



NAVY NUCLEAR WEAPONS ASSOCIATION

Keepers of the Dragon

WINTER ISSUE

JANUARY 1996

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FROM THE PRESIDENT: *Happy New Year to you and yours!!!!*

Shipmates; I am honored to have been selected as the head of such a great organization. I am sure that with your backing will continue to make an effort to reach out to our missing shipmates and encourage them to join the Navy Nuclear Weapons Association. I challenge each one of you to contact a missing shipmate not only to join this organization but also to attend the 1996 reunion in San Diego. Isabel and I had a heck of a good time in Oklahoma City. We had a great turn out of members. My special thanks to the McAlester Group. You all did exactly what you did when on active duty. **"A BANG UP JOB"** !! Charlie and Margaret, we all missed you dearly. Hope to see both of you in San Diego; 3 thru 7 October 1996. To all our membership, Joe Bland has already made arrangements for the Regency Plaza Hotel, Hotel Circle South, San Diego Ca.. It is one of the top hotels in the area. More on the reunion to follow. Again, it is my pleasure to serve this esteem membership for the next two years as your president. My address and phone number are at the top of this newsletter. If you have questions; information or just want to spin a sea story, give me a call.

From the Secretary: *First: I wish one and all a very Happy New Year. Second: I apologize for the lateness of this news letter.*

Have you really realized just how far the government has drawn down in the nuclear deterrent. In 1984 there were approximately 115,000 military and civil service that actively participated in the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP). Today I received a PRP newsletter from CNO staff that shows that in 1992 there were 10,195 Navy and DoN Civilians in the PRP. In 1993 that figure slipped to 6,079 and in 1994 that figure stands at 4,210. I don't know about you, but R.O. King and I are just about the last navy PRP left. I guess that we really know how to milk a job huh?? Worse, R.O. and I sure hope we can keep the cork in the bottle to ensure the genie doesn't come riding out on the dragon.

If you did not have the opportunity to attend the 11th NNWA reunion last October, you did yourself an injustice. The McAlester group (Lavon Dyer; Sue and Ike Eisenhower, Roy (the Oz) Osborne; Charlie and Margaret Berger; Russ Rhine and the others behind the screens) put on one HECK of a reunion. The association formally thanks the McAlester group for their professional management. (The booze was pretty good too!) Next year, please plan in advance to attend the 12th reunion. Joe Bland and associates are hosting this one in none other than San Diego, California. Even my bride is looking forward to this reunion. I want to take her to Tijuana, but she wants to visit the zoo. I've tried to explain to her that Tijuana is the zoo! As you have read in the minutes of the 11th reunion, Joe is planning the event at the Regency Plaza in Hotel Circle. This location is extremely handy to all of the attractions and shopping in the San Diego area. Joe will let us know the plans well in advance so we can publish the information to the association, but plan ahead as it will probably be the 3rd through the 7th of October.

Dee Rochester is hosting the 13th reunion. This reunion will celebrate the **50th Anniversary** of the founding of the Navy Nuclear Weapons Program. Hard to believe that we are that old isn't it. The 50th reunion will be at the old home headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico. For those who did not attend the last reunion in Albuquerque in 1992, the town has grown in magic proportions and is still the best sailor liberty port in the continental United States. Again we ask you to plan ahead. The reunion dates for 1997 are 15-16-17 October. Dee will provide information early for you to plan to.

The association is soon sending out 3x5 post cards to all members of the association who are in arrears. As we are continually getting smaller as a group, I would hate to see us get even smaller because we have to remove members for not paying the small amount of dues we charge to be a member of the elite group of master technicians. Remember that it is not what you pay to join this elite group; but rather the price that you have **ALREADY PAID IN SACRIFICES OVER THE YEARS** to become eligible that really counts. Pay attention when you receive your card and send the dues into Lou Catron so you may remain on our mailing list. **ALSO** if your address or telephone number has change, please let Lou and Pat know so that they may change it on our master membership listing.

I've just received the latest copy of "Shift Colors", the navy retired bulletin. If you need to contact the retired pay desk; the address is: Defense Finance & Accounting Service Directorate for Retired Pay (Code RO) PO Box 99191 Cleveland, OH 44199-1126 Their phone number is: 1-800-321-1080. Any other contact you may desire on retired matters other than pay, call 1-800-535-2699.

Again our historian Don Micco provided massive amounts of materials and nuclear weapons history at the reunion. Don could not make the reunion himself, but ensured our history was present by mailing and shipping everything to the reunion committee. Don wanted use to remind all of our members that he is interested in receiving any and all information that our membership has stuck away some where. Old photos; plaques, newspaper articles, or any other item that you think has some historical significance to our association being. Contact Don at (218) 466-7804.

As the minutes stated, Bob Bays has undertaken the task of developing a complete article of history of the Navy Nuclear Weapons program. He is going to expound on the article of Henry Smith and hopefully we'll have a complete history published in the national service magazines. If you have any information, comical quips, or anything else that you think may add credit to this article, please contact Bob at (606) 253-9688.

If any of the association membership has any article or information they would like published in the newsletter, please feel free to submit them to me and we will consider publishing them. Remember to keep the article as short as possible as we do not have a lot of room. Also the article should relate either with our line of business or information that would be interesting to our general membership.

Thought of the Day: *There are two types of people who never amount to much. Those who can't do what they're told; and those who can do nothing else.*

Points to Ponder: We have not succeeded in answering all of your questions. In fact we have not completely answered any of them. The answers we have however, do serve to raise a whole new set of questions about problems we had not thought of previously. In some ways we are as confused as you are, but we believe our confusion is on a much higher plan and about much more important matters. Sincerely; The Management

Sea Story Time: A young ensign aboard a U.S. Navy destroyer was on his first overseas cruise. His ship was about to return to the states when he was finally given an opportunity to show how quickly he could get the destroyer underway. He jumped at the chance and soon began barking out orders, sending the crew out into every direction. He set a new record and as the ship steamed out of the harbor, he was not surprised when the seaman brought him a message from the captain. "Congratulations on setting the new underway record. You displayed exceptional ability in taking command. Your exercise was efficient, by the book and commendable in every way. In your eagerness to perform well, you only overlooked one basic rule. Before getting underway, make sure the captain is onboard!!

Seriously: We tried very hard to ensure that your first newsletter of the year was published and mailed soon after the Oklahoma reunion. The *November Issue* has now turned into the *January 1996 Issue*. The reason for this is quite simple. We tried to become state of the art and join the 22nd century. That is the good news; the bad news is that even with all this new computerized equipment and bulk mailing capability, we are still a product of our own time. What does that mean; you ask. Well a 100 megahz computer may have the capability to run fast, but it is only as fast as the fingers that are on the keyboard. Also to try an ensure that we are providing you with the latest information, we still rely on telephone communications. Unfortunately we are never at home on the same schedules between Florida and California. Even though it is only a three hour difference, as old as we are, that translates into a week or two at the best. So our (or my) apologizes for the lateness, but are looking forward to taking your criticism personally at the San Diego reunion,.

Fair Winds and Following Seas; Shipmates. Give us a call (anyone on the board) if you have questions or in some cases; the answers.... Thomas H. Best Sr. Secretary; Navy Nuclear Weapons Association (904) 277-2476