

# U.S.S. MARS (AFS-1)

NEWSLETTER NO.5

SUMMER 1999



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## REUNION UP-DATE

In just a few short weeks, some of us will be gathering on the banks of the Ohio River, renewing old friendships and making new friends from Mars. It appears we will have a good turn-out, as all 80 rooms set-aside for the Mars, have been reserved. More rooms will be available, but you must make reservations now. \*\*\* 1-800 292-2079 USS Mars booking #4239 \*\*\* Please register all guests under the Mars booking number. If we have a total of 150 people, Dutch will be able to receive a substantial rebate for our organization.

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## USS MARS Reunion Welcome

Riverview Hotel

### REUNION COORDINATOR

ERNIE (DUTCH) MUELLER  
515 Hawthorne Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45205  
(513) 921-0310

### Cincinnati/Covington

October 15 - 17

668 Fifth Street  
Covington, KY  
(606) 491-1200



Reunion Headquarters

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Registration forms have been received from those listed below. We are sure to have many surprise guests in our hospitality room on Friday and Saturday. We have no restrictions, so a last minute decision to attend will be no problem and you are most welcome anytime during the reunion.

\*\*\*\*\* BRING A PICTURE OF YOURSELF FROM YOUR YOUNGER DAYS ON MARS \*\*\*\*\*

Earnie & Caroline Breeding 1963-65  
Michael J. Ciaccio 1973-75  
Roger L. Compton & Nina 1968-70  
James & Sandra Freeman 1963-65  
Steve & Judi Grossman 1963-65  
Frank R. Hart 1963-67  
Dennis M. Hatfield 1963-65  
Ron & Yukie Henning 1967-70  
George E. Johnson 1963-66  
Everett & Teruko Jones 1965-68  
Elmer & Colleen Kaiser 1973-76  
Joseph D. Kay 1968-70  
Albert & Doris Knutson 1971-72  
Gerald & Carol Kessinger 1963-65

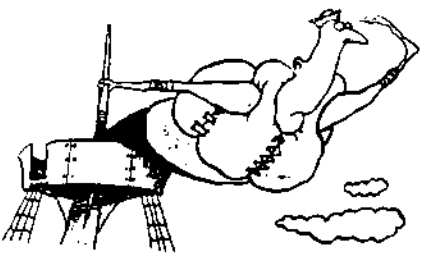


Not Sure if You're  
Coming or Going?

Bill & Eleanor Lada 1965-67  
John & Sharron La Page 1965-67  
Larry Martin 1968-70  
John D. Milliken 1968-70  
Dutch & Betty Mueller 1968-69  
Cecil & Kathy Oppie 1968-69  
Terry & Teresita Prinner 1969-75  
Frank & Judy Rawl 1965-67  
Robert E. Samson 1963-66  
Perry & Barbara Shelton 1967-68  
Walt & Sue Sirman 1963-66  
Marvin & Eda Snyder 1963-66  
Michael R. Toy 1963-65  
George C. Watkins 1965-66

For those who will be attending and your name is not listed above, please let Dutch know the days you will be attending this reunion.

Again, another full newsletter, as I continue to push the 55¢ postage to the limit. Letters for the MAIL CALL section continue to come in and the use of e-mail is being used at an increasing rate. \*\*\* Keep the mail coming. \*\*\* Five pages of this newsletter have been used for the name's and addresses of everyone who is on the mailing list. Have added 44 more names to the ship's crew list, including three Commanding Officers. We are going to need everyone's help in locating the crew. If you have the address of someone who is not on the mailing list, send it to me. The newsletter is not just for those who want to attend a reunion. It is hoped that through our newsletters, we will be able to keep in touch with our past shipmates.

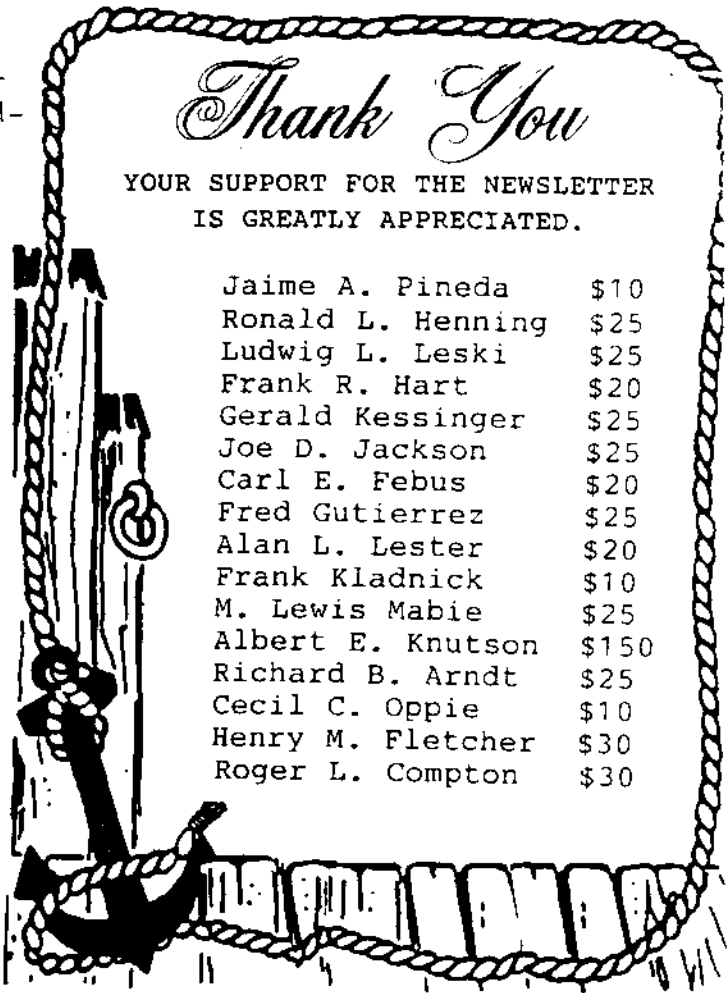


*In Search of*

It appears that our best source for find-past crewmembers, is on the inter-net. If you have a full name and state a

person could be living in, send it to Walt Sirman, Robert Schorfheide or myself. We will give it a try for you. A 10¢ phone call is all that it takes to find out if the person you are looking for, is there. A little time and effort can pay-off. I have names of hundreds of past crewmembers, but need some HELP.... Send what you have to one of us.

Donations are keeping our newsletter fund in excellent financial shape. Thank you for the support that is needed. I will continue to mail all past newsletters to everyone who comes on board.



*Thank You*

YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE NEWSLETTER IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

- Jaime A. Pineda \$10
- Ronald L. Henning \$25
- Ludwig L. Leski \$25
- Frank R. Hart \$20
- Gerald Kessinger \$25
- Joe D. Jackson \$25
- Carl E. Febus \$20
- Fred Gutierrez \$25
- Alan L. Lester \$20
- Frank Kladnick \$10
- M. Lewis Mabie \$25
- Albert E. Knutson \$150
- Richard B. Arndt \$25
- Cecil C. Oppie \$10
- Henry M. Fletcher \$30
- Roger L. Compton \$30

**ACCOUNT STATEMENT**

Spring 1999 Balance	\$548.84
New Donations	\$475.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,023.84</b>

Printing/envelopes	\$126.20
Postage	\$181.00

Summer 1999 Balance	\$716.64
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**MARS HISTORY**

Continue to send me your memories of events and the crew during your tour on Mars. If you remember an event differently than what is printed, please help with the needed corrections. Dates and events can get mixed up after so many years. Thanks to those who helped with the year 1966, which is on the last page of this newsletter.

I ask for your help on the year 1967, which will be in the next newsletter in February 2000. Keep the pictures coming, as I work all into the history book.

Newsletter NO.6 will be mailed in February 2000. Please have your mail to me in early January. If each one of us could help find one more past Mars shipmate, we could double our ship's crew list. Give it a try. ERJ

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I work at the Social Security headquarters in Baltimore, MD. These days, I do all my cruising in my own boat on the Chesapeake Bay.

Larry J. Summers (1968-71)

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**Moving?**  
Let us know.....

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I reported to pre comm detail of Mars in Oct 1963. We were being paid \$16.00 per Deim. That does not sound like much, but as a fresh caught Ensign I was being paid the grand sum of \$222.30 and 47.88 for food, so the \$16 was BIG money. Caroline came to San Diego from Athens, Ga where I had just completed Navy Supply Corps Basic Supply course. We were married on November 14, 1963 at 32nd Street Chapel. Neither of us had ever been West before. Our nearest relatives were in Michigan or Georgia. Charlie Hall the 1st Lieutenant and his wife took us under their wings, and helped us through every thing. Our reception was in their home. The wedding was on a Thursday afternoon. We were delayed for about an hour, so that we were coming out of the chapel just as rush hour was starting. Needless to say, traffic was backed up. I could not afford to take leave because it would cost me the per deim. I was successful in talking Ed Morris and Chuck Gardner, asst Supply Officer and Supply Officer, into Friday off. Jennifer was 18 months old and a friend from Supply School kept her for the wedding night. Friday for our honeymoon, we went to the San Diego Zoo. The wedding was the first function where the entire wardroom was involved.

Several weeks later, I had duty on Friday evening. Caroline picked me up Saturday morning. On a lark we decided to drive into Tiajuana.

While there I bought a gallon of rum. I had a Michigan license. I did not want to pay California tax, so I walked across the border. I wondered why the Crossing guard smiled when I told him I was going back to Michigan the next week. As I got back into the car I looked down at shiny brown shoes that only a Naval Officer would wear.

Earnie Breeding (1963-65)

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I will be unable to attend the USS Mars Reunion in October. Please keep me on the mailing list so that I can keep up with the group and possibly attend the next reunion. Thank you very much for the great newsletter that you have provided.

Richard B. Arndt (1963-65)

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I remember the old BMC who had the metal support ring cut out of his combination hat so it hung down on the sides and billowed up when there was a wind. I think his name was Johnson? He reminded me of a Wallace Beery type grizzled old chief out of a John Wayne movie. I have a vivid memory of him standing on the focsle, legs spread, leaning into the wind with his hands on his hips, and that hat ballooned up, chinstrap on, as we ran the ground swells pulling away from Hong Kong. Funny, the things that embed themselves into our minds.

Jerry Havens (1965-67)



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The day Mars arrived in Long Beach (12-63) was hectic. Loading commenced almost before the lines were secured. "Little John", Chief Johnson was on the maindeck, running the show. And I mean running! I crossed horns with Little John once: NEVER WALK ON LITTLE JOHN'S FRESHLY PAINTED DECK. I still have the tooth marks.

Frank Hart (1963-67)

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Everett, Thank you for thinking about us after the outbreak of tornados in and around Oklahoma City. We are very lucky as the storms skirted us by about three miles after being lined up on Mustang for what seems like an eternity. I do have an underground shelter so my family is never at a risk for this kind of weather. One of my business associates perished in the storm, but he did send his wife and four kids to a shelter after he opted to stay with his house.

We had plenty of warning--The local media had helicopters and ground personnel with the carnage until it left the OKC area. I feel confident they saved hundreds of lives. The devastation is unbelievable!!-----

Walter Sirman (1963-66)

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I served in MARS from 74-76 as Command Master Chief, CMAA, and SLJO. Although homeported in Sasebo, we spent most of our time on "errands" in the South, up to and including a couple of (boring) Indian Ocean cruises to East Africa. Great ship, great crew. Broke my heart when the USN was forced to return her to Vallejo for overhaul, vice SSK Shipyards in Sasebo. That evolution got scratched by self serving politicians claiming American shipyards workers were being deprived of a livelihood. I was aboard when MARS became last ship, last military unit, to clear Vungtao in early May, 75.

I left her in Subic June, 76, with orders to the USS OKLAHOMA CITY, where I did a CMC and CMAA "gig" from 76-78. Twilited as CMC Fleet Activities Yokosuka from 78-79, sliding out with 30 years service as of 1 Sep 79. Lived in Subic until 84, at which time I shifted berths to Rogers, Arkansas, where, I note in Jones Newsletter, another MARS ship mate resides. Again shifted berths in 1989 to Reno, Nevada, area where I remain to this day. Served 4 terms as FRA Branch 274 President, and now in second year laboring as Branch Sec.

In Loyalty, Protection, and Service.

Les Campbell (1974-76)

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I read with enjoyment the article from Don Landauer.

I remember Don and his lovely wife visiting the ship a few days ahead of deployment to see his "at sea home" and familiarize himself with the ship. When I met them they were in the captain's stateroom and after a brief visit I escorted them to the PSD at T.I. for his official ID card. We had quite a visit and I enjoyed chatting with both of them.

When Don finally checked onboard we couldn't locate an appropriate set of U.S. civilian ~~style~~ collar device for him to wear so we ended up using a set of U.S. round uniform buttons from an army uniform!! Anyway, they worked just fine. Heaven knows where the army buttons came from, but I'm glad we had them or Capt. Pickavance would have had a fit!!!

And we had a lot of fun in Don's class. I remember he was teaching about Management Principles and one of his assignments was to write down every single sequence, in order, of what steps it takes to SHAVE! I think it was Gantt chart method or something of the kind.

Don, being a proficient writer and published author, brought a couple of books he wrote about some great historical nautical places to visit on the west coast. ~~These books made~~ for some enjoyable reading.

Don, do you remember the biggest concern we had was how to get you back to the states from the Gulf? I appreciated the postcard telling us when you were finally arrived stateside. Keep in touch.

Bob Jackson (1990-92)

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## A Pilot Applies His Knowledge to Auxiliary Service

Story by Dick Woodbury

A stiff breeze ripples the National Ensign, the sun is high, and the skyline of St. Paul looms in the background. It's Indian Summer on the upper Mississippi, and we're aboard the tow boat Patrick Gannaway, tied up at its Camas Company mooring on the descending left bank at UMR 837.5. My partner, Burt Olson, is taking photos of Auxiliarist Ludwig (Lud) Leski seated at the helm, while I scout other locations.

Lud looks right at home on the bridge of the vessel, and he should! This Auxiliarist is a professional pilot with over thirty years of experience on the river. The Gannaway is 71' 9" in length and has a 19' beam. It was built in Indiana by the Maxim Company in 1977. Powered by twin V-12 engines that generate 850 hp, the vessel has 59-inch props, draws five feet of water, and has a gross displacement of 84 tons. Its job is to barge sand and gravel to a distribution yard up river at UMR 856.

It's time for the crew of the Gannaway to move two 195 x 35 foot barges loaded with 1,300 tons of gravel each (the equivalent of 116 semis) to the yard. A crew of three, consisting of Lud as pilot, along with an engineer and mate, will do the job. After the two barges are secured together end to end, Lud brings the tug up behind the rear barge and the engineer makes fast the cables that hold it secure. Then, he eases the tow away from the dock and into the channel for the 5-hour, 19 mile trip up river.

Lud grew up in St. Paul. After Johnson High School, he joined the Navy in August, 1961. His first ship was the USS Hassayampa, an oiler operating out of Pearl Harbor. Then he served for a year aboard the USS Mars, a new class of very fast supply ships. After that, Lud served 18 months as a boatswain mate on the USS Pyro, an ammunition ship in the Tonkin Gulf and Subic Bay areas.

After he completed his Naval service, Leski returned to St. Paul and civilian life. In 1966, he found a job as a deck hand with the Shiely Company. He worked as a mate and engineer, and in 1970 was licensed as a merchant marine officer by the Coast Guard. He has worked on the river over thirty years for different tow companies.

Lud and his wife Lou Ann have two adult sons. When he is not actively towing on the river, Leski is busy keeping the Patrick Gannaway ship-shape. There is always routine maintenance on the engines, electrical equipment and other gear aboard the vessel.

Leski is a staff officer in 08W-11 Flotilla 01 which meets at the St. Paul Yacht Club. He enjoys teaching marlinspike seamanship in the BS&S course, and his working display of knot tying is a popular training device with the students. Lud is a member of the Navy League, VFW, and AmVets. He also volunteers to pilot a research vessel for the Science Museum and is a member of a community awareness and emergency response group. When he gets the opportunity, he likes to spend time on his two house boats.

"I've been fortunate," says Leski, I make my living doing what other Auxiliarist's do for a hobby. I was able to get jobs on the river, and work into a career I really enjoy.

Ludwig L. Leski (1963-65)

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Your reunion package arrived and brought back many memories of ship and crew. So far I've contacted Walt Sirman of the original machine room group. We had a long telephone conversation. Hatfield and Arndt are next. Looking forward to seeing them all in October. So sorry to hear Milton Mc Farren passed away. He was a great guy. See you in October.

DP1 Alan L. Lester (1963-65)

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Three tours followed command of Mars. CINPAC REP to JSTPS SAC HDQTRS, Omaha. Chief of Staff, ComFair Med. Naples, Italy. Inspector General, Chief of Naval Reserve, New Orleans. Retired in New Orleans 1978 and have lived here since. I was Harbor Master at Municipal Yacht Harbor on Lake Ponchartrain and retired from there in 1993.

During my command, I had the big No."1" installed on the stack with red lights for at-sea display when necessary and white lights for in-port. A few senior officers weren't too enchanted, because I didn't have their permission. It was there when I was relieved. I've often wondered how long it lasted. If anyone knows, please inform me at the reunion.

Captain Albert E. Knutson (1971-72)

I had the good fortune to locate the last CO of Mars, Captain Ostertag. He informed me that those lights were still in place when the Mars was turned over to USNS in 1993. In a tape from the 1987 deployment, Captain Coonan talked about lighting up the flying holiday ensign with red, white and blue lights, turning on the No."1" red lights and playing PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN, after a un-rep was complete. The receiving ship loved it.

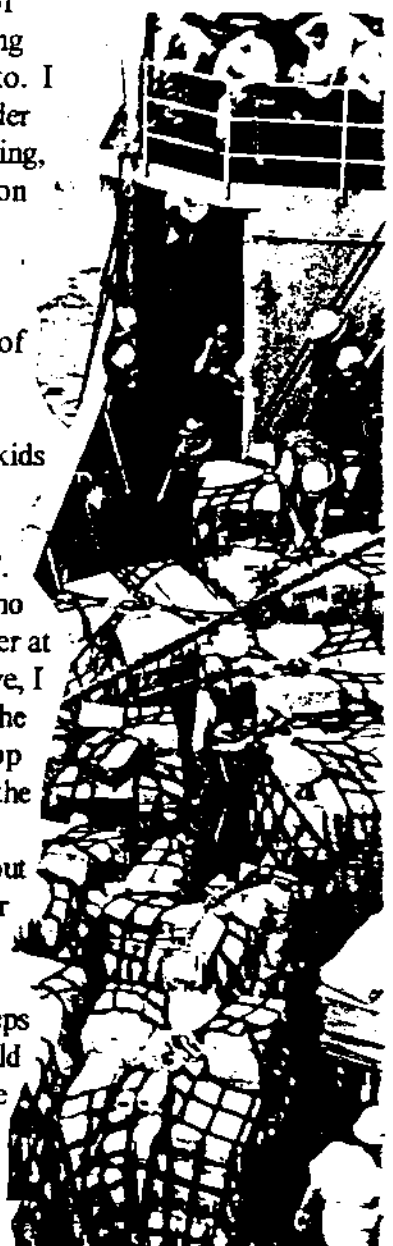
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Everett \*\*\*

I reported to MARS in her homeport of Yokosuka during a snowstorm in February of 1969. In two fast-paced weeks, we were fully loaded and began the first of many long Yankee Station and Market Time line swings since the ship's recent overhaul in Yoko. I was a brand new Lieutenant Commander, the Assistant Supply Officer for Commander Chuck Cuson. Over the next 28 months, I had some of the most rewarding, challenging, and hairy experiences of my 24-year naval career. I worked for three great skippers on Mars: Andy Anderson, Tom Nutt, and Al Knutson and two dynamo SupOs - Chuck Cuson and Joe Jackson. More importantly, we had top-notch crews, which allowed MARS to set about every unrep record and win most of the Es for auxiliary ships in WestPac. We weathered typhoons, rescued ships and crews, lost a helo with no loss of life (it was carrying a huge load of flour to a carrier and when it sank, we created the largest underwater donut off Vietnam), and, under the guiding hand of Captain Tom "Noah" Nutt, we moved the entire household goods, cars, pets, and even a couple of kids from Yoko back to Alameda, the real hostile zone in the early '70s.

I departed MARS in Danang in the spring of 1971, headed for graduate school in D.C. and then began a life of devious behavior as a Navy comptroller, unfortunately, with no more sea or West Coast duty. In 1984, I retired as a Captain, the Fleet Support Officer at the Ships Parts Control Center, Mechanicsburg, PA. From a "small world" perspective, I worked for soon to become RADM Jim Miller, the then XO at SPCC, who had been the SupO on MARS after Joe Jackson. Also, RADM Jack Cavanaugh, another MARS Top Chop, grew up in my hometown. After 15 years in private industry, most recently as the Chief Operating Officer of INS, Inc, a technical support service company in Northern Virginia, I retired again and began my current career as a private consultant working out of my home in Northern Virginia. My primary engagements now are teaching a career planning and management course to senior officer and senior enlisted folks at various bases and stations who are within two years of retiring from the service. It is very rewarding to be able to help these folks get focused on their lives after Navy and it keeps me in touch with the new cell phone, pager, and email based Navy. I believe you would find it interesting that all of these new fangled devices really don't do much to improve the quality of communications - just creates a lot more to deal with. Many thanks to Everett Jones and others working on the reunion. It has caused me to be in touch with many other Martians. Hope I can make it to Cincinnati.

Lew Mabie (1969 - 1971)





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 Thank you for the package of newsletters from our old shipmates. I appreciate you and others in keeping in touch and updated news on the crew of USS Mars. My tour on the Mars, was June 66 to June 69. This was followed by tours on the USS Markab (AR-23), USS Neptune (ARC-2), shore duty, Pearl Harbor, and finally the USS Oriskany (CV-34). Nothing in comparison was better than Mars. As snipes, we kept the engineroom spotless. The BT's and MM's had a good working relationship. Remember one time, while underway, an apprentice spilled a bucket of white paint from the lower level of the Bailey-Board on a Warrant Officer. I attended the reunion in La Jolla. One of our members owned the restaurant (George Munger). They showed some black and white film of our replishment job. Brings back memories of our XO, who I talked with at the reunion. He gave me his business card and invited me to visit his winnery here in Napa Valley and meet his brothers. Now, my deepest sympathy to the family of Henry James Wertin, XO USS Mars (1965-67) We are keeping in touch with the Mars gang here in the Bay Area (San Francisco). I have suggested to them, that we could host a reunion of the USS Mars by the Bay. Mostly Supply Division here. I'll miss the Cincinnati/Covington reunion. Say hello to our good shipmates.  
 Jaime A. Pineda (1966-69)

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I attended boot camp in San Diego, received orders to USS Kitty Hawk on a new program (pre-school indoctrination), spent six months aboard her at Bremerton shipyards. A lot of chipping paint and standing fire watch with welders. From there to radar class "A" school, Treasure Island. From there to Yokosuka as "RDSN" where "Mars" just departed to Subic, caught my old ship Kitty Hawk to meet Mars in Tokin Gulf. Boarded Mars via UH-46 helo. Made third class one month after arriving. Aboard Mars at last, as usual the Mars would go from Japan to Tiawan, to Vietnam, to Phillipines, to Vietnam to Japan; and back again. Yokosuka was home to all of us in one way or another. I realy enjoyed my time aboard the Mars, it was a unique time in the navy and the world. I made many friends and was very lucky to see all of the orient, Japan, Okinawa, Phillipines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore; all in a four year tour. Ended my four years in 1968. Became a private citizen. Served on Texas City Police Department, Galveston County Sheriff's Department; then as major appliance service agent. Enjoyed most of my service aboard the Mars, made many friends.

Royce E. McQuaig (1964-68)  
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Thought I better drop you a short letter. On April 1, I retired from my job with the county, after 30 years. I now work part time for Sears. It was real nice to get the last newsletter and read about my old ship mates. I won't be able to make the reunion, but maybe if they ever have it on the West Coast, I will try and make it.  
 Frank R. Kladnick (1963-66)

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Got this out of Navy Times. I'm LCDR Chuck Scanlon. USN (Ret). I was XO from Dec 1985 to Nov 1987. From there to NTCC TI until I retired Feb 1989. Currently I reside in Alameda and teach school locally. I'm still in contact with a few ex-shipmates. I'd love to get together but Canny in October is a bit of a reach. Anything going this side of the world? Regards to all former shipmates, love to hear from you.

Chuck Scanlon (1985-87)

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Thanks for all the information from shipmates and the reunion. Sorry I can't be there. After my discharge, worked on NP and BN Railroad in Tacoma and Seattle, WA for several years. Moved to Grand Forks, ND and sold real estate and managed 400 apartment units. I later moved to my hometown, Jamestown, ND and took over the Brass Rail Bar and Lounge. Managed bar for 16 years. Went to Las Vegas end of March 1997 for USS Navasoto (AO-106) reunion. While there on 1 April, had a heart attack. Spent two weeks in the hospital. Triple by-pass. Couldn't fly home, so my cousin in Phoenix took me infor six weeks while I recovered. Finely got home 1 June. I couldn't do anything, so I decided to sell everything I had over the next six months and moved to Apache Junction, AZ. I presently work for General Motors test driving new cars and trucks.

Fred Geigle (1965-68)

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I reported on board the Mars in Yokosuka in April of '65. The ship was fully manned by Plankowners at the time and I was among the first of the replacements to the original crew. Remained aboard through December of '67, advancing from AKA to AK2. Once the ship offloaded all of its originally intended aviation spare parts inventory to Subic Bay in 1966, I became the only AK remaining on board out of an initial complement of 13. My job became support of the HC-1 helo det. Mars was my first command rightout of 'A' School, and it will always have a special place in my heart. It started my love affair with Japan, where I remain today, working for the Family Service Center at Naval Air Facility Atsugi. Hope the reunion comes off famously, and is well attended. As it turned out, I retired as an AKCM on 30 years just weeks before the Mars was retired from active service to join the USNS fleet. Best to you, and thank you for the effort you are expending on all our behalf.

Jerry Havens (1965-67)

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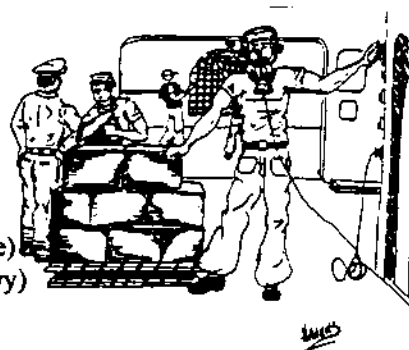


MEMORIES . . . .

. . . . from the crew

- AKAA OLSEN (Arrived with me from AK"A" School in April 1965)
- AKAA TATE (Arrived with me from AK"A" School in April 1965)
- AK1 MILES (Plankowner, slept above me in Supply berthing)
- AK1 BEESON (Plankowner, Supply Office, went on to become an AKCM, wrote wife a letter every day)
- AK2 BUCHANEN (Plankowner, busted to AK3)
- AK2 STONER (Plankowner, famous for being advanced to chief and busted on at least two occasions)

- SKC LAIRD (Plankowner, epitome of Old-Navy work-a-holic chief, very positive influence on me)
- SK1 ROCILLO (Plankowner, ran Shipping/Receiving, kept calling me 'Hebens', drove me crazy)
- SK2 "PEEWEE" MOYER (Plankowner, baby with boxing gloves tattooed on bicep, a little bit crazy)
- SK3 RIDZEWSKI (Plankowner, made 2<sup>nd</sup> in '65 and was a great roll model)
- SK3 HOGAN (Plankowner, Ski's best friend and a very good friend of mine, great guy)
- SK2 DAILY (Plankowner, outstanding sailor, went on to become an LDO, super memories)
- SK2 DIVELY (Plankowner, editor of first ship's cruise book, design winner for ship's logo)
- SK2 "SQUIRREL" HART (Plankowner, responsible for only IBM electric typewriter in Supply Office)
- SKCM TUCKER (Plankowner, one of Navy's original E-9's, swore I'd never get anywhere in the Navy)
- SK1 ASHLEY (Plankowner, first shipboard mentor, taught me not to play poker with Filipinos)
- SK3 WALTON (A gambling fool, always cleaned up in berthing craps games)



WMS

- SK3 ALLEN (Walton's favorite 'mark', retired as SKC from CFWP Atsugi Japan, drives taxi Yokosuka)
- SK1 TUNE (Plankowner, short and myopic, some great stories of liberty in P.I.)
- DK2 SIRNA (Plankowner, a whiz on the AN/UYK-5 computer, taught me keypunch and sorting)
- SK1 WORTHLY (Plankowner, ex-CT, frustrated SK in charge of stores accounts and records)
- CS2 BOSTON (Plankowner, retired from Mars, returned as club manager in Atsugi, retired from NEX in Yokosuka)

These are men I can picture as clearly today as when I was growing amongst them within the confines of USS Mars (AFS-1). I was recruited by SK2 Dively to do cartoons for the first cruise book. We spent five days in a guest house in Tokyo provided by the Daiwa Printing Company, as we laid out the final pages and scrambled to create cartoons and text to fill them. CWO Tex Western's personal tour of Building J-39, our primary supply staging area in Yokosuka, included pointing out the six foot high "No Smoking" sign emblazoned in the upper-most rafters, which he had been tasked to paint when he arrived in Yokosuka with the first occupation forces in late 1945. SK1 Ashley's advice on how to stay out of trouble in Yokosuka, stay sober and hold onto your wallet, while never followed, rings true today. Being taken under the wings of SK3's Hogan and Ridzewski on my first foray into the town of Olongapo. Visiting the Shamrock and Acme bars, and making the amazing trip out to Bahuk Bahuk's East Inn with them. Losing my wrist watch the first night, along with some skin where it was yanked from my wrist.



Master Chief Tucker's stern, cigar chewing, face, always disappointed when I would allow my loyalty to support of the helos of HC1 pull me from the replenishment chores he wanted me to be performing. The sad and weary eyes of Chief Laird as he explained yet again some relatively simple transaction. CDR's Baumgardner and Sapannos control over the immense job of managing Mars' supply mission, with the bullish support of LCDR Stombaugh, followed by the fastidious time-and-motion management style of LCDR Miller, as Assistant Supply Officers.



LT's Carter and Lombardi, as dedicated leaders as I had to that point witnessed. Genuinely nice men who tried their best to shield us peons from the vagaries from above. LT Walsh, the Disbursing Officer who sold me his red 1962 Chevy Impala for \$900 MPC from my first reenlistment bonus of \$1700 in 1967.

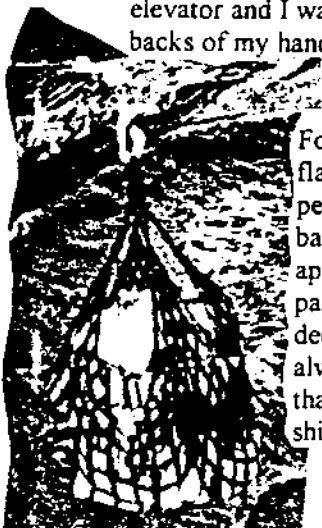
Liberty in Khaosung Taiwan, Hong Kong, Olongapo, Sasebo, and Singapore. Sitting just off Pratas Reef for nearly a month shortly after reporting aboard, as we participated in the salvage of Frank Knox, a destroyer that had impaled its sonar dome soundly on the well charted obstacle. Following its floating we accompanied the tow to Khaosung for a few days of great liberty. The brush with the fishing boat in the fog of Tokyo Bay as we returned from a deployment. Sailing close to the shore of Viet Nam as we vert-repped the gun fire support vessels that pounded the gorgeous coastline. Watching in awe as the Oklahoma City made its approach for un-rep, then watching its rooster tail as it made its high speed departure. The Coast Guardsmen coming out to pick up fresh fruits and vegetables for their Loran and Lorac stations on

the islands off of the cost of Cambodia, seeing their excitement when we threw in some Project Handclasp ice cream bars. Anchoring in DaNang and Cam Rahn Bay to in-rep the myriad ships that swung at anchor there. It almost seemed you could walk from deck to deck all the way to shore the harbors were so full.

One morning in late 1965, I was scrambling to my break-out station in bulk hold number two as we were departing Hong Kong. I had on my leather shoes and had to take the weather decks because the fork lift passageway was jammed with pallets and activity. The deck was wet and when I arrived at hold two the hatch was still shut, as it had to be when we were in port. I threw open the scuttle and slithered through, using my poor habit of grasping the edge of the lid to steady myself as I started my descent. The lid latch didn't work and it slammed on my two hands when a ground swell caused the bow to pitch and my feet slipped off of the ladder. A Shipmate who witnessed this on the main deck quickly pulled the scuttle open causing to slide thumping down the ladder in pain and shock. It was a near degloving of the skin on the backs of my hands, and they ran with blood, but they didn't hurt. My pain was all in my arms, back and head which had been pounded against the steel of the ladder. A quick ride up the large center-deck cargo elevator and I was rushed to sick bay. I still have the scars, and wet weather causes considerable pain to the backs of my hands, but this did provide me with my best shipboard injury story of my 30 year career.



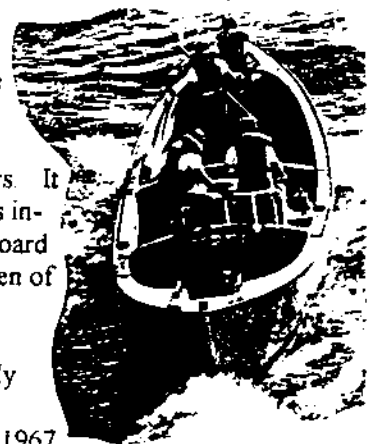
Following the Destroyer-man's management of CAPT Medley, it was quite a shock to experience the flamboyant leadership style of CAPT Watkins. As an airdale myself, (as was the custom of the time, most people had nicknames and mine was "Super Airdale", which I wore emblazoned across the back of my ballcap), I basked in the crews amazement at our new Skipper. Swim calls and helo rides were all greatly appreciated. The Supply Officer did go a little crazy when he was forbidden to deck load rags, haze gray paint and toilet paper for our departure from Yokosuka, because the presence of the pallets on the weather decks would detract from the esthetics of our ship as we sailed forth to replenish the world. CAPT Watkins always smiling face, (some people could not believe any man could have that many teeth in their mouth, or that teeth could be that white), would appear in passageways, offices and virtually any other location on the ship. Wearing no collar devices he would greet us warmly, ask about our day and then be on his way. His



final H-46 flight, vert-repping USS Ajax in Khaosung harbor while a crowd of Chinese lined the seawall to watch in wonder, ended in a belly flop on the Ajax helo platform. But even in this the Skipper earned the admiration of the crew as he managed to delay our pier-side recovery operation long enough the ship had to remain tied up to the pier overnight. I watched him as he refused to be satisfied with the placement of the lifting slings. His efforts negated the need, at least for one night, for the long ferry ride in the dirty one-lungers that plied the harbor. In contrast, CAPT Riley, with his submarine experience, could also be seen popping up in the damndest places, but usually in coveralls with a distracted look on his face while he traced piping and lines as they traversed bulkheads and passageways.



My final responsibility onboard Mars was to serve as the supply liaison and helo ops coordinator on the deck of USS Clark County, an LST that broached on a beach of sunny South Viet Nam. We lost an H-46 in that operation as it settled into the sea during a routine ship-to-ship movie transfer. In all, it was a fitting way to end my first actual tour of duty with the U.S. Navy. I left the ship in Subic Bay in December of 1967 as an AK2 enroute to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron ONE (VQ-1) in Atsugi, Japan. Making First Class on that tour I believed myself to be on a fast track, but then languished, not making chief until 1975. I picked up Senior Chief on board USS Midway in 1979 and Master Chief at Human Resource Management Center, Yokosuka, Japan in 1982. My last three tours in the Navy were as a Command Master Chief, and I retired on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993. I found it poignant they decommissioned the Mars in the same year, subsequently re-commissioning her as a USNS vessel.



This is far too long, and I apologize, but my mind simply flows when I recollect my time onboard Mars. It has been said that every man needs his own war, and Viet Nam was mine. While I spent many months in-country with VQ-1, my initial memories of that lush green land of pain come from my time spent on board Mars. I was still young then. I was still a hawk. I had so much to learn and from the decks and the men of USS Mars I learned so much.

I would love to correspond with any other Mars sailors of the period April 1965 to December 1967. My email address is: [JCHavens@atsugi.navy.mil](mailto:JCHavens@atsugi.navy.mil) or [gchavens@hotmail.com](mailto:gchavens@hotmail.com)

JERRY HAVENS, AKA-AN-2, April 1965-December 1967

### WE MOURN THE PASSING OF THESE SHIPMATES



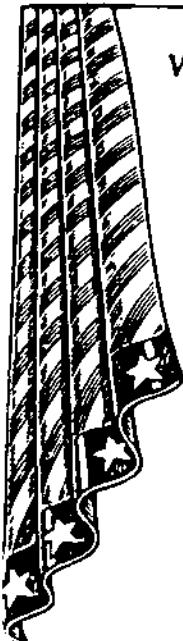
Captain Russell C. Medley  
Commanding Officer 1963-65  
Passed away in 1993



Captain Horce (Rex) Riley  
Commanding Officer 1966-68  
Passed away June 1990

Commander Belmont W. Cousins  
Executive Officer 1978

MCM Frank C. Drew  
Command Master Chief 1967-68  
Passed away August 1988





## Commanding Officer

Captain George C. Watkins

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CDR. H.J. Wertin

### Supply Officer

CDR. J.M. Baumgardner  
CDR. L.M. Sappanos

**M**ars is off the coast of Vietnam as the New Year begins. One last swing is made through Market Time and Yankee Station, before heading back to Yokosuka. While at sea, work starts on the renovation of the crews mess decks and library.

The month of February is spent underway, except for six days in Subic Bay. Another first for Mars, as a complete vertrep of a carrier is accomplished, while steaming close alongside. ZAP-THEM, the words used by the captain for vertreps, is now being done on an ever increasing pace. Captain Watkins was most often the pilot of one of the helo's, when the ship was anchored.

On one occasion, a detour was made, as Mars made a full speed, 360 degree circle around a Russian freighter. Midnight in Moscow was played on the ships top side speakers, as the crew relaxed and showed the Russian's the good U.S. Navy life.

Returning to Yokosuka the first week in March for repairs, up-keep and back loading. Mars spends 36 days in port, the longest in-port time period in over fifteen months. Work continues on the renovation of the crews messing, CPO quarters and the wardroom by SRF and ship's personnel. A ships party is enjoyed by the crew during this stay in port. More new faces are seen on board, as plankowners continue to be transferred.

**A**pril finds Mars underway again, as two swings are made through Market Time and Yankee Station. Break-outs continue almost around the clock during this time period. Mars sets a new record, as 286 ships and stations receive supplies during the month. This is a record that may never be broken. A vertrep of the USS Des Moines in Da Nang, while she was firing her 8-inch guns, was a typical example of Mars activities and capabilities. Leaving the line in mid May, Mars spends a few days in Kaohsiung. Then on to Sasebo for three days of training and an ORI inspection by ComSerGru Three Staff.

**R**eturning to Yokosuka on May 27th, a collision occurs in dense fog, at the entrance to Tokyo Bay, with a small Japanese merchant ship, the Seiwa Maru. Only minor damage to both ships, as a paint touch-up is all that's needed.

The ships newly renovated library opens. With it's luxurious atmosphere and red carpet, a nice break for those who want a nice place to relax. The newly completed First Class Mess opens on the mess deck, as work continues on the crew spaces.

**S**upply Department has a change of command in June. Commander James M. Baumgardner is relieved by Commander Louis M. Sappanos, as Supply Officer. After a twenty nine day stay in Yokosuka, Mars is loaded and gets underway the last week in June.

1966

**M**ars spends the month of July in the operating area off Vietnam, with an ever increasing number of ships in the Seventh Fleet.

Admiral Horacio Rivero, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, makes a visit on board to observe a vertrep of the USS Oriskany and USS Dale.

During the month, while underway, some type of underwater explosion occurs. This unexplained event, gives the ship a good jolt. Leaving the line for a few days, Mars heads for Kaohsiung to load fresh provisions.

A rare personnel inspection is held before arriving in Kaohsiung. While in port, a group of the crew took a load of supplies to a missionary hospital high in the mountains. Back on the line, with a special delivery to a nuclear submarine, that has surfaced near the Mars. Steaks and ice cream are ZAPPED to them. The CO is the captain's brother, Commander David Watkins, who later became CNO.

**A**ugust is spent in Yokosuka. Another ship's party allows the crew to enjoy the good life of a Martian, as everyone on board receives a Mars plaque. A two day climb is made to the top of Mount Fuji, and a Mars plaque is placed at the last rest station.

September 1st, and Mars once again heads south. Another busy three weeks are spent on the line. During this trip, the ship was fired upon by the VC. The word was passed that the ship was receiving in-coming fire. Almost everyone went to the port side, to watch thirteen rounds fall far short of their target. Just a reminder that a war was going on out here. While waiting for darkness, on a warm evening with calm seas, a race was held between two number 1's. The USS Sacramento (AOE-1) and Mars make a challenge for the fastest ship. The Mars, with superior take-off speed, pulled out to a commanding lead. The Sacramento, with her power plant from the battleship, Kentucky, was soon over-coming the Mars. As the lead was about to be relinquished, our captain declared the race over and Mars the winner. Needless to say, Mars was soon left in the wake of the Sacramento, as she steamed past. A little something different from the routine. As darkness fell, the two ships proceeded into the Gulf of Tonkin to replenish the carrier task force.

**R**eplishment gear stowed, the ship heads for Singapore. A detour is made to cross the Equator. Plans have been made well in advance for this event. A meeting was held in the first class mess by the "Shellbacks". Much to their surprise, they found themselves locked in by some very zealous "Pollywogs". Fortunately for these shellbacks, they had phone communication to the bridge and the CO. General Quarters was sounded and the shellbacks were freed.

A 4 day visit in Singapore and a 5 day visit to Hong Kong, Mars returns to Yokosuka on October 20th. Soon the three weeks in Yoko, go by too fast and the ship is underway in November.

**S**everal weeks on the line, into December, when Captain George Watkins is relieved by Captain Horce Riley. Returning to her homeport on December 20th for the holidays, Mars has spent a total of 215 days away from Yokosuka this year. Nine swings were made through Market Time and Yankee Station as the ship set new records and Mars' firsts. Only a few plankowners remain.