



# USS Claude V. Ricketts / (formerly) USS Biddle DDG-5

## The Big Nickel #13, November, 2014

### 2014 Reunion Wrap-up

The 2014 Reunion held in Washington, D.C. has come and gone and appears to have been a great success. The reunion, hosted at the Crowne Plaza National Airport hotel in Arlington, Virginia, officially went from July 25 to July 29, with various events and ceremonies happening just about every day/evening. However, some shipmates arrived early and left late. Since this reunion was a combination celebration



FN Dieter Wuttke (FGN) and wife Ruth arriving in Washington for the 2014 Reunion

of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the recommissioning of the ship from the USS Biddle DDG-5 to USS Claude V. Ricketts DDG-5 and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NATO Mixed Manning Demonstration (MMD), we were fortunate to have one

shipmate join us from Germany (FN Dieter Wuttke) along with his wife Ruth and another shipmate from the United Kingdom (FN Patrick "Spider" Raines) and his wife Carol. Both served on board during the MMD which ran from June 1964 to December 1965.



FN Patrick "Spider" Raines (RN) and wife Carol at the 2014 Reunion Reception

The actual start date of the reunion was Friday, July 25. The Hospitality Room opened at noon rather than the 0800 we had planned on because the hotel was using it for training purposes. As soon as we got the room, Shipmates began to arrive and register. Kirk Neuman, our Storekeeper, began to setup our ship's store with the shirts, cups, hats, ship's patches and challenge coins.



2014 Reunion Ship's Store items



Shipmates reconnecting at the 2014 Reunion

As usual, during the registration and check-in, shipmates re-connected with each other, caught up with our lives since the last reunion, told sea stores, met shipmates who hadn't attended previous reunion, and in this case for those of us who were on board during the MMD,



MMD (6/64 - 12/65) shipmates reconnecting

reconnecting with a couple of shipmates we hadn't seen since December, 1965. Wives also reconnected and established new and re-established old friendships formed at previous reunions.



Catching up at the 2014 Reunion Reception

Friday evening, the 2014 Reunion Reception was held. Shipmates gathered to share appetizers and a drink and continued to catch up.

Saturday morning all hands gathered for the 2014 Crew Meeting. Donuts and coffee were available for early attendees, which were greatly appreciated after the previous evening's reception.



Wives reconnecting at the 2014 Reunion



Catching up at the 2014 Reunion Reception

As Association president HM3 Jim Miller (71 - 73) couldn't make the reunion, the meeting was called to order at 0900 by VP RD2 Danny Timm (65 - 68). The minutes of the meeting can be found on the website on the [2014 Crew Meeting](#) page.



RD2 Danny Timm calling the 2014 Crew Meeting to order

During the meeting, two members of the USS Belknap Association were in attendance to make a presentation of a Proclamation thanking the crew of the USS Claude V. Ricketts the night of November 22, 1975 for their heroic efforts saving the USS Belknap CG-26 and her crew after she had collided with the USS John F. Kennedy CVA-67. The Proclamation and as well as a video of the presentation can be seen on the [website here](#).



Jim Farrow and Skip McCarroll presenting the Belknap Assoc. Proclamation

Also at the meeting, it was decided to hold the 2016 Reunion in Jacksonville, Florida in the hopes that the USS Adams will (finally) be docked there. Dates for the reunion have been tentatively set to be Thursday, May 12, 2016 to Sunday, May 15, 2016. Other than the tentative dates, nothing else has been arranged as of yet.

As for the Adams, the latest news (as of the publication of this newsletter) about the effort to “Bring Home the Adams” can be found on the [Adams Museum website](#). If the Adams is indeed in Jacksonville, part of our reunion will undoubtedly involve some work parties on our part to help restore her to her service days.

Saturday afternoon was set aside for “personal time” where shipmates could do their own thing.

At 1800 Saturday evening, we gathered for the 2014 Reunion Dinner. Thirty shipmates and their spouses/significant other’s/guests attended the dinner. Also joining us at dinner were Patricia Fortson, wife of Captain Thomas E. Fortson (Commanding Officer MMD, 1963 – 1965), her daughter Trish Harris and Trish’s husband Bill.



Standing, Bill Harris, seated L-R: Trish Harris, Patricia Fortson, Carl Slack, and Beverly Slack

After dinner, Executive Director Carl Slack presented special



BT2 Glenn Johnson with his plaque

plaques to Pat Fortson, Captain Jerome Rapkin (Commanding Officer 1969 to 1971), JO1 Toby Marquez (MMD 64 – 65), BT2 Glenn Johnson (MMD, 64 – 68), RD2 Danny Timm (65 – 68), FTM2 Michael Margeotes (64 – 70), and RD2 Kirk Neuman (MMD 64 – 68). Our newly elected Association Secretary, BM3 Michael Cheney (75 – 79)



Patricia Fortson accepting her plaque from Carl Slack

presented a plaque to FTM1 Carl Slack (MMD 63 – 67).



Trish Harris accepting her portion of the 50/50 from Glenn Johnson with Ruth Wuttke looking on

Also after dinner we ran a 50/50. In case you’re not familiar with a 50/50, people buy tickets at a set cost/ticket and after all tickets are sold, one ticket is drawn and takes half the money collected. The other half goes to the DDG-5 Association. On this night, Trish Harris was the winner of half the money and immediately donated it to our Association.

it pictures were taken of the MMD crew Pat Fortson and Trish and Bill Harris, attending the dinner and pictures of the wives/significant others.



The MMD crew: Standing l-r: Bill Harris, Ray Parkinson, Tom Woeckenberg, Ron Beckett, Patrick Raines, Toby Marquez, and Tom Zukowski. Seated l-r: Glenn Johnson, Carl Slack, Patricia Fortson, Trish Harris, Kirk Neuman, Dieter Wuttke

After the 50/50 was time for crew photos. Various (64-65) with all shipmates



**The 2014 Reunion DDG-5 Ship's Crew**



**2014 Reunion Wives/SOs of the DDG-5 Crew**

After dinner we gathered in the Hospitality Room to continue to share sea stories and gossip.



RD2 Kirk Neuman presenting a ship's hat to our photographer, Dona Jones



Shipmates and wives



ET3 John Cubells checking out the raffle items



Boarding the tour bus



Talking with the volunteer

Sunday morning, boarded bus for tour of

we all the the

various military monuments and memorials.

Our first stop was the Marine Corps War

Memorial, also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial. We spent some time there, taking pictures and talking to a volunteer about the history of the memorial. Our tour guide and professional photographer, Dona Jones, gather us all together for a group photo.



Group photo in front of the Iwo Jima Memorial



Visiting the Korean War Veterans Memorial

After re-boarding the bus, we rode over to the National Mall to tour the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial on the Western end of the Reflecting Pool and then rode to the World War II Memorial on the



ETR2 Charles Collier, SN Tom Zukowski and SN Ray Parkinson at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial



FN Dieter Wuttke, Ruth Wuttke, FTM2 Tom Lerner, Mary Lou Johnson and BT2 Glenn Johnson at the World War II Memorial



Part of the Memorial Tour group at the Lincoln Memorial

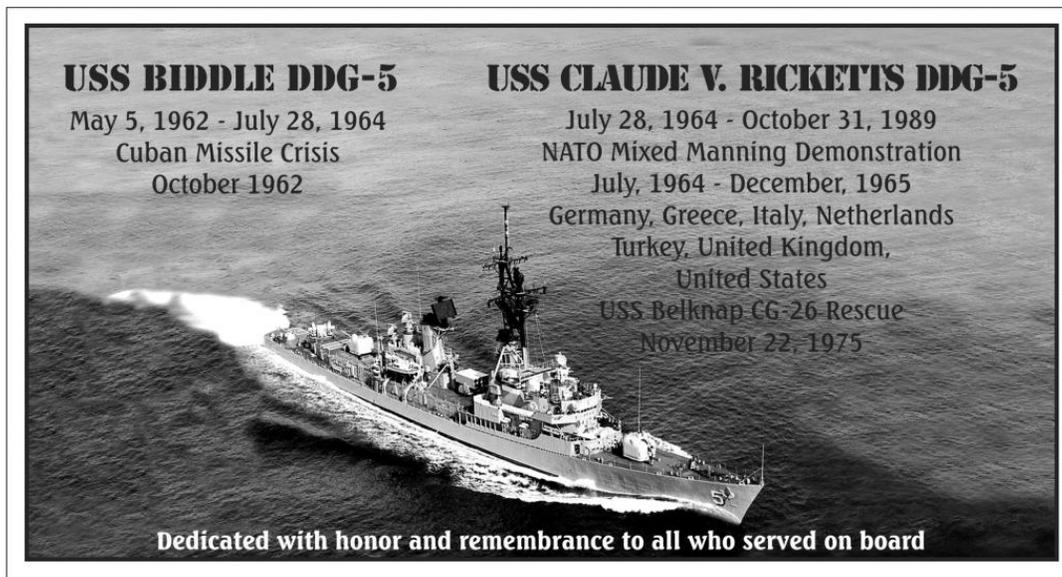
country.

Eastern end of the Pool. This took a few hours since there was so much to see as well as taking the time to reflect on what those that had served before and after us had given for this

After touring the World War II Memorial, we boarded the bus and were driven to the **nopa Kitchen + Bar** restaurant for lunch before going to the U.S. Navy Memorial to dedicate the Ship's Plaque.

We were greeted by Rear Admiral William Thompson, USN (Ret.) and JO1 Toby Marquez (64 – 65), host for the plaque presentation. We gathered in the Arleigh and Roberta Burke Theater for the dedication. During the

dedication, several shipmates approached the podium to remark on their experience and memories of their time on board the ship. More photographs and a video of some of these remarks can be found on the [website here](#).



The DDG-5 Ship's Plaque displayed at the U.S. Navy Memorial



Plaque Dedication group shot



**BT2 Glenn Johnson photographing the DDG-5 Plaque**



**SN Ray Parkinson and FTM2 Michael Margeotes checking out the DDG-5 Plaque**

Sunday evening we held the 2014 Reunion Pizza Party. Michael Bosworth, Commander USN retired, from NAVSEA new ship design made a presentation about past and future design of naval ships.



**RD2 Danny Timm and wife Cissy touring the Navy Museum**

Monday morning, July 28, we boarded a bus which took us to the Washington Ship Yard where we had planned the 50 year anniversary ceremony of the re-commissioning of the USS Biddle DDG-5 to the USS Claude V. Ricketts DDG-5 fifty years before on July 28, 1964. On arrival at the ship yard, we spent some time at The Navy Museum before heading toward the display ship, USS Barry DD-993 where the ceremony was held.



USS Barry DD-993 where the ceremony was held.

We gathered on the ASROC deck of the Barry for the ceremony. Honored guests were James Ricketts, son of Admiral Claude V. Ricketts, and Pat Fortson, wife of Captain Thomas E. Fortson, her daughter Trish Harris and son-in-law Bill Harris. RD2 Kirk Neuman (64 – 68) was the host and speaker.



**Posting of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance**



**RD2 Kirk Neuman at the 50 year anniversary ceremony**

First thing on the agenda was posting the colors and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance as we had no recording of the National Anthem to play. GMM3 Michael Schmidt (65 – 67) gave the benediction and then Kirk talked about the history of the ship, briefly covering her time as the USS Biddle and then highlighting historical events

and then taps was played. After that lunch was served.

That was the official end of the 2016 Reunion. However events for the following couple of days had been planned including a tour of Annapolis on Tuesday and a river cruise and tour of Mount Vernon on Wednesday. Pictures of these events can be seen on the website. Wednesday evening those of us still at the Crowne Plaza gathered together for a spontaneous farewell dinner in the hotel restaurant.



**Standing at attention as Taps is played**



**The Last Supper: Kirk Neuman, Anne Neuman, Carol Raines, Ann Zukowski, Beverly Slack, Ruth Wuttke, Dieter Wuttke, Carl Slack, Tom Zukowski, Patrick Raines, Ron Beckett**

All of the pictures included here along with many, MANY more can be seen on the website by going to the [2016 Reunion page](#) (note that your tireless webmaster is still updating things on the site so not all of the photos taken during the reunion are up yet so keep checking back). You can also find link to a reunion comment form there as well and it would be appreciated if you would fill it out if you attended the reunion.

A huge Bravo Zulu to FTM1 Carl Slack, DDG-5 Crew Members Association Executive Directory and 2016 Reunion Coordinator, for pulling together what was arguably the best reunion ever.

## **President**

BT3 LeRoy E. Kidd (83 – 85): [leroykidd@aol.com](mailto:leroykidd@aol.com)



I would like to thank all those shipmates who attended the 2014 Reunion in Washington, D.C. It was my first and I had a great time and really learned a lot about the ship before and after my time on board that I never knew. I was "elected" President of the DDG-5 Crewmembers Association at the Crew Meeting, Saturday morning July 26.

A little about me? I entered the Navy in July of '82 when I was 18 years old and attended Boot Camp and BT "A" school in Great Lakes. The Claude V. Ricketts was my first ship. I remember reporting aboard on Friday evening about 1900, only to be told the following Tuesday we were getting underway for GITMO at 0900. I didn't even know what a GITMO was? LOL! My first 13 months aboard, we were underway 11. It was great

to read about the activities of the CVR in the historical book Mike Margeotes researched and put together. I still tell many of those stories to friends and co-workers to this day.

I was assigned to the forward fire room and had NEVER seen so much machinery smooshed into such a small space! We worked so hard, and learned so much. People today comment about my ingenuity. The work habits and techniques I developed there made me the man I am today. Don't forget the Space Temp Thermometers....they were pegged out at 130°F. Who does that? Sailors Do!!! BT1 ED Curtis was my LPO until he made BTC and transferred. I don't remember him ever sweatin' anything? I see his name in the roster. Maybe he'll respond?

I elected to stay in the Navy and make it my first career. I rode two other ships, lived in Puerto Rico for two years and survived Hurricane Hugo, introduced (recruited) some 40 unsuspecting shipmates to our lifestyle and did some work on Nuclear Submarines. I retired as a BT1 (SW) in '02. I completed two Dept. of Labor apprenticeships, earned an AS degree while on active duty, and completed my BA in Liberal Arts at the University of Connecticut in '03.

My first Reunion? I arrived early on Thursday afternoon and got settled into my room. As I was out investigating the amenities available at the hotel I ran into a gentleman and his wife. He was proudly displaying his Claude V. Ricketts ball cap and I struck up a conversation. Moments later another shipmate came along, and so on and so on. About 7 hours later we were still talking and laughing. Now it's 2300 and there were about 12 of the neatest salty ole' sailors telling sea stories. By more than 20 years I was the youngest guy there. LOL.

I'd like to send my thanks to all who have made the DDG-5 Crewmembers Association and the 2014 Reunion a success. In time I may be able to recall all your names, until then be patient. LOL. The amount of time and effort it takes to coordinate all the entities and the development of personal contacts each member has as it relates to their specific roll in the association is amazing. Not to mention the "front money" each offers openly to get processes moving, waiting to be reimbursed. The re-occurring theme I hear is, "I do it because I enjoy it..." God Bless you!!

Not everyone has the time, and/or resources to do everything needing to be done. People of "my" generation have different ideals and priorities than those of the older generations and don't seem to get involved. "We" are still working, and have kids in school, etc. The ideal family vacation doesn't include a ships reunion. We all understand those things. I do encourage everyone to do what they can in supporting those who have chosen to undertake these monumental tasks. We all recall the team work and sacrifice we made for the Big Nickel. Those are the very things that keep bringing us back together after all this time. The DDG-5 Crewmembers Association needs us to come together again to keep the memory alive. If you're not able to be actively involved, I hope you'll be able to stay in touch.

Respectfully,  
LeRoy Kidd  
President, DDG-5 Crewmembers Association

## Vice President

BT2 Glenn R. Johnson (64 – 68): [gjohn11905@gmail.com](mailto:gjohn11905@gmail.com)



Dear Shipmates.

It seems like only a few weeks have passed since we were all together in the nation's capital. A fun time for sure. The tours were great and the weather cooperated. Our honored guests were the best! We really enjoyed the Fortson family, the Ricketts family and the other dignitaries that gave their time to our reunion. The presence of Dieter and Spider was particularly special for me, it was a great event. The planning by Carl and Kirk was well done. It makes me proud to have served on the "Big Nickel" with a great bunch of guys that are willing to take the time to meet every few years. A big "Thank you" to all who attended our last reunion. Without your attendance, there would be no reunion.

At the crew meeting I was elected to the Vice President's position. I think my role is pretty limited and I really don't have much on my plate at this time. Thanks to Email we can all stay in touch and discuss issues that need to be addressed on a regular basis. Kirk does a fine job of getting the news out to the crew. I encourage all of you to stay in touch with us, and share any information about other DDG-5 sailors. If you find a shipmate please let Carl or Kirk know so they can update our roster to reflect another shipmate. Every shipmate is important and we want to find all of them.

As you know, our ship was an Adams Class Destroyer. Hopefully 2015 will be the year that the USS Adams, DDG-2 will be moored to the pier in downtown Jacksonville FL. This project has been ongoing for about 5 years. We will try to keep everyone up to date on the progress of this project. I hope to be there when she ties up.

I send you all my best. Stay safe and seaworthy.

Glenn Johnson, Vice President DDG-5 Crew members Assoc.

## Treasurer

FTM2 Michael Margeotes (65 – 70): [margeotesm@msn.com](mailto:margeotesm@msn.com)



Checking: \$25.75

Savings: \$137.38

## Secretary

BM3 Michael Cheney (75 – 79): [sdowrk@gmail.com](mailto:sdowrk@gmail.com)



The minutes from the 2014 Reunion Crew Meeting can be found on [The Big Nickel website](#). (Note that as of this newsletter the minutes have not yet been digitized. Keep checking the site for updates).

## Executive Director/Reunion Coordinator

FTM1 Carl Slack (63 – 67): [rickettsddg5@yahoo.com](mailto:rickettsddg5@yahoo.com)

Carl W. Slack, FTM1, USN



1964



2013

### The Reunion

Shipmates,

The reunion in Washington, DC is over, and I would like to thank the shipmates and spouses who took the time to make the reunion marking 50 years since the ship was renamed, and the ship was involved in the mixed manning demonstration. Especially like to thank Dieter Wuttke and his wife Ruth who came from Germany and Patrick “Spider” Raines and his wife Carol who traveled from their home in Spain. Spider was one of the crew from the UK. Would like to thank Mrs. Thomas Fortson and her daughter and son-in-law who were at the reunion. Mrs. Fortson is the wife of Captain Thomas Fortson who had command of the ship for the Mixed Manning Demonstration.

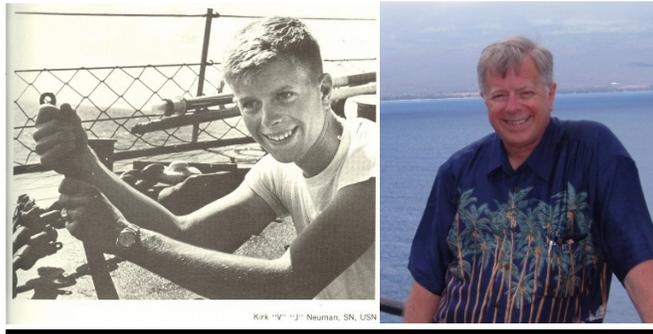
Donations for the plaque at the Navy Memorial are going great; we have raised the \$3000 and are thinking about a second plaque to cover the years of the ships service after the Belknap incident. We dedicated the plaque on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July at the Navy Memorial. It was well attended with a word or two from shipmates. Mrs. Thomas Fortson, the wife of the Captain during the Mixed Manning Demonstration, was there with her daughter and son-in-law.

Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association is still hard at work in their effort to bring the USS Charles F. Adams DDG 2 to Jacksonville, FL as a museum ship. They continue to maintain the Adams Class Museum in

downtown Jacksonville at the Landing. If you find yourself in Jacksonville stop by and say hello. As part of this project our association sponsored two hull plates at \$2500 each. Both hull plates are now completed. The Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association has a lease for a place for the Adams to be tied up. They have raised a significant amount of money for the ship. Once the Navy releases the ship to them more funds will become available from large donors. Arrangements have been put in place for the ship to be put in dry dock in Philadelphia for hull repairs and exterior painting. When that is finished there are arrangements to have it towed to Jacksonville. The company that is doing the dry docking will give them a temporary pier in Jacksonville, so the ship can be worked on. It has been a long trip to get to this point but the end looks in sight, with luck the ship could be in Jacksonville this time next year.

The next reunion will be in Jacksonville, FL May 2016. It will be great if the Adam's is in Jacksonville than. You can plan on bringing your work clothes so we can start to bring the ship back to its former glory.

## A word from the Webmaster



1964

2013

RD2 Kirk “VJ” Neuman (7/64 - 3/68): [Captain.Kirk@TheBigNickel.Navy](mailto:Captain.Kirk@TheBigNickel.Navy)  
[TheBigNickel.Navy](http://TheBigNickel.Navy) – [USSClaudeVRicketts.Navy](http://USSClaudeVRicketts.Navy)

**I would encourage you to check/update your registration information if you haven't done so recently. Simply click the BRB (Big Red Button) on the Home Port page for instructions on how to do this. I'm asking you to do this because there are some of you who registered, but since that time you've changed your email address. As always, if you have questions or problems, contact me.**

As of the end of October, 2014 we now have a new domain extension. You can now reach the website by going to [TheBigNickel.Navy](http://TheBigNickel.Navy) or [USSClaudeVRicketts.Navy](http://USSClaudeVRicketts.Navy). The existing domain extension (\*.org) will remain active until at least the middle of 2015, but I would encourage you to change any bookmarks you currently have to the new site link(s).

Also, if you haven't yet registered on the website, I would encourage you to do that. It is easy to do and the information you enter will be kept private except for your on board information which will be displayed in the Crew Roster. If you're registered and log in to the website you will be able to email other registered shipmates through the Crew Roster as well as being kept up-to-date on activities for the DDG-5 Crew Members Association.

On November 7, 2014, I had a major senior moment and managed to take the website down. In order to fix things I had to do a total reinstall of the Crew Forums. During that reinstall I think I lost some of the pictures some of you had uploaded to the Forum Gallery. If your pictures aren't there, I sincerely apologize and will accept any flogging you think is necessary.

## A word from the Storekeeper



RD2 Kirk "VJ" Neuman (64 – 67): [Storekeeper@TheBigNickel.Navy](mailto:Storekeeper@TheBigNickel.Navy)

The "new" ships store is now open for business. Items for sale include ships cups, ships hats, ships patches, challenge coins, polo shirts and denim shirts (long and short sleeve). I've implemented a new order form that you can now fill out on-line with buttons at the bottom to save and/or print the form.

I've also added a pay via PayPal button near the bottom of the Ship's Store page for those who may want to pay that way rather than sending a check. Note that there is an additional fee for using the PayPal method. Unfortunately my pockets are only so deep and I can't really afford to absorb the fee PayPal charges. Should you want use the PayPal method, make sure to email me your order form.

Christmas is just around the corner and if you would like to order something, I need to have your order not-later-than Friday, December 4. I would recommend using the PayPal method of payment rather than snailmail.

## The Amen Corner

BM3 Wayne Miller (65 – 68): [Choicemedtrans@optonline.net](mailto:Choicemedtrans@optonline.net)

### **Taps:**

We have received notification of the passing of the following shipmates and family members since the last newsletter:

- MM2 Michael Waltman (1968 - 1970) - April 27, 2011. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- Captain Thomas Russell Sheridan (Commanding Officer, June 19 1980 - Mar 27 1982) - June 20, 2013. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- FTM1 James Bell Miller (April, 1970 - August, 1974) - August 4, 2013. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- EM3 Ben McGavock Ford (December, 1976 To November, 1979) - September 11, 2013. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- LCDR Frederick J. Reeg (1964 - 1965), April 13, 2011. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- ST1 Donald J. Oglesby (1962 - 1963), March 3, 2014. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- BTFN Roger A. Freed (1983 - 1987), December 2, 2013. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- Captain Francis Raymond Donovan (Commanding Officer, September 5, 1972 - March 8, 1974), May 4, 2014. Retired as Vice Admiral. You can view his [obituary here](#).
- FTG2 Robert P. Chalmers (October, 1966 - July, 1970), February 20, 2014. You can view his [obituary here](#).

## Bring Home The Adams Updates



The Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association (JHNSA) is hard at work in their efforts to bring the USS Charles F. Adams DDG-2 to Jacksonville, FL as a museum ship. They continue to maintain the Adams Class Museum in downtown Jacksonville at the Jacksonville Landing. If you find yourself in Jacksonville stop by and say hello.

As part of this project the DDG-5 Crew Members Association sponsored two hull plates at \$2500 each. The Starboard Hull Plate collection was completed at the 2012 Reunion. The Port Hull Plate collection was completed at the 2014 Reunion. Even though we have completed the Hull Plate drive, donations can still be made to Save the Adams by going online to the [Adams Class Museum website](#).

The latest word as of this newsletter is that the USS Adams will be in Jacksonville next spring. An article in the [Jacksonville Business Journal](#) on November 13<sup>th</sup> indicated that the Navy will hand over the Adams to the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association (JHNSA) "which should happen at any moment."

She's in pretty rough shape after nearly 25 years and will need lots of help to get back to her former glory.



Below are photographs showing the existing Shipyards Downtown Jacksonville (left) and an artist's rendition of the USS Adams DDG-2 moored amidst the redeveloped shipyards (right).

