

# THE MAGOFFIN MESSENGER

The Newsletter of USS Magoffin (APA-199)

Veteran's Association

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## President's Message

Greetings Shipmates.

Hope that you have enjoyed the summer and are looking forward to fall. Doris & I had the good fortune of spending time in San Diego this summer with shipmates Terry Little and Russ Osborne who I served with in 1962 on the Magoffin. (see photo on page 7)

I want to thank all of you for your very generous donations to the Magoffin County High School Scholarship Fund at Morehead State University. Because of your efforts, the fund currently stands at \$21,052 toward our minimum goal of \$25,000. I have no doubt that our goal will be reached before we meet next year in Colorado Springs.

As you are aware the reunion following Colorado Springs will be held in the Eastern Time Zone. I am asking that crewmembers that reside on the East Coast begin considering hosting that reunion. We would hope to consider proposals at the next reunion.

Another thing to be thinking about is the election of some new Association Officers positions for the future. Our Secretary Tom Haglage will be retiring from his position at the next reunion and his position will need to be replaced. Tom has been an outstanding asset to the Board and his efforts both as our Secretary, and as our lead person in the establishment of the Morehead State Scholarship Fund are greatly appreciated by all the crew.

I close in the spirit of the season with "Go Navy, Beat Army!"

Mike Stein  
President

## An Editor's Prerogative

It isn't often that an old man on Medicare gets the opportunity to try and relive an important part of his youth but I was fortunate enough to have that happen to me this summer.

My niece, Alexandria Dodge, is an Intelligence specialist, 2nd Class and is stationed near Quantico, Virginia. Last spring she and others from her group were TDY'ed to the USS Peleliu (LHA-5) for a WestPac/Persian gulf tour.

Since joining the Navy, Alex and I have enjoyed a special relationship because we are the only two in the family that can speak "Navy" and our conversations don't require detailed explanations of what terms like "Bosun's locker" or "Monkey's fist" mean.

While deployed she found that she could invite family to join her aboard the Peleliu for an 8 day "Tiger" cruise and was kind enough to secure an invitation for me and for her father.

I had never heard of a Tiger cruise but soon discovered that they are fairly common aboard larger vessels returning from West-Pac. The invited guests board in Pearl Harbor and take the ship to San Diego.

I received a packet of forms from the ship, completed them and sent them back including a medical release and a statement acknowledging that I understood that there were dangers and that there was a lot of walking and stair climbing. Then I had to wait.

*Continued on page 2*



*The Magoffin Messenger is a quarterly publication for and by the members of the USS Magoffin Veterans Association. This newsletter as well as a wealth of other USS Magoffin information and history can be found at:  
[www.ussmagoffin.org](http://www.ussmagoffin.org)*

## Tiger Cruise continued

After 6 weeks I received my approval, made reservations to fly Hawaiian Airlines one-way to Honolulu and started packing.

When I arrived in Hawaii, I was met by Alex and her father David Dodge. The ship provided a bus to take us to the pier and that is when I learned for certain that today's Amphibious Navy isn't the Navy that I served in.

The Peleliu is an Amphibious Helicopter Assault ship and while her mission statement is the same as that of the Magoffin (Get the Marines and their supplies on the beach, pull back and support the operation) they sure do it in a different way. She is the flag ship for the group which includes an LPH, an LSD and various destroyers and frigates. The three amphibious ships together carry an entire Marine Battalion, their aircraft, equipment and enough supplies that once landed, the Marines can operate independently for 30 days.

The Peleliu has only 5 boats. A Captain's gig, an Admiral's barge, 2 LCU's and one LCAC. The LCU's are capable of carrying a number of loaded Humvee's and their Marines at one time. In fact, today's LCU's are big enough to have a galley and sleeping areas for their crew and are capable of spending 3 or 4 days at seas without support. The LCAC (Landing Craft - Air Cushioned) is an immense vessel that had two huge fans in the stern and can fly across the water, over the beach and down the highway, all without wheels.

The main mode of transport is the Helicopter. In order to land the troops, the Marine air-wing brought aboard 12 CH-46 Sea Knights, 9 CH-53 Sea Stallions and 4 UH-1N Huey's. To protect the troops, they brought 6 AV-8B Harrier attack planes and 4 AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopters. The combination of boats and choppers are used to put 900 Marines, their equipment, vehicles and support staff on the beach. The equipment includes howitzers, tanks and Humvee's in assorted configurations.

By the way, none of the Marine's gear is brought aboard by crane. Everything is driven aboard either off one of the boats, down a ramp from the flight deck or up a ramp from the pier.

I was issued a rack in the crew's quarters and found that today's sailor has a berth that has curtains, a light and a fan.

When you lift up the bottom of the bunk there is a locker for more of your gear. The head had stalls with doors and showers with curtains. In order to hear reveille you had to be outside the crews quarters, everyone depended on their own alarm clocks.

The troops had similar quarters and shared all of the services of the ship as though they were ship's company. I was amazed by a lack of "blue vs green" attitude among both the crew and the troops.

Chow was chow was chow but the tables were bolted to the floor and there were table clothes. The mess decks had seven plasma televisions that showed sports, news and movies but you couldn't get coffee until 6:00am and not after dinner. (The crew seemed to live on energy drinks, sodas and water.)

The ship's store was the size of a mini-market and almost as well provided. The big sellers were Tostitos, Spam, Cigarettes and cans of Energy drink. There are also vending machines around the ship. Cash isn't used on the vessel. Each person aboard is paid by direct deposit and fills up a "Cash card" at an ATM. I don't think I saw a dollar bill the entire time I was aboard.

Sick bay is huge compared the what I used to believe was a large medical area on the Magoffin. During deployment, the Peleliu has more than 40 medical personnel including 7 doctors, a dentist, a pharmacist and 4 nurses. The Corpsmen who are assigned to the embarked Marines work regular hours in sickbay. There are 4 operating rooms, exam rooms, x-ray, pharmacy, a 42 bed ward and a 12 bed ICU. Sick bay has the capability of processing whole blood including freezing platelets and plasma for future use.

The crew and Marine detachment are each about 80% male and 20% female. The women hold all of the same jobs as the men except for actual combat duties. The lieutenant that heads up the Peleliu air wing is not only a female but also a "Mustang" officer.

My own experience was wonderful. I toured thought the ship from forecandle to engine room, watched flight operations and fire power demonstrations. I was very impressed by the fact that when we anchored off Camp Pendleton, The Marines, their aircraft and their equipment was off loaded and on the beach in less than 5 hours. There was a "Steel Beach" picnic on the flight deck and a "Texas Hold 'Em" tournament on the mess decks. All of the military personnel I talked to were informed, intelligent and for the most part "gung-ho".

I found that I really felt "Navy" and comfortable with being aboard. I was reminded of how great it feels to be at sea on a ship that actually allows you to feel the motion of the ocean and the smell of the salt water. I was reassured and encouraged to know that today's sailor is better educated, better motivated and more likely to be long term than when I was on active duty. If you ever get invited to sail on a "Tiger" cruise, do yourself a favor and do it.

Of all of my experiences, and there were far too many to mention in this missive, on definitely tops the list. My niece, who worked very hard to get them, was awarded both the Surface Warfare badge and the Air Warfare badge. At department awards ceremony I was honored to be allowed to pin her with her one of the badges, while her father did the other. (She also received a letter of commendation form a one star Marine General for her exemplary work while aboard.

There is a lot more about the voyage plus lots of photos on the Association website - [www.ussmagoffin.org](http://www.ussmagoffin.org) -

*Terry Little/ Editor and webmaster*

## Congratulations Shipmates

As Mike mentioned in his "Presidents Message" the Magoffin Veteran's Association scholarship fund is up to at least \$22,800. This puts us very close to the goal and also means that we will exceed it in the future.

Special thanks should be given to Tom Haglage for his efforts in putting this fund together and working so closely with both Magoffin County High School and Morehead State University.

Let's keep up the good work and put the total over \$25,000 by the Colorado reunion.

## Morehead State University Ranked Among the Best!

For the third year in a row, *U.S. News and World Report* has ranked Morehead State University as "one of the top public universities in the South" in their 2007 edition of "America's Best Colleges. MSU President Andrews said "This is another measure of the quality education offered at Morehead State.

## Registration Form USS Magoffin Association

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SERVED ABOARD MO/YR \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ TO-MO/YR \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

RATING/RANK \_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_

WIFE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

My 2006 Dues of \$10 are enclosed ( )

My 2007 Dues of \$10 are enclosed ( )

My 2008 Dues of \$10 are enclosed ( )

My back Dues of \$\_\_\_\_\_are enclosed

Scholarship fund donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you have previously filled out this form completely, just your name and address would be required to re-register unless something has changed.

Please make checks payable to - USS Magoffin Association

Please mail dues to:

USS MAGOFFIN ASSOCIATION  
Mr. Joe Beninato, Treasurer  
61 Sunrise Drive - Edison, NJ 08817

**Magoffin Veterans' Association  
Bank Balance - Year to Date**

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| BALANCE 01/01/06             | <b>\$ 15,744.49</b> |
| CASH RECEIPTS                |                     |
| Dues                         | \$1,065.00          |
| Ship Store                   | 472.06              |
| Reunion                      | 20,643.00           |
| Scholarship Fund             | <u>1,860.00</u>     |
| <b><u>Total Receipts</u></b> | <b>\$ 24,040.06</b> |

**CHECK DISBURSEMENTS**

|                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Postage                           |                   |
| Telephone (800)                   |                   |
| Shipstore                         |                   |
| Reunion Expenses                  |                   |
| Newsletter                        |                   |
| Scholarship                       | <u>(4,000.00)</u> |
| <b><u>Total Disbursements</u></b> | <b>(4,000.00)</b> |

**ENDING BALANCE     \$ 11,744.49**

(Broken Down as Follows)

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Education Fund 01/01/06</b> | <b>\$ 4,293.11</b> |
| Disbursement (May 2006)        | (1,000.00)         |
| Transferred Moorehead St       | (3,000.00)         |
| Receipts - Reunion             | 1,600.00           |
| Donations Jan-Dec 2006         | <u>510.00</u>      |

**Education Ending Balance** \$ 2403.11

**General Operating Fund**     **\$ 9,341.38**

**Welcome Aboard**

Rolland Bispo - (59-60) MM-1 in M division. Now lives in Couer d'Aleve, ID

Bruce Melsha - (63-66) BT-3 in B division. Now lives in Swisher, ID

Robert O'Brien - (1945) Seaman 1C in 2nd Division. Now lives in Citrus Heights, CA

Michael O'Hara - (66-67) EMFN in BGP. Now lives in Morris, IL

Russ Osborne - (62-64) PC-3 in X division. Now lives in Maple Grove, MN

Ray Sprinks - (53-57) EMW in OPS. Now lives in Oakwood, GA

**Mystery Solved!**

The last newsletter had a photograph of a Magoffin Corpsman holding a newborn baby and we asked if anyone knew who the corpsman was. Thanks to Pete Patterson we have an answer and a photo.

*"Yes, I know who this guy was. Thursten E. Everingham, but he wished to be called "Cool Breeze". He was one of the team that birthed this tiny girl. First the Doc delivered her and tied off the umbilical cord, He then handed the new born to your's truly for me to clean her up while "Cool Breeze" got a warm blanket from the autoclave. I wrapped it around her and handed her to him while someone took a picture. Then we punched a small hole in one finger of a surgical glove, put in tepid tea and she nursed. "Cool Breeze and two others, Tyson and Nelson, came aboard the Magoffin from FMF duty in Korea."*

*Smooth sailing,  
Pete Patterson*

*Rodney (Pete) Patterson, went on to become an MD, a well known renal surgeon and headed up the Veteran's Hospital in Little Rock, AK. He and his wife are now retired and travel the world.*



**Attention Vietnam Veterans**

A recent study sponsored by the Western Australia Institute for Medical Research has found that Vietnam veterans face a greater risk of developing prostate cancer.

A researcher at the Institute says one possible reason for this is Vietnam veterans' exposure to Agent Orange.



## Court Expands Coverage for Vietnam Vets

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims has announced a landmark decision in the case of *Haas v. Nicholson*. This ruling could directly affect thousands of disabled Vietnam-era Navy veterans.

The Court's ruling states that Veterans Affairs requirement for "boots on the ground" as the definition of "service in the Republic of Vietnam" is unreasonable, and does not align with Congress's intent. In addition the law does not limit application of the presumption of service connection for herbicide exposure to those who set foot on the soil of the Republic of Vietnam. The Court cited that the law defines "service in the Republic of Vietnam" as including "service in the waters offshore, or service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in Vietnam."

According to court documents the unclear nature of the policy was further demonstrated when Secretary Nicholson was asked to apply the regulatory interpretation in the case of a veteran who served in the waters off of Vietnam, in water where his feet did not touch the seabed, versus a veteran who was in the waters where he was able to touch the seabed, he responded that neither veteran would be entitled to the presumption because the regulatory definition is limited to those veterans "who set foot on land, if you will boots on ground, not touching the ocean floor." When later asked if there was a difference between the case of a veteran who served on a vessel floating up a river - which, according to the Secretary's argument, could be miles wide - who never touched land within the Republic of Vietnam, and a veteran who served on a ship within 100 feet of the shoreline who never touched the land, the Secretary simply responded, without rationale, that the **latter** form of service would not warrant application of the presumption of service.

The Court's opinion further states that VA's regulation defining "service in the Republic of Vietnam" is ambiguous and that VA's interpretation of the regulatory term "service in the Republic of Vietnam," allowing the application of the presumption of exposure to herbicides only to Vietnam-era veterans who set foot on land, is "inconsistent with longstanding agency views, plainly erroneous in light of legislative and regulatory history, and unreasonable, and must be SET ASIDE."

**Note:** The Court also found that the VA changed the Adjudication Procedure Manual to exclude receipt of

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The Vietnam Service Medal (VSM) as a definition of "service in the Republic of Vietnam" in 2002. The Court's decision may force VA to rethink this policy change.

The elimination of the requirement for "boots on ground" will mean that Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans can now file claims based on service in the Republic of Vietnam including "service in the waters offshore."

This decision may open the floodgates to millions of Vietnam-era disability claims. Navy Vietnam veterans are encouraged to contact their local Veterans Service Officer as soon as possible to determine if they are eligible to receive disability benefits based on this ruling.

## Mt. Soledad Memorial Transferred

A new federal law has transferred ownership of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, Ca. to the United States government has been heralded by the national commander of the American Legion as a "victory for common sense." On May 3, a San Diego federal judge ordered the city of San Diego to take down the cross within 90 days or face \$5,000 in daily fines. The new legislation renders any lawsuits moot. The American Legion is also currently conducting a campaign in support of the Public Expression of Religion Act ( HR 2679 and S 3696) The measures would remove the authority for judges to award taxpayer monies in attorney's fees in Establishment Clause cases involving litigation against religious icons and veterans memorials.



*Members who attended the last reunion in San Diego will remember visiting this memorial.*



**Russ Osborne, Mike Stein, Doris Stein and Sue Osborne**

**Note:** Russ served aboard the Magoffin in the early '60's (along with Mike and Terry Little). He was in "X" division. He and his wife Sue now live in Minnesota. Russ is Vice President of the Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans of America and met with Mike while in San Diego for the national convention of the Paralyzed Veterans of America convention.

### **Peacoats -- One of God's Better Inventions**

Military.com | Dave Woods, SN USN (ret.) | August 03, 2006

You remember them: Those ton and a half monsters that took the annual production of thirty-five sheep to make. Those thick black rascals with black plastic buttons the size of poker chips. The issue coats that drove shore duty chief petty officers stark raving nuts if they caught you with the collar turned up or your hands in your pockets.

"Hey, you rubber sock, get those damn hands outta them damn pockets! Didn't they issue you black leather gloves?" So, you took your hands out of your pockets and risked digital frostbite rather than

***continued next column***

### **Peacoats continued**

face whatever the Navy had in store for violators of the 'No Damn Hands In Peacoat Pockets' policy. There's probably a special barracks in Hell full of old E-3s caught hitchhiking in sub-zero weather with hands in peacoat pockets.

As for those leather gloves, one glove always went missing. "Son, where in th' hell are the gloves we issued you?" We? I don't remember this nasty, ugly so-n-so being at Great Lakes when the 'jocks and socks' petty officers were throwing my initial issue sea bag at me and yelling, "Move it!!"

As for the gloves, once you inadvertently leave one glove on a bar stool or on the seat of a Greyhound bus, the remaining glove is only useful if a tank rolls over the hand that fit the lost glove.

In the days long ago, a navy spec. peacoat weighed about the same as a flat carload of cinder blocks. When it rained, it absorbed water until your spine warped, your shins cracked and your ankles split. Five minutes standing in the rain waiting on a bus and you felt like you were piggy-backing the Statue of Liberty.

When a peacoat got wet, it smelled a lot like sheep dip. It had that wet wool smell, times three. It weighed three and a half tons and smelled like 'Mary had a little lamb's gym shorts.

You know how heavy a late '50s pea coat was? Well, they had little metal chains sewn in the back of the collar to hang them up by. Like diluted Navy coffee, sexual sensitivity instruction, comfortable air-conditioned topside security bungalows, patent leather plastic-looking shoes and wearing white hats configured to look like bidet bowls, the peacoat spec. has been watered down to the point you could hang them up with dental floss. In the old days, peacoat buttons and grocery cart wheels were interchangeable parts. The gear issued by the U.S. Navy was tough as hell, bluejacket-tested clothing with the durability of rhino hide and construction equipment tires.

Peacoats came with wide, heavy collars. In a cold, hard wind, you could turn that wide collar up to cover your neck and it was like poking your head in a tank turret. The things were warm, but I never thought they were long enough. Standing out in the wind in those 'big-legged britches' (bell bottoms), the wind whistled up your cuffs and took

away body warmth like a thief. But, they were perfect to pull over you for a blanket when sleeping on a bus or a bus terminal bench. Every sailor remembers stretching out on one of those oak bus station pews with his white hat over his face, his head up against his AWOL bag and covered with his peacoat. There was always some 'SP' who had not fully evolved from the apes, who poked you with his billy bat and said, "Hey, you! Get up! Waddya think yer doin'? You wanna sleep, get a room!" Peacoats were lined with quilted satin or rayon. I never realized it at the time, but sleeping on bus seats and station benches would be the closest I would ever get to sleeping on satin sheets.

In Washington DC, they have a wonderful marble and granite plaza honoring the United States Navy. Every man or woman who served this nation in a naval uniform, owes it to himself or herself to visit this memorial and take their families. It honors all naval service and any red-blooded American bluejacket or officer will feel the gentle warmth of pride his or her service is honored within this

**Peacoats continued**

truly magical place.

The focal point of this memorial is a bronze statue of a lone American sailor. No crow on his sleeve tells you that he is non-rated. And, there are further indications that suggest maybe, once upon a time, the sculptor himself may have once been an E-3 white hat.

The lad has his collar turned up and his hands in his pockets. I'm sure the Goddess of the Main Induction laughs at the old, crusty chiefs standing there with veins popping out on their old, wrinkled necks, muttering, "Look at that S.O.B. standing there with his collar up and his damn hands in his pockets. In my day, I would have ripped that jerk a new one!"

Ah, the satisfied glow of E-3 revenge.

Peacoats -- one of God's better inventions.

*Thanks to Sam Rubin for sending this excellent article. -*

**USS Magoffin (APA-199)  
Veterans Association**

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"No beach beyond our reach"

**Defending America - WWII, Korea, Cold War, Viet Nam**