

# USS Turner Joy (DD-951) Newsletter

## *The 21MC*

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**Dianne Morgan, Editor**

September 15, 2015



## **Shipmate Comments**

### **John H. Rohrer, ETSN, 59-61, Menlo Park, CA**

I was so sorry to hear that my old buddy Woody Lovill passed. Oh, the days, when we were young sailors on the best Destroyer in the Pacific Fleet.

### **Ed Briggs, CDR, 66-68, Escondido, CA**

Turner Joy was in CUA VIET River channel Dec. 24, 1969. --Navy and Coast Guard ships associated with Service in Vietnam and Exposure to Herbicide Agents, if you are interested for VA claims.

### **George Ryan, IC2, 68-72, Fullerton, CA**

Recently, I lost my best friend and soul mate--my wife, Jan. Hold on to your loved ones hard and long, because life is truly too short. Tell them every chance that you get how much you love them. God bless all of you and yours, George.

### **Richard E. Asche, LT(SC), 63-64, Port Orchard, WA**

Perhaps you have noticed the new photo in our letterhead in this and the last issue of the newsletter. The photo is of "our lady" depicted as that "pot of gold at the end of the rainbow", was taken by Jerry McDonald, a current BHSA Board of Directors member and Bremerton City Councilman who just happens to live directly above our ship in the Condos on Washington Avenue. His good wife, Mary, happened to look out the windows and ordered Jerry to quickly get his camera. Jerry being a good Air Force veteran, quickly obeyed. As anyone knows who has tried to capture a rainbow photo, it's here one second and a second later it is gone! Our thanks to Jerry and his wife Mary for this keepsake!

**Kenneth Smith, MM2, 69-71, San Bernadino, CA**

I felt great sadness upon hearing of the passing of Roger Sudduth. He was the Captain of the USS Turner Joy when I reported aboard in 1969. Many things made this my favorite duty station. There was an aura that only good leadership can create. Although my duty assignment did not allow personal contact with the Captain, his leadership and kindness was shown. The thing that most impressed me was his sense of timing. We always left port and returned to port in the planned time schedule. This meant a lot to us because we knew that if we went out and did our job we would be back in time to see our families.

I had the good fortune of seeing him at our 2004 Reunion and we had a good discussion and he remembered things as if they were just recent. He told me things about some of those incidents that I was not aware of.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the Sudduth family. Very respectfully, Kenneth D. Smith

**Doug Church, OS2, 72-76, Gig Harbor, WA**

I am presently the Director of Volunteers for USS Turner Joy. My email address is: [scrapper613@gmail.com](mailto:scrapper613@gmail.com). Anyone wishing to come on-board and assist in giving ship tours (sea stories are allowed) can contact me or anyone in the Gift Shop.

**Richard E. Asche, LT(SC), 63-64, Port Orchard, WA**

Sadly, I must report that my beloved wife of 55 years, Helen, passed away on August 3, 2015 of pneumonia in Marysville, CA. She helped organize and attended many of our reunions since our first reunion in 1990 and I miss her terribly. Together we enjoyed many wonderful experiences with our shipmates, including the Lovills', Hales' and many others. I shall never forget those friendships and good times together. Life goes on however, and she would want it that way. Just thought you should know....Dick

## **TAPS**

**Marshall L. Hakala, FTG3, 63-65, Peoria, IL**

My father, Marshall Louis Hakala was receiving the USS Turner Joy Newsletter. Unfortunately, he passed away on April 30, 2015. I know he had strong memories and relationships from his time in the Navy. He will be missed. Thank you. Sincerely, Denise Hakala.

**Michael Spencer, YN1, 73-74**

Michael Spencer's mother-in-law advises that Michael passed away early in 2015. His family kindly donated a number of photo albums with photos of the '74 WestPac Cruise. The photos are retained on board TJ and are available for viewing. Please contact TJ Curator on board TJ.

**Roger M. Suddeth, CDR, 68-70, San Diego, CA**

Thank you so much for forwarding to us the heartwarming letter from my father's shipmate, MM2 Kenneth Smith. My brother and I were so touched to receive such a gift from our father's Navy career, which he loved so much. I can say without hesitation that our Dad's service on Turner Joy was the highlight of his career. Our Dad died in his sleep on October 17, 2014 due to complications from Alzheimer's and a previous bout of pneumonia. Thank you for keeping Turner Joy and her history alive for so many... Sincerely, Lesley Sudduth Willard

## **FIRST AND SECOND TURNER JOY REUNIONS-1990 & 1992**

I have just previewed some three hours of long-lost video tapes of our first reunions in Bremerton and although fascinating, I have to say that we sure looked a lot older in 1990 and 1992 than we do now! I am having them reproduced on DVD's and will make them available to shipmates if interested for a minimal charge of \$15.00 each to defray the costs of production. All proceeds will of course, be placed back into our reunion bank account.

The first reunion you will recall, the TJ was still in PSNS custody and covered in seagull and pigeon droppings when we toured the ship. The next reunion in 1992 we toured the ship while berthed at its present location in downtown Bremerton. The tapes brought back many memories of the many good experiences I enjoyed while a member of our fine crew. And, they reintroduced me to my shipmates, many of whom are now gone.

I enjoyed listening to our first banquet speech by Captain Andy Kerr who was introduced by Captain Bob Barnhart. Captain Andy Kerr as you may recall was the 7th Fleet Investigating officer who investigated the events surrounding the Tonkin Gulf Incident. Honored guests included family members of Admiral C. Turner Joy and Captain Wentworth, our first CO. As usual, Bob McClinton was our favored MC at both reunions. I enjoyed re-hearing some of your jokes, Admiral Bob! And VADM Ed Briggs and Nan attended our second reunion in 1992 and have attended all reunions since. Finally, Woody Lovill, who attended all reunions except the 2014 reunion is shown in the videos.

I believe that many shipmates would like to have these DVD's for their historical value and to see what they looked like back in the "Olden Days". If you are interested in receiving either or both DVD's please send your check for \$15.00 each to Turner Joy Reunion Group, 2599 E. Alaska Ave., Port Orchard, WA 98366. You won't be disappointed!

### **BHSA WEBSITE,**

BHSA now has a new website and publishes a newsletter which is contained at the link below. Check it out and click on the link for the six year old boy touring Turner Joy and guided by our new Executive Director, Jack James. It is like another tour of our ship without being there! This website complements our own shipmate website at [www.ussturnerjoy.com](http://www.ussturnerjoy.com). The BHSA site can be found at: <http://www.ussturnerjoy.org/newsletter/>.

### **DON'T MISS IT! PLAN NOW!**

Summer vacations are winding down and it is time to start thinking about the upcoming 2016 USS Turner Joy Reunion. Let's match or surpass the spectacular attendance at the 2014 Reunion which was one of the best attended reunions ever with approximately 200 shipmates, wives and family members in attendance.

In 2016 the Turner Joy Reunion returns to the east coast and will be held in Norfolk, VA on September 22-25, 2016. Don't miss it! Experience reuniting with old shipmates and re-living together the stories of the Turner Joy. Mark the September 22-25, 2016 dates on your calendar

and make the necessary arrangements to attend. Remember, it is the friendships and connecting with old shipmates and new ones that bring people together at the reunions. You hear it over and over again from shipmates, “Why did I wait so long to come to a Turner Joy reunion? I am not going to miss the next one!”

Reunion events planned include tour of Norfolk Naval Station, Norfolk Harbor, Nauticus National Maritime Center – including USS Wisconsin, Memorial Service and Dinner Banquet.

Future 21MC Newsletters will have more details as we get closer to September 2016.

Also, you may want to consider vacationing before or after the reunion in the Virginia area taking in some historic places such as:

Jamestowne(Williamsburg),<http://www.visitwilliamsburg.com/>

Your Turner Joy Advisory Committee is committed to insuring a successful reunion.

The current advisory committee:

Mike Stockreiter, Chairman

Dick Asche

Rick Haight, Coordinator- Norfolk, September 2016 Reunion

Tod Hale

Mike Morgan & Dianne Morgan ( 21 MC Editor)

Dale Sheveland

Richard AAmoDt

Tony Rosenbaun

Charley Shultheis

**By: Mike Stockreiter, LTJG, 64-66, Glenview, IL – Reunion Advisory Committee  
Chairman**

### **Reflections on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Gun Mount Explosion in USS TURNER JOY (DD-951) off the Coast of South Vietnam on 25 October 1965**

It was an exceptionally hard day for all who were serving in TURNER JOY on 25 October 1965, and for the survivors of the men who were lost or injured there. It was a tragic ordeal for those who shared the experience or were personally affected by it and we all have, for fifty years now, mourned the lost lives and maimed bodies of six fine men. But, as we reflect on that sad occasion, it is easy to become so absorbed in our remembrance as to miss a fundamental lesson in the matter and perhaps its most lasting legacy. In pursuit of that thought, it is useful to consider the burdens of personal responsibility in a free and democratic society, the awful price they sometimes command, and the role they played on that day.

The six men who lost their lives or were gravely injured in the explosion were superb Americans. Volunteers all, every one of them was a dedicated, patriotic professional, and a fine example of manhood. The ship’s senior Gunner’s Mate, the Captain of Mount 53, and another Gunner were trying to safely extract from the vitals of their beloved gun a “hang-fire”- an uncooperative, maverick round that would not detonate on command - and planning to hand it to yet another Gunner who was standing on the main deck at the passing scuttle in the rear of the mount to receive and discard it overboard. The possibility of spontaneous detonation during the process was known to all, yet they went forward – it had to be done. The Weapons Officer and his brand-new Gunnery Assistant were in the mount, sharing the danger with their men, as

effective military leaders always do.

Tragically, something went awry and the round detonated during the removal process. Two men were instantly killed inside the mount. Two others were blown out of the mount and onto the deck with grievous injuries. Two more were blown overboard and into the dark, snake-infested water. Only one of the latter was saved, the other was lost from sight in the darkness and perished. Badly-injured, the one survivor was brought back aboard through the courageous performance of the ship's swimmer, who went overboard immediately, in his working uniform and without any life-saving attachments, in order to rescue his endangered shipmate.

As we try to mentally process the immensity, and the finality, of these tragic results, it is important to see that these magnificent Americans were not only casualties of the explosion, they were also casualties of their own noble character. Driven by a special sense of responsibility, they were responding to a call of duty that denied them any choice but to go tackle the dangerous job required by the circumstances, regardless of the potential consequences to them personally. That three of them gave their last full measure of devotion in the process should not be allowed to be forgotten. That three others suffered grave injuries so willingly for the same purpose likewise should not be allowed to languish in the wake of time's inevitable passing. That a brave young petty officer risked his life to rescue a badly-injured shipmate from the dark, snake-infested water should be enshrined in Navy lore. But, while we few shipmates recall their sacrifices and mourn their loss, we sadly note that no stone monument commemorates their patriotism, and few medals acknowledging their courage have adorned their chests or the walls of their survivors. And, while a small bronze plaque resting on the now-retired TURNER JOY lists the three who lost their lives on the occasion, the contributions of the other four and the significance of the occasion are largely lost in the mists of time. Consequently, few Americans beyond the small and diminishing numbers of their shipmates and survivors will ever know what they offered up for our sake. Yet, so it is with those who go down to the Sea in ships. The Ocean is a terrible and demanding Mistress; a dangerously powerful, unpredictable, and seductive but unruly and unforgiving vixen. She offers no pity or respite to the unprepared or unlucky sailor. Moreover, a warship is an exceedingly dangerous place, with its vast quantities of volatile fuels, explosives, intricate and heavy machinery, entangling rigging, and ever-present shock hazards. And its systems generally obey "Murphy's Law", often failing at the worst possible moment and with the most disastrous possible consequences. Coupling a warship with such an unsympathetic wench as the wanton and rapacious Sea, and adding to the mix both the aforementioned "Murphy's Law" and an occasional enemy determined to wreak harm on it and its crew, is to put it often "In Harm's Way", a condition that all naval personnel accept as their fate in this life, and live with every day.

The lesson in this is that our society, in spite of not routinely deserving it, has always been blessed with warriors who were willing to serve their country in this kind of exceptionally demanding environment and to assume the personal responsibility to do whatever the task requires, regardless of the potential consequences to themselves. We must be eternally thankful for that and always encourage it in our youth, because it is what, for many generations - even down to today - has kept the "wolf away from the door" of our existence as a society and as a nation. Without it, our way of life will be irrevocably lost, along with a singular opportunity to shine the beacon of hope upon all mankind as we lead them down the winding, slippery, rutted, and uncharted path towards the ever-elusive goal of universal peace and individual freedom amongst our notoriously cantankerous and often fratricidal species.

Why that round would not fire normally, thereby setting into motion the tragic chain of events

that we now reflect upon, no one will ever know. But because seven good men followed a long line of American heroes in doing their hard duty on that day, the United State of America continues to shine that beacon of hope upon all mankind on this day, a half-century later. Their sacrifices on that day wrote a new chapter in the book of American Patriotism, and that is the enduring legacy of that tragic occasion.

May God continue to bless America with brave and dedicated souls who, like these seven, routinely accept and carry out their voluntary, and often dangerous, responsibility to keep it free and democratic, seeking neither monuments, plaques, nor medals, to commemorate their irreplaceable contributions to our society.

Rest in Peace Shipmates; your monument is found in the exceptional example of a sailor's duty faithfully performed that you bequeathed your fellow Americans on 25 October 1965.

We who were there know what you gave.

**O.J. Hickox, Jr. Chief Engineer 1965-1967**

### **WHAT YOU GATHER, Author Unknown**

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes... I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

'Hello Barry, how are you today?'

'H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas. They sure look good'

'They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?'

'Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time.'

'Good. Anything I can help you with?'

'No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas.'

'Would you like to take some home?' asked Mr. Miller.

'No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with.'

'Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?'

'All I got's my prize marble here.'

'Is that right? Let me see it', said Miller.

'Here Tis She's a dandy'

'I can see that. Hmm mmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?' the store owner asked.

'Not zackley but almost.'

'Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble'. Mr. Miller told the boy.

'Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller.'

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, 'There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever.

When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store.'

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts...all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one; each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket. 'Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size....they came to pay their debt.'

'We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world,' she confided, 'but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho ...' With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

**The Moral:**

We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath.

Today I wish you a day of ordinary miracles ~ A fresh pot of coffee you didn't make yourself...

An unexpected phone call from an old friend.... Green stoplights on your way to work....

The fastest line at the grocery store...A good sing-along song on the radio..

Your keys found right where you left them.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU GATHER, BUT WHAT YOU SCATTER THAT TELLS WHAT KIND OF LIFE YOU HAVE LIVED!

**FUNNIES**

Daughter: "Daddy, I am coming home to get married. Take out your checkbook. I'm in love with a boy who is far away from me. I am in California and he lives in New York. We met on a dating website, became friends on Facebook, had long chats on Whatsapp, he proposed to me on Skype and now we've had two months of relationship through Viper. Dad, I need your blessings, good wishes, and a really big wedding."

Father: "Wow! Really!! Then you should get married on Twitter, have fun on Tango, buy your kids on Amazon and pay through PayPal. And if, or, when you get fed up with your husband.... sell him on Ebay."

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## **2 0 15- 2 0 16    T U R N E R J O Y M E M B E R S H I P**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELE (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ TELE. (WORK) \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ # OF CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

DATES SERVED ON BOARD \_\_\_\_\_ RANK/RATING ON TJ \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY \_\_\_\_\_ RETIRED? \_\_\_\_\_ RETIRED RANK/RATING \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT OCCUPATION/EMPLOYER \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN NEWSLETTER? (YES/NO) \_\_\_\_\_

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- **Donations to the Turner Joy Maintenance/Dry Dock Fund should be mailed to the address below, made payable to BHSA and shown in the “For” line: TJ Sailors. During these economic times, your donation to this fund is highly encouraged.**
- Annual dues are \$20.00 per year (Jan-Dec.’15). Membership dues (Jan-Dec.) may be paid in advance at the rate of \$20.00 per year. Your dues subsidize all reunion activities. Additional amounts paid (in \$20.00 increments) will be credited to future year membership dues. Thus, a \$100.00 payment for instance, will pay your annual dues through 2019. The year that your dues are “paid to” is indicated next to your name on the mailing label of this newsletter. No date next to your name indicates that your dues have not been paid since 1998. It is not necessary to make up for missed dues if you are delinquent. If your dues are paid up and if you so desire, please return this form for change of address or for your comments for future newsletters.

Please send this application with your check payable to:

**USS TURNER JOY REUNION GROUP  
2599 EAST ALASKA AVE., PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366**