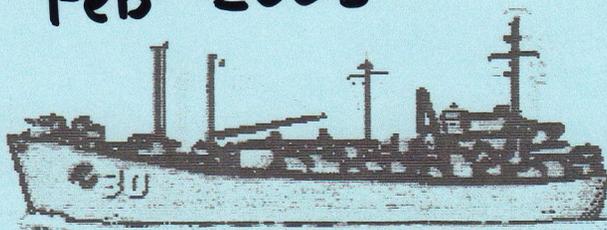


U.S.S. Askari Association

Feb 2003

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WWII

Korea

Vietnam



Purpose of the Association

This Association is made up of former Askari officers and crew members who want to share fond memories, keep in touch with one another, and have reunions from time to time.

Association Officers

President: Ed Toth (419-693-9567)
Vice Pres.: Al Wolfe (815-223-1823)
Secretary: Merrill Davis (812-331-1641)
Treasurer: John Roth (217-476-8095)

Get Ready for the 2003 Reunion

At our last reunion, we voted to continue to affiliate with the Mobile Riverine Force Association (MRFA). The time for the next reunion is fast approaching.

Reunion Location

The reunion will be held at the Drawbridge Villager – Premier Hotel Suites (I-75 at Buttermilk Pike), 2477 Royal Drive, Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky 41017. Transportation to and from the airport is free. When entering the baggage area at the Cincinnati Airport, you will see a phone set-up. Pick up the phone labeled “Coach to the Castle” and a van will pick you up shortly. The van leaves the Drawbridge to and from the airport every half hour.

Reunion Reservation Form

To register for the reunion, you need to fill out the information on the reservation form on the last page and send it to MRFA President Albert Moore at the address on the form. If you are a non-member, you can pay your dues at the reunion. Dues are \$10.00 for one year or \$27.50 for 3 years.

Hotel Reservations

We had a problem at the last reunion with our room location, but this year we will definitely be in the main hotel with our social gathering room number posted in the lobby. Be sure to call in your hotel reservation early and indicate you are with the MRFA to get the special reunion room discount.

Dates: August 27-31, 2003

Place: Drawbridge Villager
(I-75 at Buttermilk Pike)
2477 Royal Drive
Ft Mitchell, Kentucky 41017

Reservations: 800-354-9793

Room rates are good 3 days prior to the reunion and 3 days following the reunion. Rates are as follows:

Main Building: \$77 (up to 4 occupants)
Garrison Building: \$67 (up to 4 occupants)

Hospitality Room: There will be a hospitality room available on the main floor of the main building with snacks and beverages (soda, coffee, beer, etc.) provided through donations.

The hotel has 3 restaurants and 3 swimming pools (one indoor and two outdoor).

Questions?

For more reunion information, check the MRFA website at www.mrfa.org (reunion 03) or contact Larry Ethridge at 502-459-1981 or email him at lethridge@amy-law.com.

Let's share our stories/memories

At a recent officer's meeting, we thought it would be nice to have a newsletter in which members could share memories from their Askari experience. We would like members to send their war stories, shipboard memories, photos, etc. for inclusion in the newsletter. Email items to Merrill Davis at mfdavis33@insightbb.com or mail them to

Merrill Davis
3405 Ashwood Drive
Bloomington, IN 47401

Ed Toth remembers...

I had just finished up boot camp at Great Lakes in 1952 and was shipped out to San Diego to go aboard the U.S.S. Askari ARL-30. I had no idea what kind of ship it was or where it was going or what it did. At that time, the ship was out for some sea trials of some sort. We were told it would be back in a few days. So we were put up in some barracks, were fed good, went on a few small work details, and had liberty every night. There were about six of us at the time waiting for the ship, and we thought this is really great ----- a little work and liberty every night. What a life especially after boot camp. Well needless to say, this all came to an abrupt end about three days later.

We reported to the ship after our wonderful three days, to the biggest surprise of our lives. We were assigned some cots and told we would be sleeping on the tank deck till we got to Pearl Harbor. At that time, some people would be transferred to other ships, and then we would be assigned to a compartment and bunk. The rest of the day was spent being shown around the ship. I was assigned to the Engineering Division being a red striper" from boot camp. The next day at 0800, we reported to our division on our main deck. After quarters, myself and brothers Chick and Carl Scaletti were corralled by this 1st Class Engineman Vince Clifford. He informed us that we were going to learn all about the #1 Generating Space from the bottom up. As I climbed down the ladder, we could hear the screaming of the three Superior Diesel Generators.

As we stood there talking, Clifford, said, "Well boys, let's get to work!" He pulled a couple of deck

plates and said, "You are looking at the bilge boys. Now get down there and start swabbing them." With that he threw us a bunch of rags and said, "I will be checking on you boys from time to time. So don't try to sluff off."

That was my first day aboard the U.S.S. Askari ARL-30.

Merrill Davis remembers...

'Twas a dark, dank night in early 1953. We had been in Yokosuka Harbor for about four months. We had moved a couple of times in the inner harbor but had not put out to sea since we had arrived. The Executive Officer, M.C. Thompson, came up to me and asked if I was afraid of heights. When I said not to my knowledge, he told me we were going to have a *repel boarders* drill and I was to be the boarder!

I believe Mr. Thompson was a little edgy because we had been in harbor so long and had not had that many drills. He thought he needed to do something to check out the reaction of the crew to an emergency.

He gave me a dark hat cover and a blue CPO shirt and told me to go down the ladder at the small boat boom on the starboard side. He said when the deck sentry approached, I should draw attention to myself and we'll see what happens.

I went down the ladder, waited for the sound of the sentry walking. As he approached, I popped my head up and made some noise. He appeared to be startled and just stood there. I whispered loudly and told him to blow his whistle to get the attention of the quarterdeck. He did so, the alarm was sounded, and within a minute or so, about ten crew members came running with M-1s and took me into custody. They marched me to the quarterdeck where, much to my relief, it was made clear this was a drill. I believe we passed muster on the drill.

Did you know?

The Askari earned 4 Battle Stars in Korea and 12 Battle Stars and 2 Presidential Unit Citations in Vietnam. How many repair ships do you know that can boast that kind of record?

Brief Askari History

Built at Chicago Bridge and Iron Works, Seneca, IL
Launched 2 March 1945 as LST1181
Commissioned 15 March 1945
Lt. E. L. Haslup in command
Decommissioned 9 April 1945 for reoutfitting
Recommissioned as ARL-30 23 July 1945
Served briefly in the Pacific in WWII
Assisted in nuclear bomb tests in 1948
Served several tours in Korea
"Passage to Freedom" in Southeast Asia in 1954
Decommissioned there on 21 March 1956
Recommissioned on 13 August 1966 for Vietnam
LCDR John F. Campbell in command
Served in Vietnam Feb 1967-Aug 1971

Decommissioned 1 September 1971
Loaned to Indonesian Navy
Recommissioned as RI DJAJA WIDJAJA
Remained on the U.S. Navy list until February 1979
Sold to Indonesian Navy in February 1979

Fill in the Gaps

We've given a very brief history of the Askari and are counting on you to fill in the gaps. Come to the Askari reunion at the Drawbridge in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky Wednesday, August 27 through Sunday, August 31, 2003 and share your stories with others who served on the Askari. If you can't come for the full meeting, please come for as long as you can. We want to see everyone there.

2003 Reunion Registration Form

Name: _____

Unit: U.S.S. Askari (ARL-30)

Name(s) wife & family / guest(s) _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration Fee: Members cost is \$35.00 (including family and 1 guest) \$ _____

Saturday afternoon buffet: Total # _____ x \$10.00 each = \$ _____

Grand Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please send your check or money order (payable to MRFA) and this form as soon as possible to (MRFA REUNIONS, 106 Belleview Dr., Conover, NC 28613). Be sure to make your hotel reservation separately by calling 800-354-9793.