

# YANCEY MEMORIES

Volume 13, Issue 1

April 2009

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS YANCEY AKA-93



### Special Points of Interest

- We asked for your input about the most surprising thing you learned in the Navy. The responses make up our cover story.
- Only one new name for Welcome Mat on page two. If you know of any former USS Yancey sailors who haven't heard about the reunions, please send his name to ML&RS, Inc.
- Ken Groom and Lyle Nelson relate a tale about "The First Food Bank." See page two.
- Your Coordinator's Message is on page three.
- You'll find the facts behind the origin of the 21-gun salute on page four.
- Some humor about being old is on page four.

## THE MOST SURPRISING THING I LEARNED IN THE NAVY

*Editor's Note: The following e-mail was sent asking for input for this newsletter: "Please send a story about the most surprising thing you learned in the Navy. Many of you were a small town or farm boy when you went in, so there must have been some real surprises when you were exposed to the world. Maybe it was another culture, an unfamiliar language (accents, phrases, foreign languages, etc.) or listening to how other shipmates were used to living back home. Maybe you learned something about yourself and your abilities that you never thought you could do." Here are your responses:*

**John Mielke:**

I'll try to make this

short and to the point, since the experience I had was short, but very memorable. I reported aboard the Yancey in Japan. A new Ensign out of OCS in Newport, RI. A few days after I was on board the Yancey set sail back to its home base in Oakland.

I was the new green Gunnery Officer and was invited by some of the gunner's mates to a poker party some place in the forward section of the ship. I thought this might be a good way to meet my men and form some camaraderie. This experience was the first surprise I had in the Navy, but by no means the last, and I miss them all. They took a very short time to clean me out of the money I intended to use. They cleaned my clock faster than they normally

got ready for liberty. It was a GREAT lesson. From that day in 1953 I never played another game of poker for money. Bless those Gunners Mates.

**Gene Hill:**

As a Minnesota boy I assumed that the same terms for food items were used everywhere. In Minnesota we called a Coke or a Pepsi "pop" and a hamburger with lettuce and tomatoes on it was called a "California burger." So when I got some fast food in Norfolk, VA, I ordered a California burger. The waitress looked at me like I was from the moon and told me in no uncertain terms, "Yo' ain't in California no mo', Honey!!" It didn't take me long to learn to

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

respect and use the local terminology, which at the time was a DE-LUXE burger with a SODA.

### James Young:

The first experience was a 3 day train ride from South Texas and on out to boot camp in San Diego. The personnel on the train treated us right royally until we got to L.A. On the train from there to San Diego, we had our first encounter with Shore Patrol that gave us a little bit of Navy training.

The time in boot camp went by quickly due to the short time we were there...they had cut training time down from 16 weeks to 9 weeks. We received our wooden rifles (our "piece") that we lived with the full 9 weeks. They only weighed 2 lbs. and we were disappointed in not having M-1s like the other company had until our CO Chief Scott informed us that 12 lbs. would be a lot heavier on our shoulders during training. We carried the wooden rifles at our graduation from the camp. My next move was on an APD for one week from San Diego to Treasure Island to wait for the Yancey.

As I am sitting there drinking a cup of coffee in the Hill Country of South Texas looking out the window with turkey and deer eating in the yard, it seems like only yesterday that we went under the Golden Gate on our first trip to Japan and off the coast of Korea with the greasy pork chops for supper (a greasy meal the first night at sea is customary). There was some sea sickness, but we got away from the ground swells by the next day. After 16 days at sea, we tied up at the Army port of Sasebo, Japan, to unload our beer and Dixie cups. At that time I was in the 1st section of the First Division and my cleaning station was the foscsle. Due to having an extra 125 personnel on the ship, the new recruits could not get haircuts. The personnel who were already on the ship came first. I had been a farm boy and sheared manes and tails on roping horses. On my first liberty,

I purchased barber supplies and opened for "business" at night in the passage way outside of the electric shop, with a G.I. can as a chair. One night the Supply Officer, Mr. Baker, observed me, and shortly after that I was transferred to his Division as Ship's Serviceman. My later experiences as the ship's barber will come in a future story.



## WELCOME MAT

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.

**Jeffrey Mundsén**  
(1967-68) RD3 OI Div  
7 Oceanview Ave  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
650-560-9968  
Amundsén@msn.com



## TAPS

The Yancey Memories was notified of the following shipmates' deaths. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families and friends 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.

**W. Luke Ivey**  
(1944-46) Cox Landing Craft  
Died February 10, 2009

**Rodney Gott**  
(1950-51) RMN1 Comm.  
Died December 21, 2008

**Fray Foster**  
(1951-54) Commissaryman 2nd/c  
Date of death not reported

## THE FIRST FOOD BANK

**By Ken Groom and Lyle Nelson:**

As usual, the Yancey was tied to buoy 22 in Sasebo, Japan—in the summer I believe. We were assigned as a fleet ship during the Korean War. It was our turn to stay in Sasebo, take cargo from other AKAs and reissue the cargo to other ships in the harbor. The stevedore labor was supplied by local Japanese. They came aboard with their bento boxes (lunch box) and Tabi (shoes with the big toe gloved separately—also known as a split toed sock).

On this particular day they were moving goods from one of the aft holds to a forward hole for transfer to another ship's boat. We were in the ship's office not doing much and looking forward to some entertainment. We noticed a line of steve-

dores moving past our ship's office and going forward. On further inspection, we saw a Storekeeper, clipboard in hand, checking the quantity of boxes being transferred. We quickly deduced that in order to get one of those boxes in our possession, all we had to do was to get a clipboard and pencil and do some arm waving. This was too easy. I will quote my shipmate friend, Lyle Nelson, on what happened next.

He says: "I remember it vividly in my mind's eye; holding the door open with one hand and the other motioning inside the office while saying, 'Boysan, boysan, here, in here,' and they obliged until the SK guys caught on."

We gave up the box without knowing what valuable contents we almost had.

## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

I hope everyone has a great summer, if it ever gets here. I look forward to seeing many of you in Mobile in October.

Thanks,  
George Clifton

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## NAVY LANGUAGE

The Navy has its personal language and is immensely jealous of it. No other service speaks in such traditional code. It is possible for a civilian to hold a 30 minute conversation with a sailor and not understand one sentence.

The primary rule of Navy code is never to call a ship a "boat." A boat is carried on a ship, Buster, and don't you forget it.

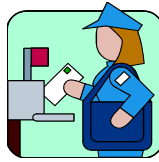
The universe may measure speed in miles per hour, but the Navy uses "knots." One knot is the speed it takes your vessel to travel 2,025 yards in an hour; it is a nautical mile instead of the 1,760 yard mile recognized by everyone else. The Navy scorns the normal clock; it goes by bells; one bell every half hour, accumulatively. One o'clock is two bells. It's not a rope, it's a line. That's not a wall, it's a bulkhead. Even if you are quartered in a barracks on dry land, it is still a bulkhead.

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### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 01/09	\$272.47
Funds received since 01/09	\$165.00
Funds available for 04/09	\$437.47
Funds expended for 04/09	\$125.50
Balance for 07/09	\$311.97

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 to the right.



## MAIL CALL

Karen:

I want to make you aware of the death of Rodney Gott RM1 on December 21, 2008 at Vista, California. I don't know the date Rodney went aboard the Yancey, but he left the ship approximately April of 1952. He was on board during the Korean War era.

I had maintained a pen pal relationship with him over the years as he mentored me when I received my orders to strike for radioman. I spent several months learning ship-board procedures before I was able to go to radio school at San Diego. I quickly learned the voice procedure and was able to stand watch while we were in port. He will be missed.

Ray Wilson

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Karen,

I started a facebook page for the USS Yancey AKA-93 which has some ship photos and a little history on it for anyone interested. (*Go to Facebook and search USS Yancey.*)

Gene Hill

## USS YANCEY REUNION

# OCT. 1-4, 2009

## MOBILE, AL

ASHBURY HOTEL

A NEWSLETTER EXCLUSIVELY FOR  
FORMER USS YANCEY SAILORS

Published by:  
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## STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The YANCEY MEMORIES is the official publication of the USS YANCEY AKA-93 Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the YANCEY. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of article submitted for publication. It would be a monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the submitter to re-search each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space and grammar limitations.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

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828-256-6008 (voice)  
828-256-6559 (Fax)  
Dina@mlrsinc.com  
Karen@mlrsinc.com  
[www.mlrsinc.com/yancey](http://www.mlrsinc.com/yancey)

"Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To"

## THE ORIGIN OF THE 21-GUN SALUTE

The use of gun salutes for military occasions is traced to early warriors who demonstrated their peaceful intentions by placing their weapons in a position that rendered them ineffective. Apparently this custom was universal, with the specific act varying with time and place, depending on the weapons being used. A North African tribe, for example, trailed the points of their spears on the ground to indicate that they did not mean to be hostile.

The tradition of rendering a salute by cannon originated in the 14th century as firearm cannons came into use. Since these early devices contained only one projectile, discharging them once rendered them ineffective. Originally warships fired seven-gun salutes—the number seven probably selected because of its astrological and Biblical significance. Seven planets had been identified and the phases of the moon changed every seven days. The Bible states that God rested on the seventh day after Creation, that every seventh year was sabbatical and that the seven times seventh year ushered in the Jubilee year.

Land batteries, having a greater supply of gunpowder, were able to fire three guns for every shot fired afloat, hence the salute by shore batteries was 21 guns. The multiple of three probably was chosen because of the mystical significance of the number three in many ancient civilizations. Early gunpowder, composed mainly of sodium nitrate, spoiled easily at sea, but could be kept cooler and drier in land magazines. When potassium nitrate improved the quality of gunpowder, ships at sea adopted the salute of 21 guns.

The 21-gun salute became the highest honor a nation rendered. Varying customs among the maritime powers led to confusion in saluting and return of salutes. Great Britain, the world's preeminent seapower in the 18th and 19th centuries, compelled weaker nations to salute first and for a time monarchies received more guns than did republics. Even-

tually, by agreement, the international salute was established at 21 guns, although the United States did not agree on this procedure until August 1875.

The gun salute system of the United States has changed considerably over the years. In 1810, the "national salute" was defined by the War Department as equal to the number of states in the Union—at that time 17. This salute was fired by all U.S. military installations at 1:00 pm (later at noon) on Independence Day. The President also received a salute equal to the number of states whenever he visited a military installation.

In 1842, the Presidential salute was formally established at 21 guns. In 1890, regulations designated the "national salute" as 21 guns and redesignated the traditional Independence Day salute, the "Salute to the Union," equal to the number of states. Fifty guns are also fired on all military installations equipped to do so at the close of the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect.

Today the national salute of 21 guns is fired in honor of a national flag, the sovereign or chief of state of a foreign nation, a member of a reigning royal family, and the President, ex-President and President-elect of the United States. It is also fired at noon of the day of a funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect.

Gun salutes are also rendered to other military and civilian leaders of this and other nations. The number of guns is based on their protocol rank. These salutes are always in odd numbers.

*Source: Headquarters, Military District of Washington, FACT SHEET: GUN SALUTE, 1969.*

## YES, I'M AN OLD SAILOR!

- I'm the life of the party..even if it lasts until 8 p.m.
- I'm very good at opening child-proof caps with a hammer.
- I'm usually interested in going home before I get to where I am going.
- I'm awake many hours before my body allows me to get up.
- I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear what you're saying.
- I'm very good at telling sea stories; over and over and over and over...
- I'm so cared for—long term care, eye care, private care, dental care.
- I'm not grouchy, I just don't like traffic, waiting, crowds, lawyers, loud music, unruly kids, Toyota Commercials, Tom Brokaw, Dan Rather, barking dogs, politicians and a few other things I can't remember.
- I'm sure everything I can't find is in a secure place.
- I'm wondering, if you're only as old as you feel. how could I be alive at 150?
- I'm a walking storeroom of facts...I've just lost the key to the storeroom door.
- Yes, I am an OLD SAILOR and I think I am having the time of my life!

## TRADITIONS OF THE NAVY

### Shanghaied

Just in case you didn't know it, the term 'Shanghaied' originated in the Chinese port of Shanghai. Here, masters of American tea-clippers delayed for want of crews, would pay the Chinese owners of dives where drunken sailors were carousing, to slip drugs into the seamen's drinking glasses and hustle the unconscious sailors aboard the waiting ships.