on the use of our new website platform, we hope to reach out to those members who do not live near a local Commandery and keep them up-to-date with Naval Order news.

Bill and Kathleen Mero are also members of the Communications Committee. Bill has been videographing speakers and presentations made at the New Orleans Congress and at the San Francisco Commandery, then posting them on YouTube and Facebook. By entering **Naval Order of the United States** in the YouTube search engine you can view the presentations during the 2015 New Orleans Congress, including the DSSA Award dinner for Admiral Stavridis, CAPT Robert Lansden's discussion of the American military response to Hurricane Katrina, and the wonderful performance of the Marine Reserve Band from New Orleans.

These videos are available to everyone worldwide. Those members unable to attend the 2015 Congress can participate vicariously through our YouTube videos. These videos can be shared at local Commandery events, but importantly can be used as recruiting and retention tools.

Kathleen Mero manages our vibrant, active, and timely Naval Order Facebook page. Commandery Commanders, historians, and the general membership share stories, comments, events, and photos that are enlightening, interesting, and fun.

With these efforts, the Communications Committee is bringing the Naval Order into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the outreach available through social media.

One of the keys to membership retention is communicating with the members belonging to inactive Commanderies. Hartley Porter, our Vice Commander General – At Large, is developing effective methods for ensuring that these members are not among the forgotten. Part of her charter for this year is to examine the possibilities inherent in establishing a virtual Commandery that brings the outlying members in the Naval Order into the fold. These members too are sometimes among the forgotten.

William Schmidt, as Vice Commander General – Commandery Support, and Donald Schuld, as Vice Commander General – Membership, work hand in hand to encourage participation and leadership development at the local Commandery level. Bill is developing the concept of a subject matter community within the Naval Order who have similar historic interests, such as chaplains, historians, and medical service personnel.

These efforts all focus on recruitment and retention, and support the Strategic Plan developed by CAPT Vance Morrison.

This coming year the San Francisco Commandery is sponsoring the 2016 Congress in Oahu, Hawaii 19 October through 22 October 2016. Our venue will be the Hale Koa Hotel located on Waikiki Beach at the Fort DeRussy Armed Forces Recreation Center. The Hale Koa is a first class hotel and recreation facility with affordable prices for military members and their families. Those of you who are eligible to stay at the Hale Koa can sponsor up to three non-military Naval Order members and spouses. Please contact Colonel Allan Cruz ([allanfpcruz@aol.com](mailto:allanfpcruz@aol.com)) who can provide additional information about reservations.

The 2016 Congress program promises to be interesting and fun. We will participate in a wreath-laying ceremony on the *USS Arizona* Memorial to honor the Fallen during the Pearl Harbor attack as part of our Congress followed by the CG Reception on the fantail of the *USS Missouri* located at ground zero at Pearl Harbor. During the presentations scheduled on Saturday, our speakers will present the history of our Nation's interaction with terrorism with a special emphasis on the Navy's role of fighting terrorism and piracy from the time of President Thomas Jefferson to the present.

On behalf of your Naval Order leadership, I wish all Companions and their loved ones a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year! See you in Hawaii!!

Mahalo!

**CAPT Michele Lockwood, USN (Ret.)**  
**Commander General**  
[mhlockwood711@gmail.com](mailto:mhlockwood711@gmail.com)

## Commander General's Strategic Plan

### GOAL:

To provide the vision and key objectives guiding the Naval Order of the United States for the next two years to ensure that the Order continues to meet its mission objectives.

### VISION:

A Naval Order that, *as a team*:

- Continues to grow and diversify its membership
- Continues to broaden its membership with eligible members from all of the Sea Services, females as well as males, young as well as old, and enlisted as well as officers
- Is increasingly acknowledged as the leader in its field of endeavor
- More actively engages its membership in each of its primary mission tasks, including:
  - Commemorating and observing important naval-related historical events
  - Supporting the study of naval history
  - Preserving historical artifacts, documents and monuments
  - Promoting camaraderie among its Companions as well as members of other organizations with similar goals.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

In an era of increasingly constrained resources and aging organizations, the successful prosecution of this Strategic Plan will require awareness, persistence, and commitment. Our membership has been declining and some of our Commanderies exhibit decreasing activity; one has recently folded. Objectives, then, to reverse negative trends include:

- Grow and broaden the membership by proactive recruitment of new Companions *by every Companion*
- Choose and develop effective national and local leadership
- Insure effective communications between Naval Order leadership and its components and membership
- Invigorate less active Commanderies
- Create new Commanderies in promising areas
- Maintain the Order on a firm financial basis
- Promote innovative and appealing ideas for fulfilling the Order's mission tasks will assist

in recruitment efforts as well as bring favorable notice to the public

- Plan Naval Order events that are eagerly anticipated by the membership and fun for all participants

With the above in mind, enabling actions include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

### ENABLING ACTIONS:

- Ensure every Companion knows that he/she is an active recruiter of new members and provide them with the materials to do so
- Ensure leaders know their responsibilities and are equipped to perform them
- Provide increased emphasis on Vice Commander General (VCG) - Development and the team that supports those efforts
- Upgrade the position and visibility of the Electronic Communications efforts to VCG-level as communications with and among the membership goes "high tech" and publicity assumes an increasingly important role
- Provide commercial support, when required, to the Registrar General's repetitive and time consuming tasks to enable that position to focus on strategic challenges
- Pursue engagement of America's youth through a state-led maritime history contest and affordable grants and scholarships
- Encourage and participate in outreach activities such as new warship commissionings, the Samuel Eliot Morison Book Award, symposia at the Naval Academy and other maritime organizations, and assume responsibility for new projects deemed worthy as well as affordable

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Dr. J. Phillip London, the Order's most recent recipient of the Admiral of the Navy George Dewey Award and Naval Order Companion, asserts in his recent book, *Character – The Ultimate Success Factor*, that "success is distinctively defined as acting with honesty and integrity, performing to the best of your ability, and appreciating the people who helped you to achieve your goals."

Let's keep the Naval Order on course with those words in mind.

Submitted by Vance Morrison

## Pearl Harbor

No event until 9/11 so unified or galvanized our country as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In Charleston that day of infamy is remembered in an annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Observance aboard the *USS Yorktown* at Patriots Point. In this, our fourth year, members of the Charleston Commandery gathered with several hundred veterans, family members, ROTC units, and others to pay tribute to those 25 South Carolinians who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor and other military installations on 7 Dec. 1947.

Since 1947 United States armed forces have fought wars in Europe, Japan, Korea, Viet Nam, Afghanistan and Iraq, playing a pivotal and beneficial role in promoting self-governance around the world.

This year's Memorial Observance featured speaker was Col. Robert Mastriani, USMC (Ret.). Col. Mastriani was commissioned in 1961, received the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts, and continues to serve our community through speaking engagements ~ his theme: "The gift to the world from America's veterans: the spread of the seed of Democracy."



Pearl Harbor Wreath Tossing Ceremony.  
Robert "Fuzzy" Knight, John Essenberg.

So on 7 Dec. Naval Order companions gathered to remember South Carolina's dead with the tossing of wreaths from the Yorktown's hangar deck. We gathered to honor our Pearl Harbor survivors and veterans of WWII. But most importantly, we gathered to remember Pearl Harbor for the

devastation that must never be allowed again. Seeds of devastation cannot mature and bear fruit when opposed by the forces of strength and freedom.

This year, 74 observances after the infamous attack, only two Pearl Harbor survivors and three WWII veterans were among the crowd. Their faces, and those of many usually present, grow older, but the message they represent remains fresh and strong.

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE to the flag of the United States of America. And to the Republic for which it stands, ONE NATION UNDER GOD. INDIVISIBLE. WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

## 2015 Lee Douglas Award

The goal of every Naval Order Commandery is to honor and preserve American maritime history and heritage through the efforts and camaraderie of its companions, and thereby ensure the traditions of the Naval Order of the United States endure.

In some years, goals are achieved, new programs are brought into operation, membership is retained and expanded, and Commandery members work together exceptionally in support of the vision of NOUS national leadership. The highest-caliber efforts are recognized annually in the awarding of the LCDR Lee W. Douglas Memorial Award.

When the Charleston Commandery, only chartered in 2011, shared the Lee Douglas Award with the San Francisco Commandery in 2014 at the Newport Congress, we were the youngest Commandery to have been so recognized.

As Commander, it was with a tremendous sense of pride that I informed our companions their hard work and untiring efforts as a Commandery had once again been recognized and rewarded in New Orleans this year. To have shared recognition with San Francisco was inspiring. To have been recognized in two consecutive years was beyond all our expectations.



Jerry Rovner, Vice Commander Charleston, accepts Lee Douglas Award from Vance Morrison at New Orleans Congress.

Heading up the Charleston Commandery's extraordinary group of men and women – deeply committed to the Naval Order and its mission(s) – who truly enjoy one another's company, and who are deserving of this high honor, is a privilege beyond measure, for which I will be forever grateful.

Submitted by David G. Porter

NOUS Florida First Coast would like to offer congratulations to NOUS New Orleans on a superb Congress for 2015. The presentations and spirit offered with other Commanderies, camaraderie, and the veteran speakers were unsurpassed. Congratulations to outgoing national officers and to the new group of leaders who will continue our mission over the next years. We look forward to Hawaii next year and then being host here in Jacksonville for 2017.

The Congress offered some companions of the First Coast Commandery a unique opportunity to explore Florida and Naval History during the trek to New Orleans. First stop was the Florida Caverns, just 8 miles off of Interstate 10 near Marianna, Florida. Excavated during the early 30's as part of the 'New Deal' jobs program, this unique natural attraction opens up some of Florida's subterranean beauty. The site offers camping, trails and a marvelous tour of the caverns.

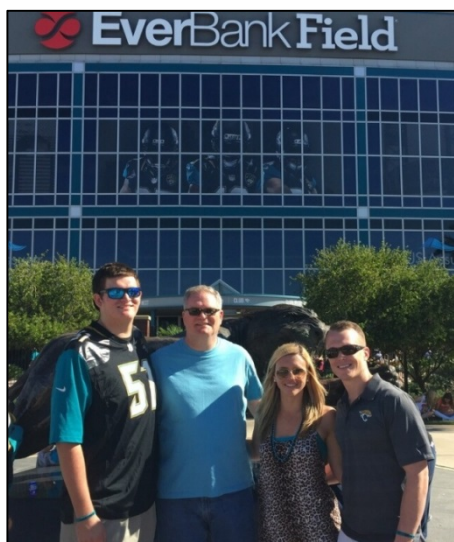


Naval Air Museum at NAS Pensacola; a must-see museum when travelling in North West Florida

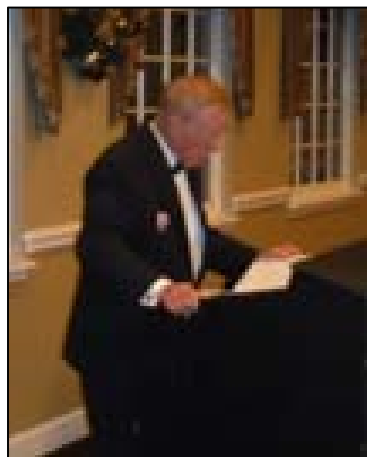
The next day was a tour of the Finest Naval Air Museum in the Country at Naval Air Station, Pensacola. Between the displays of a full range of Aviation History to the IMAX museum, it is a museum that needs to be on your list of must see places to visit. The next few days of the Congress in New Orleans, great

food, and the spectacular World War II museum rounded out an outstanding week of history and discovery.

NOUS First Coast and friends got together for a 'Tailgater' at the Jaguars-Chargers game at Everbank Field. While the outcome of the game may not have been what the locals wanted, the time together was great as the Jaguars honored veterans as part of the game ceremonies. We plan to make this an annual event, so those wanting to see some GREAT football next year...come on down! Make your plan now to come to Jax for the Navy-Notre Dame Game next Fall (with the 'Blues')...more plans to follow!



Companion Frank Fenno awaits the game as the Jaguars honor veterans at Everbank Filed; pictured Zach and Frank Fenno with niece Casey and her Husband Ken Miller.



Past NOUS Commander General CAPT Greg Streeter, USN (Ret) offers reflections on events of Pearl Harbor.

The First Coast Commandery honored the memory of the events of 7 December 1941 during our annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner and annual Commandery meeting. Past First Coast Commander J. Michael McGrath read the ceremony honoring POWs and MIAs. Past National Commander General CAPT Greg Streeter, USN (RET) offered reflections on the events of Pearl Harbor.



Dr. Alan Bliss of the University of North Florida and NOUS Companion, discusses the events of 7 Dec 1941 and the post attack recovery and salvage efforts.

CAPT Streeter was followed by our featured Guest Speaker, Dr. Alan Bliss, Professor of History at the University of North Florida. Dr. Bliss focused on how the events energized the Country and the Industrial base. He showed pictures of the devastation of the day and the process of bringing so many of the ships back to life through the efforts of salvage personnel and the Naval Shipyard.



CAPT Bill Wirth, USN(Ret), who was at the Pearl Harbor attack as a child, cuts the remembrance cake.

Dr. Bliss recounted the individual ships, salvage procedures, and the herculean efforts made to open the harbor and bring the Pacific Fleet back on line. It was an enlightening presentation that showed the resolve and commitment it took to recover from the attack, fighting off the aggression intended to bring us down. The lesson of resolve and response to these attacks must not be forgotten.

Submitted by Bill Whitkop

## Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner

The annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner was held at the Naval Postgraduate School on the grounds of the Naval Support Activity Monterey on Friday 4 December.

The evening started in the La Novia Room, a historical dining room at the Old Del Monte Hotel, now the site of the Naval Postgraduate School, with a full service reception.

The immediate reception area was in full display of significant Pearl Harbor 7 December displays provided by the school's Dudley Knox Library.

Of special note was the display of a silver dining service set of a knife, spoon and forks recovered following the sinking of the USS Arizona. This set shown below is on permanent loan in the DK Library.



Pearl Harbor guests are "reflected" in the safety glass protecting USS Arizona wardroom silver dining set recovered following her sinking.  
Photo credit Companion John Sanders

As in past years the Navy Center for Information Dominance Monterey Choir from the Monterey Defense Language Institute provided the guests with a pre-dinner medley of seasonal holiday and patriotic songs during the reception and later during the dinner in the El Prado Dining Room.

It is always wonderful having these fine young men and women "aboard" who, following their language training will be leaving for military service here, at home, or abroad.

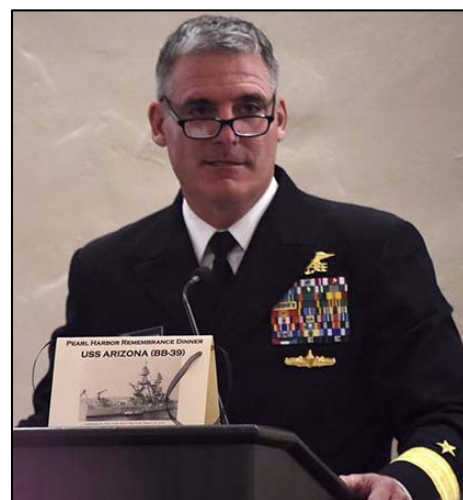
Following the reception, the guests were "piped" to the formal dining room by the "official Commandery piper" LCDR Spence Myers who provided several appropriate "pipes" as the guests proceeded into the dining room decorated with Christmas trees and packages yet to be opened.

The Monterey County Division-Naval Sea Cadet Corps provided the Honor and Color Guard for the evening.

Later in the evening, fellow Companion LCDR Nonna Cheatham shared her experiences of growing up on the Island of Kauai and, in particular, the shelling of the harbor by a Japanese submarine later entering the harbor. An interesting comment was later made by a retired senior guest that this shelling was well documented, but senior leadership at that time did not want the attacked publicized on the "mainland" in fear of greater panic within the population of the 48 States.

The 125 plus guests included NPS students, faculty, retired military, elected officials, and civilian friends from the Monterey Peninsula, Central Coast region, and Silicon Valley including UCSC STARS returning veterans.

The 2015 Theme was *Innovation: First Line of Defense – Then, Now, and Tomorrow* with guest speaker Rear Admiral Daniel Hendrickson, USN, Military Deputy DOD Silicon Valley Defense Innovation Unit. He paid tribute to the fallen heroes of Pearl Harbor and the need for greater innovation in today's environment. Following his comments, Admiral Hendrickson was presented a United States flag flown from the Fantail of the USS Missouri (BB 63) in tribute to American veterans of all branches



Rear Admiral Daniel "Brian" Hendrickson, USN, Defense Innovation Unit Experimental (DIUx) Military Deputy, delivers the keynote speech during the 2015 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner.  
Photo credit NPS MC2 Stewart

of service. The "Mighty MO's" place in America's history is forever immortalized as the site of the 2 September 1945 signing of the Instrument of Surrender that ended the war which started 7 December 1941.

The evening ended with remembrances of those that have served and those still serving, followed by the singing of Amazing Grace, the "piping" of Amazing Grace, and "Taps."

## Leadership Changes

Finally, the Commandery notes the departure of LT Kyle Kendal, Commandery Commander and LT Ian Overcast, Vice Commander who both graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School on 18 December. Both officers had taken very active leadership roles in Commandery activities and will be truly missed. Captain Ken Johnson has come out of "retirement" and will serve as Commandery Commander with Captain Jeff Kline as the Vice Commander.

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**Wreaths at Arlington**

The Monterey Bay Commandery once again contributed to the purchase of wreaths for the Arlington National Cemetery. In particular we honored deceased Companion Captain Gordon Nakagawa who was held in an American Japanese internment camp during the early 1940s and later was a prisoner of war in the "Hanoi Hilton." Last year more than four hundred thousand wreaths were donated to the Cemetery, enough to lay a wreath at every tombstone.



Mrs. Jeanne Nakagawa, wife of deceased Captain Gorgon Nakagawa, USN (Ret) and family members placing wreaths at the Arlington National Cemetery. (Photo credit UNK)

**Coming Events**

The Commandery's next events will be the annual Memorial Day wreath laying presentation aboard the Coast Guard Cutter HAWKSBILL on Monday, 30 May 2016 followed by the 74rd Anniversary Battle of Midway Dining-Out on Saturday 5 June 2016 at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Submitted by Ken Johnson

**National Capitol Commandery**

On Monday evening, 7 December, the National Capitol Commandery held its annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner. The Commander of the National Capitol Commandery, CAPT John Rodgaard USN Ret, hosted the event. Over 60 companions and guests attended.

The guest speakers were Mr. Mike Wenger and fellow companion, Bob Cressman of Navy History and Heritage Command.

Their talk was titled, "This is No Drill" NAS Pearl Harbor and The Japanese Attack on 7 December 1941.



CAPT Rodgaard, Messrs. Mike Wenger, Bob Cressman and Peter Hsu

At the conclusion of their talk, Mr. Peter Hsu presented each speaker with a copy of his artist proof of the christening of the Arleigh Burke Class destroyer, the *USS John Finn*, (DDG 113).



In the morning, the Commandery laid a wreath before the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. That evening the Commandery held its annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner. The Commander of the National Capitol Commandery, Captain John Rodgaard USN Ret, hosted both events.

At the Tomb of the Unknowns Captain Rodgaard was accompanied by fellow companions Captain Paul Crissy USCG Ret and Captain Mike Kamin, USN Ret. They were joined by members of the NHHHC. YN2 Victoria Brunzell, John Pentangelo, Dr. Lara Godbille and Lt Jonah Hein laid the wreath before the Tomb of the Unknowns.

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YN2 Victoria Brunzell, John Pentangelo, Dr. Lara Godbille, and LCDR Ben Amdur laid the wreath before the Tomb of the Unknowns.



Front Row: CDR Eddy Ha, NHHC COS, John Pentangelo, Managing Director, Naval War College Museum, Dr. Lara Godbille, Director, US Navy Seabee Museum, ENS Ellie Carpo, NHHC DAG, Captain Rodgaard. Back Row: CAPT Mike Kamin USN Ret, CDR Jeffrey Barta, NHHC Museum Systems Office, YNC Thomas Jackson, NHHC SEL, LCDR Ben Amdur, Director, Submarine Force Museum/Library and OIC, Historic Ship NAUTILUS, LT Jonah Hein, NHHC Security Officer, and ENS Daniel Bonamer, NHHC DAG. Photo credit: MC1 Timothy Comerford USN of the Naval History and Heritage Command

Also in attendance was the Command's Chief of Staff, CDR Eddy Ha. Accompanying him were, ENS Ellie Carpo, PSC Aaron Abella, CDR Jeffrey Barta, YNC Thomas Jackson, LCDR Ben Amdur, and ENS Daniel Bonamer.

Submitted by John Rodgaard

## Senior Enlisted Distinguished Sea Service Award Presented to Master Chief Rick West at Navy Memorial Ceremony

In a short ceremony at the United States Navy Memorial in downtown Washington, D.C. on a warm, sunny day at noon, former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West, U. S. Navy (Retired), was awarded the Naval Order's Distinguished Sea Service Award – Senior Enlisted in front of the Lone Sailor monument on the Memorial Heritage Center's plaza along historic Pennsylvania Avenue.



National Capitol Commandery Companions (and two wives) Lou Orsini, Terryann Kaiser, Dave Kaiser, Vance Morrison, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West, Jim Brooke, Paul Crissy, Libby Morrison, and Jack Sheahan following the DSSA-SE presentation at the Lone Sailor Statue by the U.S. Navy Memorial.

Immediate Past Commander General Captain Vance H. Morrison, US Navy (Ret) officiated as members of the National Capitol Commandery, representing the entire Naval Order, observed.

Captain Morrison provided a brief summary of Master Chief West's amazing Navy career and explained that this was the first-ever awarding of the new major award, named in honor of Chief Petty Officer Howard Snell, USN, a Companion before he passed away in 2014 and a survivor of much action during World War II including Pearl Harbor and Midway.

Master Chief Petty Officer West offered a few remarks after receiving the Award. He had not been able to attend the 2015 Naval Order Congress to receive the Award due to major work commitments, and this ceremony was held instead on 15 December 2015.

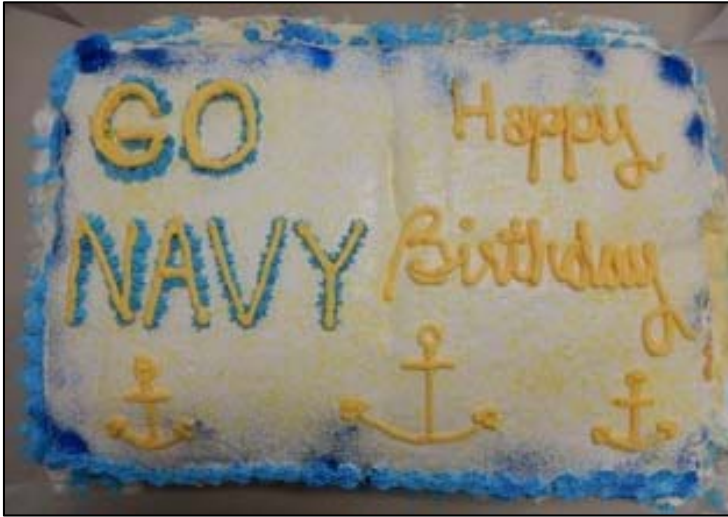
He has become a member of National Capitol Commandery.

Submitted by CAPT Vance Morrison



## Happy Birthday, Navy!

NSCC Birthday Celebration at the Mooberry Division, Washington Navy Yard



LCDR Ralph Day dressed as Commodore Barry speaking with Sea Cadets.

"I can imagine no more rewarding a career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think he can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.'"

- President John F. Kennedy

The New Orleans Commandery was busy the past quarter planning and executing the 2015 Congress Oct 21-24 at the InterContinental Hotel.

We were proud of the two dynamic speaker programs, registering all participants, leading tours of the French Quarter, assisting at each luncheon and dinner, proving transportation to distinguished guests, and hosting the hospitality suite.

The Commandery took the opportunity to schedule one of the optional dinners as our quarterly dinner meeting. Many companions joined in for the dinner at John Besh's restaurant LUKE 22 October.

The speaker, Ron Swaboda, was a member of the Amazing Mets who won the 1969 World Series. He made one of the most famous catches in baseball history to save the final game.



He is now a sports announcer in New Orleans. It was most timely for him to speak, as the Mets were playing in the National League Champions at the time, and he gave a truly interesting and amusing talk.

Submitted by Gary Bair

## San Francisco Commandery

The last three months of the year have always been the busiest time of the year for the San Francisco Commandery. This year was no exception. In fact, it may have been the busiest ever.

We started with San Francisco's annual Fleet Week event over Columbus Day Weekend. On Friday evening Commander Third Fleet, VADM Nora Tyson hosted us and other local dignitaries at a reception aboard her Flagship, *USS Somerset* (LPD-25). We all enjoyed a great evening with an outstanding crew who treated us to tours of the Navy's newest amphibious platform.

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San Francisco companion Kathleen Mero with VADM Tyson during the reception aboard the *USS Somers* (LPD-25)

It wasn't all tours and receptions. On Sunday several companions joined the Navy League in hosting a barbeque for the crew of the *Somers* and other vessels participating in Fleet Week.



Companion Kurt Libby (left) demonstrates his best "burger flipping" technique at the grill during the Fleet Week barbeque for the crews visiting San Francisco.

Our regular monthly luncheon was delayed one week so that we could have the honor of hosting the Commanding Officer of one of the Fleet Week Ships, CDR Sean Grunwell of the *USS Stockdale* (DDG-106) as our guest. CDR Grunwell mingled with our companions before lunch and gave us a presentation highlighting the mission of the ship in today's navy and the challenges we face in the world.



CDR Grunwell poses for photos with San Francisco companion John Garvey prior to lunch.

October is also the month of our annual congress and as soon as Fleet Week was finished, several of us went directly to New Orleans where our own CAPT Michele Lockwood, USN, (Ret) was installed as Commander General.

Later in the month companions Johnny Johnson, Bob Hansen, and Cecilia Gaerlan participated in a conference at the San Francisco Public Library commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the liberation of the Philippines. "Chief" Johnson is Chairman of the *USS San Francisco* Memorial Foundation and was aboard the *USS San Francisco* (CA-38) at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and during the liberation of the Philippines. Gaerlan's father survived the Bataan Death March. Along with Johnson speakers included survivors of the "Battle of Manila," as well as former prisoners of war and Ambassador James Rosenthal who served in the Philippines during his long career in the Foreign Service.



(Left) Philippine Consul General Henry Bensurto with Ambassador Rosenthal and Companion Bob Hansen (right).

Things quieted down in November as we gradually got into the holiday mode, and we began to prepare for a variety of activities honoring veterans.

CAPT Michele Lockwood was our speaker for the November luncheon. She talked about the “Incident at Niihau” where a Japanese plane that had just participated in the strafing and bombing of Naval Air Station Kaneohe during the Pearl Harbor attack crashed on the island. Niihau, known as the “forbidden island” is the westernmost of the Hawaiian Islands and is still privately owned and largely out of contact with the world. The pilot survived the crash and befriended several residents. Fighting broke out on 12 December and the pilot and a Japanese resident were killed. The incident wasn’t totally resolved until reinforcements arrived from Kauai on 14 December.

Our annual Pearl Harbor Day dinner was held in a new venue on 6 December – the University Club of San Francisco. Located at the top of Nob Hill the club provides a panoramic view of San Francisco. After Chief Johnny Johnson led with a brief talk about the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ambassador James Rosenthal honored us with a talk about the challenges we face in the Pacific region today.



Above:  
“Chief” Johnny Johnson poses with Congressman Mike Honda, 17th District. Honda presented Johnny with a certificate of recognition.



Left:  
Companion Luis Marquez and his wife Vanessa enjoy the view from the University Club on Nob Hill during our Pearl Harbor Day dinner.

As is the tradition for our Commandery, the “Change of Command” was done with the “reading of orders” and Colonel Allan Cruz, USMC, (Ret) passed responsibility to Captain Tom Snyder, MC, USN, (Ret) while Commander General Lockwood presided.



Captain Snyder (center) official relieves Colonel Cruz as San Francisco Commandery Commander while Captain Michele Lockwood presides.



Col Allan Cruz (left) and his successor CAPT Tom Snyder pose with a display of historic uniforms prior to the Pearl Harbor Day dinner.

The next day, with Captain Snyder presiding, we concluded our 2015 schedule at the Italian Athletic Club with author Ted Atlas who focused on parallels between Naval History and the history of technology especially on the San Francisco Bay Area’s contribution to both.

As one year ends and another begins San Francisco looks forward to an outstanding schedule of speakers for 2016 and is honored to host what promises to be a productive and fun Congress at the Hale Koa Hotel on Waikiki in October.

Submitted by Bob Hansen

The Texas Commandery of the Naval Order of the U. S. conducted the 30th Annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance ceremony on the Battleship Texas in recognition of the 74th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack.



LT Steven Howell, CAPT Kerry Magee, RADM Peter Andrus, CAPT David Burr, CAPT Carter Conlin, LT Thomas Gillette, CDR Robert Frazier, LCDR Gary Williamson, CDR Bryan Lethcoe, CDR Don Lieske. Seated: MM2 (SS) Gilbert Raynor, Jill Allen, QM2 Clyde Combs.

The Commander of the Texas Commandery, MM2 (SS) Gil Raynor, USN (Ret.), conducted the program which was held on the forecastle of the Battleship Texas in very pleasant weather of 65 degrees F. The Commemorative Air Force performed several fly-bys for all present to see.

Commander Gil Raynor introduced the honored guests, the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, and gave some poignant observations concerning the Day of Infamy. He also read a proclamation from Texas Governor Greg Abbott in which he gave his comments concerning the Pearl Harbor attack and its significance. He ended by declaring 7 December to be Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day which should always be remembered with reverence.



Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors

Commander Gil Raynor then called on Companion CAPT Kerry Magee to give the invocation which was beautifully expressed. Again there were no survivors present for the ceremony; only their sons and daughters were present.

CAPT Carter Conlin gave the oral history of CPO Howard L. Snell which included a description of what "Battleship Row" looked like about 15 minutes after the attack began. Howard witnessed the tremendous fires burning on *USS Arizona* and the capsized *USS Oklahoma* in addition to the many aircraft dropping

bombs and torpedoes. He was issued a rifle and pistol which he used to fire at the attacking aircraft. Howard had recently reported for duty aboard *USS Enterprise* (CV-6) and was detached to attend the Cooks and Bakers School at the Submarine Base. In the afternoon of 7 December he was told to turn in his weapons and report to the kitchen on the Submarine Base to bake bread which he did for three straight days.

As a crew member of *USS Enterprise* he participated in many actions including the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, 18 April 1942 and the Battle of Midway, 4 June 1942. Later, Howard was transferred to *USS Morrison* (DD-560) where he participated in battles for which he received eight battle stars. At the end of World War II he had accumulated a total of 17 battle stars in addition to a Navy Commendation Medal for saving the life of a shipmate who had been blown overboard after the explosion of the ammunition magazine on the aircraft carrier *USS Princeton* (CV-23) while his destroyer was helping to fight fires on the carrier which had been bombed in the Battle of Leyte Gulf on 24 October 1944.

Later Howard changed his rate to Sonar Technician and retired on 16 March 1962 as a Chief Sonar Technician.

As a footnote to his oral history it was noted that after Howard's death on January 14, 2014 the Naval Order established a new award to honor his memory: the Distinguished Sea Service Award-Senior Enlisted which was awarded for the first time to MCPON Rick D. West, USN (Ret.) at the Annual Congress held in New Orleans, LA in October 2015. The plaque for this award has the following inscription engraved: "In honor of Chief Petty Officer Howard L. Snell, U. S. Navy (Retired)".

Commander Gil Raynor introduced the keynote speaker, Jill Allen, one of the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors.



Commander Gil Raynor with (left) Reba Harvey Watson and keynote speaker Jill Allen.

She was a very young girl of only 3 years at the time of the attack. She and her older sister, Jean, were the daughters of

**Continued on the next page...**

Captain Loyd George Jost, who was an Army dentist stationed on Oahu at the time of the attack. He had gone off to tend to the dying and wounded while the two young girls and their mother had been rushed to an underground bunker for protection from the bombing and strafing by the attacking aircraft.

Some six weeks after the attack the two girls and their mother were evacuated by ocean liner on a 10-day voyage to San Francisco via a round-about route along the coast of Alaska to avoid submarine attack.

They traveled to Sheboygan, Wisconsin to stay with relatives until Captain Jost returned.

Commander Raynor presented the Naval Order wreath to Reba Harvey Watson in recognition of her mother who had been a "Rosie the Riveter" during WWII and passed away this year. Her daughter, Mrs. Watson, participated in the memorial lei ceremony in honor of her mother.

The daughter of Lewis LaGessee, Lori LaGessee Cento, gave the names of the Pearl Harbor survivors who had passed away during the past year.

This was followed by the Marine Corps rifle salute and taps.

Participants in the program besides the Naval Order were:



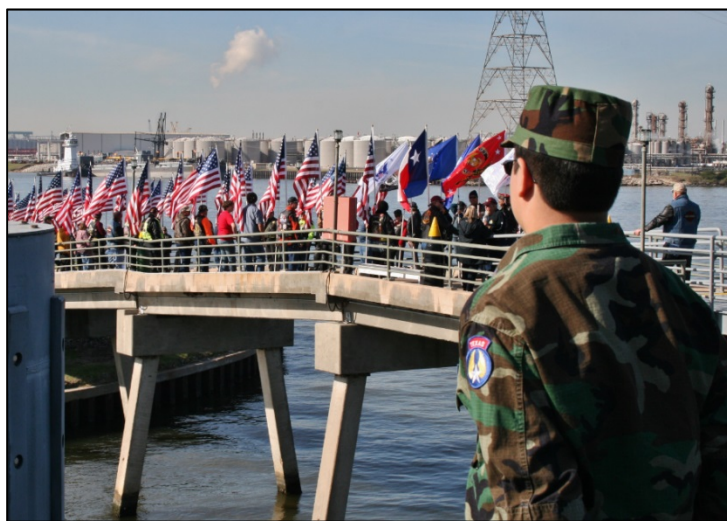
The Invincible Eagle Band directed by Companion PNC Charles E. Grabein,



U. S Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Houston Div. CO, LT Jeff Humphrey; Katy Div. CO, LTJG Steve Biersdorfer; Regional Dir. LCDR Gary Williamson; Regional Staff LCDR Allen Kremer.



USMC Rifle Squad, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines.



Flags lining the walkway to the Battleship Texas manned by SE Texas Patriot Guard Riders, John Darner Ride Captain.



Thunderbird Composite Sqdn. Civil Air Patrol, CAPT Torre LoDolce, Dep. Commdr. Of Cadets, TX 179

Photos by LT Barry Barlow, USNSCC Executive Officer and Chaplain of Houston Division and CAPT Carter Conlin, USN (Ret.), NOUS.

**Submitted by CAPT Carter B. Conlin, USN (Ret.)**

## Vice Admiral Joel T. Boone – A Giant of Navy Medicine and Medal of Honor Recipient

Although President Harding had his own personal physician, a homeopathic doctor from his hometown of Marion, Ohio, Boone took an active interest in the President's health, and as the older doctor entertained reporters in the White House, a more serious Dr. Boone took meticulous notes on Harding's increasingly failing health. He also assisted in treating First Lady Florence Harding's kidney ailment. Boone was so concerned about Mrs. Harding's kidney disease prior to the First Couple's epic western tour that he quietly arranged to have a casket brought onboard, just in case. Although there was a death on the tour, it wasn't Mrs. Harding's. On the trip, Harding's health continued to deteriorate. Harding, who suffered from high blood pressure and constant fatigue, wasn't an easy patient, and he refused to reduce his schedule. In late July, the entourage arrived in San Francisco after touring Alaska. Harding decided to rest from the trip at the Palace Hotel. It was there that he died on 2 August 1923. Boone was with him until the final moments of Harding's death.

Boone would go on to serve two additional Presidents - Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover. During the Hoover Administration, Dr. Boone created "Hoover Ball", a vigorous form of physical exercise implemented to keep the President and his Cabinet healthy. He even remained on staff briefly when President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in March 1933. In the subsequent years leading up to World War II, Boone served in several leadership roles and was promoted to Captain.

## Boone – Hero to Japanese POWs

In April 1945, Boone was promoted to Commodore and ordered as Third Fleet Medical Officer, where he was tasked with providing care and evacuation of Japanese prisoners of war at the Omori POW camp in Tokyo. Three boarding parties on an LCVP left *USS San Juan* at 3pm on 31 August. Characteristically, Boone was in the first Higgins boat.

"While entering the channel a large number of waving and very excited prisoners of war, unclad or partially clad, were seen to be standing on the dock. As the first LCVP arrived, many prisoners jumped into the water and swam toward the boat. The excitement of the prisoners was a never-forgettable sight. They carried home-made improvised national flags of the United States and Great Britain," according to the United States Pacific Fleet's report on the "Initial Release of Prisoners of War in Japan."

Boone was the first American ashore in his eagerness to "lend every effort in the relief of the starved and suffering Allied prisoners of war." He was also the only one unarmed. After liberating the Omori POW camp, Boone had a car driven to the Shinagawa Prison Hospital. The American physician entered the hospital by pushing aside armed guards with fixed bayonets. Once the prisoners realized Boone was an American officer, "their excitement knew no bounds. Those who were able to ran out of doors and jumped through windows, running toward him,

hugging him, yelling and literally kissing him and falling at his feet in their excitement."

Boone again witnessed history when he was onboard *USS Missouri* Sept. 2, 1945 during Japan's surrender to Gen. Douglas MacArthur. After his second war, RADM Boone served as the District Medical Officer, Eleventh Naval District at San Diego, Calif. In early 1948, Boone was appointed as executive Secretary on the Secretary of Defense's Committee on Medical and Hospital Services of the Armed Forces and later served on the Hoover Commission.

## The Bituminous Coal Medical Survey of 1947

Historically, the Federal Coal Mines Administration (FCMA) existed only in times of war. However, due to a protracted mining strike, on 21 May 1947, President Truman issued "Executive Order 9728" authorizing federal seizure of all mines while reestablishing the FCMA to oversee coal operations.

Eight days later, and 59 days since the strike's commencement, the Government conceded to the UMW's demands which included a reduction of the coal miners' work week from six to five days, an increase in wages by 18 1/2 cents an hour, workmen's compensation, a medical and hospital fund contributed by wage deduction, and an unprecedented nationwide survey of "hospital and medical facilities, medical treatment, sanitation, community facilities and housing" in coal mining areas. Enter Admiral Joel T. Boone.

The Department of the Interior had specifically requested Boone to serve as Medical Advisor to the Federal Coal Mines Administration and Director of a Medical Survey of the Bituminous Coal Industry. Admiral Boone was given free rein over his duties and implementation of the survey.

Unsurprisingly, the survey was to end up as essentially a Navy operation. Boone's first task was to create a team to undertake the daunting survey of mines. He was given CAPT Charles T. Dickeman, CEC, USN, to serve as engineering consultant. As his administrative officer, Boone recruited CDR John Balch, USNR, a Supply Corps officer, who during World War I, had served with Boone as a Navy pharmacist's mate with the 6th Marine Regiment in France. Both had received the Medal of Honor for heroism under fire while with the regiment.

Boone knew he also needed a team of medical and sanitation experts to conduct the survey. Vice Admiral McIntire, Surgeon General, authorized Boone to call upon personnel in the Navy Medical Department. Unique among this group was CDR Julius Amberson, MC, USN. Amberson was once a mining engineer whose career was interrupted by World War I. He served as a radioman aboard submarines in the war and then trained to become a physician, paying for medical school by working as a mining consultant. At the outbreak of World War II, Amberson rejoined the Navy as a physician where he would

Continued on the next page...

earn a reputation as a specialist in epidemic diseases; as such he was credited for saving hundreds of thousands of lives during the war.

In all, Boone's Medical Survey Group consisted of headquarters staff including statistician LT Charles Curtis, HC, USN, and five teams of naval officers (each team including a medical officer in charge, an engineer familiar with housing, a recreation and welfare specialist, and a chief yeoman as clerk). Owing to the impossibility of investigating all 8,000 bituminous mines, the Survey Group took a representative sample of 260 mines in 105 counties in 22 bituminous coal producing states and set out to carefully study aspects of hospital and medical facilities, and medical treatment and sanitation and housing conditions, particularly in the Appalachia where about 80 percent of the soft coal miners lived.

The Group completed the tours by the spring 1947 and submitted their data to headquarters. The final report, "A Medical Survey of the Bituminous Coal Industry" was submitted to the Department of the Interior in March 1947 and 13,000 copies of the report were printed and distributed. The 244-page report was broken into seven sections: general medical services, hospitalization, hospital facilities, housing and sanitary facilities, industrial medicine, and off-the-job living, public health with six pages of recommendations to improve conditions in each of the seven aspects identified and then concluded with a supplement.

Among the many recommendations in the report were that the coal industry adopt a comprehensive system of prepaid medical and dental care and hospitalization; improve the amount and quality of hospital care; develop better sanitation at mining areas; and have mine operators build and maintain wash and change houses for their employees.

In his final assessment of the medical conditions of the coal mining areas of the United States, Admiral Boone pointed out that industrial health has not received the attention or kept pace with industrial progress. "In a short-sighted rush of speed to create and develop machines in the interest of wealth and greater comfort, the health of the people who operate those machines has been neglected or given too limited attention. With the advancement of mechanization, obviously there is a greater exaction on physical well-being and mental acuity. Health is not only man's most valuable possession but a necessary requisite to the progress of a mechanized age."

The report received praise from the American Medical Association, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, and even John L. Lewis. After its initial publication, Lewis invited Boone to lunch to discuss the report's findings. To Boone's surprise the labor leader told him that the report was superb and that he ordered an additional 25,000 copies. In the end, the report is credited for the construction of 13 modern hospitals in the southern Appalachians, the installations of wash houses, and overall improvements in mine safety and first aid.

Following the mining survey, then RADM Boone was assigned

Inspector General for Navy Medicine, a role that soon brought him back to combat medicine during the early days of the Korean Conflict. Quick to recognize the value of helicopters in the treatment of the wounded, ADM Boone pressed for the installation of flight decks onboard hospital ships.

By December 1950, however, due to his health, Vice Adm. Boone was forced to retire from the Navy and was promoted to the rank of vice admiral. He was too ill to attend the opening of the Adm. Joel T. Boone Health Clinic at the Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek on 15 March 1972.

"What a better way to dedicate a structure to the medical needs of our great Navy than to name this building after one of America's – and the Navy's – great patriots," said Vice Adm. George Davis, who was the Navy's surgeon general and guest speaker. "May those people who occupy this building to administer health care needs to our Navy eligible have the dedication, empathy and the devotion to service that its name implies."

In 1982, the Navy again honored VADM Boone by commissioning the *USS Boone* (FFG-28), a Perry class guided missile frigate assigned to DESRON 14. She was decommissioned in 2012.

VADM Boone's decorations included the Medal of Honor; Distinguished Service Cross; Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters; the Purple Heart with two oak leaf clusters; Bronze Star Medal with Combat V; Secretary of the Navy Commendation Medal; Defense Medal with Star; Haitian Campaign Medal; World War I Victory Medal with six battle clasps; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II; Croix de Guerre with two Palms, Officer of the Legion of Honor, Order of Fourragere (France); War Cross (Italy).

After his retirement, he and Mrs. Boone resided in Washington, D.C., where he died on 2 April 1974. He was buried in Section 11 of

Arlington National Cemetery. His wife, Helen Elizabeth Koch Boone who died in 1977, is buried with him.



Submitted by Tom Burden  
Lieutenant Commander, Medical Service Corps,  
U.S. Navy (Retired)

## Local Teen Creates Award-Winning Vietnam War Documentary

By Yolanda Cruz - Associated Press - Monday, August 24, 2015

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (AP) - While plenty of teenagers post videos to their social media accounts, one local teen created her own video documentary based on an event of the Vietnam War.

Abigail Wiest, 13, of Hattiesburg, entered the National History Day competition for Mississippi this past March with her project focusing on the *USS Kirk*.

"The *USS Kirk* was a ship off of the coast of Vietnam as Saigon fell in 1975," said Abigail's father, Andrew Wiest, a history professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. "It was supposed to guard incoming and outgoing helicopters. Instead it was there as hundreds of Vietnamese helicopters carrying refugees flew away from the failing country."

"I learned about it in school and I thought it was such an interesting story that I decided I wanted to do my project on it," Abigail Wiest said.

National History Day is a nationwide competition for middle- and high-school students. It encourages students to use their creativity to develop original historical research focused on an annual theme.

Students who participate in the state National History Day contest compete for the opportunity to attend the national competition in College Park, Maryland, and have the opportunity to win scholarships and other awards. To participate, students create a project (group or individual) in one of five areas: video documentary, exhibit, paper (individual only), performance and website design.

Wiest, who just started eighth grade at Sacred Heart Catholic School, decided to enter a video documentary because she felt it was the best medium for the subject matter.

"I thought about doing a paper, but with the video you can really see the emotion of the men I interviewed and actually see the helicopters in the water and people on the *USS Kirk*," Wiest said. "It just wouldn't have been as powerful in a paper or exhibit."

As part of filming her documentary, Wiest traveled with her father to New Orleans to a retirement home for Vietnamese Americans. There they found Kiem Do, who served as a captain in the South Vietnamese Navy, and Toan Nguyen, who was a colonel in the South Vietnamese Air Force.



"Mr. Do was one of the men who led the flotilla carrying nearly 30,000 refugees to safety as the war ended. The *USS Kirk* helped get those people to the Philippines and safety," Wiest said. "Mr. Nguyen was a pilot who tried to land his helicopter on the *USS Kirk* but was turned away. After tossing family members to safety on the ship, he landed his chopper in the water, trying to avoid the chopper blades (when he jumped from the chopper) so he could make it to the ship."

One of the things Wiest was most proud of in doing her documentary was getting to the stories of the men she interviewed.

"They were so happy to talk to me and tell me about what they experienced," Wiest said. "They just were glad that their story was getting out there and people would learn about what happened out there."

Wiest won first place in the National History Day competition for the state of Mississippi, and moved on to the national competition in College Park, Maryland, but did not place. "While there, Abigail's work caught the eye of Charles Chadbourn, a professor at the Naval War College," Andrew said. "He loved the project and took it to the main publisher of Naval History in the world, the International Journal of Naval History, the leading journal in the field."

Jan Herman, the producer of the first PBS documentary on the *USS Kirk*, also wrote Wiest to comment on the technical skill of her documentary.

"It is heartwarming to learn how the story of *USS Kirk* has inspired a younger generation of scholars such as yourself," Herman wrote to Wiest. "I was not only touched by the content of your creation but marvel at how skillfully you presented the story. Creating a successful documentary, balancing interviews with visual content is formidable enough for an experienced filmmaker. That you achieved success at such a young age is even more remarkable. Your scholarship, maturity and dedication set you apart. Should you choose to become a professional historian, I have no doubt you will be a very successful one."

Wiest, who worked on the project independently, said she has found great interest in filmmaking as well as history.

"I've always liked history, but doing this project made me realize how much I really liked editing the video and putting it all together," Wiest said. "I think I would really like it if I could do something like that when I grow up."

See Abigail Wiest's documentary at the International Journal of Naval History website: [goo.gl/CGeQgw](http://goo.gl/CGeQgw)

Information from: The Hattiesburg American, [hattiesburgamerican.com](http://hattiesburgamerican.com)



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If you have any questions, please contact CAPT Serafini at [attlioserafini@msn.com](mailto:attlioserafini@msn.com). **Check can be mailed to CAPT Serafini at: Naval Order Foundation, A. Serafini 416 Sycamore Street San Carlos, CA 94070-2018**

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Submitted by Don Schuld

**In Memoriam**

Mrs. Zola "Be" Francine Carver, (Certificate #9225)  
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 Joined 08 August 2012  
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