

# **USS Yancey**

**AKA/LKA-93**

# **USS Rankin**

**AKA/LKA-103**



**2016 Reunion**  
**Jacksonville, Florida**



# 2016 Reunion

## Jacksonville, Florida

The **USS Yancey** and **USS Rankin** held their third combined reunion from Thursday through Sunday, September 22-25, 2016, at the **Doubletree by Hilton Jacksonville Riverfront Hotel**. This was the 21st annual reunion for the Yancey and the 13th for the Rankin.

The hospitality room opened on Thursday afternoon, and attendees began registering and receiving name tags and event tickets. Ray Casey of Military Reunion Planners greeted everyone and went over the itinerary and other useful information. At 6:00 everyone was directed to the Amelia Room for the traditional welcoming dinner and the official kickoff of the 2016 Reunion. After a delicious meal, the group returned to the hospitality room for an all-night Happy Hour.

Friday morning brought a sunny Florida day, perfect for the reunion's first tour. We boarded our bus and headed for the **Blount Island Command**, a U.S. Marine Corps facility dedicated to maintaining equipment for use in confrontations worldwide. The amphibious forces no longer load cargo and equipment onto AKAs at Morehead City for transportation to a landing site. Instead, all the gear is pre-loaded onto specialized ships and prepositioned at sites around the world. When the



material is needed for a landing, the pre-loaded ships proceed to the landing area. We had a base tour and a briefing on how the operation works, then took a tour of the **USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE-2)**, a typical ship used in prepositioning. The Sacagawea had just returned from a three-year deployment and was mostly empty and rusty. She will be cleaned up, reloaded and redeployed sometime in the future for another three year tour. We finished our tour with lunch at the command's no-nonsense chow hall and returned to the Doubletree for an afternoon and evening on our own.

Saturday was another warm North Florida day. Since our tour didn't begin until the afternoon, we had the morning to relax by the pool, stroll along the sunny St. John Riverwalk, or just enjoy the hospitality room. The Yancey and Rankin business meetings were held from 10:00-11:00.

At 1:00 we once again boarded our bus for the forty mile trip to **St. Augustine**. Founded in 1565, St. Augustine is America's oldest continuously occupied city. Upon arriving there, we met our guide and started a two-hour tour of the city, which began with a trip across the **Bridge of Lions** to Anastasia Island and the St. Augustine Lighthouse. We returned to the mainland to continue our tour, seeing sights such as the **Castillo de San Marcos** fortress and the **Fountain of Youth**. Then we had four hours to explore St. Augustine on our own, and to have dinner before our return to the hotel.

Sunday's tour began with an interesting trip to the **Budweiser brewery** in Jacksonville. Our visit included a trip through the brewery, with a guide explaining the history behind the Anheuser-Busch company and its amazing variety of beers. The tour concluded with a stop in the Tap Room for samples of Budweiser's many products. Our next stop was a visit to the impressive **Cummer Museum and Gardens**, after which we returned to the hotel to relax and get ready for the reunion banquet.


At 5:30 we started lining up to have individual photographs taken for this **Memory Book**, after which we adjourned to the hospitality room for pre-Banquet

cocktails. Both ships' crews gathered for group pictures before being seated. Master of Ceremonies Skip Sander requested all rise for the **Marine Corps Color Guard** to present the colors. Because of the low ceiling in the banquet room, they were forced to work outside, with glass doors open to the banquet room. That made it hot inside and *very* humid! When the room cooled off and everyone was seated, The Rankin's CDR Ed Gaskell led us in a series of toasts, followed by the Yancey's Gene Hill, singing his special version of **God Bless the U.S.A.**

After dinner we paused for the annual Memorial Service. John Karlis, acting as chaplain, gave the invocation and led the group in prayer. Then came the traditional **Bell Ceremony**, honoring our departed shipmates. Skip Sander read the names of the Rankin shipmates who died or whose deaths had been learned of since the last reunion. George Clifton read the names of those from the Yancey. Ed Gaskell rang a bell after each name was read. The service concluded with Taps and a moment of silence.

This officially ended the 2016 Jacksonville combined reunion. Many attendees returned to the hospitality room to say their goodbyes until next year.

*The 2016 Jacksonville reunion was planned and organized by Military Reunion Planners of Grapevine, Texas, under the leadership and guidance of:*



**George Clifton**      **Skip Sander**  
USS Yancey              USS Rankin

*The Memory Book was designed and produced by Skip Sander, and printed by blurb.com. Shipmate Photos were taken by Ed Wright of the Jacksonville Camera Club. Other photos were provided by George Clifton, Leigh Dubie, Gene Hill, Jim McCourt, and Skip Sander.*

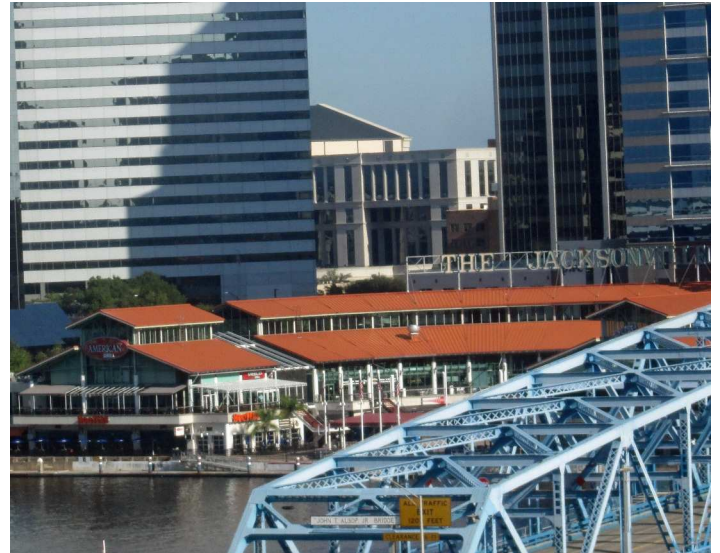
*Old-time shipmate photos were taken from USS Yancey and USS Rankin cruise books.*

*The Famous Grouse, Jim Beam, Old Forester, Bacardi, and other spirits in the Hospitality Room were provided by Willie Dunning, PFC, USMC, embarked in USS Rankin, 1962.*

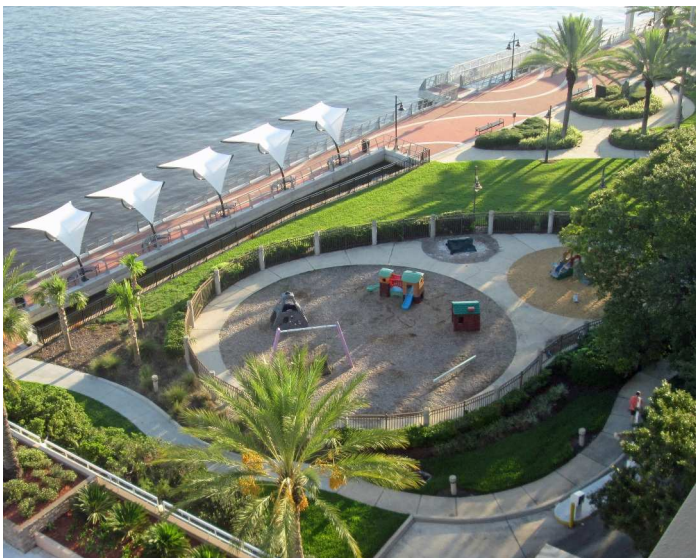
# Jacksonville, Florida



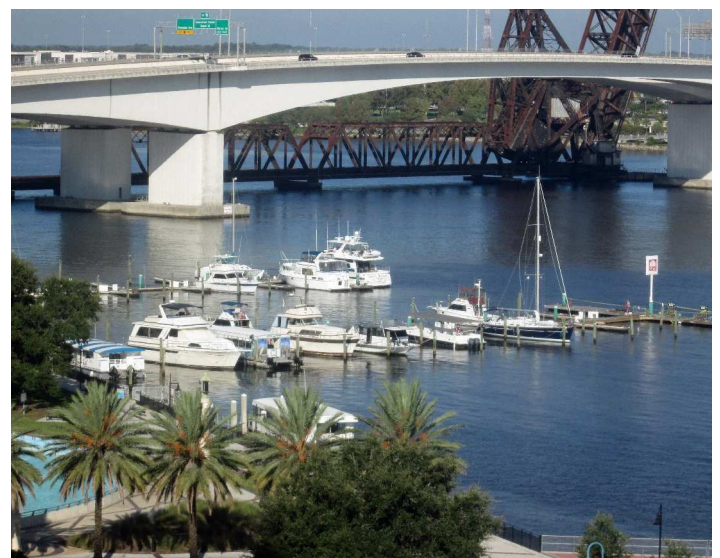
The view from our hotel



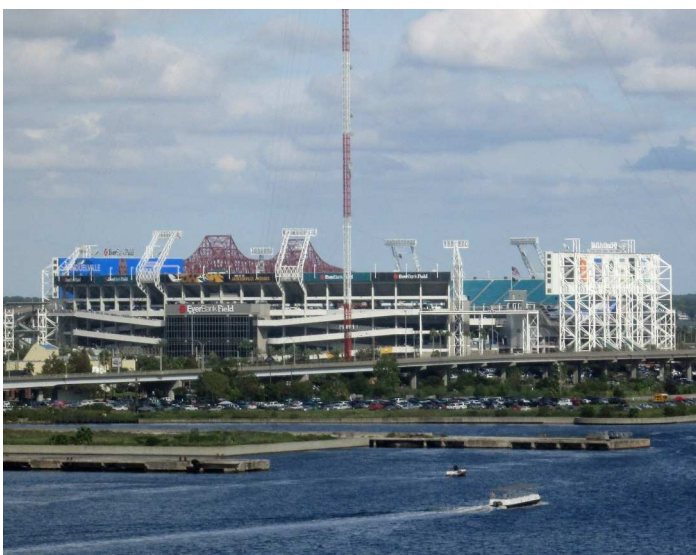
The Jacksonville Landing



Along the Southbank Riverwalk



River City Marina



EverBank Field, home of the Jacksonville Jaguars



The Lone Sailor, on the Southbank Riverwalk

# Hospitality Room



Toby Gillespie



Dave Beeler, Jim Grant, Chuck Liesegang



John Karlis, George Clifton, Paul Dunn, Paul Smith



Tom Lobello



Hugh Doherty



Norman Boyd

# Hospitality Room



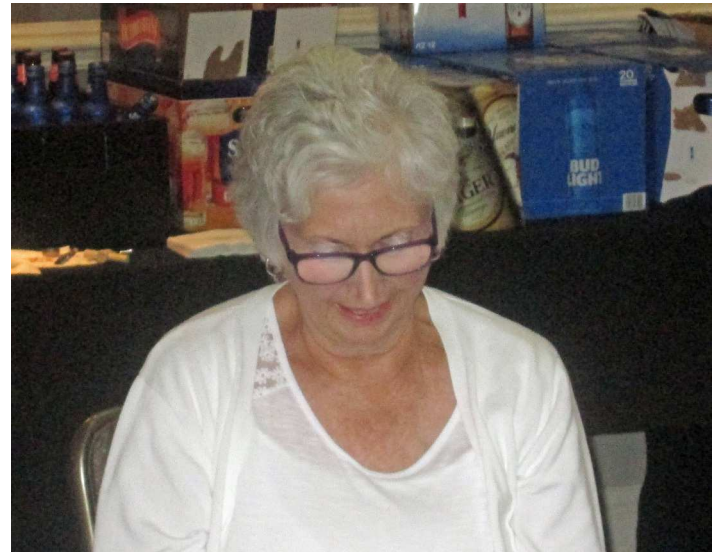
Walter Gillespie



Paul Smith



Joyce Marshall, Mike Norman, Ed Gaskell, Nancy Norman



Andrea Beeler



Lola Gersbacher, Pete Gersbacher



Lola Gersbacher, Lorraine Burke

# Hospitality Room



Margaret Doherty, Bob DeVault, Joyce Marshall, Hugh Doherty



Russ Gleason



Ada Fauber, Connie Boyd, Betty Malme



Shipmates and Ladies



Fine wines



Medicinal spirits



# U.S. Marine Corps Blount Island Command



The Main Gate



LCM-8, still an amphibious workhorse



We were briefed in the Port Operations building...



... which incorporates 21st century comforts!



USNS SACAGAWEA (T-AKE-2)



Welcome Aboard!

# U.S. Marine Corps Blount Island Command



Descending into the hold



SGT Newman demonstrating movable bulkheads



Main Deck Elevator Storage Area



She holds quite a few vehicles



Non-armored HMMWV, M998 variant



MRTT – Mid-Range Tow Tractor

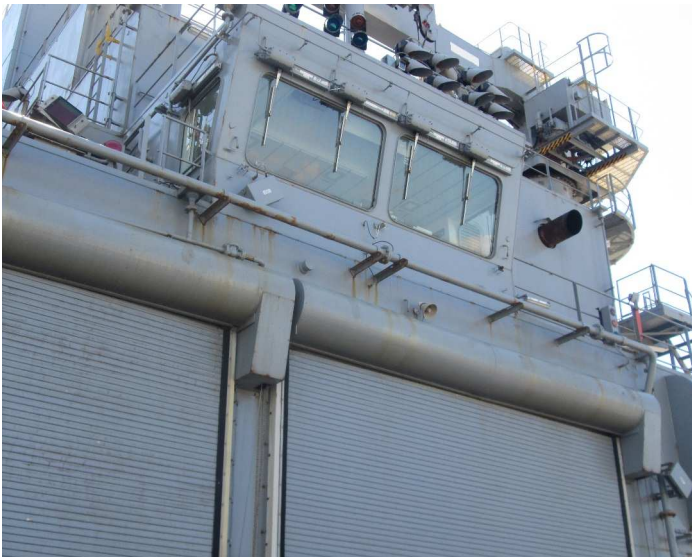
# U.S. Marine Corps Blount Island Command



10-foot Refrigeration Storage Container



SGT Erwin-Stubbs and friend



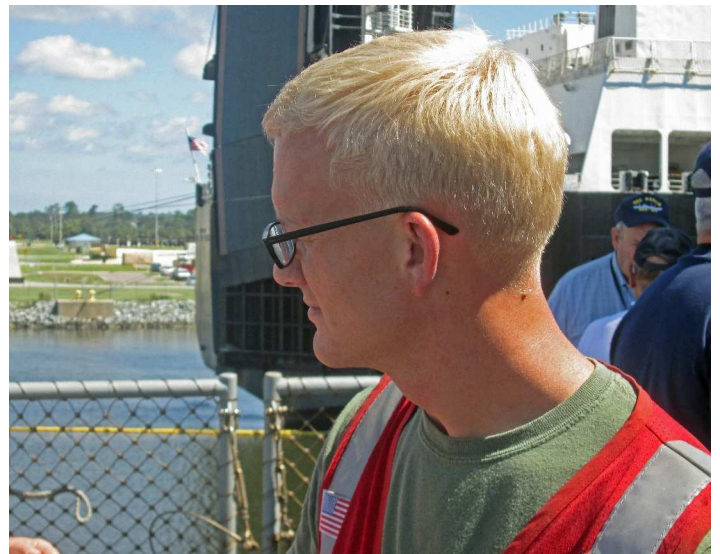
On the weather deck, looking up at the "tower"



Pondering the modern technology



Chief Boyd tells a sea story



SGT Newman listens in

# U.S. Marine Corps Blount Island Command



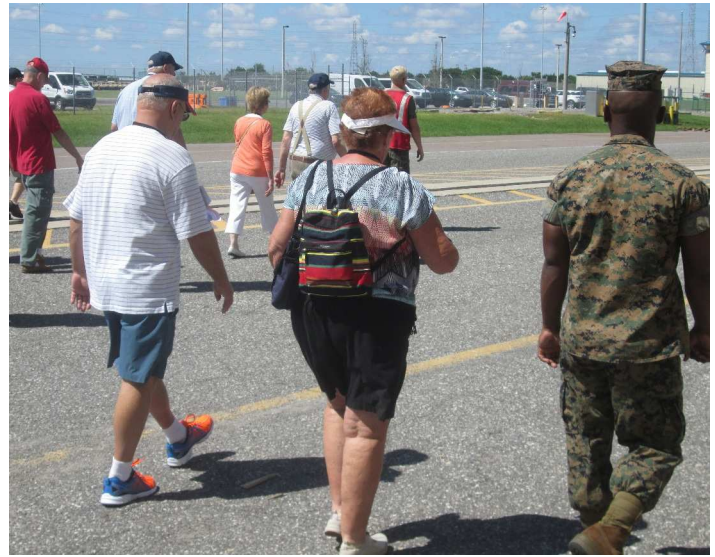
Our bus and the Dames Point Bridge



Modern gear for giving "gator hashmarks"



Debarking



Marching to lunch



Our chow hall – The Bunker



Saying goodbye to MAJ Leigh Dubie, USMC (Ret)

# St. Augustine



Castillo de San Marcos (Built 1672-1695)



Matanzas River from the Bridge of Lions



St. Augustine Light Station



Magnolia Avenue Live Oak Canopy



St. George Street – pedestrians only



Pirates! Aaaargh!

# St. Augustine



Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, founder of St. Augustine



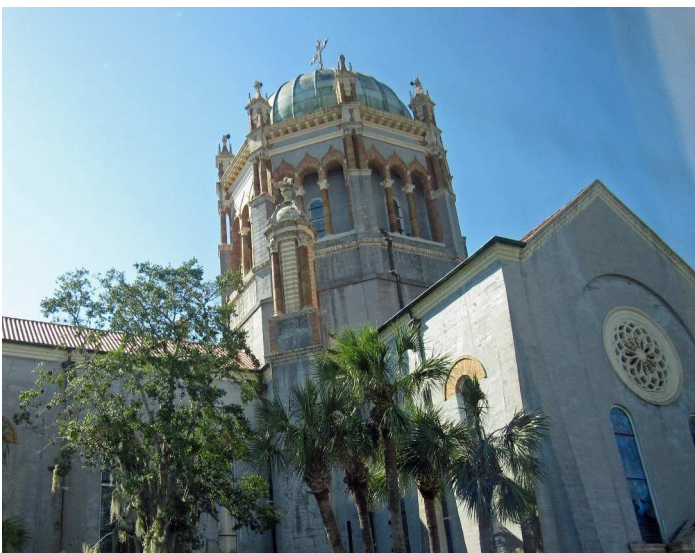
The Lightner Museum... it doubles as City Hall!



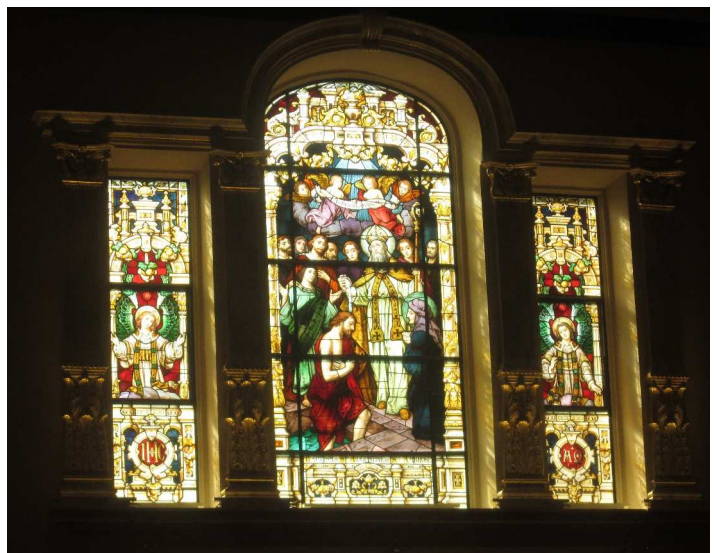
The gazebo on La Plaza de la Constitución



Pre-1700s water well



Memorial Presbyterian Church



Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine

# Budweiser Brewery & Cummer Gardens



Paul Dunn and friend



Something good is brewing...



...free beer, courtesy of...



...The King of Beers



The Italian Garden



The wisteria arbor



*Standing:* Tim Boyd, Norman Boyd, Gene Hill, Elton Fauber, Walt Gillespie, J. W. Young, Paul Dunn, Mike Norman, George Clifton, Paul Smith, Russ Gleason, John Karlis. *Seated:* Duane Malme, *Not present:* Doyle Clark



*Standing:* Mark Thomas, Jim Grant, Bob DeVault, Dick Lacy, John Burke, Dave Beeler, Walter Stringer, J. Harvey McCubbin, Ray Falker, Skip Sander, Willie Dunning, Ed Gaskell, Bill Devroe, Hugh Dougherty, Huey Hughes, Jim McCourt, Ray Spicer, Tex Spicer, Paul Allen, Dale Koepp. *Seated:* Hillyer "Billy" Head, Tom Lobello. *Not Present:* Charles Liesegang, Larry Rogan, Ray Zellers



# Farewell Banquet



Marine Corps Color Guard



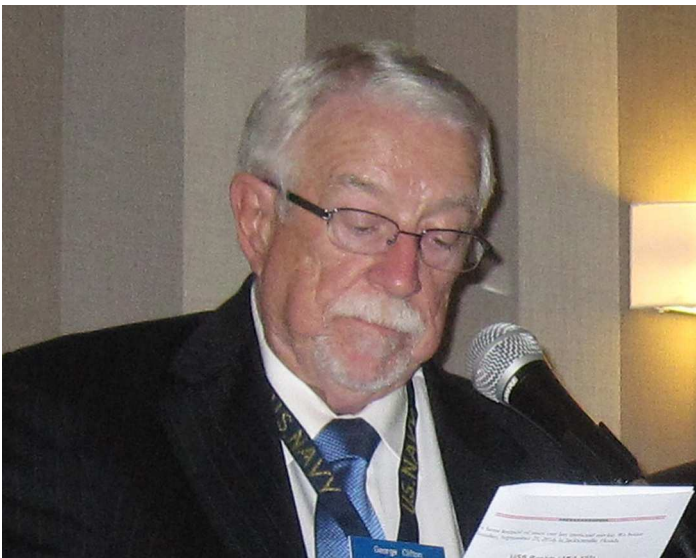
John Karlis delivers the invocation



Ed Gaskell proposes a toast



Skip Sander addresses the group



George Clifton adds his wisdom



Gentlemen of the USS Yancey

## Reunion Attendees – USS Yancey



**Norman, Connie & Tim Boyd**

USS Yancey  
EMC, 1961-1963



**Doyle Clark & Sonya Tice**

USS Yancey  
CS3, 1954



**George Clifton**

USS Yancey  
QM2, 1963-1967



**Paul Dunn**

USS Yancey  
LTJG, 1966-1969



**Elton & Ada Fauber**

USS Yancey  
QM2, 1952-1956



**Walter & Toby Gillespie**

USS Yancey  
FN, 1961-1963

## Reunion Attendees – USS Yancey



**Russ Gleason**  
USS Yancey  
LT, 1962-1964



**Gene & Shereen Hill**  
USS Yancey  
PC3, 1966-1968



**John Karlis**  
USS Yancey  
EM3, 1966-1968



**Duane & Betty Malme**  
USS Yancey  
MM3, 1955-1957



**Mike & Nancy Norman**  
USS Yancey  
SM2, 1964-1966



**Paul Smith**  
USS Yancey  
EM3, 1966-1968

## Reunion Attendees – USS Yancey



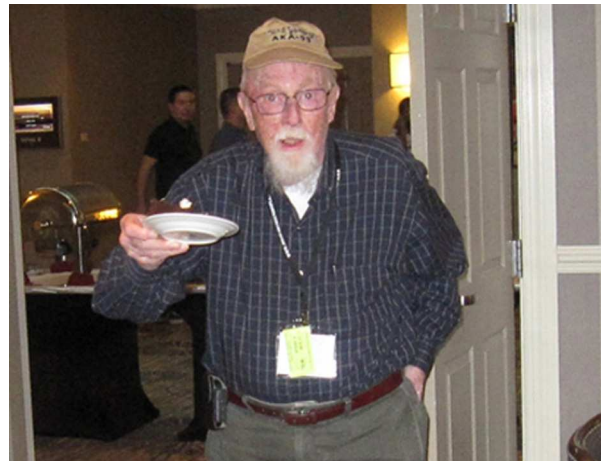
**J. W. Young & Virginia Greer-Young**

USS Yancey  
SH2, 1951-1954

## Yancey Shipmates on Parade



Ladies' Auxiliary



Surprise!



Fireworks over Jacksonville



"God Bless the U.S.A."

## Reunion Attendees – USS Rankin



**Paul & Faye Allen**

USS Rankin  
ENS (SC), 1946-1947



**Dave & Andrea Beeler**

USS Rankin  
ETN3, 1963-1966



**John & Lorraine Burke**

USS Rankin  
EN2, 1966-1970



**Bob & Ann DeVault**

USS Rankin  
SM2, 1959-1962



**Bill & Bette Devroe**

USS Rankin  
SK3, 1963-1965



**Hugh & Margaret Doherty**

USS Rankin  
SN, 1959-1961

## Reunion Attendees – USS Rankin



**Willie Dunning**  
USS Rankin  
PFC, USMC, 1962



**Ray & Jackie Falker**  
USS Rankin  
MMFN, 1964-1967



**Ed Gaskell**  
USS Rankin  
LT, 1954-1956



**Pete & Lola Gersbacher**  
USS Rankin  
ENS/LTJG, 1959-1960



**Jim & Joanne Grant**  
USS Rankin  
RD2, 1962-1963



**Stew & Ellie Gully**  
USS Rankin  
ENS/LTJG, 1957-1958

## Reunion Attendees – USS Rankin



**Hillyer "Billy" Head**

USS Rankin  
S2c, 1946



**Huey Hughes & Marie Waldman**

USS Rankin  
BT3, 1959-1962



**Dale Koepp & Kim Rygelski**

USS Rankin  
FN, 1962-1964



**Dick & Martha Lacy**

USS Rankin  
ENS, 1959-1960



**Charles Liesegang**

USS Rankin  
RM3, 1964-1966



**Tom & Lee Lobello**

USS Rankin  
RDM 2/C, 1945-1946

## Reunion Attendees – USS Rankin



**Jim & Mae McCourt**

USS Rankin  
RD3, 1963-1966



**J. Harvey McCubbin**

USS Rankin  
RD2, 1962-1965



**Larry & Linda Rogan**

USS Rankin  
SN, 1961-1964



**Louis "Skip" Sander**

USS Rankin  
ENS/LTJG, 1961-1963



**Ray & Alice Spicer**

USS Rankin  
BT3, 1960-1963



**Tex Spicer**

USS Rankin  
BT3, 1960-1962



## Reunion Attendees – USS Rankin



**Bud & Arleen Stringer**

USS Rankin  
MM3, 1965-1969



**Mark & Linda Thomas**

USS Rankin  
IC3, 1967-1970



**Ray Zellers**

USS Rankin  
FTG3, 1959-1960

## Rankin Shipmates on Parade



# Attendance and History

## USS Yancey / USS Rankin Reunion

Jacksonville, Florida – September 22-26, 2016

### USS Yancey

**Boyd, Norman** EMC, 1961-1963

Connie Boyd & Tim Boyd

Gulfport, MS

228-832-1816

No email

**Clark, Doyle** CS3, 1954

Sonya Tice

Lake City, FL

386-754-0959

No email

**Clifton, George** QM2, 1963-1967

Oak Lawn, IL

708-425-8531

clifs@ameritech.net

**Dunn, Paul** LTJG, 1966-1969

Painesville, OH

440-350-0585

paul@dunn.org

**Fauber, Elton** QM2, 1952-1956

Ada Fauber

Williamsburg, VA

757-869-2474

elf2rbf12@cox.net

**Gillespie, Walter L.** FN, 1961-1963

Toby Gillespie

Madison, AL

256-461-8218

tjgill5@aol.com

**Gleason, Russ** LT, 1962-1964

Lakewood, CO

303-988-8053

russell.gleason@comcast.net

**Hill, Gene** PC3, 1966-1968

Alamo, TX

218-349-3549

hermantowncars@msn.com

**Karlis, John** EM3, 1966-1968

Derby, NY

716-549-6939

jjkarlis@verizon.net

**Malme, Duane C.** MM3, 1955-1957

Betty Malme

Sacramento, CA

916-455-8509

kirstenwyatt@rocketmail.com

**Norman, Michael** SM2, 1964-1966

Nancy Norman

Danville, IL

618-513-7970

mikestorman23@gmail.com

**Smith, Jr., Paul H.** EM3, 1966-1968

York, ME

802-734-8777

phsmithjr@gmail.com

**Young, J. W.** SH2, 1951-1954

Virginia Greer-Young

Uvalde, TX

830-232-5003

ew32@hctc.net

### USS Rankin

**Allen, Paul** ENS(SC), 1946-1947

Faye Allen

Mission, TX

757-377-8800

pma0674@yahoo.com

**Beeler, David L.** ETN3, 1963-1966

Andrea Beeler

Fort Walton Beach, FL

724-552-3157

dlbeeler1943@gmail.com

**Burke, John J.** EN2, 1966-1970

Lorraine Burke

Pompton Plains, NJ

201-803-5123

jburke1225@aol.com

**DeVault, Bob** SM2, 1959-1962

Ann DeVault

Fredericksburg, VA

540-710-9484

robertdevault@verizon.net

**Devroe, Bill** SK3, 1963-1965

Bette Devroe

Wayne, NJ

973-617-7895

wdevroe@optonline.net

**Doherty, Hugh** SN, 1959-1961

Margaret Doherty

Smithtown, NY

631-724-6450

flashue@yahoo.com

**Dunning, Willie** PFC, USMC, 1962

Mobile, AL

251-661-4226

williedi@comcast.net

**Falker, Ray** MMFN, 1964-1967

Jackie Falker

Ellicott City, MD

410-461-8034

rayjac22@msn.com

**Gaskell, Ed** LT, 1954-1956

Baton Rouge, LA

225-400-8946

epgaskell@cox.net

**Gersbacher, Pete** ENS/LTJG,

1959-1960

Lola Gersbacher

Anaheim, CA

714-998-8844

petegers@pacbell.net

**Grant, Jim** RD2, 1962-1963

Joanne Grant

Rochester Hills, MI

248-877-5069

jimgrant01@gmail.com

**Gully, Stew** ENS/LTJG, 1957-1958

Ellie Gully

Raleigh, NC

919-367-8652

gull8000@bellsouth.net

**Head, Hillyer "Billy"** S/2C, 1946  
Justin Mitchell  
Oxford, GA  
770-786-4219  
nene4421@hotmail.com

**Hughes, Richard "Huey"** BT3,  
1959-1962  
Marie Waldman  
Mansfield, OH  
419-589-4123  
mwaldman@neo.rr.com

**Koepp, Dale** FN, 1962-1964  
Kim Rygelski  
Amherst, OH  
740-984-1073  
No email

**Lacy, Dick** ENS, 1959-1960  
Martha Lacy  
Jamesville, NY  
315-492-4534  
lacy.mardick@gmail.com

**Liesegang, Charles** RM3, 1964-1966  
Englewood, FL  
941-999-4010  
dl7160@comcast.net

**Lobello, Tom** RDM 2/C, 1945-1946  
Lee Lobello  
Jacksonville, FL  
904-786-9205  
tomlobello@att.net

**McCourt, James P.** RD3, 1963-1966  
Mae McCourt  
Tierra Verde, FL  
727-643-9029  
jimsmccourt6@gmail.com

**McCubbin, J. Harvey** RD2, 1962-1965  
Bridgeton, NJ  
856-455-5343  
harveymccubbin@comcast.net

**Rogan, Larry** SN, 1961-1964  
Linda Rogan  
Brooksville, FL  
352-592-2641  
lrogan@tampabay.rr.com

**Sander, Skip** ENS/LTJG, 1961-1963  
Pittsburgh, PA  
412-367-1376  
ussrankin@aol.com

**Spicer, S.Ray** BT3, 1960-1963  
Alice Spicer  
Brooklyn, NY  
718-339-0984  
alispicer@yahoo.com

**Spicer, Tex** BT3, 1960-1962  
Lorraine Hamby  
Fermin, NC  
336-874-2928  
lorainehamby@yahoo.com

**Stringer, Walter "Bud"** MM3,  
1965-1969  
Arleen Stringer  
Islip Terrace, NY  
631-277-4695  
walter\_s@mac.com

**Thomas, Mark** IC3, 1967-1970  
Linda Thomas  
Stillwater, OK  
405-762-6906  
markt4600@gmail.com

**Zellers, Ray** FTG3, 1959-1960  
Eustis, FL  
352-357-6715  
rayzellers@embarqmail.com

## 2016 Reunion Statistics

**USS Yancey**  
13 Shipmates  
6 Spouses & Guests  
19 Total Attendees

**USS Rankin**  
27 Shipmates  
22 Spouses & Guests  
49 Total Attendees

**Both Ships**  
40 Shipmates  
28 Spouses & Guests  
68 Total Attendees



## USS Yancey Reunion History

2016 - Jacksonville, FL  
2015 - Nashville, TN  
2014 - Newport, RI  
2013 - Washington, DC  
2012 - San Diego, CA  
2011 - New Orleans, LA  
2010 - Boston, MA  
2009 - Mobile, AL  
2008 - Seattle, WA  
2007 - Washington, DC  
2006 - Chicago, IL  
2005 - Norfolk, VA  
2004 - San Francisco, CA  
2003 - Corpus Christi, TX  
2002 - Charleston, SC  
2001 - San Diego, CA  
2000 - Baton Rouge, LA  
1999 - Washington, DC  
1998 - Pensacola, FL  
1997 - San Francisco, CA  
1996 - No reunion  
1995 - Norfolk, VA



## USS Rankin Reunion History

2016 - Jacksonville, FL  
2015 - Nashville, TN  
2014 - Newport, RI  
2013 - San Antonio, TX  
2012 - New Orleans, LA  
2011 - Charleston, SC  
2010 - Branson, MO  
2009 - Norfolk, VA  
2008 - Stuart, FL  
2007 - New London, CT  
2006 - Washington, DC  
2005 - San Diego, CA  
2004 - Norfolk, VA

There were some informal reunions in the 1990s, all held in Norfolk/Virginia Beach.

## As We Were When We Served



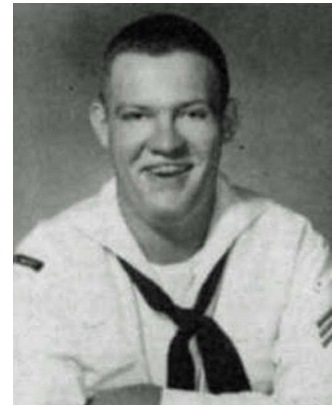
Boyd, N., EMC



Clifton, G. R., QM2



ENS P. H. Dunn



Gillespie, W. L., FN



LT R. D. Gleason



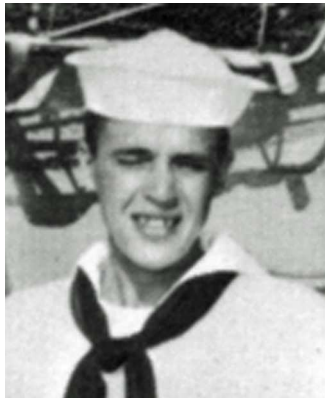
Karlis, J. J., EMFN



Yancey Tour in the Med, 1960s



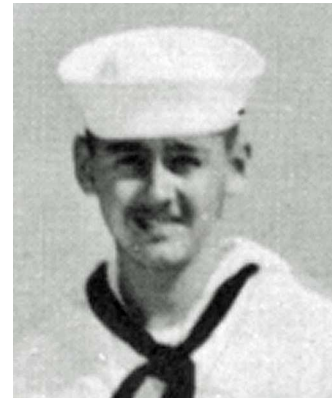
Burke, J. J., EN2



DeVault, R. L., SN



ENS F. P. Gersbacher



Hughes, R. B., BT3



ENS L. F. Sander

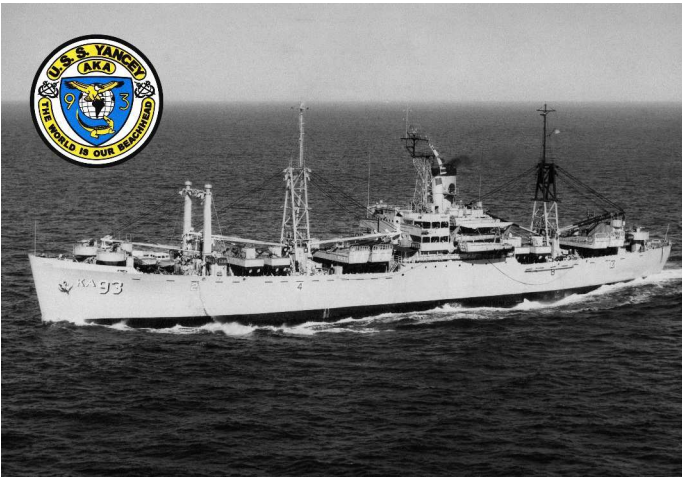


Thomas, M. A., IC3



Rankin in New York, Early 1950s

# The Ships We Served On



**USS Yancey (AKA-93/LKA-93)** was an *Andromeda*-class attack cargo ship built by the Moore Dry Dock Company of Oakland, California. The ship was named after Yancey County, North Carolina.

*Yancey's* keel was laid on May 22, 1944. She was launched on July 8, and commissioned on October 11, 1944. She operated in the Pacific during the war and participated in the amphibious landings at Iwo Jima in February 1945 and Okinawa in April 1945. After Japan's surrender in August, *Yancey* was in Tokyo Bay for the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender on September 2, 1945.

She made voyages delivering troops for the occupation of Japan before returning to the United States in January 1946. After spending most of the next year on the East Coast, *Yancey* was ordered back into the Pacific in November, and took part in *Operation Highjump*, a Navy expedition to Antarctica, in January 1947; *Yancey Glacier* was named in the ship's honor.

After spending most of the next decade in duties in the Western Pacific, *Yancey* was decommissioned in March 1958 and placed in reserve at Olympia, Washington. She was reactivated in the aftermath of the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and recommissioned in November.

During the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis she sailed in support of the U.S. blockade of Cuba, and during the April 1965 U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic she carried almost a quarter of all of the evacuees from Santo Domingo. In January 1970, *Yancey* was blown by a storm into the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, closing it for several weeks.

USS *Yancey* was decommissioned for the final time in January 1971. After being stripped of salvageable materials, she was sunk in 1990 as an artificial reef off Morehead City, North Carolina, a place she had visited often in the past. She rests on her starboard side at a depth of 160 feet.



**USS Rankin (AKA-103/LKA-103)** was a *Tolland*-class attack cargo ship built by the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company of Wilmington, North Carolina. She was named after Rankin County, Mississippi.

*Rankin's* keel was laid on October 31, 1944. She was launched 52 days later and commissioned in Charleston, South Carolina on February 25, 1945. She joined the Pacific Fleet in April, participating for 17 days in the Battle of Okinawa. During her time there, she faced more than 100 *kamikaze* air raids. On June 28, she sailed for San Francisco. She was in Seattle when hostilities ended, and sailed for the Philippines.

*Rankin* took part in *Operation Magic Carpet*, repatriating U.S. soldiers who had been stationed in the Far East. She visited China and Japan during 1946 and early 1947. The ship was decommissioned in San Francisco in May 1947, and placed "in mothballs" at Suisun Bay, California.

*Rankin* was Recommissioned in March, 1952 at the Todd Shipyard in Alameda, California. She transited the Panama Canal to join the Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, and began a second career supporting amphibious training operations in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Caribbean.

In July 1958, she helped land 5,000 U.S. troops in Lebanon, helping to avoid a civil war. In November 1962, she was one of hundreds of ships responding to the Cuban Missile Crisis. In February 1963, she visited the Dominican Republic for the inauguration of President Juan Bosch, and in April, she patrolled for 31 days off the coast of Haiti until tensions eased in that country.

From 1956-1960, *Rankin* won an unprecedented five straight Battle Efficiency Awards, enabling her crew to wear a Gold E on their uniforms. In 1958, she simultaneously held every award available to an AKA.

USS *Rankin* was decommissioned in 1971, and in 1988 was sunk as a fishing and diving reef off the coast of Stuart, Florida. She rests on her starboard side at 130 feet.

## What Were the AKA/LKAs?

AKAs were U.S. Navy ships designed specifically to carry troops, equipment and supplies in support of amphibious assaults, and to provide naval gunfire support during those assaults. They were originally called Attack Cargo Ships and designated AKA. In 1969, all AKAs were renamed as Amphibious Cargo Ships and redesignated LKA.

As amphibious operations became more important in World War II, planners saw the need for a special kind of cargo ship, one that could carry both cargo and the LCM and LCVP boats with which to attack the beach, and that carried guns to assist in anti-air defense and shore bombardment. Specifications were drawn up, and construction of the AKAs began. A total of 108 were built between 1943 and 1945—an average of one new ship every eight days! Six more AKA/LKAs, featuring new and improved designs, were built in later years.

Compared to other cargo ship types, AKAs could carry landing craft, were faster, had more armament, and had larger hatches and booms. Their holds were optimized for combat loading, a method of cargo storage where the items first needed ashore were at the top of the hold, and those needed later were lower down. Because these ships went into forward

combat areas, they had Combat Information Centers and significant amounts of equipment for radio communication, neither of which were present in other cargo ships.

Attack cargo ships played a vital role in the Pacific War, where many were attacked by kamikazes and other aircraft, and several were torpedoed, but none were sunk or otherwise destroyed. Nine AKAs were present at the surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.

After the war, many AKAs were put into the National Defense Reserve Fleet. Others were converted for other uses, such as oceanographic surveying, under-sea cable laying, and repairing other ships. Some of the reserve ships were recommissioned for the Korean War, and some stayed in service during the Vietnam War.

In the 1960s, both the United States Navy and the British Royal Navy developed amphibious transport docks (LPDs), with well decks and flight decks, which gradually took on this unique amphibious role and today have assumed it completely. The last amphibious cargo ship in the American Navy, USS El Paso (LKA-117), was decommissioned in 1994.

## In Memoriam

These are the shipmates who died or whose deaths were learned of since our last reunion. We honored their lives and memories by reading their names at our Memorial Service in Jacksonville.

### **USS Yancey (AKA-93)**

David Chestnut  
James Clarke  
William Fosler Jr.  
Richard Greenwalt  
Johann Hermann  
Leo McCluskey  
Rex McCurdy  
Richard Nierescher  
Gerald Sudbrock  
Fredrick Templin  
Bill Welfare  
Lenvil West  
Bobby Gene Young

### **USS Rankin (AKA-103)**

Harry Vernon Anderson  
August David Collier  
Herbert W. Ezell  
Joseph N. Freitas, Jr.  
Louis William Hennings, III  
Leroy Harry Keihn  
James George King  
Everett Lee McVicker  
Henry Marvin Mickey  
Paul Bartholomew O'Neil  
Donald Eugene Reinen  
Frank N. Sipes  
Robert Howard West  
Lawrence Eugene Willis



