



# Leaky Weeks Almanac

USS John W Weeks  
Association

Volume I, Issue I  
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**Hal Gross, President Emeritus**

Dear Weeks Shipmates and Friends

I want to thank all of you who attended our seventeenth USS John W Weeks Reunion in Branson, Missouri. Due to your attendance and support, the reunion was a success. We had several new members show up for the first time. I trust that all shipmates and their spouses or quests arrived home safe.

As some of you know, at last year's reunion in Branson, Hal turned the job of Coordinator over to me, little did I know that by November, that I would also have the job of President of the our association. I got a call from him and he told me that he could no longer carry on as the President of our association due to problems with his health and asked if I would take the job; I told him that I would. For over twenty years he gave his all to this association, his only payback was watching his shipmates have a good time at the reunions that he organized; eighteen in all. We are going to miss Hal's involvement; I hope and pray that the problems with his health are resolved.

The last several months I have been busy with association business. For example, we are in the process of incorporating the association in Ohio, putting together a slate of Officers and Committee Members, revamping and expanding our membership list and working on this year's reunion.

Our membership has been falling off the last couple of years. In fact, dues paying members are at an all time low. Only 77 members paid their dues this year. Currently, our dues are 25 dollars a year, with some of the changes that we are making, hopeful we can reduce our dues to between 15 to 20 dollars a year, which is comparable with other military association. This may attract more members. Monies collected for dues are used for the purposes of furthering the work of the Association, publishing and mailing a newsletter at least four times or more a year, supporting and maintaining our website and searching for shipmates. Incidentally, in the future dues are to be sent to our new Treasurer, Jim Harkins. **You can still send this year's dues to Jim.**

Another major change that I am implementing is the way that we organize our yearly reunions. Instead of traveling around the country looking for and inspecting reunion sites, I decided to work with Military Reunion Planners and rely on our members for input. After much research, talking to members of our association, other association members, and the folks at the US Navy Memorial, I decided that this is the most cost effective route for both our association and members that attend our reunions. So far, working with the folks at Military Reunion Planners has been a joy. The package that they put together for us is enclosed in this newsletter.

Finally, this year we will make changes to improve our website, particularly in the member's listing. The listing will be easier to search, print, and will contain more information. Last year and so far this year, the majority of new active members came from inquiries through our website. **Also, if you have an e-mail address and have not been receiving e-mails from me, please send me your e-mail address.**

In the meantime, if there are concerns or if you just have questions; feel free to contact me or other members of our committee. I'll keep you informed of the business of the association by means of the newsletters and our website.

Len Budzynski

## Inside this issue:

*Why Have a Reunion?* 2

*Important Reunion  
2004 Information* 2

*Picket Duty 1945  
By Morris Gillett* 3

*Sick Call* 3

*Taps* 3

*Reunion Information  
inserts*

*Committee Members* 4

## Special points of interest:

- VIP Veteran's Tour of Washington DC and WWII Memorial.
- "Shear Madness" at the Kennedy Center Theatre.
- Signup early to reserve a room for this year's reunion. We reserved 50 rooms. They will go fast!
- Two upgrades to mini-suites will be given away!

## Why Have a Reunion?



Submitted by Bill Fleming

*“Your present sense of camaraderie and nostalgia is not really focused around happy and casual memories like (say) those of high school, but on uncommon bonds forged under unusual conditions.”*

Those of you who served in the military know that those years were among the most intense, unforgettable, and influential of your life. And the largest part of that experience, the part that keeps coming back time and again, is the people—those men you served with. Served with? What a strange term. That actually meant eating, working, playing, joking, yelling, suffering and celebrating together, day in and day out. Good times, bad times, great times, boring times, and times that scared you to death. At first you were with some you might have avoided or never met in “the real world.” But it was more than friendship. Your present sense of camaraderie and nostalgia is not really focused around happy and casual memories like (say) those of high school, but on uncommon bonds forged under unusual conditions. You depended on each other to get the job done; you needed each other to survive battles and boredom, and you come away with an experience known only to those who have been there.

Then, many of you were catapulted from military service directly back into civilian life. After your discharge, you scattered to towns and cities across America. When you try to remember your military experience and the people you served with, there are blank spots and a sense of incompleteness because no one is around to remember with you, and there is a lot you forgotten. Your experiences and thoughts may not be easily shared with people you now love and live with. Friends and family may have long ago begun to yawn over old war stories, never realizing their subtle yet profound importance to you. A reunion offers you a chance to remember, fill in the blanks, rediscover long-lost friends, compare experiences, ask a friend that important question, spend time with someone you had previously overlooked, be with those who understand, and finally put into proper perspective that most profound and powerful part of your life.

*Reprint from Military Reunion Handbook*

## Important Reunion 2004 Information

You will find two inserts in this newsletter for this year’s reunion. One insert contains general information about the reunion and the hotel. The back of this insert has information about the Tours, Breakfast Buffet, Banquet Dinner, and Cancellation insurance. The other insert is the Reservation Form. We are doing things differently this year so read the material carefully.

It is important that you make your Hotel Reservations as soon as possible. We have fifty rooms reserved for our group. If members reserve their room early, we may be able to get more rooms; however, as we get closer to the reunion it may be impossible to get additional rooms. **Please note, if you reserve your room today, you are under no obligation. You may cancel up to 4:00pm, of the day that the reunion starts, Sept 29, 2004.**

**One change this year, you will need to call the hotel and make your own hotel reservation. This will eliminate some of the problems we had in the pass and will give you control of your reservation. Be sure to tell them what kind of room you want, smoking, nonsmoking, etc..**

I obtained two free upgrades from a standard room to a mini-suite, which will be given away. I will ask the hotel personnel to randomly select two people and give them the upgrades when they check in.

Next, look at the Reservation Form. Fill it out and total it up, write a check and send it to **National Reunion Planners**, please do not send the check to me. The show at the Kenny Center and the two tours are optional. You can take none of the tours, take one or all three, the choice is yours. These tours are very reasonably priced. Incidentally, all transportation is included in these prices. **Unlike the hotel, you have up to August 20, 2004 to send your check in for the registration fee and tours. Carefully read the information on cancellation of these items.**



Sixties Shipmates



Washington DC



## Picket Duty, By Morris Gillett

The following is my recollection of an event involving the *John W. Weeks DD701* while on picket duty some miles out in front of the fleet that made up a carrier task force. I am not sure of the date but believe it to have been in late March, 1945. In all likelihood it was after the amphibious landing on Okinawa and we may have still been part of Task Force 38.

At any rate escort vessels formed a screen well out in front of the fleet and served as radar and sonar pickets. Our pickets were responsible for sinking many small Japanese pickets that were on observation and radio patrols. Another very important function of picket duty was to maintain an alert watch for floating mines the Japanese planted in action areas. When they were spotted by a ship, they would be exploded. This was usually done with 20 mm gunfire while the mine was some distance from the ship. On occasions, however, we used a Springfield rifle to clear away the mine. For years I kept a piece of shrapnel that landed on our deck when a mine was exploded by rifle fire while it was rather close to the ship.

On the occasion of this experience we were well out in front of the fleet and an unidentified radar contact was made some distance off our port bow. It was a dark night. We assumed that it was another Japanese picket and we began to close on it. As we drew near, standard procedure was to challenge with a small light and with our electronic IFF gear. This we did but received no response. As we closed the challenge was repeated time and time again. Still there was no response and the Officer of the Deck ordered a starboard turn so we would be broadside to the unidentified vessel and could bring our five inch guns to bear. All three turrets were locked to the fire control radar and all that was needed was the command to load and fire. By this time Captain Theobald had the con and kept challenging the target but to no avail. Typical of his wisdom and leadership, Captain Theobald said, "Lock the search light into fire control and illuminate the target." This was done and to our great surprise, we lit up a U. S. Navy PC boat. With a great rush its decks were filled with sailors and officers waving their arms. Why they had not been alert and received our challenges I never knew. With a small light the patrol craft identified itself and asked, "Where are we?" The Captain's answer was, "You are right in front of a fast carrier task force and you had better get out of the way." Apparently the PC had been part of the Okinawa landing force and was completely lost. Weeks notified the fleet of its presence and gave the PC its location as well as a heading that would allow safe passage.

*Morris served aboard the Weeks during WWII as a Chief Radioman.*



*Captain Theobald said, "Lock the search light into fire control and illuminate the target."*

*If you know of any of our shipmates that are sick, in the hospital, or deceased; please contact Jerry Brown or Len Budzynski.*

## Sick Call

**Tony Johnson** under went coronary artery bypass surgery on February 3, 2004. He is home and is doing fine. His address is 603 Chimney Rock RD, Rutherfordton, NC 28131 and phone is 828-287-5615.

**Hal Gross's** back surgery is temporarily delayed. Hal's address is 14220 Isla Flores Avenue, Fort Pierce, FL 34951 and phone is 772-467-0130.

## Taps

**Andy Crawford** Served on the Weeks from 1944 to 1946. Andy passed away from natural causes on October 18, 2003.

**Ted Snyder** Served on the Weeks from 1950 to 1954. Ted passed away on November 5, 2003, after a long illness.

**Tom Isabelle** Served on the Weeks from 1952 to 1953. Tom passed away November 20, 2003, after a long illness.

**Joe Berry** Served on the Weeks from 1958 to 1960. Joe passed away January 25, 2004, after a short illness.



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## Leaky Weeks Almanac



**We're on the Web!**

[www.ussjwweeks701.org](http://www.ussjwweeks701.org)

## Your Officers and Committee Members

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