

A newsletter exclusively for former USS YANCEY SAILORS

# YANCEY MEMORIES

Volume 13, Issue 3

October 2009

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS YANCEY AKA-93



### Special Points of Interest

- **Our cover story is the recap of the 2009 reunion in Mobile, AL.**
- **Page two has a list of attendees. Please join them next year.**
- **George Clifton has some details from the reunion for you in his column on page three.**
- **Milt Schroeder shares some of his most notable memories from 1944-1946. A great read on page 3 under Mail Call.**
- **Ever wonder where USS Yancey got its name? Wonder no more. Read George Dawson's article on pages 3 & 4.**
- **Ken Groom shares some hitchhiking stories on pages 4 & 5.**
- **The Boston preview and survey are on pages 5 & 6.**

## 2009 REUNION IN MOBILE RECAP

Mobile, Alabama was the location for the 2009 USS Yancey (AKA-93) reunion. Nineteen former shipmates from the Yancey and twelve of their guests enjoyed the four day/three night event on October 1-4, 2009 at the Ashbury Hotel in Mobile.

Everyone began arriving on Thursday, October 1 and the first thing most of them did after registering was to go into the hospitality room to see who else had arrived. This went on all afternoon until the 5:00 pm Welcome Reception brought everyone together for the first time. George Clifton, group coordinator, welcomed everyone to the reunion, made necessary introductions and the reunion was officially underway. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks were served

during the reception as everyone made the rounds to see and greet old friends. Four new attendees were welcomed this year and they quickly were made to feel part of the group. The remainder of the evening was free to catch up on what had been going on and to trade stories over dinner and in the hospitality room.

Friday morning dawned gray and threatening, but all turned out well for the visit to the USS Alabama. At 9:00 am the group left the hotel to tour the great battleship that dated back to WWII and all through the years until the war for Iraqi Freedom. The USS Alabama earned nine battle stars during WWII. The Aircraft Pavilion features planes from every war plus pictures of the state of Alabama's Medal of Honor recipients. Also located at

the site is the USS Drum, a WWII submarine which was visited by the group. A delicious lunch was served to the attendees in the Ward Room of the USS Alabama. A short tour of the city of Mobile followed the Alabama visit and then it was back to the hotel for some rest and relaxation. Snacks and drinks were waiting in the hospitality room when the group returned and most came by and enjoyed a snack before resting up for the evening. At 6:00 pm the social hour began and everyone returned to the Jasmine Room for the "Down by the Bay Buffet." The Southern-themed dinner was enjoyed by all and then it was time for some fun with the gift exchange. In the past few years, the Yankee Swap has become a favorite Friday evening event, so this was contin-

*(Continued on page 2)*

ued for the 2009 reunion also. It turned out to again be a fun way to spend the evening and get a gift to take home as well. Mr. Chester got "special gifts" for the exchange. If you want to know what, you'll have to ask someone who attended! It's great to see what is brought in from all over the country as representative of one's area. Many of the attendees returned to the hospitality room for some more stories and reminiscing after the evening's activities.

Saturday morning after a hearty breakfast, the optional tour to Bellingrath Gardens departed the hotel. Nowhere in the world is floral beauty more concentrated than in the internationally famous Bellingrath Gardens which is located on the riverfront land trod by French and Spanish Colonials. Also located on the grounds is the home of Coca-Cola magnate, Walter Bellingrath. The home is furnished with antique furniture in period settings plus an outstanding collection of china and porcelain. Lunch was on the "Southern Belle" as it cruised the Fowl River. What a beautiful day for a river cruise and a great day for everyone. It was a truly enjoyable day. After returning to the hotel in the afternoon, the annual business meeting was held to determine the location of the 2010 reunion and the leadership for the next year. George Clifton was again chosen as reunion coordinator and Boston, MA was selected as the 2010 reunion site. After the meeting there was time to catch a breath and get ready for the big event of the reunion—the USS Yancey (AKA-93) banquet. The evening began with the pre-dinner cocktail hour and photo session and then at 7:00 pm everyone moved into the banquet room. George Clifton made the welcoming remarks and dinner was served. Thanks to James Young, a film about flying during World War II was shown. This same film will be shown on the History Channel at a later date. Following the film, the last item on the agenda was the Memorial Service to remember those USS Yancey shipmates who had passed away, especially those since the last

reunion. Edmund McLaughlin, George Clifton and Paul Dunn led the service. As the names from the Honor Roll were read, a bell was tolled in their memory. It was now time to bring the banquet to a close, and there were mixed feelings—happiness for such a wonderful reunion experience and sadness that it was now close to an end. Many had to say their good byes tonight because of early travel plans on Sunday morning, so there were many hugs and handshakes and farewells before leaving the banquet. Others lingered on to make the most of the remaining time here.

Sunday morning's breakfast was the final chance for good byes for those who didn't have early travel plans, and a few more minutes to tell another story or to listen to an old friend tell about his family. Reunions bring up old memories and old feelings and sometimes it's hard to let them go, but there will be next year! See you in Boston.

## 2009 REUNION ATTENDEES

Joe & Juanita Bennett  
 Billy Bowling  
 Norman & Connie Boyd  
 Richey Brunskill  
 Kenneth & Connie Chester  
 Richard & Jackie Chester  
 George Clifton  
 Lewis & Elba Daniels  
 Paul Dunn  
 Elton & Ada Fauber  
 Walter & Toby Gillespie  
 Kenneth Groom  
 Duane & Betty Malme  
 Edmund McLaughlin  
 Milton & Tom Schroeder  
 Jay & Betty Lee Schwall  
 William & Nancy Suchy  
 James Way  
 James & Eleanor Young

**Total Members:** 19  
**Guests:** 12  
**GRAND TOTAL:** 31



## WELCOME

The following shipmate has been located since the last newsletter. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

**James Segraves**  
 (1968-70) LT Eng  
 5812 Twin Oaks Dr  
 Pace, FL 32571-8379  
 850-994-0818  
 jsegraves@aol.com



## TAPS

The Yancey Memories was notified of the following shipmates' deaths. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families of the deceased. Anyone who knows of a deceased shipmate, or learns of one, please notify ML & RS, Inc so their names can be included in TAPS and be added to the Honor Roll.

**Walter Elder**  
 Date of death not reported

**Aristeo Ruiz**  
 (1954-58) MM3 M Div  
 Died June 22, 2008

## GOLF HUMOR

A golf club walks into a local bar and asks the bartender for a pint of beer. The bartender refuses to serve him. "Why not?" asks the golf club. "You'll be driving later," replies the bartender.

## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

I just got back from the reunion in Mobile, AL and I'm happy to tell you it was a great reunion. It was well attended and other than a little rain Friday morning, the weather was sunny. The tours were enjoyable and on schedule, so we were back to the hotel by 2:30 both days which gave everyone time to relax prior to the evening activities. It was good to see everyone again and we also had some first timers from WWII and the Korean Era. My hope is to see more shipmates from the 1960s attending in the future. It truly is a nice group of people that attend and it would be disappointing to have to discontinue future reunions because of low numbers.

The vote was almost unanimous to have the 2010 reunion in Boston, Massachusetts in early October. More information will be provided in the newsletter once the exact date is determined. For those of you that are looking to 2011, we will be going to New Orleans, Louisiana or San Antonio, Texas, depending on the vote at the Boston reunion. Start making plans so we can have a record turn out in Boston.

I hope everyone is well and that you have an enjoyable Holiday Season.

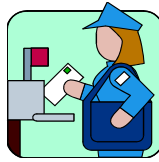
George Clifton

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### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Balance after 07/09        | <b>\$311.97</b> |
| Funds received since 07/09 | <b>\$60.00</b>  |
| Funds available for 010/09 | <b>\$371.97</b> |
| Funds expended for 10/09   | <b>\$169.87</b> |
| Balance for 01/10          | <b>\$202.10</b> |

**The newsletter is being mailed only to those who returned the coupon for USPS service. All others can access the newsletter on line at [www.mlrsinc.com/yancey](http://www.mlrsinc.com/yancey). Please send contributions to the newsletter to ML&RS, Inc at the address on page five.**



## MAIL CALL

Dear Karen,

In response to your request for funny incidents that may have happened during my tour on the Yancey from October in 1944 through October of 1946, it seems very difficult to remember anything that was ever funny. All the memories seem to be related to work, duty and getting home again in one piece.

As a substitute, it is possible to remember the high points of this tour because they were events that will never again be repeated, hopefully.

The first incident of course is being the only radioman of the Yancey (I don't remember volunteering or being selected) to be detached from the ship on D-Day at Iwo Jima and served as the radio operator for the beach control boat that was to maintain communications with the ship and shore to be sure the Marines all got to the proper beach. Our control boat was under the command of Lt. Rolland, and we were at Red Beach 1 at about 6:30 that morning waiting for the Marines to land. As history was written, nothing was happening until after 9:00 am after about the first three waves of Marines hit the beach and the Japs came out of their caves and dumped everything on us but the kitchen sink.

Instead of being relieved after the first day as planned, the Yancey left the landing area for the open sea to avoid the kamikaze raids, and as a result, we did not get relieved until after three days and nights at the beach.

After the successful landings at Okinawa, and again the kamikaze experiences, my second experience of note was after the Japanese surrender to accompany (again, I don't remember volunteering or being selected) as the radio operator to be one of the first boats to land at Hi-

roshima, where our group was to find and select a building adequate to serve as an occupation control facility to coordinate the arrival of Army personnel for the occupation of Japanese prefecture. Being one of the first people to land here, our group had first choice of all the Japanese arms, swords, field glasses and other military gear which we liberated and brought home with us.

Soon thereafter, my third experience of note was after the visit to Hiroshima, the Yancey was dispatched to the Haiphong Delta to pick up a regiment of Chinese soldiers to be transported to Formosa as the initial occupation force for what is now known as Taiwan. But, alas, there were no Chinese in sight, and the Yancey was not about to risk the Japanese mine fields to enter the Haiphong Delta. As a result, the Yancey anchored and sent an LCM landing craft with an officer, a French-Indo China interpreter and nine crewmen from the Yancey to explore the inland delta waterways for signs of the Chinese Army, including yours truly as the radioman. After several days of witnessing the unbelievable experiences of poverty and depredation these natives suffered by the Japanese who were still maintaining a political and police-type presence of the population, we loaded the Chinese troops aboard and left the area.

Milt Schroeder  
schroedten@comcast.net

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USS Yancey Newsletter,

I often wondered where the great USS Yancey AKA-93 got its name. Recently I was reading a book on American history and found that there is a Yancey County in western North Carolina. Where did Yancey County get its name? No doubt it was named for the noted Southern farmer and politician William Yancey, whose oratory inflamed the South prior to the Civil War in spite of the fact that he had been raised in the northeastern part of the United States. Yancey was tough and feisty—just like his Navy namesake.

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Yancey moved back to the South at age 19, but did not regret the time he spent in the North because it had made him a better farmer. He was a Southerner in politics, he explained, but, "a Yankee...around my cattle sheds."

George Dawson  
Radioman First Class  
USS Yancey, Korean War

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Ref: Yancey AKA-93 Reunion:

Sorry about the late reply, I was sick. But I could not attend the reunion. It's funny; my other ship is having their reunion in Mobile two weeks after the Yancey's. It is the Annapolis. I didn't make that one either. Please tell the guys I miss them.

Well, my cousins and I finally got plans together to go to Europe and visit cousins in Lithuania. This is where all my grandparents came from. I've never been there or met or knew of them. One cousin has, so it will be a special reunion. I couldn't do anything more after that experience in two weeks.

Dick Balt

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## HITCHHIKING DURING THE 50S IN A CRACKERJACK UNIFORM

By Ken Groom, Yancey Historian

A bit of history first. During WW2, my father operated a "tank wagon service" delivering gasoline and other fuels to farmers, construction sites and military locations. I would ride with him when I wasn't in school. We always stopped for G.I. hitchhikers from an airbase about 12 miles from my town. That was a common thing to do then. When I joined the Navy in 1951, things had changed.

In the Bay area of San Francisco, it was relatively easy to be picked up for a ride with ex G.I.s. Yancey's homeport at that time was in Oak-

land, CA. We hitched a ride to San Francisco after we had been in port for about 3 weeks. The driver of the car asked, "How long have you been in?" We replied, "Three weeks." They thought we meant how long we had been in the Navy. That was straightened out in a short time.

I had always heard that it was possible to hitch a ride from an air base to another near your home town. After I left the Yancey, I caught a ride with a shipmate going from San Diego to near Denver. Since my hometown was in eastern Kansas, I thought I could just be dropped off at Denver's nearby base of Lowery Field. I inquired at that base about a hop from Lowery to Olathe, Kansas Navy base. This would put me about 50 miles from my home town. No luck with that; they added that I shouldn't try hitchhiking since it was not recommended. I did it anyway.

My first pickup was a car with a family of kids; it was the 4th of July, hot and the kids were sticky and sweaty. I was eventually dropped off in a remote location with a small town about a mile from the main highway on a very hot afternoon. The town's high school kids came by in cars and threw firecrackers near me for their amusement. Later I was picked up by an Air Force G.I. on his way east.

This ride was fine until it got dark. He had one of those Fords at the time that had a relay that would shut off the headlights when the electrical system was drawing too much current. Fortunately, the highway was flat and broad drainage ditches on each side. The lights would go out and we would be bouncing down the drainage ditches until the lights came on again. So, the main concern was that we might hit an occasional culvert in our path as we drove along those ditches. After a few episodes of this and as we were within about 40 miles from my hometown, I asked him to drop me off in the next town and I could make a call home for someone to pick me up. He did this; I made my call and waited near a dark ware-

house until I saw the familiar faces of my family. That was the last of my adventures with hitchhiking.

## HITCHHIKING 101- PART 2

It was about 1952; my shipmates and I had been thru boot camp together and were assigned to the Yancey together. This was the first leave after boot camp leave. The three of us, myself, Dickie Simmons and Bob Gillette, were in the Oakland, CA bus terminal ready to go home. Our hometowns in eastern Kansas were within 40 miles of each other. Since we had about 2 hours before the bus was to leave, we were standing around the terminal waiting. We were approached by a "sailor" who was in uniform, but I noticed that his neckerchief was missing. It was a wonder that the Shore Patrol hadn't stopped him. After a bit of small talk, "sailor" suggested that we go someplace for coffee. Actually, the terminal had a café, so the thought crossed my mind that we could have the coffee there. Bob decided to stay behind for some reason. So off the two of us went following "sailor" for about 6 blocks to this greasy spoon café. We sat down in a booth and "sailor" began to tell us about the merchant marine who he met on a train who had this slight of hand trick he could do. Also, the merchant marine happened to be at the café's counter. After "sailor" and the merchant marine renewed friendships, we all sat in the booth. Wonder of all wonders, the trick was mentioned and this was going to take some betting. "Sailor" wanted to know if we had our leave money safely secured. I assured him I did. As most of you know, our pockets were located on the belt line as a small slit. I didn't try to prove to him that I had my money by taking my billfold out. But, Dickie did and the games began. After a couple of tries, Dickie had lost some money, but wasn't about to give up. He kept betting and eventually lost all of his leave money.

Dickie then stormed out of the

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café with me following close behind. He was so upset with himself that he said he was going back to the ship. I persuaded him that his parents would be disappointed with him and that I could buy his Sunbeam razor for \$10 bucks. I also reminded him that the bus station was located on US Highway 50, and that the same highway went thru our hometowns.

So, Dickie went hitchhiking. The bus trip must have taken me the better part of two days. Then when I did get home, after a couple of hours, I got a call from Bob. Bob said that Dickie had hitchhiked most of the trip by getting rides from truckers and had only taken a bus to cross the Continental Divide. Dickie had arrived within two hours of our arrival. At the time, we probably made several stops for rest, food and layovers. The truckers probably didn't stop that much. Hitchhiking, in those days, was easy if you found an ex-G.I. who likes to relive his glory days, was in want of company and was driving cross country.

K.D. Groom  
Former hitchhiker and thrill seeker  
Now Yancey historian

**Editor's Note: If you have a good hitchhiking story, let us hear about it for the next issue. Send your hitchhiking story to [karen@mlrsinc.com](mailto:karen@mlrsinc.com) or to MLRS at our address below—Attention: Karen. Hope we will get some great tales!**

A NEWSLETTER EXCLUSIVELY FOR  
FORMER USS YANCEY SAILORS

Published by:  
Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc  
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"Our Reunions Work So You don't Have To"

## NAVY DAY

Navy Day was established on October 27, 1922 by the Navy League of the United States. Although it was not a national holiday, Navy Day received special attention from President Warren Harding. Harding wrote to the Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby:

*"Thank you for your note which brings assurance of the notable success which seems certain to attend the celebration of Navy Day on Friday, October 27, in commemoration of past and present services of the Navy. From our earliest national beginnings the Navy has always been, and deserved to be, an object of special pride to the American people. Its record is indeed one to inspire such sentiments and I am very sure that such a commemoration as is planned will be a timely reminder.*

*"It is well for us to have in mind that under a program of lessening naval armaments there is a greater reason for maintaining the highest efficiency, fitness and morale in this branch of the national defensive service. I know how earnestly the Navy personnel are devoted to this idea and want you to be assured of my hearty concurrence."*

October 27 was suggested by the Navy League to recognize Theodore Roosevelt's birthday. Roosevelt had been an Assistant Secretary of the Navy and supported a strong Navy as well as the idea of Navy Day. In addition, October 27 was the anniversary of a 1775 report issued by a special committee of the Continental Congress favoring the purchase of merchant ships as the foundation of an American Navy.

Navy Day was last observed on Oct. 27, 1949.

## COME TOUR HISTORIC BOSTON IN 2010

The USS Yancey reunion will be held in **Boston, MA**. We will attempt to make you familiar with the many things to see and do in the Boston area and then ask you to choose which of them you would like to see on the agenda of your reunion in Boston. Now, sit back and learn about Boston.

### ABOUT BOSTON

Boston is located at the mouth of the Charles River and is abundantly rich in history. The capital of Massachusetts and the largest city in the New England area, it was one of the earliest major U.S. cities to be settled by Europeans. The American Revolution began in the Boston area. Because it is a compact city, many of the historical areas are within walking distance of one another and are located in the downtown area. On the southern end of the district is Chinatown, with its concentration of Chinese restaurants and food stores. To the north is an area known as Government Center. Boston Common, on the west end, was originally an open area reserved by colonists for grazing cattle, but is now the oldest public park in the United States. The north end is the site of historic buildings such as Paul Revere's house and the Old North Church. It is also the area known as Little Italy and is famous for its restaurants.

Today Boston has three important economic sectors—financial services, the health care industry and high-technology industries such as electronics and commuters.

### ATTRACTIONS IN THE BOSTON AREA

You can experience the memories as you step aboard the **USS Salem (CA-139)**, the world's only preserved heavy cruiser, at the United States Naval Shipbuilding

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Museum in historic Quincy, MA. The ship and museum are located in the former Bethlehem Steel Quincy Fore River Shipyard, once one of the nation's largest shipbuilding enterprises.

In Boston we can step back in history on the **Freedom Trail**- The Cradle of Liberty...the birthplace of American Independence. The Freedom Trail takes you through almost three centuries of Boston's colonial and revolutionary history, as a red line on the sidewalk leads you from site to site. Beginning at Boston Common, some of the historic sites on the trail are **Paul Revere's home** and the **Old North Church** where his lanterns were hung; **Battle Green** with the old monument and boulder marking the line of Minutemen; the very places where our nation began. You may also want to view **Buckman Tavern**, which faces the Battle Green, and **Monroe Tavern**, which was used by the British as a hospital after the battle. Site of the **Boston Massacre** is marked by a circle of cobblestones in the street. The Bunker Hill Monument that commemorates the first major battle of the Revolution, fought here on June 17, 1775, has exhibits on the battle at its base. All of these sites and more can be visited along Boston's Freedom Trail. Here were the gathering places of the patriots, the incubators of revolution...the buildings where American resistance to the British Crown was born, grew, and flourished... until, eventually, the only alternative was war and independence.

**Boston National Historical Park** is headquarters for the National Park Service in Boston and is home to the most celebrated ship in American history, berthed here in the **Charlestown Navy Yard**, her home port for most of her life. The world's oldest commissioned warship, **USS Constitution**, nicknamed "Old Ironsides," was launched in 1797 to protect American merchant ships from deprivations by Algerian pirates, and by the British and French navies. If you would like to

learn more about this famous vessel, a visit to the **USS Constitution Museum** is in order.

A Fletcher class destroyer, **USS Cassin Young** recalls the tremendous activity in the Navy Yard during World War II. Although Cassin Young was built in San Pedro, California, 14 other ships just like her were produced here in Charleston in 1943-44. In size, crew staffing, and purpose, Cassin Young is very much a 20th-century counterpart of Constitution.

The most visited tourist destination in Boston is **Quincy Market**. A collection of more than 50 shops, plus many restaurants, food carts and local eateries, you'll find anything and everything here. Street performers will dazzle you with their talent, and you can even see a bar that is the exact replica of the one from the TV show "Cheers."

Nearby communities are also famous in American history. **Lexington** was the site of the first battle of the Revolutionary War. The fight between the British and the Minutemen, warned of their advance by Paul Revere's famous ride, took place on 17 April 1775.

The British went on to neighboring **Concord**, hoping to capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock as well as the ammunition the Minutemen had hidden, but their plans were altered by the pesky Minutemen who attacked from behind bushes and fences. The British high-tailed it back to Boston and the Revolution had begun! In Concord you can still see the hole left by a musket ball at Bullet Hole House. Also in Concord is the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, now a museum, and the remains of the cabin of Henry David Thoreau at nearby Walden Pond. Both Thoreau and Emerson are buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery as well as Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Alcott family.

Now that you have a background of the activities and attractions in the Boston area, we hope you will join your former shipmate buddies, for the USS Yancey reunion.

## USS YANCEY 2010 SURVEY

In order to provide the kind of reunion you want, not what we "think" you'd like, please take a few minutes to look over, complete and return this survey to ML&RS, Inc. right away. The reunion agenda will be created from the responses and the chairman's input. Let your voice be heard. **Mail surveys by November 30, 2009 to:**

**ML&RS, INC**  
**P O Drawer 11399**  
**Hickory, NC 28603-6402**

**Or Fax to: 828-256-6559**

**Or on line at: [www.mlrsinc.com/yancey](http://www.mlrsinc.com/yancey)**

### Reunion format:

Do you prefer breakfast all three mornings as a group? \_\_\_\_\_  
or just a farewell breakfast on Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want entertainment after the Saturday night banquet? \_\_\_\_\_yes  
\_\_\_\_\_no

**Activities:** *Please indicate which activities you would like to see on your reunion agenda.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **USS Salem in Quincy, MA**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Boston's Freedom Trail**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Boston National Historic Park** (Including Charlestown Navy Yard, USS Constitution & USS Cassin Young)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Quincy Market**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Lexington, MA**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Concord, MA**

REGISTRATION PACKETS WILL BE MAILED OUT APPROXIMATELY 90 DAYS PRIOR TO THE REUNION.