



# USS Claude V. Ricketts/Formerly Biddle DDG 5

## The Big Nickel

### #7

## December, 2011

**Next reunion: Jacksonville, FL, 3-6 May 2012**

### From The Bridge

President: Glenn Johnson



Contact: [GJohn11905@gmail.com](mailto:GJohn11905@gmail.com)

Greetings to my shipmates, active military, and veterans.

December 13, 2011

Hopefully with the incoming New Year 2012, we are all making plans to attend the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commissioning of the USS Biddle DDG5. This reunion will take place in Jacksonville FL, where we are looking forward to someday having the Charles F. Adams DDG2 moored. We will continue to show our support for this project. Remember that officer elections are held at the Saturday crew meeting. Anyone interested in serving in a position be prepared to submit their name at the crew meeting. Come and spend some time with old shipmates and meet new ones. Past reunions have been great times. The reunion in Norfolk 2010 was well attended, hoping for a repeat.

Happy Holidays and best regards to you and your families.

Glenn Johnson-President DDG-5 Crew Members Association  
352-523-1945 Home  
813-786-8958 Cell

Executive Director  
Carl Slack



## Shipmates,

Summer is over, and I once again have moved my house south for the winter. Spend a week in Jacksonville working on the reunion. Now have parked my home in Glenn Johnson's back yard so that we can work on the reunion. Time is growing short so start planning to come to Jacksonville, FL and get together with fellow shipmates. Hope to see everyone there. The more the better.

Jacksonville Naval Historic Ship Association (JNHSA) and the Adams Class Veterans Association (ACVA) had their event in October and was a huge success with FL Governor Rick Scott attending. The Governor is a strong supporter of the Adams coming to Jacksonville... For up to date on all the latest information go to our web site [TheBignickel.org](http://TheBignickel.org). That event is just another step in the work being done to make the Charles F. Adams into a museum in Jacksonville, FL that will represent all of that class of ships and those who sailed on it. It is a slow process but is moving forward with a lot of the ground work being done. A site has been approved for the pier and hopefully they can start to work on it. Show your support any way you can, if you live near Jacksonville volunteer at the reunion. We also need to complete our commitment to raise \$2500 for hull plate S5 by this reunion.

For all of the latest information about the association make it a habit to look at [TheBignickel.org](http://TheBignickel.org) on a regular schedule. Our website registrations have been increasing but still there are some shipmates who have not registered on the web site. Registering on the site allows the association to stay in touch with all of you. So if you have not registered yet, please take a few minutes a do it. There are a lot of great pictures of past reunions and other information about the ship and the association.

This reunion will mark the fifty anniversary of the commissioning of DDG 5 as the USS Biddle; we are looking for ways to celebrate this milestone. A challenge coin is being worked on for the reunion. Don't forget to bring a raffle prize. We are also looking for someone who has a ship plaque for the Biddle that we can loan to the museum. Also looking for Biddle and Ricketts patches so we can produce new ones.

The reunion is being held at the Jacksonville Crowne Plaza. Room rates are \$95.00 per night for a standard city view, \$115.00 per night for a standard river view, and \$155.00 per night for a Jr suite river view. The room rate includes free breakfast. The rates are good for three nights before and after the reunion. Reservations can be made with the Crowne Plaza at 904-398-8800. Make sure you tell them you are with the DDG 5 Crew Members Association. Have them tell you their late arrival and cancel policy.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**

Carl Slack

Executive Director DDG 5 Crew Members Association

**Secretary**  
**Jerry Kaufman**



Contact [jerhirl1@yahoo.com](mailto:jerhirl1@yahoo.com).

## Treasurer

**Michael Margoles**



Contact [margeotesm@msn.com](mailto:margeotesm@msn.com)

As of 12/12/2011, the balance of the DDG 5 Association checking is \$974.73,

## Storekeeper

**Glenn Johnson**

Contact: [Storekeeper@TheBigNickel.org](mailto:Storekeeper@TheBigNickel.org)

The DDG 5 Association has a stock of shirts, hats, cups and other items for sale. The store owns all of its stock and income from the sale of inventory is used to increase the stock, with excess profits being turned over to the treasurer. You can access the Ships Store by going to <http://thebignickel.org/ShipsStore.html>. Simply open the Order Form (you'll need to have Adobe Reader), print it out, select what you want, fill in the information you want for a monogram and send the form along with your check or money order to Glenn Johnson at the address given on the form. We have a limited amount of shirts and hats. Let us know what you want so that if we need to order more we can before the reunion.

Glenn Johnson

## A word from the Webmaster

Kirk "VJ" Neuman



Contact: [Captain.Kirk@thebignickel.org](mailto:Captain.Kirk@thebignickel.org)

For those of you who aren't aware, the USS Claude V. Ricketts was one of the ships that came to the rescue of the USS Belknap the night of November 22, 1975 after the Belknap was involved in a collision with the USS John Kennedy. The CVR and her crew played a primary role in ensuring that the Belknap and more of her crew weren't lost that night. I received the following email from Preston Fitzwater, a crewman who was on board the USS Belknap CG-26 and will post it on the website, but also wanted to include it in the newsletter for those of you who don't often visit [TheBigNickel.org](http://TheBigNickel.org).

**My name is Preston Fitzwater. I was an OS2 on board Belknap on Nov. 22nd 1975. I know if it hadn't been for the crew of the "Big Nickel", we may well have lost our ship that night and many more shipmates. Dale and Bordello were there too, but I'll always remember Ricketts charging in.**

**I was on the fo'c'stle as Ricketts came along side. As I remember, the seas were 4 - 6 ft and we were dead-in-the-water and had no fire main pressure. As your Captain would maneuver Ricketts, I could hear him shouting orders to the helm and lee helm, rudder and engine orders. There would be a few seconds that the ships' bows would be even and we could pass our wounded shipmates over to your shipmates. At the same time, your fire crews attacked the blaze amidships. I remember at one point, the ships came together so hard that a stanchion on Ricketts' port torpedo deck broke loose from the deck.**

**I had never, nor will ever see such fine ship handling. (The Belknap crew joked after we were safe in Augusta Bay that John Wayne must have been commanding Ricketts!) The turning point came after Ricketts managed to lash herself to Belknap and could sustain a constant barrage of water onto the fire.**

**We were all brothers that night. And I will consider us so always. Please pass on to your shipmates my eternal thanks for coming to our aid. I will never forget.**

**Best Regards,  
Preston M. Fitzwater  
Former OS2, USS Belknap**

This is what the Belknap looked the morning after:



And now more mundane news: I'm sorry to report that there haven't been many changes or updates to the website since the last newsletter. As Carl reported earlier, we've gotten quite a few new shipmates registered

on the site in the last few months, which I'm always happy to see. As I type this, we have 297 shipmates registered.

If you have registered on the site, I would appreciate it if you would log in and make sure that your information is current and up-to-date. Some of you have changed your email addresses since you registered. If you are unsure about logging in to the site, just click on the box that says **New Login Procedure Click to read** and you should then be able to get logged in. If you have problems or questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

I would like to implement a series of pages dedicated to the various cruise books that were put out during the ships career. If you have a cruise book that you've had digitally scanned and would like me to put it up on the site, please let me know. I would prefer the scans to be in PDF, but I will take what you have and convert it to PDF as necessary. I'm working on a method to allow you to upload your files, but that is still a ways off. Until then, I'm afraid you'll have to burn a CD/DVD and ship it to me via snail-mail at: Cruise Book, c/o Kirk Neuman, 141 Strese Lane, Apple Valley, MN 55124-9337.

Here's hoping to see you all at the reunion in Jacksonville this coming May. By the time you receive this newsletter, you will be able to find an on-line version of the registration form through the 2012 Reunion page. You should be able to fill it out on-line, print it out and send it to Michael Margeotes.

My hope and wish for all is for a Happy Holiday Season, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kirk "VJ" Neuman  
Webmaster/Designer/Developer  
[Captain.Kirk@TheBigNickel.org](mailto:Captain.Kirk@TheBigNickel.org)

### **THE AMEN CORNER**

(Chaplain, Wayne Miller)

Contact: [Chaplain@TheBigNickel.org](mailto:Chaplain@TheBigNickel.org)

## Taps

### **Binnacle List**

Glenn Johnson Recovering from a scooter accident. Still recovering.

### **From the Fantail**

**Remember do all you can to save the Charles F. Adams DDG 2**

See You All At the 2012 Reunion

Set the special sea detail  
 Make ready DDG 2  
 Destination final Homeport Jacksonville, FL

Brought to you by the DDG 5 Crew Members Association

Executive Director DDG-5 Crew Members Association Carl Slack PO Box 83 Jackson, NH 03846-0083 603-986-4661 <a href="mailto:RickettsDDG5@yahoo.com">RickettsDDG5@yahoo.com</a>	President Glenn Johnson 352-523-1945 <a href="mailto:Gjohn11905@gmail.com">Gjohn11905@gmail.com</a>	Vice President Danny Timm <a href="mailto:Dtimm46@yahoo.com">Dtimm46@yahoo.com</a>
Secretary Jerry Kaufman <a href="mailto:Jershirl1@yahoo.com">Jershirl1@yahoo.com</a>	Treasurer/Historian Michael Margeotes <a href="mailto:margeotesm@msn.com">margeotesm@msn.com</a>	Webmaster Kirk Neuman 952-432-0252 <a href="#">The Big Nickel</a>

If receive this by snail mail and have an email address please, contact any member of the Executive Council so that in the future, the newsletter can be emailed to you rather than snail mailed. Help us save paper and expenses.



## DDG 5 Crew Members Association

Reunion: 3 May-6 May 2012

Reunion Registration Form

Please complete and return your registration no later than 15 April, 2012. After 15 April, bring the form and payment with you. Please advise us if you are coming by phone, email or the web site reunion survey. Registrations received by 1 April, 2012 will be placed in a drawing to be held 15 April, 2012 for a free complementary room, second and third place would receive a free upgrade to a Jr. Suite.

Please print name of attendees:

Crew member \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest's \_\_\_\_\_

Registration is \$90 for each attendee 18 and over, 12 – 18, \$45 Registration includes five days use of the hospitality room with snacks and non-alcoholic beverages (BYOB), pizza party on Thursday night, a welcome reception Friday evening (with hors d'oeuvres and cash bar), a buffet dinner and raffle Saturday evening and name badges, and reunion pin (first 100), and cup (first 60). If you do not plan on attending any of the following events please adjust your registration fee according:

\_\_\_ No Reception -\$15.00 \_\_\_ No Dinner -\$35.00 \_\_\_ No pizza -\$5.00

Number adults \_\_\_\_\_ X \$90.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number children \_\_\_\_\_ X \$45.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Tour of Mayport Naval Base (pickup at hotel). Tour would include touring the navy base with the possibility of a ship visit. Stop at the Veterans Memorial, Adams Class Museum, and Maritime Museum. (This tour requires a min of 45 and is limited to the first 55 people who sign up.)

Friday 4 May Number attending  \$65.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

St Augustine Tour. Thursday or Sunday self tour. If there is enough interest there will be a bus.

Number attending  X

Donation to the Association \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*Total Amount Remitted\*\*\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Comments

Make checks payable to DDG 5 Crew Members Association. Mail to DDG 5 2012 Reunion, c/o Michael Margeotes, 29 Columbia Blvd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18302

Make hotel reservations directly with the Crown Plaza, 904-398-8800. Make sure you tell them you are with the DDG 5 Crew Members Association. See the website for more details

<http://thebignickel.org/2010Reunion.php>.

If you are planning on coming to the reunion and haven't yet done so, please fill in the survey on the website

<http://thebignickel.org/2010Reunion.php>.

Don't forget to bring a raffle prize.

For crew members flying in to Jacksonville, GO Airport Shuttle is a good way to get to and from the airport. There one way rate is \$20.00 for the first person and \$8.00 for each additional person. Their number is 904-353-8880.

## USS Claude V Ricketts/Formerly Biddle DDG 5

9th Reunion

Carl W Slack FTM1 63-68

Sponsored by DDG 5 Crew Members Association

### Wednesday 2 May 2012

1200-2300 Hospitality Room

### Thursday 3 May 2012

0800-2300 Hospitality Room. Check in Pizza night 1830.

### Friday 4 May 2012

0830 Board Bus for Mayport tour

**0800-2300 Hospitality Room**

**1800-2100 Reception, Presentation by Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association.**

**Saturday 5 May 2012**

0800-0900 Coffee and Donuts

0900 Crews meeting

0800-2300 Hospitality Room

1800 Dinner

**Sunday 6 May 2012**

0800-1300 Hospitality Room

0900 St Augustine Tour

That's all Crew Until Next Time  
Safe Journey Home