

USS Washtenaw County Veterans Association

Quarterly Newsletter – August 2022

A Message from our President: Hello again veterans, shipmates, and family members! I am looking forward to meeting many of you again in just a few short weeks at Norfolk. David and Roz Vicknair have done a lot of work getting things organized. I think we will all be in for a real treat. Safe travels all!

An Important and Time-sensitive Message from the Reunion Coordinator: Shipmates the cutoff date is August 25, 2022. If you haven't made your hotel reservations by that date you cannot be guaranteed the \$89.00 rate. Please contact hotel with your reservations, and get your registration [form] sent in [to me, David] so I can get a count and make up name tags.

Colonial Williamsburg. This living history museum is the world's largest. Our reunion plan has all interested folks traveling up and back on our chartered bus. "CW's" 300 acres features accurate historical sites, working tradespeople in period dress, historic taverns, and even two world-class art museums. At the entrance we will be at the Visitor Center with plenty of information on how to organize the day. Plan ahead – the CW website provides info on accessibility options. One can buy an admission ticket or just decide to traverse the grounds for no charge. A free shuttle bus runs through the "Historic Area", with stops at the Governor's Palace, the Capitol, the taverns, the art museums, and Merchants Square. The sites are all authentic to the 1700's, and a true learning experience. A cabinetmaker, blacksmith, wheelwright, silversmith, wigmaker – the list goes on... There are plenty of dining choices including sandwich shops and bistros.

Famous Battle – Hampton Roads Virginia. "Hampton Roads" refers to the mouth area of the James River as it enters Chesapeake Bay. Norfolk city lies adjacent, to the south of "the Roads". The area has always been an important harbor area, what with the adjacent ports of Norfolk and Newport News.

As one gazes out to the Roads from Norfolk, think about the famous Civil War sea battle between the Confederate **CSS Merrimack** (actually renamed **Virginia** by the Confederates), and the Union **USS Monitor**. This was the first ever battle between two ironclad warships. It happened on March 9, 1862.

The Confederates wanted to break the Union blockade that had been set at the Roads. On March 8 the uniquely reconstructed **Virginia** (built off the captured Union gunboat **Merrimack**) departed the upstream Gosport Virginia harbor. She entered the Roads and attacked three classic Union wooden sail warships near Norfolk. She sank **Congress** and **Cumberland**, and damaged **Minnesota**. This third action was cut short by darkness, tides, and a need to care for her wounded. The ironclad returned upstream to her berth.

The next morning, March 9, **Virginia's** second approach towards **Minnesota** was intercepted by the new **USS Monitor**. The two ironclads then made history with a three-hour gunnery duel. Neither ship was very maneuverable, the armor plating held up, and the cannon fire was inconclusive. **Virginia** left the scene, again for Gosport, to repair, strengthen, and reconsider her tactics. **Monitor** remained at Hampton Roads, still protecting **Minnesota**. While during ensuing days there may have been opportunities, the battle was never rejoined.

The battle received word-wide attention with immediate effects on navies around the world. A new age of naval construction and warfare had begun.

Neither ship ever fought again. **Virginia** was destroyed by her own crew at harbor on May 9 1862, just as the Confederate army evacuated the Norfolk area. **Monitor** sank during an Atlantic storm on December 31 1862 as she was being towed to a new operating area at Beaufort North Carolina.

Taps: Sadly reporting the passing of Melva June (Johnson) Rosenbalm, Amity, Oregon. Spouse of Kenny Rosenbalm. June 8, 2022, just shy of her 74th birthday.

New ACV Mishap. The February newsletter mentioned the new **Amphibious Combat Vehicle**, nearing introduction into the USMC inventory. Several test units are now in the amphibious fleet for final evaluation. Unfortunately we have witnessed a set-back. In late July two ACV's were damaged in the unusually high surf at Camp Pendleton, southern California. One ACV actually rolled over in the surf. Thankfully no troops were injured. The second one was completely disabled among the shorebreak waves, and the Marines had to evacuate and swim to shore.

As a result, the USMC has stopped launching the ACV's while it investigates these serious accidents.

And further, in an August 17th announcement, the USMC and BAE Systems disclosed a finalized \$88 million order for an initial purchase of the ACV's. BAE Systems plans to begin mass production in the near future.

How to simulate life on board a US Navy Ship. This is off the internet and I thought it was just terrific! Absolutely worth lots of smiles and laughter!

1. Buy a steel dumpster, paint it gray inside and out, and live in it for six months.
2. Run all the pipes and wires in your house exposed on the walls.
3. Repaint your entire house every month.
4. Once a week, blow compressed air up your chimney, making sure the wind carries the soot onto your neighbor's house. Ignore his complaints.
5. Once a month, take all major appliances apart, and then reassemble them.
6. Raise the thresholds and lower the headers of your front and back door so that you either trip or bang your head every time you pass through them.
7. Disassemble and inspect your lawnmower every week.
8. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, turn your water heater temperature up to 200 degrees. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, turn the water heater off. On Saturdays and Sundays tell your family they use too much water during the week, so no bathing will be allowed.
9. Raise your bed to within 6" of the ceiling, so you can't turn over without getting out and then getting back in.
10. Sleep on the shelf in your closet. Replace the closet door with a curtain. Have your spouse whip open the curtain about 3 hours after you go to sleep, shine a flashlight in your eyes, and say "Sorry, wrong rack."
11. Make your family qualify to operate each appliance in your house - dishwasher operator, washing machine technician, cell phone tech, etc.
12. Have your neighbor come over each day at 0500, blow a whistle loudly, and shout "reveille, reveille, all hands heave out and trice up."

13. Have your mother-in-law write down everything she's going to do the following day, then have her make you stand in your back yard at 0600 while she reads it to you.
14. Empty all the garbage bins in your house and sweep the driveway three times a day, whether it needs it or not.
15. Watch no TV except for the "B" movies usually played in the middle of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch, then show a different one.
16. Post a menu on the kitchen door informing your family that they are having steak for dinner. Then make them wait in line for an hour. When they finally get to the kitchen, tell them you are out of steak, but they can have dried ham or hot dogs. Repeat daily until they ignore the menu and just ask for hot dogs.
17. Bake a cake. Prop up one side of the pan so the cake bakes unevenly. Spread icing real thick to level it off.
18. Get up every night around midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on stale bread. (midrats)
19. Set your alarm clock to go off at random during the night. At the alarm, jump up and dress as fast as you can, making sure to button your top shirt button and tuck your pants into your socks. Run out into the backyard and uncoil the garden hose.
20. Every week or so, throw your cat or dog in the pool and shout "Man overboard port side!" Rate your family members on how fast they respond.
21. Place a podium at the end of your driveway. Have your family stand watches at the podium, rotating at 4 hour intervals. This is best done when the weather is worst. January is a good time.
22. Make coffee using eighteen scoops of budget priced coffee grounds per pot, and allow the pot to simmer for 5 hours before drinking.
23. Lock yourself and your family in the house for six weeks. Tell them during week 4 that, at the end of the 6th week, you are going to take them to Disney World for "liberty". At the end of the 6th week, inform them the trip to Disney World has been canceled because they need to get ready for an inspection, and it will be another week before they can leave the house.

Ships Compartment Letter Identifiers. Another excerpt from "The Bluejacket's Manual". Most of us would never be able to forget the standard shipboard system for identifying the spaces aboard ship. The sequence (the "address") always had a letter as the final segment. Some of the common letters include:

A – Stowage

C – Control such as the pilot house, CIC

E – Engineering

L – Living spaces

M – Ammunition magazines, gun mounts

V – Voids

W – Water tanks

Latest photos: The local sheriff “Marine Patrol” for a segment of the Columbia River, out of Rainier Oregon, regularly patrols the zone where Washtenaw County is moored. Here are two photos they sent me during July. Sharp eyes will notice the osprey or eagle bird’s nest atop the port generator smokestack.

Submitted,

Chris Nintzel, Secretary



