

MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

June 2018

A message from the President



John Cecil

Greetings,

Summer arrived in Sebring. It has been very hot (high 80s, low 90s) the last couple of weeks. June also is start of the rainy and hurricane seasons in Florida and we have been receiving almost daily showers since late May. Hopefully our Northern members are enjoying cooler and drier air.

So far this year we have had close to 600 visitors, hopefully headed for a record number of visitors for the year. Summer normally brings a decline in the number of visitors. This is a great time for visits from Scouts and other groups----can pretty much have the Museum to themselves. Just let us know in advance when your group wants to visit (863) 385-0992 or navmargrd@gmail.com.

We received many favorable comments on our Memorial Day observance. It was held in front of the Museum with attendees seated under a large tent. Towards the end of the observance, it began to rain and all attendees came inside the Museum where the observance was concluded. This also worked out well as we had a cake cutting ceremony planned inside to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Museum which opened its doors as the Military Sea Services Museum on Memorial Day 1998. See additional comments and photos elsewhere in this "Scuttlebutt." Photos were provided by Fred Carino, Cris Carino, Diana Borders and Donald Laylock.

Have a great summer. Stay safe!

John



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Florida, 33870 Phone: (863) 385-0992
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Hours of Operation
Open: Wednesday through Saturday
Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/>

Welcome Aboard New Members

On 28 May 2018, Mark and Tammie Colbert signed up for the Museum's life membership plan. Mark is a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel and is the Senior Aerospace Science Instructor for Sebring High School's Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Tammie had many different careers during their marriage, and is currently ensuring their son Nic gets the most out of middle school. Mark and Tammie live in Sebring, FL.

On 14 June 2018, David Smutnick signed up for the Museum's five-year membership plan. David is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War era. David lives in Sebring, FL.

On 23 June 2018, Charles and Denelda Frank became annual members of the Museum. Charles is a U.S. Navy veteran and a retired electrician. Denelda is a retired CSR. Charles and Denelda live in Bradenton, FL.

A very hearty welcome aboard to our newest members! A sincere thank you to all our members for their continued support. Without member support, the Museum would not be able to pay its bills and would have to close the doors.

Memorial Day at the Military Sea Services Museum

On 28 May, the Museum held a Memorial Day observance to remember and honor the more than one million American military men and women who gave their lives in service of our country. A special thank you to Mike Borders, John Cecil, and Fred Carino who did most of the planning and preparation for the observance. Also a special thank you to Mary Anne LaMorte who coordinated the refreshments. A special thank you to the Sebring Public Works Department for delivering, setting up, and removing 100 chairs. A special thank you to John and Janet Harbaugh for driving the golf carts used to shuttle attendees from the remote parking facility to the Museum. A special thank you to Chris Carino for directing traffic and coordinating parking. A special thank you to local businesses: Mario Munoz of Golf Cart Doctors who donated two brand new road ready gulf carts to transport attendees, Harry Haverly of Musicland who provided the sound system, Taylor Rentals who did not charge for delivery, setup, and removal of the large tent, Highlands News-Sun and the Highlands Radio Group who published the event.

About 150 people attended the Memorial Day observance and the Museum's 20th anniversary ceremony that followed. Attendees included numerous Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard veterans, many patriotic citizens, and local dignitaries, including the Honorable John Shoop, Mayor of Sebring; Charlie Lowrance, Sebring City Council President; and Jack Richie, Highlands County Commissioner. Col Mark Colbert's Sebring High School Air Force JROTC honor guard posted and retired the Colors, and several Boy Scouts acted as ushers, helping to seat attendees.



Memorial Day at the Military Sea Services Museum Cont'd.



Ms Patty Huffman sang the National Anthem, and Ms Carol West played taps. These young people were terrific. The Museum staff and we are sure all who attended the observance thank them and deeply appreciate their outstanding efforts.

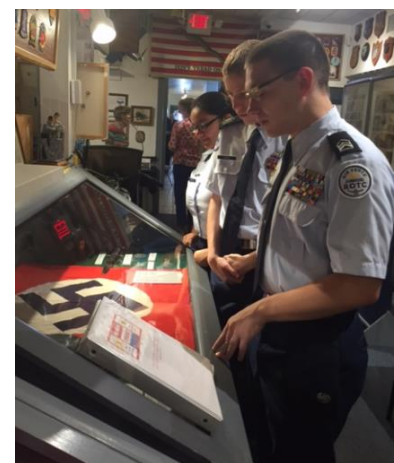
We thank Mike Borders, Museum member, who acted as Master of Ceremonies, John Cecil, Museum President, for his remarks, Reverend Ron DeGenaro, Jr., St. John United Methodist Church, who gave the invocation and benediction. We also thank Col Mark Colbert, USAF (Ret), Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AF JROTC) Instructor at Sebring High School, and the Honorable John Shoop, Mayor of Sebring for their remarks.

Many who attended the Memorial Day observance commented on the appropriateness of the remarks of the speakers and the ceremony. Most stated they hoped that future Memorial Day observances will be held at the Museum as the program was excellent and the location appropriate. A very well done to all who participated.

BRAVO ZULU!



Sebring High School AF JROTC Honor Guard



Tales of an Asia Sailor



[American Battlecruiser](#)

by [davisg022](#)



American Battlecruiser

The historical HMS Hood and HMS Repulse, the German Scharnhorst and the Japanese Kongo-class were examples of the Battlecruiser. These were warships with heavier guns and armament than traditional cruisers but lighter and faster than the Battle Ships. How many of you know the story of the World War II American Battlecruisers?

USS Alaska (CB-1) was the lead ship of the Alaska class of large cruisers which served with the United States Navy at the end of World War II. She was the first of two ships of her class to be completed, followed only by Guam (CB-2); four other ships were ordered but were not completed before the end of the war. Alaska was the third vessel of the US Navy to be named after what was then the territory of Alaska. She was laid down on 17 December 1941, ten days after the outbreak of war, was launched in August 1943 by the New York Shipbuilding Corporation, in Camden, New Jersey, and was commissioned in June 1944. She was armed with a main battery of nine 12 in guns in three triple turrets and had a top speed of 33 knots (38 mph).

Due to being commissioned late in the war, Alaska saw relatively limited service. She participated in operations off Iwo Jima and Okinawa during February–July 1945, including providing anti-aircraft defense for various carrier task forces and conducting limited shore bombardment operations. She shot down several Japanese aircraft off Okinawa, including a possible Ohka piloted missile. In July–August 1945 she participated in sweeps for Japanese shipping in the East China and Yellow Seas. After the end of the war, she assisted in the occupation of Korea and transported a contingent of US Army troops back to the United States. She was decommissioned in February 1947 and placed in reserve, where she remained until she was stricken in 1960 and sold for scrapping the following year.

Tales of an Asia Sailor- Cont'd

Alaska was authorized under the Fleet Expansion Act on 19 July 1940 and ordered on 9 September. On 17 December 1941 she was laid down at New York Shipbuilding in Camden, New Jersey. She was launched on 15 August 1943, sponsored by the wife of the governor of Alaska, before being fitted out. The ship was completed by June 1944 and was commissioned into the US Navy on 17 June, under the command of Captain Peter K. Fischler. The ship was 808 feet 6 inches long and with a beam of 91 feet 1 in and a draft of 31 feet 10 in. She displaced 34,253 tons at full combat load. The ship was powered by four-shaft General Electric geared steam turbines and eight oil-fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers rated at 150,000 shaft horsepower, generating a top speed of 33 knots. Alaska had a cruising range of 12,000 nautical miles at a speed of 15 knots. She carried four seaplanes, with a pair of steam catapults mounted amidships.

The ship was armed with a main battery of nine 12 inch guns in three triple gun turrets. The secondary battery consisted of twelve 5 inch guns in twin turrets. Two were placed on the centerline firing over the main battery turrets, fore and aft, and the remaining four turrets were placed on the corners of the superstructure. The light anti-aircraft battery consisted of 56 quad-mounted 40mm Bofors guns and 34 single-mounted 20mm Oerlikon guns. A pair of Mk 34 gun directors aided gun laying for the main battery, while two Mk 37 directors controlled the 5-inch guns and a Mk 57 director aided the 40 mm guns. The main armored belt was 9 in thick, while the gun turrets had 12.8 in thick faces. The main armored deck was 4 in thick.

After her commissioning, Alaska completed a shakedown cruise and on 12 November she left Philadelphia and after a stop at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, transited the Panama Canal and reached San Diego on 12 December. There her gun crews trained for shore bombardment and anti-aircraft fire.

On 8 January 1945, Alaska left California for Hawaii, arriving in Pearl Harbor on 13 January. There she participated in further training and was assigned to Task Group 12.2, which departed for Ulithi on 29 January. The Task Group reached Ulithi on 6 February and was merged into Task Group 58.5, part of Task Force 58, the Fast Carrier Task Force. Task Group 58.5 was assigned to provide anti-aircraft defense for the aircraft carriers; Alaska was assigned to the carriers Enterprise and Saratoga. The fleet sailed for Japan on 10 February to conduct air strikes against Tokyo and the surrounding airfields. The Japanese did not attack the fleet during the operation. Alaska was then transferred to Task Group 58.4 and assigned to support the assault on Iwo Jima. She served in the screen for the carriers off Iwo Jima for nineteen days, after which time she had to return to Ulithi to replenish fuel and supplies.

Alaska remained with TG 58.4 for the Battle of Okinawa. She was assigned to screen the carriers Yorktown and Intrepid; the fleet left Ulithi on 14 March and reached its operational area southeast of Kyushu four days later. The first air strikes on Okinawa began that day and claimed 17 Japanese aircraft destroyed on the ground. Here, Alaska finally saw combat, as the Japanese launched a major air strike on the American fleet. Her anti-aircraft gunners destroyed a kamikaze attempting to crash into Intrepid. Shortly after that, Alaska was warned that American aircraft were in the vicinity. Later that afternoon, Alaska shot down a second Japanese bomber.

The following day, the carrier Franklin was badly damaged by several bomb hits and a kamikaze. Alaska and her sister Guam, two other cruisers, and several destroyers were detached to create Task Group 58.2.9 to escort the crippled Franklin to Ulithi. On the voyage back to port, another Japanese bomber attacked Franklin, though the ships were unable to shoot it down. Gunfire from one of the 5-inch guns accidentally caused flash burns on several

Tales of an Asia Sailor- Cont'd

men standing nearby; these were the only casualties suffered by her crew during the war. Alaska then took on the role of fighter director; using her anti-air search radar, she vectored fighters to intercept and destroy a Kawasaki Heavy Fighter. On 22 March, the ships reached Ulithi and Alaska was detached to rejoin TG 58.4.

After returning to her unit, Alaska continued to screen for the aircraft carriers off Okinawa. On 27 March she was detached to conduct a bombardment of Minamidaito. She was joined by Guam, two light cruisers, and Destroyer Squadron 47. On the night of 27–28 March, she fired forty-five 12-inch shells and three hundred and fifty-two 5-inch rounds at the island. The ships rejoined TG 58.4 at a refueling point, after which they returned to Okinawa to support the landings when they began on 1 April. On the evening of 11 April, Alaska shot down one Japanese plane, assisted in the destruction of another, and claimed what might have been a piloted rocket-bomb. On 16 April, the ship shot down another three aircraft and assisted with three others. Throughout the rest of the month, her heavy anti-aircraft fire succeeded in driving off Japanese bombers.

Alaska then returned to Ulithi to resupply, arriving on 14 May. She was then assigned to TG 38.4, the reorganized carrier task force. The fleet then returned to Okinawa, where Alaska continued in her anti-aircraft defense role. On 9 June, she and Guam bombarded Oki Daito. TG 38.4 then steamed to San Pedro Bay in Leyte Gulf for rest and maintenance; the ship remained there from 13 June until 13 July, when she was assigned to Cruiser Task Force 95 along with her sister Guam, under the command of Rear Admiral Francis S. Low. On 16 July, Alaska and Guam conducted a sweep into the East China and Yellow Seas to sink Japanese shipping vessels. They had only limited success, however, and returned to the fleet on 23 July. They then joined a major raid, which included three battleships and three escort carriers, into the estuary of the Yangtze River off Shanghai. Again, the operation met with limited success.

In the course of her service during World War II, Alaska was awarded three battle stars. On 30 August Alaska left Okinawa for Japan to participate in the 7th Fleet occupation force. She arrived in Inchon, Korea on 8 September and supported Army operations there until 26 September, when she left for Tsingtao, China, arriving the following day. There, she supported the 6th Marine Division until 13 November, when she returned to Inchon to take on Army soldiers as part of Operation Magic Carpet, the mass repatriation of millions of American servicemen from Asia and Europe. Alaska left Inchon with a contingent of soldiers bound for San Francisco. After reaching San Francisco, she left for the Atlantic, via the Panama Canal, which she transited on 13 December. The ship arrived at the Boston Navy Yard on 18 December, where preparations were made to place the ship in reserve. She left Boston on 1 February 1946 for Bayonne, New Jersey, where she would be berthed in reserve. She arrived there the following day, and on 13 August; she was removed from active service, though she would not be decommissioned until 17 February 1947.

In 1958, the Bureau of Ships prepared two feasibility studies to see if Alaska and Guam were suitable to be converted to guided missile cruisers. The first study involved removing all of the guns for four different missile systems. At \$160 million this was seen as too costly, so a second study was conducted. This study left the forward batteries—the two 12" triple turrets and three of the 5" dual turrets—in place and added a reduced version of the first plan for the aft. This would have cost \$82 million and was still seen as too cost-prohibitive.

Tales of an Asia Sailor- Cont'd

As a result, the conversion proposal was abandoned, and the ship was instead stricken from the naval registry on 1 June 1960. On 30 June she was sold to the Lipsett Division of Luria Brothers to be broken up for scrap.

A short life for a beautiful class of ship.

[davisg022](#) | June 29, 2018

Thank you CDR Eugene "Doc" Savage, USN (Ret) for this interesting piece of history.

Radioman in Love

Following graduation from Radioman "A" December 1958 I reported aboard Naval Air Station Pensacola FL as a Radio Seaman and assigned to the communication center at Sherman Field. The center included a direct teletype link to NAS Pensacola, a message center and an air-to-ground CW circuit on which we communicated with the USS Antietam that was serving as a training carrier for student Navy pilots. There were 3 sailors assigned to all four watch sections providing 24/7 coverage.

One very slow Sunday mid-watch a fellow radiomen by the name of Shorty on my section, who was madly in love with a 2nd class wave stationed in operations. Although she had previously rejected his previous attempts to gain her attention he made one last desperate try. Her boyfriend was stationed on board the USS Antietam CV-36 which was currently out to sea providing student pilots touch and go opportunities. He typed up a fake emergency message from the Antietam stating among other things that they had capsized and were requesting emergency assistance. The message looked valid and he placed it as the first message on the operation's department message board as he knew she would pick up their messages first thing Monday morning. Well she did and immediately spotted the message and let out a loud shriek just as the Operations Officer was passing behind her and he grabbed the message board from her and raced to the operations center before anyone could stop him! Shorty ran down the hall and notified the Ops boss about his plan before any action was initiated except for the base Admiral being alerted. Not long after the dust settled the Admiral's car appeared and Shorty was hauled off. I'm not sure what ever happened to him other than losing his secret clearance and he was never seen again!

Thank you Lou Mezie, RMC(AC), USN(Ret) for this great crazy in love story.

Tales of an Asia Sailor



[Japanese Imperial Navy Ship Yamato](#)

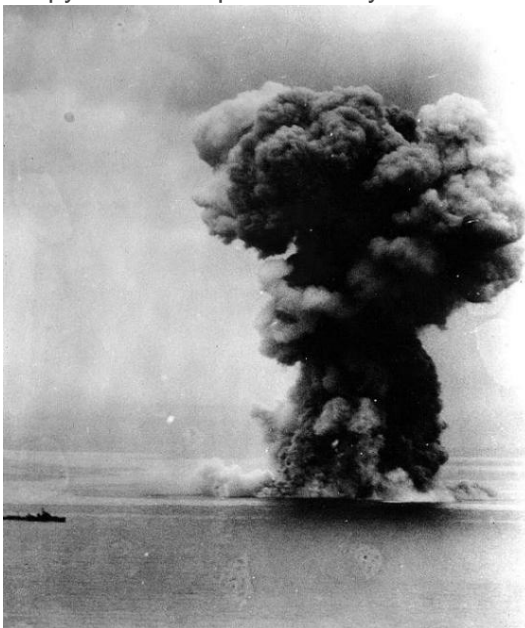
by [davisg022](#)



The Yamato class battleship carried the largest naval artillery ever fitted to a warship, nine 460-millimeter (18.1 in) naval guns, each capable of firing 1,460 kg (3,220 lb) shells over 42 km (26 mi). Two battleships of the class (**Yamato** and Musashi) were completed, while a third (Shinano) was converted to an aircraft carrier during construction.

The Yamato was sunk on April 7, 1945, during a suicide attempt to attack the U.S. fleet during the Battle for Okinawa.

Yamato was designed as the embodiment of Imperial power and glory. Ironically in its death throes, it became the funeral pyre of the Japanese Navy.



[davisg022](#) | April 12, 2018

Anniversaries

14 June 1773. U.S. Flag adopted by the Second Continental Congress. In 1916, President Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 of each year as Flag Day.

14 June 1775. Continental Army established. --- 2016 Happy 241st Birthday to the U.S. Army.

18 June 1812. U.S. declares war on Great Britain.

10 June 1854. U.S. Naval Academy holds its first graduation in Annapolis, MD.

17 June 1898. Navy Hospital Corps established.

15 June 1904. More than 1,000 people perished during a fire aboard the steam boat General Slocum in New York's East River.

6-26 June 1918 (100 yrs ago) Battle of Belleau Wood, about 45 miles from Paris near the Marne River in France. The first large-scale battle fought by U.S. Marines during World War I. On 26 June, the Germans were cleared from the forest ending one of the bloodiest and ferocious battles fought by U.S. Marines during World War I.

15 June 1934. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an act making the National Guard part of the U.S. Army in the event of war or other national emergency.

4-7 June 1942. Battle of Midway. U.S. Navy decisively defeated the Japanese Navy inflicting irreparable damage on the Japanese fleet. The battle of Midway coupled with the earlier Japanese defeat in the battle of the Coral Sea was a major turning point in the war in the Pacific.

22 June 1942. Pledge of Allegiance recognized by Congress.

6 June 1944. D-Day. The Allied invasion of German occupied Western Europe (Operations Neptune and Overload) began on the beaches of Normandy, France.

15 June 1944. Battle of Saipan.

19-20 June 1944. Battle of the Philippine Sea. The Japanese lost three carriers, two oilers and approximately 600 aircraft. The devastation the American pilots inflicted on the Japanese fleet led to the aerial fight earning the name "The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot."

25 June 1950. Korean War began.

10 June 1963. President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act --- equal pay for those doing equal work.

8 June 1967. USS LIBERTY (AGTR-5) was suddenly and without warning attacked in international waters by air and naval forces of Israel. Thirty four Americans were killed and 174 wounded.

Anniversaries- Cont'd

12 June 1987. President Ronald Reagan demands, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

4 July 1776. The Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence written largely by Thomas Jefferson.

3 July 1898. U.S. Fleet destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba.

28 July 1914. World War I began.

30 July 1942. WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) established. The Women's Reserve of the U.S. Navy established.

5 July 1945. Philippines liberated.

14 July 1945. First U.S. Navy bombardment of Japanese home islands began with the bombardment of the Japan Iron and Steel Company in Kiamichi on Honshu, one of Japan's main islands.

16 July 1945. First atomic bomb successfully tested in New Mexico.

29 July 1945. USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA-35) enroute to Leyte Gulf was sunk by a Japanese submarine resulting in the loss of 881 crewmen. Only 316 crewmen were alive when they were rescued from the water almost five days later. The sinking of the USS INDIANAPOLIS was the worst U.S. Navy disaster of World War II.

27 July 1953. Korean War Armistice signed at Panmunjom. Korean War ended.

Mailed Copies

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Did You Know That

following the Battle of Belleau Wood, the U.S. Marines began being referred to as "Devil Dogs." Many believe the term Devil Dogs was started by the Germans, but its actual origins are not clear. It is known that Germans out of respect for the U.S. Marine's fighting ability referred to them as elite "storm troopers."

Quotable Quotes

Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained, for it is the only safeguard to our liberties.---Abraham Lincoln

Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directions.
----Winston Churchill

You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.---Mae West

Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.---Dr. Seuss

A good speech should be like a woman's skirt: long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest.---Winston Churchill

Stories Wanted

We would like to publish in the Scuttlebutt short stories of Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard personal experiences, and/or short stories of sea services historical events. We are sure there are plenty of stories out there that would be of interest to Scuttlebutt readers. Please email your stories to navmargrd@gmail.com or mail to the Museum.

Memorial Day at the Military Sea Services Museum – more photos:



