

FROM THE QUARTERDECK

JULY, 2005

Our first try at a Mini reunion went well. We had members show up that had never attended a ships reunion before, others who had only attended one or two in the past. The idea again is to bring our reunion at a time and place where we might draw some interest from new members and extend our relationship with those who have attended our many reunions in the past. On how many more occasions will we see our crew of shipmates before we become incapable of attending ourselves.

In Peoria, IL. We had a tour of the Caterpillar plant, where we learned how they stock and service customers all over the world. That evening we bussed over to the River Boat Casino, we had dinner and time for the slots and other games of chance. The next day we took the Peoria historical tour, then lunch in a railroad dinning car. We had a great Banquet Sat. evening with a guest speaker. The subject of discussion was about a captain and crew who had sailed down the Mississippi and ran into trouble with Indians and a mutinous crew. He had many pieces of antiquated relics taken from the sunken vessel.

In attendance at our reunion are those listed below: Joe & Margo Variot, Don & Mary Jane Seibold, Ron & Ann Able, Robert & Jo Ann Christy, Anthony & Marilyn Lewis, Al & Rollen Mettler, Anthony & Magdalin Schmitt & their two daughters, Marvin Childress & his wife, Al Rellergert & his wife, Kenneth Bears & son, Jim & Morena Downing.

Our upcoming reunion in Valley Forge should be one to remember. The hotel has gifted us with a wine and cheese welcome aboard party on Wed. Sept, 21, 2005, 6pm to 8pm. Make travel plans accordingly. Our sister ships Maryland and Colorado have sided on with Military Reunion Planners to handle all events and Hotel reservations. We had already made a deal with the Doubletree Hotel. But did sign on with them to handle our side tours. I am sure that doing so will help make our Reunion a success.

We want to Thank Mary Porzueck for her donations of pictures, a book regarding crossing the equator, and other memorable bits about the war and Wee Vee. Also to Ronald D. Overlin for donation of two menus of the West Virginia, dated, Fourth of July, 1938, and July 4, 1940. Thanks to everyone who has donated at one time or another.

There is a young lady named Misty, looking for some information on two cousins that were on the Wee Vee. Duane L. Simon, went on board 10-20-39, nickname curley, Joseph Simon, went on board 12-28-37. If any one of the Pearl Harbor Survivors remembers anything about these two sailors, contact Misty at 503-667-6407. She will appreciate it.

We continue to receive life memberships and are in the process of getting identification made to show that you are a life member of the USS West Virginia Organization. Here is an updated list:

Nick Aiello	Marvin Childress	Bob Kronberger	Arthur Rinetti
Glen Atkins	Dale Favor	Paul Lukas	Al. Rellergert
Charles Bender	George Gackle	Alton Meyer (dec)	William Rosebloom
Sam Bennet	George Hefner	Mary Porzueck	Anthony Schmitt
Ralph Batchelor	Don Jones	C. Prozenica	Charles Schmoll

Wade Childs

Mel Kovacheck

Aubrey Pridgen

B.J. Zastrow

If somehow we missed your name please let us know.

OKINAWA: "FLOWER BIRDS" AND CLOSE SUPPORT

Following the Iwo Jima affair, American planners chose the Ryukyu Island chain, stretching almost 800 miles between the enemy homeland and Formosa, as their next objective. Okinawa, 60 miles long and 465 miles square, was the only large island in the chain and was viewed as a suitable site for airfield construction in anticipation of the upcoming invasion of Japan. Okinawa was a long way from American bases-750 miles north of Manila, 900 miles north of Leyte Gulf, 1,200 miles northwest of Ulithi, and 3,300 miles from Espiritu Santo- meaning that the landing fleet would have to remain in the area receiving supplies from a long train of logistical vessels. On the defender's side lay one central fact: the island lay near Formosa and only 350 miles south of airfields on Kyushu, which put it within range, with refueling, of every aircraft in Japan.

On Okinawa itself, Lt. General Mitsuru Ushijima, who had 77,000 to 100,000 troops in his 32nd Army garrison, received orders to employ the same defense in depth tactics as General Kuribayashi had on Iwo Jima. It was, however, on the backs of the in-range aviators that Japan's main defense lay. In early March 1945, Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki was instructed to employ aircraft of the Imperial Navy's Third, Fifth, and Tenth Air Fleets in defense of the island. These Ugaki combined into the powerful and fanatical Kikusui (Floating Chrysanthemum) Forces for suicide attacks. When on March 25 reconnaissance planes reported the US activation of (operation Ten-go," a plan for Kamikaze opposition. Ugaki's "flower birds" would play havoc with Yankee warships, including the West Virginia, for the next three months.

The "Wee Vee," with BatDiv chief Sowell still embarked, departed Ulithi for Okinawa on March 21. Captain Wiley's "old battleship" was part of the Fire Support Group (Task Force 54) commanded by Vice Admiral Morton L. Deyo, who had commanded US fire ships off Normandy the year before and flew his flag in the Tennessee. The Mountain State dreadnought's assignment was further broken down in that she came under Rear Admiral L.D. McCormick's Task Unit 54.1.4 composed of our ship, the Idaho, three cruisers and five destroyers. Training exercises were held enroute with AA gunners firing at kites and many "bogey" contacts were reported by the escort though no actual attacks materialized. The heavy ships arrived off Okinawa on March 24.

Two days later as soldiers of the New York 77th Division stormed ashore to secure Kerama Retto, 20 miles southwest of Okinawa, as a fleet anchorage, Admiral Deyo directed his Fire Support Group to open the shelling of targets on Okinawa's Hagushi Bay. Proceeding by various speeds to her station of yellow Beach, directly off shore of Hagushi town, the West Virginia turned into the wind, launched her two floatplanes, and went to General Quarters. About the same time, the cruiser Wichita six miles off reported torpedo wakes and maneuvered out of their way. Destroyers sped to the scene dropping depth charges and soon lookouts aboard the "Wee Vee" and the cruiser Biloxi directly

ahead reported an oil slick to port. The perpetrator, the Japanese submarine RO-49, was believed sunk, but in fact she escaped-only to be sunk by the destroyer Hudson on April 4. To be on the safe side, an emergency turn signal was hoisted aboard the Yankee warships which all turned due north, the West Virginia at 15 knots.

Thirteen minutes after the submarine scare, the "Wee Vee" came back to her original course and arrived on her bombardment station off the northern beaches half an hour later. In haze and overcast, lookouts on board the big ship caught a gun flash on shore some 12,000 yards distant which was followed by a splash four or five thousand yards off her port bow. Meanwhile, the Idaho had hoisted the "Commence Firing" signal and Commander Rodgers, circling inland, was reporting large AA batteries in need of primary attention. When Commander Hardison reported himself ready, skipper Wiley ordered him to open fire. "Boom!" Number Three 16-inch turret opened the show with a full salvo of HC. "Right-100," Rodgers corrected. A few salvos later he was calling, "No change! No change!" The AA battery was quickly destroyed and the captain ordered a shift of fire to Hagushi town plus Yontan and Kadena airfields. Within Minutes, Wiley and others could see the village "burning and covering the area with smoke." There was no counter battery reply from the shore.

The West Virginia's crusade continued until about noon. At 1120, the minesweeper Strength, 3,000 yards off her port bow, reported a Japanese submarine off her starboard bow. Three minutes later, Air Defense lookouts on the battlewagon pointed out a torpedo wake off their own starboard bow. Captain Wiley immediately granted his AA gun captains permission to fire on future torpedo wakes providing the range was reasonable. Again, yankee "tin cans" sped in dropping their "ash cans" and the "Wee Vee" was bothered no further by such alarms. After lunch, the refueled OS2U's were sent out and the shoot of Hagushi continued until dusk. At 1810 as she retired off shore for the night, radar picked up nine "bogies" closing. The Air Defense gong sounded, but no attackers came near.

The dawn Air Defense alert was sounded aboard the West Virginia at 0520 on March 27. As the sun rose partially above the horizon, "Bogey" reports were continuously received in the radio room. It was while the Fire Support Group was standing back in towards Okinawa at 10 knots for a second day of firing that the men of the "Wee Vee" had their first taste of the Kyushu-based "flower birds. " A long range twin-engined Irving reconnaissance aircraft approached her formation from the port quarter and was taken under fire by all ships. Aboard the Mountain State battleship, 5-inch Director No. 4 was given radar designation from the CIC and fire was opened with the two after port 5-inch mounts. Observers noted that the bird was hit and fell into the sea off the port quarter. "It was believed," Wiley later confided in his official report, "that 5-inch fire from his ship aided in destroying the plane."

Not long after the Irving was downed, a Francis bomber came in from ahead and passed along the West Virginia's starboard side. It was taken under immediate fire by 40mm and 20mm guns, but no Mountaineer hits were observed. Somebody else got the plane, which crashed 4,000 yards off the port quarter. Meanwhile across the bay, eleven Kamikazes

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attacked, getting hits on the Biloxi, O'Brien, Downey, and Nevada. Skimp details on the assault were relayed to Captain Wiley via TBS.

By 1001 the West Virginia was nearing Yellow Beach with her GQ bugle sounding. Again, two Kingfishers were sent up to spot and at 1038, she began her scheduled bombardment from a range of 2,000 yards. As the 5-inchers spat their shells, Wiley leveled his binoculars landward and could see "several large fires in different parts of our bombardment area."

"On top of a ridge," he noted "Some wrecked planes alongside revetments which are covered with camouflage nets." Adjusting focus, the former dirigible commander decided that "The beach defenses look strong." Several rows of posts and wires were fully discernable in the water outside the sea wall. The "Wee Vee" continued her shoot all day, mostly at what were described as "Class B Targets," retiring with other units of Task Force 54 for the evening. During her exit, more "bogies" were reported, but none attacked.

At 1021 as the 16-inchers continued to patrol the beach area, the minesweeper Skylark about 3,000 yds away hit a mine and exploded. As the survivors abandoned her and the little ship sank, it became more than apparent that the Japanese had planted a strong "Garden" off Hagushi.

The West Virginia steamed down to Kerama Retto on March 29 for ammunition replenishment. The effort of hoisting the big shells aboard in nets from an LST and manhandling them- gently-down to the shell rooms with an equal supply of powder to the magazines consumed the entire day.

March 30 was again busy for the gunners aboard the West Virginia. Once more she put up her observation planes and stood by off the Hagushi beaches to provide fire support for UDT's clearing the obstacles Captain Wiley had commented on three days earlier. At 0835 as the frogmen began their dangerous task, the battleship opened up with both her main and secondary batteries. Although the noise and smoke when combined with rain and poor visibility aided the UDT's it also caused difficulties for the spotters. Surprisingly the visibility seemed to clear when a squadron of carrier planes arrived to dive low on a bombing run. Several large fires were soon thereafter seen burning in the "Wee Vee's" target area. Simultaneously as the frogmen continued about their business of planting charges, those men on the battleship now on the opposite side or in turrets could watch their almost calm activity as shells screamed over their heads to explode on the beach beyond. At noon the UDT's were finished and their little landing craft, know as LCVP's picked them up and retired, each boat firing several green rocket to mark their departure.

During the afternoon watch, Admiral Deyo passed orders for his dreadnoughts to move inshore and punch holes in the sea wall large enough for troops to pass through. Nearly scraping the reef, Wiley's command closed to an approximate 2,000 yard range and went to GQ. In weather much cleared since morning, the starboard 5-inchers began to hammer

the obstacles, "which proved tough!" The rolling thunder of the main battery joined the dual-purpose guns and several direct hits were thereafter observed. The skipper was pleased to see the wall "broken through in several places." While the bigger guns sought the shore, one 40mm quad exercised on general coverage of the landing beach area.

Although the West Virginia had had only one brief scrape with Japanese fliers thus far, the Divine Wind had not been Silent. Every day since the American fleet arrived, small groups of "flower birds" made assaults. The most serious came that evening when the Fifth Fleet flagship Indianapolis was badly hurt, forcing Admiral Raymond Spruance to shift aboard the New Mexico.

March 31 was the final day for pre-invasion bombardment and the "Wee Vee" was once more early on her station. Closing Yellow Beach, the battleship again trained her cannon and with reports from her spotting planes, pounded the sea wall, shoreline, and targets inland. The six hour bombardment was intense and useful, but otherwise little different from those fired other days.

Sunday, April 1, was "Love Day" at Okinawa. On this nice Easter morning, 603 landing craft would begin putting ashore 451, 866 men of Lt. General Simon B. Buckner's Tenth US Army (XXIX corps and III Amphibious Corps). The proceedings would go off like clock work because, with few exceptions, Lt. General Ushijima's defenders were entrenched deep in the southern mountains waiting to meet the Americans on favorable ground. To the Yanks going in, the island would at first appear depopulated, but at sea, the enemy would come very much alive.

The West Virginia went to General Quarters at 0608 and less than two minutes later, fliers of the Rising Sun were picked up by lookouts and radar. First a Nate fighter broke through cloud cover on the port bow, turned left, and began down the port side in a dive. When approximately abeam, the military plane turned toward the ship still losing altitude. Hit repeatedly by 20mm and 40mm shells, the "flower blossom" disintegrated and crashed close on board. A few seconds later, a loud bang was felt and water rose in a forty foot sprout in the vicinity of the crash. Observers on the "Wee Vee" put their heads together and concluded that the blast was the plane's bomb detonating under water.

No sooner was the Nate downed than four more enemy aircraft were seen coming in. Another Nate came in high on the battleship's port beam and was taken under fire by her 40mm's and 20mm's. The fighter passed over the ship and was splashed by gunfire about 700 yards off her starboard bow. As several other ships were also firing on the bird, no one on board knew who actually got it.

The early excitement over the West Virginia closed Yellow Beach to support the landing of the 6th Marine Division. As she steamed close inshore, Chaplain Williams and several others thought a moment as the sun rose over heavy low lying clouds. The new light cast a "peach like glow" over the water; it was going to be a beautiful clear day with the sea calm enough for a good landing operation. It was just the sort of weather folks in the Mountain State would hope for when going to worship, but here on this holy day there

would be no time on a tight schedule for church. The Chaplain could only pray that the war would be finished before the next celebration of The Resurrection.

By 0630, Commander Rodgers was aloft and the "Wee Vee" was ready to join other vessels of Admiral Deyo's command in a last prelanding shoot. A few minutes later, the dreadnought heeled to port as the first 16-inch salvo was sent off. Again and again the big guns sent their HC shell into the sea wall behind the beaches. To any observer, "the blinding flash of the big rifles, the huge bellow of smoke, and their immense thunder seemed like volcanoes erupting." At 0730, Captain Wiley ordered a cease fire while carrier-based aircraft had to go with bombs and rockets. In just a few minutes the air strike was over and the naval ships, stretching now over a ten-mile front, resumed their cannonade. To the "hoarse roar of her main battery," the West Virginia's 5-inchers and even several 40mm mounts joined in, together expending a vast amount of cordite.

At 0800, invasion chief Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner signaled the by-now traditional, "Land the Landing Force," and somewhere aboard someone yelled, "Here they come." In the van were the little LCI gunboats, moving slowly in order not to out distance the other "amphtracs" and landing craft. Skipper Wiley inspected the expedition with his binoculars smiling as to the "north and south as far as one can see rocket ships and Higgins boats are closing to the beach." A few minutes after this, LST-809 caught fire about 500 hundred yards off the West Virginia's port quarter and several men jumped overboard. Smart damage control had the fires quickly out and the soggy swimmers were returned aboard by a landing craft. Just as another wave passed the Mountain State battlegroup, carrier planes dived in "for their last pre-landing strafing and rocket fire, making a noise like a gigantic cotton sheet being ripped apart."

A half hour after Turner's order the TBS brought Wiley word that the first leathernecks were just off the beach "going in." Four minutes later with the sun now burning away lingering patches of mist, the first wave of amphibious tanks landed. Aboard the battleship, closed to just 2,000 yards off shore, lookouts began to report numerous mortar and small caliber splashes among the later waves. The Japanese response, meager at best, was deemed to be "generally ineffective" because "it seemed to have no special aim." Around 0900 observers were able to view not only the "almost solid mass of transports to seaward," but "beaches swarming with amphtracs and men, troops moving through cornfields toward the tableland, an exhaustive supply of landing craft forming waves, (and) boats of earlier waves beginning to retreat." Through the period of landing, the "Wee Vee's" guns shot forth all shape of shell, "walking them back and forth before the quickly-advancing Marines."

The fire support by the West Virginia and other ships was an awe-inspiring sight which brought forth many comments. To reporter Ernie Pyle aboard one of the small craft, the shoot's concussion "...set up vibrations in the air-a sort of flutter- which pained and pounded the ears as though with invisible drumsticks." Atop the walls of the 32nd Army Headquarters of Shuri Castle, Lt. General Ushijima and his staff watched the firing. "The dust, smoke, and flashes of fire... in the north and central airfield area," remembered one

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Japanese staff officer, "cover the ground and soar to the sky, presenting a scene of unsurpassed grandeur."

Just before 1000, Commander Rodgers took time out from his spotting over the shore to inform the ship that soldiers of the US 7th division were on top of the ridge next to Kedena airfield. Within minutes, he was back on the radio to report that American tanks were moving on both ends of the strip meeting little resistance. Lt. Kovacheck, now flying the other Kingfisher, was soon able to join in with the happy news that elements of the 6th Marine Division held nearby Yontan air base. On the West Virginia as elsewhere, all hands were stunned. Those points, according to the invasion plan, were not supposed to fall for another three days! Where, they wondered, were the Japanese?

Through the remainder of the morning, the "old battleship" fired on targets reported as "military" by her spotters. There is some question as to the validity of many of those objectives as hundreds of native Okinawan family tombs were destroyed by naval guns, Shore fire control parties offered little guidance of better quality and so the big rifles simply continued support fire deeper into the interior. By noon, the general situation seemed almost quiet, although many more small craft approached the beaches with men and supplies. Throughout the afternoon, the absence of opposition continued to astound the WEE Vee's crew. Not only was there no resistance from the land, but the Japanese air forces were not reported either. At 1600, Admiral Turner radioed both Admirals Nimitz and Spruance with information that the beachhead was secured.

In seven months of war, the West Virginia had battled the Divine Wind on many occasions, but so far was untouched. At 1850 as her men stood to Air Defense and the ship maneuvered out to sea with Deyo's heavy ships for the night, a "Flash Red" alert was received. The battleship's perfect record was about to be soiled for the first and only time.

At approximately 1907, four unidentified planes, possibly Oscars, were sighted by lookouts at a range of 3,000 yards, altitude 2,000 feet, flying directly toward the ship. Fire was opened at the leading plane at which time the Japanese formation split, two planes flying aft on the starboard side and two crossing the bow to port.

The two fighters flying aft on the starboard side, were fired on by the starboard 40mm and 20mm batteries, and one was observed to crash in flames off the starboard bow. The second plane continued down the starboard side and crashed the transport Alpine, about 2,500 yards away.

The Oscars passing down the port side were taken under fire by the port 40mm and 20mm batteries. One flew aft on the port side and crashed into a landing craft on the port quarter. The second plane was taken under fire by the majority of the port 20mm and 40mm batteries, but the poor visibility of the evening twilight combined with the volume of tracers conspired to blind the gunners, preventing them from staying on target.

Evading the AA fire and making a tight turn, this Oscar went into a steep vertical dive and just missing the bridge to port, crashed on the port side of the superstructure in 20mm group NO. 6, just forward of 4-inch Director No. 2 on the 0-3 deck between frames 67-70. Four men were killed instantly and twenty-three wounded. "Two of the four men killed that night," Seaman Rogusky later told the writer, "were my helpers on the cleaning station that we were assigned to."

The plane's 500-lb. Bomb plunged through a deck, but failed to explode. "Luckily," Seaman Robinson remembered, "the detonator remained in the galley while the bomb

lodged in the sleeping quarters." The "Wee Vee's" bomb disposal officer Chief Gunner Kenneth H. Barrett quickly found and defused the missile, which had broken upon impact and had it taken on deck and thrown over the side.

The Oscar battered the splinter shield, a fire room intake and parts of the signal bridge, broke through the deck with the detonator and wound up in the galley. Its engine, thrown clear of the fuselage, bounded into the ship's laundry. Fortunately, there was no explosion. Acting as the ship's Intelligence Officer, Lt. Robert O. Baumrucker moved down from his newly assigned post as chief of the main battery plotting room to conduct an unofficial examination of the damage. After poking through the wreckage and comparing notes with others on the scene, he too breathed a sigh of relief that the bomb had not detonated upon impact. "Had it gone off," he later confided to his note pad, "it would have cleaned out the whole mast, bridge, and much of the ship. As it was, it loused up part of the signal bridge and the crew's galley."

"The galley door was opposite my station in No. 2 5-inch mount on 0-2 deck starboard side," Seaman Robinson adds. "We had projectiles and powder cases lying on the deck and inside the galley was a raging steam and oil fire." As the flames spread to the laundry, tailor shop, and crew's space, Lt. Commander Whiter ordered all fire pumps to boost pressure to 100 pounds. As small caliber ammunition began to detonate, White's 0-2 damage control party, skillfully led by Lt. (j.g.) Richard P. Crossley, was quickly into action, putting out the fire and shutting off the steam valves. "I was too damn busy to be scared," Robinson concluded.

Among those later awarded various medals for bravery in battling this fire were Lt. Crossley, Fireman 1-c Jerry J. Rock, Chief Laundryman Frank Pinchowsky, Electrician's Mate 3-c Donald H. Sievers, Pharmacist's Mate 2-C Talmadge B. Yelverton, and Seaman 1-C Raymond J. Sullivan.

Once Air Defense and General Quarters were secured, "The smells became real." Noxious gas was discovered in the gallery where the bomb had settled and the compartment was closed off. "Fingers and parts of bodies were in the life nets and littered the port deck and galley." Damage was superficial, affecting only those parts of the superstructure, which were hit, plus a few lines and cables in the interior of the ship. Repair parties began clearing away the wreckage immediately after the crash and within an hour the West Virginia had weigh on and her skipper was able to report her fully operational.

About the time the galley was being closed off, a party found the dead Japanese pilot. Aviators Rodgers and Kovachek took a small Rising Sun ensign from his uniform. Seaman Robinson and a buddy received the unhappy task of "loading the Jap's remains into an orange crate from the galley, with his head placed on top." Even thirty years later the Seaman's thoughts of this duty are distasteful. "We took the crate from 0-2 down the ladder to the main deck and forward to the head. We had to carry the crate by sticking our fingers through the slats and were able to feel the gore rubbing against them. We placed him with the bodies of our four dead" to await burial.

The West Virginia's first tour of duty off Okinawa-and Captain Wiley's last-continued until April 24. Rather than a simple space-consuming daily chronology, we will examine hereafter only a few incidents of interest.

TO BE CONTINUED:

USS WEST VIRGINIA REUION. SEPT 21-26,2005
HOTEL RESERVATION FORM
MAIL TO: DOUBLE TREE GUEST SUITES
ATTENTION: RESERVATIONS
640 WEST GERMANTOWN PIKE
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA. 19482

The hotel would prefer telephone reservations
Call 1-610-834-8300, 1-800-222-8733 Have credit card ready

Name: _____ Share With _____
 Address: _____ City, State, Zip _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____
 Arrival Date _____ Depart Date _____
 Number of Rooms _____ Number of Guest per room _____
 Handicap _____ Smoking _____ Non smoking _____
 Confirmation Number _____

Rates are \$82 , single, double, \$92 Triple, \$102 quad, plus tax
Rates include a full breakfast buffet and a 20% discount on dinner.

All reservations must be made by credit card or a check to accompany this form. Rates are good 3 days before and 3 days after reunion if rooms are available. Cut off date Sept.1, 2005 after that only on room availability.

I the undersigned , hereby assumes liability for , and shall indemnify, defend, protect, save and hold harmless the USS West Virginia Reunion Assoc. and Doubletree Guest Suites, its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates and their officers, agents, subcontractors and their employees from and against any and all liabilities, claims, judgments, damages, and losses, including all cost, fees and expenses incidental thereto, caused by or arising out of the gross negligence or willful misconduct on my behalf and which are in any way related to the services or goods contemplated by this agreement.

Signature _____ Date _____
 2nd guest _____ Date _____

Note: Upon making a telephone reservation, you understand you are bound to the above agreement.

For Airport Transportation: Tropiano-1-800-559-2040

CANCELLATION POLICY: Must be done 72 hours in advance.
HOTEL OFFERS FREE PARKING. Make 2 copies of this form. 1 for hotel &
1 to USS West Virginia, C/O 4564 Cedar River Rd. Mancelona, Michigan 49659

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USS WEST VIRGINIA

2005 REUNION EVENTS / TOURS

EVENT A: BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY TOUR:

Thursday, September 22nd (9:00am-2:00pm)

You will enjoy a special day on board the most decorated battleship in history and learn about her nineteen battle and campaign stars. History comes to life as you tour through the Iowa class ship, one of the largest battleships ever built. Beautifully maintained, this floating museum has something for everyone including an on-board video tour in the wardroom, for those that have trouble moving between decks. While on board this great ship, you can enjoy a box lunch. You will also have plenty of time to explore the ship at your own pace including a visit to the gift shop which is filled with unique gift ideas. A box lunch is included in the tour price.

EVENT B: COMMEMORATIVE BUFFET DINNER

Thursday, September 22nd (Depart your hotel at 5:30pm)

Please join us for this special commemorative buffet dinner. This special event will be held at the Hilton Hotel. Military Reunion Planners will be honoring three sister ships. The USS West Virginia BB48, the USS Colorado BB45, and the USS Maryland BB46. (Military Reunion Planners will provide motorcoach transportation to the event.) This is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with your friends and visit with shipmates from your sister ships. You will also enjoy wonderful entertainment and an all-you-can-eat buffet dinner. This is going to be a great event, don't miss it!

EVENT C: HISTORIC PHILADELPHIA TOUR

Friday, September 23rd (9:00am-2:00pm)

You will experience the "City of Brotherly love". Your very experienced guide will escort you through the heart of historic Philadelphia, which was settled in 1683. Some of the historic sites you will visit include Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Congress Hall, and Christ Church. We will see as much as time permits in this very historical city. You will have plenty of time for lunch on your own at the *Redding Terminal Market*. (Your guide will point out the "hotspots.") Don't forget your camera.

EVENT D: GALA BANQUET DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT

Friday, September 23rd (7:00pm at the hotel)

Enjoy your Gala Banquet dinner with your friends at your Hotel. The dinner choices are Prime Rib of Beef or Grilled Breast of Chicken. Please select your Banquet entrée choice on your reservation form.

EVENT E: HISTORIC VALLEY FORGE TOUR

Saturday, September 24th (9:00am-1:00pm)

You will begin this wonderful historic tour with a stop at the Valley Forge National Historical Park's welcome center. There is an 18 minute film that will introduce you to the life during the encampment of 1777-78. Displays and artifacts in the exhibit area illustrate what life was like in the camp during that time. You will have plenty of time to explore the artifacts and gift shop, at your own pace. We will then depart on a riding tour through the park. Don't miss this step back in history.

EVENT F: BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE & RE-ENACTMENT TOUR

Sunday, September 25th (11:00am-5:00pm)

The Battle of Brandywine, fought between the Continental Army under General George Washington and the British forces led by General William Howe, was the largest engagement of the Revolutionary War. You will have the chance to see this annual re-enactment of this historic battle. The Americans were defeated in this largest single day battle of the American War for Independence; as a result the British took Philadelphia. Upon arrival at Brandywine you will take the short tram ride to the Battlefield. There will be a \$10 admission fee; this is not included in the tour price. You will see the re-enactment as well as have the opportunity to visit this very historic park including the encampments, crafts people, and settlers; all of which are part of the re-enactment. Food and beverage are available for purchase.

TOUR CANCELLATION INSURANCE

Should an emergency arise or you need to cancel your reunion meals or tour reservations for health or any other reason, you can relax. With the purchase of this insurance, you will be eligible for a full refund up until three (3) days prior to the start of the reunion. If you need to cancel - please call our office immediately (817-251-3551) for a cancellation number. If you have not purchased cancellation insurance, all tour and meal money is non-refundable 6 weeks prior to the reunion.

USS WEST VIRGINIA

2005 EVENT & TOUR RESERVATION FORM

Reunion Registration Fee:

Everyone Please Pay

_____ people at \$30 p.p. =

EVENT A: Battleship New Jersey Tour w/Box Lunch:

Thursday, September 22nd (9:00am-2:00pm)

_____ people at \$45 p.p. =

EVENT B: Commemorative Buffet Dinner:

Thursday, September 22nd (depart hotel at 5:30pm)

_____ people at \$40 p.p. =

EVENT C: Philadelphia Historic City Tour:

Friday, September 23rd (9:00am-2:00pm)

_____ people at \$35 p.p. =

EVENT D: Gala Banquet Dinner & Entertainment:

Friday, September 23rd (7:00pm at the hotel)

SELECT: Prime Rib of Beef

_____ people at \$30 p.p. =

AND/OR Grilled Breast of Chicken

_____ people at \$30 p.p. =

EVENT E: Historic Valley Forge Tour:

Saturday, September 24th (9:00am-1:00pm)

_____ people at \$32 p.p. =

EVENT F: Battle of Brandywine & Re-enactment Tour:

Sunday, September 25th (11:00am-5:00pm)

_____ people at \$30 p.p. =

Tour Cancellation Insurance: (Protect your money)

_____ people at \$6 p.p. =

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE

=

ENCLOSED FIND \$ TO COVER ITEMS SELECTED

>>> PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

Name: _____ Spouse/Guest _____
Address: _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____
Phone: (Home) _____ Phone: (Work/Other) _____
Emergency contact during the reunion: _____ Ph: _____
Years on Ship: 19 _____ to 19 _____ Division _____
E-Mail Address: _____

____ Yes, I have made my hotel reservations at the host hotel: (Doubletree - Plymouth Meeting)

Check In Date: _____ Check Out Date: _____ Confirmation #: _____

____ I will be attending the reunion, but *will not* be staying at the host hotel.

>>> SEND COMPLETED FORM BY **AUGUST 20th** WITH CHECK MADE OUT TO:

Military Reunion Planners P.O. Box 1588, Colleyville, TX 76034

Reservations received after August 20th, will be subject to space available basis!

You may wish to make a copy of this form for your records. For more information call weekdays: 817-251-3551 or Email: info@MilitaryReunionPlanners.com. Reservation forms and full payment must be received by August 20, 2005. Request for refunds must be made in writing and postmarked before August 20. There is a \$5 refund processing fee. No refunds will be made after August 20th, unless you have purchased tour cancellation insurance. There is a \$25 return check fee for NSF. Your cancelled check is your receipt and proof of purchase. For a written confirmation, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. MRP will not be held liable for failure of vendors to provide contracted services, or any injuries/accidents that may occur during the reunion. Sorry, no refunds will be given after September 19th for any reason.

Date Rcv'd:	Check #	Amount\$	Posted
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USS West Virginia BB 48

REUNION ASSOCIATION

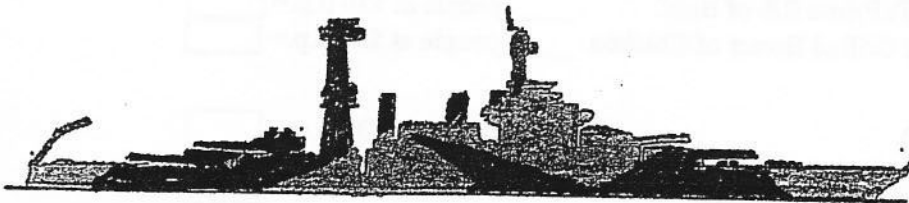
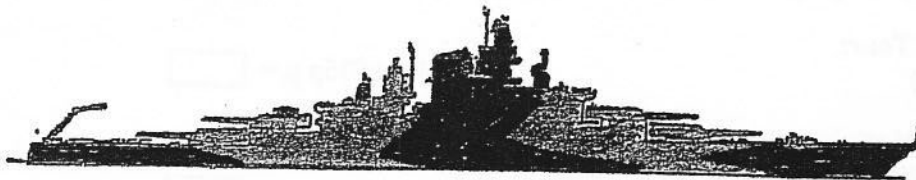
C/O JOSEPH VARIOT
4564 CEDAR RIVER RD
MANCELONA, MI. 49659

Visit the Web site-www.usswestvirginia.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Date Orientated Material

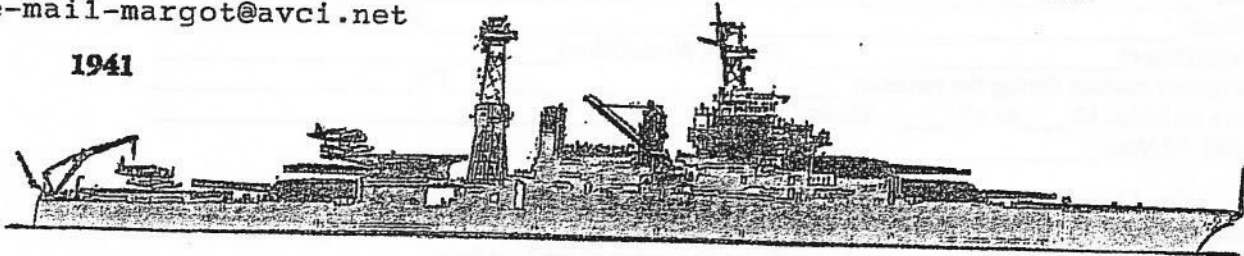
Postmaster: please rush
this newsletter to-



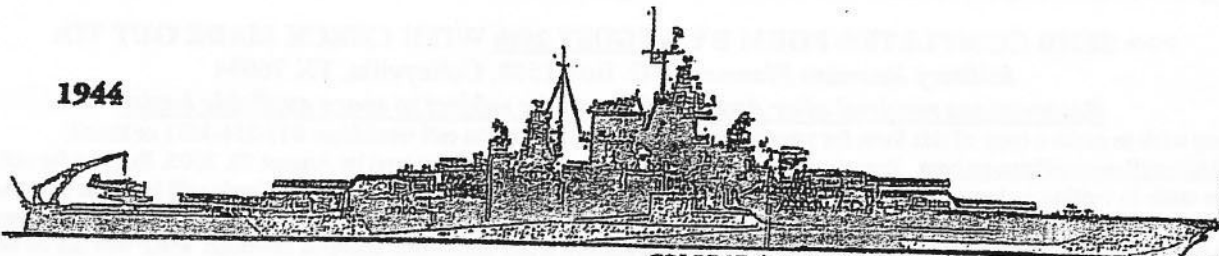
Tele: (231) 584-2280
Fax: (231) 584-2290
e-mail-margot@avci.net

COLORADO CLASS BATTLESHIP - USS WEST VIRGINA (BB48)
AS OUTFITTED IN THE WINTER OF 1941

1941



1944



COLORADO CLASS BATTLESHIP - USS WEST VIRGINA (BB48)
AS OUTFITTED IN THE SUMMER OF 1944