



# YANCEY MEMORIES

## COORDINATORS MESSAGE



I hope this finds you all well and enjoying some good weather, although I guess that depends on where you live.

Plans are underway for the 2021 reunion in Annapolis, Maryland in September. Information is readily available at [www.ussyancey.com](http://www.ussyancey.com). The easiest way to make your hotel reservations is online, if you must contact the hotel directly to place your reservation press "0" and make sure you are speaking to the front desk and ask for Don White. Anyone attending that does not have computer access can contact me and I will print the information and mail it to them.

Among the deceased reported in this issue are two of our regular attendees at the reunions for many years. Walt Gillespie and J.W. Young were well known and liked among attendees. It is just a little harder when it is someone you've known for years.

Remember we need stories no matter how long or short. I think this is what people like to see in each issue.

George Clifton  
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## PROFILE EDWIN BOOTH

One of the stories about the Yancey, right after the Korea War we were at anchor in Sasabo, Japan. The word came that Red China was going to invade Taiwan, so the Yancey pulled out with other ships to help out Taiwan, but the invasion fell apart so we went to the Philippines, we left off two shipmates at Manila and went to Subic Bay (Philippines). The captain gave liberty in dress white pants, T-shirt and cap. When the boat pulled up to the dock, it returned with all the liberty personnel with a message saying your personnel will be in full dress uniforms.

After the Navy I was a plumbing contractor. Then I went back into the service, Seabees. To do my 20 years in, I was called up for Desert Storm. I served with the Marine Corps for six months and called to noncommissioned officer school. I was awarded two Navy Achievement Medals by the Secretary of the Navy and top Seabee of the detachment.

## HITCHIKING WITH LONGTIME CONTRIBUTOR KEN GROOM

In 1954, I decided to go on leave from San Diego. I had arranged for a car ride as far as Denver, my home was in eastern Kansas. I first went to Lowry Air Field (Denver) to try to get a military hop, that didn't work out. Then I decided to hitchhike. The first ride I got was with a family that had a mess of kids. It was the fourth of July. They dropped me off in western Kansas at an intersection near a small town. The local kids would drive by and throw firecrackers at me. The next ride I got was with an Air Force guy. He had a problem with the lights on his car. They would go out on occasion. We would go driving down in the side ditches until the lights would come back on. I could take that only so long, so I had him drop me off at Manhattan Kansas near a warehouse. From there I called my parents to come and get me.

## JERRY NICHOLS shorts

Some of the ships in the fleet had a band, some didn't, we were one of the ones who did, it consisted of 3 guys, one on the electric guitar, Larry Dixon, he was also a radioman, a southern gentleman from S. Carolina, or Georgia, or one of those southern states. George Palmer on the Bass guitar, another radioman, we all worked together, he was a New Yorker. Everyone aboard ship would park their car on the street. George would say, he'd Paaak his Kaaa on the street. He didn't try to talk this way, this is the way he actually talked, he said all New Yorkers talked this way. Our guy on the drums was a machinist mate, I can't remember his name, but he could certainly play those drums. George was a natural musician, he'd never played a guitar in his life, he picked up on it like it was a second nature to him, became an excellent bass guitarist. He was also our local dancer. The twist was a big hit at the time, when we were in port a lot of the guys from the radio shack would go into town together, and go to a local pub. The twist always came on and George would get out there and twist by himself. The rest of us were just learning how to twist our bodies in rhythm, but not George, he was a natural here too, he was our twisting champion.

## More JERRY NICHOLS shorts

I became friends with a BM3 who served on board during WWII, he told me a story about the ship being attacked by Japanese planes. They were flying all around, attacking as many ships as they could, he was on deck assigned to a gun. One of the planes was shot up pretty bad, was on fire, so the pilot did a kamikaze on their sister ship, pretty horrible site, just like the movies. That was the only battle he was in.

Fast forward to '62, we were at some port overseas, can't remember which one, we were anchored out, a bunch of the guys were in town on liberty, I was on watch in the radio shack. The boats on duty announced over the speaker for the crane crew to report to crane #2, I thought this was odd so I went outside to see what was happening. One of the guys, a BM3, had too much to drink, way, way too much, a couple of the guys got him on board our liberty boat, but he was stumbling around so bad that he couldn't climb up the ladder to get back on board the ship. Since the boats on duty was a personal friend, he got permission from the OOD for the crane to lower the net, load him into it and hoist him on board. He was half way passed out while he was being lifted on board, but awake enough to realize what was happening to him. He laid still in the net, was probably too afraid to move, or too drunk to move. The net landed him on the main deck gently, he laid there awhile, probably about 1-2 minutes, then a couple of guys walked over, got him out of the net, helped him to his feet, and walked him below, while he was walking he saluted the boats on duty for helping him out. A lot of us were on deck watching it all take place, we whooped, hollered, and whistled while he was walking out of the net.

## A SONS REMBEMBRANCE OF HIS DADS YANCEY STORIES

My dad was Gerald Leonard, he passed April 5 2018...He was 93. He became an engineer and went into the HVAC business in the New York, Long Island area. He was a great, funny, smart father, we all miss him a lot...Rob Stein. My mom was an army Air Force nurse stationed at Brooke Army medical in Texas (and ran the burn unit at the end of the war and for a little time after the war. My dad served on the Yancey about 1945 for a couple of years. (He was heading to Japan to invade along with a million other men on ships when President Truman dropped the bomb. My dad was in charge of the radio and ship communications. He told me they received a message that Japan surrendered. They didn't believe it.. They were days away from the invasion. My dad told his assistant to wake the captain.. the other sailor said no way, I'm not waking the captain!!...but they did and the captain had to send some secret messages to confirm the news....It was true. They

could turn the ship around and head back to the Brooklyn Navy Yards....The captain opened a secret cabinet that had lots of alcohol in it my dad told me he was friends with the captain and he was a nice guy, both my dad and the captain were both Jewish. I'm pretty sure--...It was a fun cruise back home he told me...lots of laughs.



2017 picture of Gerald and his daughter-in-law

## USS Yancey Reunion Group



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A Newsletter Exclusively  
for Former USS Yancey  
(AKA-93) Sailors & their  
Families

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## THE WORLD IS OUR BEACHHEAD

### Shipmates Who Have Passed



Walter Gillespie  
FN3 61-63  
Deceased 4/2/2021



James Young  
SH2 51-54  
Deceased 5/7/2021

Don Youngblood  
FN 70-71  
Deceased 10/24/2020

David DiMattia  
SN 66-68  
Deceased 8/15/2019

Dennis Snyder  
ICFA 66-68  
Deceased  
3/2/2017

Your Yancey Newsletter needs your stories, articles, and your profile...share your career and memories with you shipmates . Email us at: [clifs@ameritech.net](mailto:clifs@ameritech.net)