

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A major job responsibility of your association president is the city destination and hotel selection plus the coordination of tours and events for four (4) days.

The planning for our 2005 Fleet Review San Diego is now completed. Meeting and sleeping rooms were visited and meals sampled so our members and spouses/guests may look forward to a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

A plan of the events is in this edition and includes Seaport Village, USS Midway Carrier Museum, San Diego Zoo, a harbor cruise and a visit to Old Town San Diego.

San Diego is a premier vacation destination. To avoid large crowds, it was decided to schedule our gathering for the end of September when cooler daytime temperatures usually occur.

With only four (4) days to enjoy and one of those to be spent aboard MCRD for morning colors, graduation and lunch at Duncan Hall, an all day trip to MCB Camp Pendleton had to be dropped. Those who wish to go there are invited to arrive on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, a day early, to buddy-up or carpool to Oceanside, CA. The hotel has extended our lower rate to include that extra day.

Please be aware that only seventy (70) rooms of the Red Lion Hanalei have been advance-blocked for USSMA. Since we will share the 402-room hotel with reunion groups from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division (Army) and the USS Midway (CVB-41) the rooms should go FAST! We expect nearly 300 will attend from our association. When those 70 rooms are nearly all reserved, we will try to expand our commitment. You are encouraged to MAKE RESERVATIONS PROMPTLY by calling (619) 297-1101 and reference Seagoing Marines.

Those arriving by air may call the low-cost 1-800-9-SHUTTLE and avoid high taxi rates to the hotel.

Three other items of interest are pertinent to this trip:

- 1) We will be honored by the performance of the US Marine Band – San Diego. Comprised of 50 musicians the band in their full dress blues will play on Sunday afternoon from 1600 – 1700 hours on the hotel's grassy courtyard area near the pool. This "Salute to Seagoing" will be their Sunset Concert of big band music plus military branch songs ending, of course, with the Marine Hymn.
- 2) The USS NEW YORK (BB-34) ship's bell once used at the sea school at MCRD – San Diego, has been rediscovered in a building on the base. Efforts are being made to have the bell loaned and transported to the hotel for our Fleet Review.
- 3) A prototype of our bronze 18" x 24" warship museum plaque will be presented to the membership for their consideration at the Sunday business meeting.

The base is only four (4) miles away so the Friday trip will not be as long as the 75-mile Parris Island run last year. We still leave the hotel at 0700 hours to be in our seats at 0730 for the 0800 morning colors. Members are encouraged by the Assistant G-3 to wear their red seagoing t-shirts and red caps with ship's names if possible. All MCRD marines, recruits and visitors present will be made aware that MARDETS once existed.

My final comments relate to membership growth. We started in 2000 with less than 20 members from USS Boxer (CV-21). In only five (5) years we have expanded our roster to nearly 1,200! Many eligible marines are still unaware of our existence. They continue to hold their own small mini-reunions for their individual detachments throughout the country.

Late in February 2005, spurred by a vote of the marine detachment members of USS Enterprise (CV-6) and similar efforts by USS Philippine Sea (CV-47) and others, a plan was initiated to reach a larger audience. The idea is to encourage the small individual groups to unite and merge their reunions with ours. An invitation letter was prepared to "MARDET Reunion Coordinators" and mailed with a copy

of the USS Enterprise letter and one of our applications. Two Fleet Review evenings on Friday and Saturday will be available for ship's detachments to meet for dinner together on their own.

Six invitations have been sent to USS Missouri (BB-63), USS Princeton (CV-37), USS Juneau (CL-119), USS Lake Champlain (CV-39), USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) and USS Coral Sea (CVB-43) identified from "Leatherneck" reunion lists. Our members are encouraged to help expand these efforts by providing the name and address of their own ship's reunion co-ordinaters to your president.

Strength in numbers means lower rates on hotels, tours and meals plus the possible meeting of friends from boot camp, sea school, sea duty or shore duty.

Best wishes to you all and hope to see you in San Diego!

Bob Vanderveen  
USS Valley Forge (CV-45)