



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

The Big Nickel #9, September, 2012

Next reunion: Washington, D.C, 26-29 July, 2014 (tentative)

From the President

Jim Miller



Contact: the_millers_1977@q.com

Hello Shipmates and Families,

I would like to take this time to introduce myself. My name is Jim Miller and I served on the USS Claude V. Ricketts from the summer of 1971 to January 1973. I served as your Hospital Corpsman (HM3). I was discharged on February 4th 1973.

As I have gotten older my desire to reconnect with the guys I served with aboard the Ricketts has increased. This desire to reconnect was often fueled by a former high school teacher of mine, who became like a second father to me. He served in the Navy in WWII in the South Pacific and whenever I would see him after I graduated he would tell me about these ship reunions they would have. Well, I finally got the courage to go to the 2012 Reunion in Jacksonville, Florida. I had several goals in going to the Reunion; 1. To be open to whatever I found at the reunion. 2. To hopefully meet some guys I served with. 3. To listen to what other shipmates had to say about their time on the Ricketts.

I have to tell you, I met the warmest group of men and women at the Jacksonville Reunion, all held together by the common bond of the Ricketts. I talked with shipmates from different eras and though I didn't see any of the guys I served with, I felt camaraderie with those that were there. The wives were very warm and welcoming and

wanted to know all about me and my family. It was more than I had ever expected and I only wished I had started going to the reunions sooner.

After spending three days with these shipmates and talking about our time in the Navy and our lives since, we had our Crew Meeting. I was honored to be elected the new President of the DDG-5 Crew Members Association. Glenn Johnson was our previous President and I only hope I can do half as good a job as he has done. One of my responsibilities is to say a little something in our newsletter, so here goes.

There are several people who need to be recognized for the work they do on our behalf. First there is Carl Slack, don't let the name fool you, he's no slacker. With Carl everything is full steam ahead. He is the Executive Director of the DDG-5 Crew Members Association and most importantly he is our Reunion Coordinator. In other words he keeps us all on track and makes sure things are running smoothly. Secondly there is our Webmaster. Kirk Neuman is the guy who does all the magic on our web page. He does this so we can talk to each other and see what's going on with the Ricketts crew. Please, take the time to visit our web page and register if you haven't already done so.

The DDG-5 Crew Members Association can only grow if we find and encourage our shipmates to join us, help us to find and know the disposition of all of our shipmates wherever they maybe.

Lastly I would encourage all of you to make a commitment to be at our 2014 Washington DC Reunion. Let's make the 2014 Reunion the best one yet!

I am always open to listen or visit with you, so contact me at your convenience.

Always your shipmate

Jim Miller the_millers_1977@q.com

Vice President

Danny Timm



Contact: dtimm46@yahoo.com

Ahoy shipmates. It's hard to believe that it has been 4 months since the reunion in Jacksonville. I think everyone who attended had a good time. I know my wife, Cissy, and I certainly did. It was great to see old friends and shipmates as well as making new friends.

Congratulations to Jim Miller and Dan Rogers for being selected as president and secretary respectively. My thanks go out to Glenn Johnson for serving as the Association president and for operating the ship's store for the past 3 years.

I would also thank Kirk for developing and functioning as webmaster for The Big Nickel. He has put a lot of his "blood, sweat and tears" into this endeavor and his efforts have not gone unnoticed. If you are in touch with other shipmates, encourage them to go to the website (<http://thebignickel.org>) and register.

Thanks to Carl Slack for serving as Executive Director of the Association as well as the Reunion Coordinator. Our reunions would not be as successful as they have been if not for his efforts.

We are now looking ahead to our 2014 reunion in Washington, DC. The 2012 reunion marked the 50th anniversary of commissioning of DDG 5 as the USS Biddle on May 5, 1962. The 2014 reunion will mark the 50th anniversary of the renaming as the USS Claude V. Ricketts. I hope as many shipmates as possible can attend. Again, if you are in contact with shipmates who have never attended, urge them to join us.

In the meantime, if any of you ever find yourselves in the Dallas, TX area drop on down to Tool. We're only 60 minutes southeast of Dallas, have a good view of the lake and the beer is always cold and the coffee hot.

Treasurer

Michael Margoles



Contact margeotesm@msn.com

Checking: \$25.75

Savings: \$37.38

Secretary

Dan Rogers



The minutes from the 2012 Reunion Crew Meeting can be found on [The Big Nickel website](#).

Executive Director

Carl Slack



Contact: rickettsddg5@yahoo.com

Shipmates,

I would like to take this time to thank Glenn Johnson for his service to the association as our President for the last three years. He also did a great job taking care of the ships store. Now the office and responsibilities of president has been placed in the capable hands of our shipmate James Miller. I know that we all thank him for taking on this job and wish him well. Kirk Neuman has volunteered to take over the ship store operations. Dan Rogers has taken over from Jerry Kaufman as secretary and will also be the newsletter editor. Thanks to Jerry for his good work.

The effort to bring the Charles F. Adams DDG-2 to Jacksonville is continuing and I feel certain that one day we will be able to work on bringing it back to her former glory. Like a giant jig saw puzzle it is one piece at a time and sometimes it is difficult to see the end. It will happen, it just takes time. The Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association (JHNSA) is in the best hands possible, and if they cannot make it happen, no one can. Their greatest need now is to raise money and demonstrate to the navy that they can provide a good home.

JHNSA needs all of our support, and another way we as individuals can show that support is to become a member of JHNSA. Go to www.adamsclassmuseum.org and become a member. If you are in Jacksonville stop in at the Visitor's Center, located in the [Jacksonville Landing](#) and see what they have there and talk with Pat Stroud. Become a member and, if you can, attend the annual meeting of JHNSA. Remember JHNSA will be able to proudly say the Adams is now ours when the navy releases the ship. Once that occurs there will be a lot of work that will need to be done on the ship. Plan on scheduling work periods for our association to do all the work you miss about the navy, chipping and painting.

We, the DDG-5 Crew Members Association, have now completed our commitment to fund Starboard #5 hull plate. Thanks to everyone who contributed. We have started on Port #5 hull plate and plan on completing that on or before August 2014. You can help by making a donation by going to [Save The Charlie Deuce](#) page on [The Big Nickel](#) website, printing the donation form and sending it along with your donation to our Treasurer Michael Margeotes (his address is on the donation form). These contributions are through the ACVA (Adams Class Veteran Association) which then uses the money to support preserving the memory of that class of ships. They pass the funds on to JHNSA as needed. Some of us are also members of this association, and I would urge all our shipmates to join. Go to www.adamsclassddgvets.org.

JHNSA and ACVA are both nonprofits and donation are tax deductible. It is important that we as an association continue to show our support for getting the USS Charles F Adams DDG2 to Jacksonville, FL. Remember she is the last of that proud class of ships, and can represent DDG5 as well as the other 22.

Carl Slack FTM1 63-68: Executive Director DDG 5 Crew Members Association

Reunion Coordinator

Carl Slack



Contact: rickettsddg5@yahoo.com

Ahoy, All Shipmates!

We just completed (well, maybe not “just completed” since this newsletter is a bit late getting out due to some health issues with both our Newsletter Editor and our Webmaster) our reunion in Jacksonville, Florida where we celebrated 50 years since the DDG-5 was placed in commission as the USS Biddle. We had 27 crew members and 14 wives in attendance. Be sure to visit [The Big Nickel website](#), specifically the [2012 Reunion page](#), to view these pictures and many others as well as other information related to the reunion.

Thursday night everyone enjoyed the pizza and a chance to catch up on what was happening in our lives.



Friday there was a tour of Mayport Naval Base. We were unable to tour a ship, due to most of the ships were underway and those few in port were undergoing repair. We did have a very interesting tour of the Chiefs Club. Chiefs Club at Mayport is one of the last in the Navy today, and is a museum with plaques and hats from a lot of navy ships past and present. One room is dedicated to Navy and Marine Medal of Honor recipients. Our stop there was very entertaining with a tour guide who could out talk me. We followed that with a look at today’s enlisted quarters which were really nice, makes one ready to go back on active duty. We enjoyed a

lunch at the mess hall. All I can say after seeing the barracks and eating at the chow hall it sure wasn't like the navy I was in.



Friday night we had a welcome reception with finger food.



Saturday morning was the crews meeting, with 21 members present. Minutes of the Crew Meeting can be found on [TheBigNickel](#) website under the 2012 Reunion page or by [clicking here](#). DDG-5 Crew Member Association officer elections were held with the following results:

- President: Jim Miller, HM3, 1971-1973
- Vice President: Danny Timm, RD2, 1965-1968
- Secretary: Dan Rogers, STG2, 1968-1969
- Treasurer: Michael Margeotes, FTM2, 1965 – 1970

The 2014 reunion location and dates was discussed and voted on. The only location put forth was Washington, D.C. Since this reunion will mark the 50th anniversary (July 28, 1964) of ship being recommissioned to USS Claude V Ricketts DDG-5, the dates of the reunion were set to Saturday, July 26 to Tuesday, July 28, 2014. This reunion will also mark the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Mixed Manning Demonstration (MMD). The ship made a port visit to Washington, D.C. in October 1964, with ceremonies for the MMD. Washington, D.C. has a lot to offer, but especially for us is the Navy Museum and the USS Barry DD 933, which is open to the public. We will try to have some of our events on the Barry. We hope to have former NATO mixed-manned crew members from German, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, and the United Kingdom attend the reunion. We are planning on making this a grand celebration for the ship and the Mixed Manning Demonstration. Washington, D.C. is a central location for a large percentage of our crew members, with easy access. I have begun work on getting this reunion organized and looking for a host from the local area. If you live in the Washington, D.C. area and are interested in being host for the reunion, please [contact me](#).

After the Crew Meeting, the crew and wives all gathered at the Lone Sailor Stature for a ceremony for our departed shipmates.



Saturday afternoon a cake cutting ceremony was held at the Adam's Class visitor's center for the USS Biddle DDG-5 commissioning 50th anniversary. The cake was cut by the three Biddle plank owners present at the reunion, Chuck Ketteringham, Tom Zukowski and Ray Parkinson.



There was also a presentation by Dan Bean updating the status of bringing the USS Charles F Adams DDG-2 to Jacksonville. It is still a work in progress but looks good. The greatest hurdle now is money (see my article above).

Saturday night was the dinner and a raffle of donated items.



It was a successful reunion, enjoyed by those in attendance. Some who had planned on coming did not make it do to last minute conflicts. The early registration award of a free junior suite was won by Howard Williams. Free upgrades to suites were won by Kirk Neuman and Raymond Parkinson. These perks, given by the Crowne Plaza, were worth over \$1000 and this is why it is worthwhile getting your reunion registrations in early. Also, for the coordinator, it helps when planning the reunion.

As the coordinator I try to make sure that everyone on our crews list is notified of the reunion. I also post reunion notices in those magazines and other associations that will let us do so with no charge. Because of the large number of reunions today the posting only appears in one edition and is than on their web site. Some such as the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) only allow a posting once a year for a member. I am presently not a member of the VFW so cannot post with them, but I do have someone else do it. Everyone should feel free to post a reunion notice. They can have themselves as a contact or use the association contact information.

Remember do not assume that I have contacted anyone, make the contact yourself, better more than once than never.

As I write this, the Crew Master List (CML) has 703 names, with 505 email addresses and 20 who receive their newsletter through the postal system. The [Big Nickel website](#) has 315 crew registered member. That leaves almost 200 who have not registered on the website. Registering on the website is not a requirement, but it is one way to keep track of crew members. Most of the latest additions to the CML have come through the website. I plan on posting a “looking for shipmates” in the off year between reunions in various magazines in an effort to contact those that are not in the CML. Included in this newsletter is a how to go about locating crew members.

Carl Slack FTM1 63-68

Reunion Coordinator DDG 5 Crew Members Association

A word from the Webmaster



Kirk “VJ” Neuman

Captain.Kirk@TheBigNickel.org

TheBigNickel.org or USSClaudeVRicketts.org

What’s happening

I finally managed to update the 2012 Reunion pages with photos of the various events and posting of the 2012 Crew Business Meeting minutes.

I also have on my website-to-do-list, the scanning of two cruise books for inclusion on the site under the Cruise Books pages. There is also an additional Cruise Book I need to grab from Dropbox and get ready for publishing on the site. To process these books does take time so I apologize if you’re looking for your cruise book and don’t see it.

Additionally, I am now also the ship’s storekeeper (“appointed” at the Crew Meeting at the 2012 reunion). As a result, I have the stock for the store in hand and am currently (in my guise as webmaster) updating the Ship’s Store page and the order form to present our wares in a proper fashion. On top of that, I’m working at

taking updated pictures of our wares to include on the webpage. To get a glimpse of what those wares are, see “**A word from the Storekeeper**” elsewhere in this newsletter.

Site Registration

There are many of you who are reading this newsletter who have not registered on the [website](#). Admittedly there are no great rewards for registering, but after registering you are permitted to make posts in the Crew Forum as well as emailing other shipmates via the Crew Roster page. The other reason to register is so that the Executive Council has a method of coordinating the DDG-5 CML put together by Carl Slack over many years and those who have registered on the site.

Additionally, there are more than a few of you who have registered on the site, but have not kept up with changes in email or physical addresses and phone numbers. If you have previously registered on the site, you can access your information by first logging in on the home page (or via the Forum page) using your username and password. After logging in, go to the Crew Roster page and find your name. Click on it and you should see a form filled in with the information you provided during registration come up. You can add or modify such information as you need. Once you're done, click the Update button at the bottom of the form.

If you don't remember your username or password, click the [Forgot your password?](#) link and you will be taken to a form where you can enter your email address to receive an email with your username and a password reset link. If your email address currently stored on the site is doesn't match your input, you will see a notice that an error has occurred and that there are no usernames associated with the entered email address. Should that be the case, [contact me](#) and I will work with you resetting your username/password.

The DDG-5 Crew Master List

As mentioned, Carl Slack has put together a DDG-5 CML containing 700 plus names of the men who have served on either the Biddle or the Ricketts during her career. However, it is estimated that between 4000 and 5000 men served on board during the nearly 30 years she was in service. Obviously, 700 out of 4000-5000 is a very small percentage. In the future, I will be including the CML on the website and provide a cross-correlation to the shipmates who have registered on the site. I plan on including some sort of color coding to show who has registered on the site and who is unreachable (either via email, phone or snail mail), among other things.

The Executive Council is hoping that you who are reading this newsletter will go through the CML and if you know of a shipmate who isn't listed that you will either contact them or the Executive Council so that we may contact them.

DDG-5 Crew Members Association Donations

If you've visited the site during the last couple of months you may have noticed the big yellow button on the home page. I created a PayPal donation capability should anyone feel generous and would want to make a donation to the Association. The Association does not ask for dues except for those that register for the reunions, so I passed the idea by the Executive Council and they gave me permission to put the donation button on the site. All donations go to the Association (I don't take a penny for me) and are used to help defray costs association with planning and setting up the reunions as well as other items such as postal costs of snail-mailing things like this newsletter to those that don't have email/internet access.

A word from the Storekeeper



Kirk "VJ" Neuman
Storekeeper@TheBigNickel.org

What's happening

I am now the Ship's Storekeeper (as of the Crew Meeting during the 2012 reunion), relieving Glenn Johnson who has done a fantastic job over the past 3 years. Currently the Ship's Store is in hiatus, waiting for me to (in my guise as Webmaster) update the Ship's Store web page which requires me (in my guise as Storekeeper) to take pictures of the various items we have so that you can see (more-or-less) what you're getting. Also, the order form needs to be updated to reflect cost increases and new items that we now have (ship's patches for both the Biddle and the Ricketts, and the 2012 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the Biddle challenge coins).

Once reopened, among the items the Ship's Store will have in stock (or can be ordered) are:

- Shirts (blue polo, and short and long sleeve denim) for either the Biddle or the Ricketts with the ship name, ship silhouette, and **DDG-5 Crew Members Assoc** embroidered over the left pocket and the option of additional embroidery you may wish on the right side. (Pictures are being worked as I type).
- Ball caps for either the Biddle or the Ricketts with the ship's name, ship silhouette and DDG-5 embroidered on the crown.



- DDG-5 50th Anniversary USS Biddle commissioning commemorative Challenge Coins with a bow-on ship silhouette on one side and the two ship's crests on the other.



- Coffee cups for either the Biddle or the Ricketts with the ship name, ship silhouette, and DDG-5



- Ship's patches for both the Biddle and the Ricketts.



I am also looking into the possibility of an optional on-line payment capability, probably through PayPal. Keep watching for the Ship's Store reopening sometime over the next couple of months.

Locating Crew Members

On the crews master list we have 700 plus names, with about 200 in the lost status. It is estimated that between 4000 and 5000 shipmates were aboard DDG5 in the course of her time in service. So you can see we are missing quite a few. If everyone would work on adding to our list of know addresses we can narrow the gap. Here are some ways you as shipmates can help do that.

If someone you know is retired from the Navy, here is a procedure to forward a letter to them through the Navy World Wide Locator.

1. Clearly write the name of the service member on the outside of the envelope. Seal the envelope and place appropriate postage on it.
2. Place the letter in another envelope with instructions to Navy Locator to forward to the service member. Include as much identifying information as possible, including full name, rate/rank, service number and or social security number, all duty station know, and everything else that might narrow the search.
3. Include required fee of \$3.50 per name payable to U>S> Treasury by check or money order. If you do not include the fee your letter will be returned. Fees are retained if research is unsuccessful in identifying the service member or a forwarding address.

The navy does not maintain current addresses on service members who have been discharged. However if a person has been discharged in the past year they can forward to the last known address in the service record if available. If a service member is in a retired status, and in receipt of retired pay, and sufficient identifying information provided, mail can be forwarded to current residence address.

Mail request to: Navy World Wide Locator

Navy Personnel Command (PERS-312)
 5720 Integrity Drive
 Millington, TN 38055-3120

You will receive notification when your letter is forwarded. If they are unable to forward your letter, your letter will be returned. They do not guarantee receipt or provide any further service. If you have any questions you can contact Navy Locator staff at 901-874-3388.

Have patience it takes time. If you are sure someone retired and get your letter back, you can assume one of two things they are deceased or have failed to keep the navy up to date, as required, with their address.

Tin Can Sailors also has a locator service. This is another organization I recommend joining. They will pass your request to their shipmate locator. For each shipmate located you agree to the donation of \$10. Donations are expected for deceased shipmates. Call for more information and to start a search at 877-846-2267. Remember as with the navy a successful search depends on how much you are able to provide, such as name of ship, years aboard, hometown and state, wife's name, middle initial, etc.

There are other ways to find, a shipmate. Use the computer to search. Post looking for shipmate name on magazines such as FRA, VFW, American Legion and any others you think of.

Brought to you by the DDG 5 Crew Members Association

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