



Firedrake Newsletter – July 2011

Baton Rouge a – A Good Time for Everyone

Nearly 60 Firedrake Shipmates and spouses/family spent four great days enjoying our Firedrake Reunion 2011 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Based on comments made by many the reunion lived up to expectations and was enjoyed by all. Several have sent follow up “Thank You” emails expressing their pleasure and enjoyment of the trips and activities, with numerous comments asking for more “Bread Pudding”, a treat that we enjoyed at many meals. Few will ever forget the very high flood stage of the mighty Mississippi River right next to our reunion home in the Belle of Baton Rouge Hotel.

The ship’s web site www.USSFiredrake.org has been updated with many photos taken during the reunion including a set of various shipmates as they boarder the USS Kidd for our 2011 Memorial Ceremony that were taken by Patrick Dennis, the photographer who took our group photo. All attendees received a copy of the group photo. For those of you who were unable to make the reunion there is a copy of the group photo posted on the web site. Click here to go directly to the photo listing page, <http://ussfiredrake.com/photos.html>

A particularly memorable trip was to the National World War II Memorial in New Orleans included a buffet lunch and a special musical show featuring the Victory Belles singing a wonderful medley of WWII era songs. A couple of our shipmates enjoyed being a part of the performance and those incidents were captured on video tape and may be seen by clicking on the Ship Photos tab on the web site main page then scrolling down and clicking on Video Files and selecting the video(s) you want to watch. We also enjoyed the Solomon Victory Theater screening of Beyond All Boundaries, the Museum's signature cinematic experience of World War II narrated by Tom Hanks. After touring the museum we took a brief narrated bus tour of several parts of New Orleans followed by a great Creole dinner at Ralph and Kacoos Restaurant in the French Quarter.

If anyone has photos that you took and would like to see added to our web site please contact Dick Tracy at USSFiredrake@gmail.com to arrange it. All of your photos of the reunion are welcome so we can all enjoy them.

This year only three of our dozen or so World War II Firedrake shipmates were able to be in attendance and for one, Bob Tellier it was his first Firedrake Reunion and he was accompanied by two of his granddaughters, Christine and Catherine Reale. Here is a photo of the three Plankowners, Manny Fontana, Bob Tellier and Art Herry at the Reception our first night.



As we do at each reunion we held our Two Bell Memorial Ceremony to honor and remember those shipmates who have crossed the bar to their final reward since our preceding reunion or whom we may have learned of their earlier passing. This year we memorialized ten shipmates. You can see them listed on the USS Kidd Memorial Service Brochure on the web site and also a complete listing on our Memorial page which you can find on our web site under the ships personnel tab below the ship photo.

Firedrake Merchandise Available

There are a limited number of Firedrake items available for sale. These items may be ordered by contacting Dick Tracy at USSFiredrake@gmail.com

Ship's Patches – a 5 inch diameter cloth patch (photo)- \$8.50 each includes postage

Firedrake Ceramic Tiles - 6"x6" with stand (photo below) - \$10.00 each plus postage

Reunion 2011 Firedrake Ball point Pen - \$0.75 each includes postage

Firedrake Golf Shirts (Navy) –only 4 available (1 Med, 2 Lg, 1 XL) - \$20 each plus shipping

Firedrake Ball Caps – one size fits all - \$10.00 plus shipping



Help find your Shipmates

The whole purpose of this newsletter, web site and our reunion is to allow all Firedrake Shipmates to be in contact with and to enjoy sharing good times with one another. That can only happen when we know about one another and share that information. So if you know the whereabouts of any shipmates and you don't see their names on the listing of shipmates on the website, <http://ussfiredrake.com/shipmates.html> then send the information you have on them to us at USSFiredrake@gmail.com so we can contact them and get them listed.

If you find a shipmate listed on our web site who you don't have address or phone or email information for and you want to contact them just send an email to USSFiredrake@gmail.com asking for contact information. We don't publish it on our web site for privacy purposes but freely share it with shipmates.

Also please see the next article on our USS Firedrake Forum where you can find information from shipmates and can post questions or information for others to see and respond to.

NEW USS FIREDRAKE FORUM!

For those shipmates who have access to and use the internet I have some exciting news about our new **USS Firedrake Forum** – a site where you can keep in contact with shipmates by posting and reading any news or things of interest shared by other shipmates. Many of you are probably familiar with online forums and this one will be a place to visit often to contact or post items or notes for shipmates. **Access to your new forum is restricted to only those who have served onboard the USS Firedrake AE-14 and exists for your benefit and enjoyment in keeping up with shipmates prior to and after reunions.** It is a place to let your shipmates know what is happening in your life as well as a place to post and discuss things of importance to both veterans with only a few years of Navy service and those who ended up making a career out of the military.

*To provide this Forum **without cost** there are a few places where advertisements will show up on the pages. This is a good deal for us and you can choose to ignore or respond to the ads as you see fit. You do NOT need to respond to any of them.*

The following is a **step by step procedure for you to follow in joining and using the Firedrake Forum.** This is a new action to bring shipmates together in addition to our great Bi-annual Firedrake reunions.

The Forum site is at <http://uss-firedrake.proboards.com> If you click on this it should open the site.

1. The first time you go to this site you must register by clicking on the blue highlighted word 'Register' at the left side of the top heading box under the word **Error:**, **OR** clicking on the words **create new account** to the right of the user name box. Clicking either of these will open the Registration form to register for our Firedrake forum. Registration is necessary to protect the privacy of shipmates by limiting access to the forum.
2. Fill in the data requested. When you choose your Username it is requested that since this is a restricted forum only for shipmates, you make your Username for this forum one so shipmates can easily recognize you. You may only use alphanumeric characters (A-Z and 0-9) in your username and it must be between 1 and 18 characters long. So I recommend making your name first and last names with no space between them such as DickTracy or MannyFontana. Remember whatever you choose as a password as you will need it later to enter the Forum. A birth date is also required, and if you are reluctant to provide your actual birth date, maybe just use 1 Jan 1940 or whatever you choose.

3. After entering the information in the blocks for user name through gender there is a box labeled CAPTCHA. In it you will find an advertisement (it helps provide this as a free service) also in it is a box where you are asked to enter “your answer”. In that block enter the words that you are given and told to enter in the colored bar just above the words “your answer”. This is a security process to keep spammers out of our forum.
4. Click on the button in front of “I Agree” in the box at the bottom and then click on “Create Account” If you have made an error in entering information you will be prompted as to the problem and which data you need to re-enter.
5. After agreeing to the terms you will be taken to a new page asking for your Activation key. At this point you should logoff and **check your email** until **you receive** an email from ProBoards telling you your account has been created and providing you with the **activation key**. When you receive the email from ProBoards, highlight and copy the activation key then click below it where it tells you to click to activate!
6. This will take you to a log in page where you need to enter your password that you created on the registration form. Enter it and click to go into the forum. You will be presented with a screen that has your activation key. If it is filled in just click on Activate Account and you will be taken into the Forum. **If** the activation key is not filled in **copy and paste it** in from the email you received from ProBoards and then click on Activate Account and you will be taken into the Forum.

CONGRATULATIONS you are now in our Forum!
Bookmark it as <http://uss-firedrake.proboards.com>

What to do now that you are in the USS Firedrake Forum? USE IT!
How or why?

Well here are a few thoughts on how you and others can use your forum, and once you start using it other uses will likely develop.

We have started the Forum boards with a few topics you will see under the General area, under Retiree Concerns, and one for Suggestions and Ideas. Your first post to the board for others to see will likely be in the General Board area. I will put a couple of thoughts in there just to use as examples and to get things started. Click on the blue words [General Board](#) under the General section to start.

You can also use the Firedrake forum in conjunction with our newly renovated and expanded web site www.USSFiredrake.org where you will now find a listing of all known shipmates along with a new section to list our departed shipmates. **The revised web site also now has copies of all our Firedrake Newsletters and information on Reunions. It also has a greatly expanded section of photos of shipmates and activities taken at our reunions. Check it out!!!**

The use and value of this Forum board will depend on what you and your fellow shipmates want to make of it. *Please realize that the Firedrake Forum will start out slowly until more and more shipmates sign into and start using it.* This forum has been established for you with the hopes that it will encourage and facilitate contact between shipmates, provide an easy place to discuss thoughts on reunions, locate topics relative to veterans' rights and responsibilities and be a friendly social network to keep in touch with shipmate friends. It can also be used to post information on the passing of shipmates or health and prayer concerns.

Let us know what you think of it by posting your comments under Suggestions and Ideas.

Dick Tracy
Reunion Coordinator USS Firedrake AE-14

Next Reunion

The shipmates and spouses at the Baton Rouge Reunion spent a meeting discussing possible locations for the next reunion in 2013. No final decision was arrived at. However, discussions were centered on choices and geographic areas and a strong contender brought up and that received positive feedback was the area of Charleston, South Carolina. As reunion coordinator I agreed to look at the opportunities there to hold our reunion. Another thought that was brought up was to consider holding the reunion on a cruise ship. With overall expenses for lodging and food and the reunion activities the cost of holding a reunion on a cruise may be comparable to other venues so this will also be looked into.

If any shipmates have a desire to participate in the selection of future Firedrake reunions please contact me for discussions by November 2011. Contact me by using email of USSFiredrake@gmail.com .