

USS STODDARD ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



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Napa Winery



Fisherman's Wharf



Reunion update -
Sacramento, CA
from president, dave pietz...

We have 33 signed up for the reunion as of July 1st. Please send in your registration as soon as you are certain you will be able to be with us in Sacramento.

The hotel provides shuttle service to and from the airport, and a buffet breakfast each morning.

The reunion packets will include brochures, maps, and coupons.

On Thursday we will start our San Francisco tour. We will visit Fisherman's Wharf



SS Jeremiah O'Brien

and have our memorial service on the SS Jeremiah O'Brien. We will go over the Golden Gate Bridge to a Napa Valley winery.

Friday we will visit Old Sacramento and Sutter's Fort. This will include a docent tour of the State Capitol and the Viet Nam War Memorial.



USS STODDARD DD566
WWII * Korea * Vietnam

17th Reunion - Sacramento (Sept. 28th–Oct. 1st) - 2005

There will be a gold panning demonstration—each person will have a chance to pan for gold. We will have lunch at the Marshall's Gold Discovery Park.



Saturday evening we will have our banquet at the Towe Ford Museum. The collection of 180 models were owned by Edward Towe, a Montana banker. The Museum is now known as the Towe Auto Museum. Saturday morning and afternoon will be free time to explore on your own.

**HAWTHORN
STUFFS**

Tel: (916) 441-1200



STODDARD WW II YEARS

USS Stoddard DD-566

The USS Stoddard was named for James Stoddard who was born at Port Robinson, CW (Canada), around 1838. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery during the Civil War.

The Stoddard was nicknamed "The Steaming Demon." The Stoddard keel was laid March 10th, 1943 at Seattle, Washington, by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corp. - Commissioned on April 15, 1944, with Commodore Horace Myers in command.

Here are some very special memories of the Stoddard's WWII Crew.

The Crew Remembers...

Merle Weedlun: I had the privilege and honor of being a plank owner of the USS Stoddard. It was amazing to be a part of the assembly of steel and human beings to produce one of the most versatile and deadly fighting ships, a Fletcher class destroyer. With 5 - 5" guns, 5 twin 40mm's, 7 - 20mm's 10 torpedoes, numerous depth charges, sonar, radar, computers, stable elements, we could challenge anything underwater, on water, on land and in the air. As Senior Watch Officer, I made the first entry in the ship's log.

There are a few personal recollections that went along with the early life of the ship. I would guess the original crew was about 1/3 regular or experienced men and about 2/3 recruits or personnel who had never been on a ship. The oldest people on board was Capt. Myers, Lt. Munger (chief engineer) and George Vonderheid (S1, SK2) who was a draftee at age 36. I was 23 years old, and had a year plus experience on a World War I four stack destroyer trying to just stay afloat in the Aleutians. I had completed a 3-month course at Fire Control School in Washington DC and was ready to transform from an engineering officer to gunnery officer.

Some interesting things happened during our test trials. They ran that ship through the ringer, full speed trials, maximum turns, and one was going full speed astern for an hour. It was pretty strange seeing the beating from the waves breaking over the stern. I don't think the depth

charges were in the racks. Close to completion, someone put steel filings in a main shaft bearing. Supposedly it was a crew member who didn't relish going back to the war zone.

Once coming into dock, a Pilot had the Conn and he was moving pretty fast. Capt. Myers knocked him off the box he was standing on and ordered "all engines back full." The ship started to shudder and we "skidded" to a stop. Then the Captain had the engines put forward to offset the reverse motion and to unload the boiler. After popping all the safeties and some oscillation, we finally got safely moored.

We went to San Diego then for antisubmarine training and some gunnery practice.

Next we went to Pearl Harbor and got a good shake down operation and passed with flying colors and were sent to the Aleutians. We did make 7 runs on the northern island and Paramershoo Peninsula. Four times we shore bombarded their installations. We always went in at dusk so we could get out at dawn. We had no air cover and apparently neither did they since we never were attacked. Bad weather delayed other strikes. On one occasion, a large ice flow covered the horizon. Our radar looked like we were making a land fall. Ten feet of ice above the surface usually represents about 70 ft below. There was a certain amount of boredom involved. Lt. Proctor had a good sense of humor. I remember when I relieved him as OOD, he usually had a little note on the board. Two I remember: "Avoid the war with 94," and "Sweep and flee with John McKee."

One of the bombardments ended rather badly. The weather was turning for worse and when we completed the bombardment all ships turned 90 deg. into one of those williwaves and we hit some big ones. The gun crews of one destroyer didn't get their

forward mounts trained forward and the huge waves smashed into the sides of the mount's turrets, crushing and killing one or two of the gun crew. We took such a pounding that our gyroscope tumbled and we had to go on magnetic compass. It took over an hour to get the gyros back in commission.

When we left the Aleutians and went to Okinawa, the battle there was closing down. When we steamed into the harbor we saw beat up ships anchored in the bay, most of them destroyers - 122 destroyers were hit by kamikazes at Okinawa. 41 were either sunk outright or considered total losses by the Navy and scrapped. The other 81 destroyers were repaired and returned to service. All told, in all ships, 4,907 sailors lost their lives and 4,8824 were wounded in the greatest air-sea battle of all time.

When we went on picket duty the attacks were infrequent. Our three destroyers made contact with about 6 of them one evening. I had just gone on watch in the director when we got word from CIC that bogies were sighted on our port bow. We trained our director and 2 5" ready guns, spotted them visually and they were 2 engine planes. Since we had no 2 engine planes in the area, I ordered "Action port, control on target, commence firing." When general quarters sounded and guns were firing, I never saw stations manned so fast. The plane we were trained on was coming in high and then started to dive. I looked up from my scope (probably a 2-3 scan) and saw our burst following the plane down on our sister ship (the Wren, I think). I ordered cease fire, but couldn't stop the shells in flight. It was frightening to think we might hit our own sister ship. I was looking through my scope and saw the plane crash in the water, and I did see a sailor jump overboard from a 40mm gun mount.

Then we swung our guns to starboard to pick up another plane high above. The 5" gun crews hated that slew rate, that I could automatically swing all batteries around at a high speed.



Stoddard WWII Years continued from Page 2

We got on their plane and in short order our computer solved the solution and we chopped his tail off. I never did spot the plane coming in low astern of us that our 20 mm knocked down.

The Stoddard and two other destroyers patrolled a triangular pattern throughout the night. Around 2AM a lookout heard a man calling out. The captain brought the ship around, we located the voice, trained a search light on him, and lowered a whale boat to pick him up. It was the sailor I had seen abandoning ship. It seems like he had survived a hit on another destroyer and this time he decided to get off early!

We later went to Leyte and joined up with a tremendous task force that made the final assault on the mainland of Japan; 4 large groups, 3 American, 1 British. Each group consisted of 3 large battleships, the next circle 3 large carriers and 2 small carriers, the next circle 3 large cruisers and 2 light cruisers and then an outer circle of 24 destroyers (3 squadrons). These four groups steamed as a unit and covered the horizon - the equivalent of a city of approximately 160,000 sailors.

We destroyers had fun picking up pilots who had to ditch their shot up planes. If they were in our sector, we took off at full speed, usually chasing another destroyer because each pilot was worth enough ice cream for the crew. We didn't have ice cream machines on board our ship. The pilots were so grateful for being picked up, but before we got them back to the stability of the carrier, they usually got real sea sick and were glad to get off our rolling ship!

With the war winding down, they worked up a plan to send a division of destroyers into Tokyo Bay and shore bombard Tokyo. Sort of a Doolittle strike, except by water instead of by air. Our division was given this dubious honor because we were the first to shore bombard the Japan homeland up north. Fortunately, bad weather delayed the strike and then came the amazing news of the Hiroshima atom bombing. Our final action then became to dispatch 1/10th of our crew to form the Naval landing party to set up the occupation force to control

Tokyo Harbor operations. We went into Tokyo 3-4 days after the Missouri and tied up at the docks. We were soon making liberty in a country that completely surrendered under their orders of their god and Emperor. I couldn't believe that a country who could send out suicide pilots, did not resist occupation forces. I never heard of any soldier or sailor killed by any bitter resistance forces.

Overall, my memories of the Stoddard are the highlight of my 20 years service in WW II and Korean War. We had a well trained crew. One person I might mention that was the glue that stuck the ship together - **Danny Rizzolo**. He was a yeoman who delivered the plan of the day to the ward room. He knew what the officers, the chiefs and the crewmen were doing and thinking. Danny made us all feel like we were a team. It was only natural that Danny served as an Alumni Chaplain for so many years. God bless you, Danny.

When we got back to San Diego, in December 1945, I received orders to report immediately to the USS English as Executive Officer . . . that ship was in Tokyo!



LeRoy Bill: When the war was over, I was a GM2/c. We had no use for the guns and my watch changed from a gun watch to being on the helm, which I enjoyed. To be able to handle the ship, I discovered the power the ship had, especially in storms.

Being the Navy, there were no other instructions except to keep the ship on the headings that were given to me by the officer who had the Conn. I soon learned that the ship didn't drive like a car, but rotated from the center and once I'd learned that, it was easy. As the ship

came over the crest of the wave and slid into a trough, the compass would slide off the heading very quickly, especially in stormy weather. You learned to be able to spin the wheel and catch the ship as it came up so that you were on the right heading.

My greatest wish was to be able to be on the helm as we came along side to fuel or take on stores. I was allowed to bring our ship to the other ship, but not along side. That job was turned over to Pat Duncan, who had the experience. Those who own boats know the feeling of being on the helm. Imagine doing it with our destroyer!

The one thing I did learn, that when the Captain is on the bridge, his orders override all others. This is an experience that I'll always be grateful for having had.

Don Wagner: The one thing I still have from the Stoddard, is an old, yellow news sheet put out by our communications staff, with no date, but has news from Europe. It was issued most likely either while we were getting underway for our return to the States, or while we were underway because it lists our steaming time, speed (13 1/2 kts), great circle. Then it lists:

Yokusuka - Midway 2240 miles 7 days;

Midway - Pearl 1150 miles 3 1/2 days;

Pearl - San Diego 2315 miles 7 days;

San Diego to Panama 2700 miles 8 1/2 days;

Panama to New York 2018 miles 6 1/2 days

Dominic Altieri: I was drafted to the Navy. I was a machinist and I thought I would be sent to join the army. But they sent me to Rochester to study refrigeration, then onto duty on the Stoddard. I remember so well those storms at sea, the swells and the ship pitching...I did not swim well, so I was very leery of being on the deck - my General Quarter duty station. When we were in the Aleutians, it was so cold. If you hit that water, you'd last only a few minutes.

We were patrolling in Tokyo Harbor during the signing of the peace treaty. I remember the small landing craft that came along side, with rifles, as part of the disarming task. Every man on board our ship could get a rifle, some of the officers got sabers. When we went ashore, the Japanese children offered us food, we gave them candy.

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Ray Harris: While we were in Yokosuka Bay, shortly after the surrender, a landing craft came by with Japanese army rifles and bayonets. Anyone who wanted a souvenir was able to take one. I still have my rifle, minus the bayonet (I think the kids did away with it). I also have a Japanese rain poncho, still in its package.

In 1945, our trip from Japan to Philadelphia was via San Diego and the Panama Canal. Somewhere along the Mexican coastline, the weather was good and the temperature was high. The Stoddard cut power and stopped so that all hands could go swimming in the warm coastal waters, believe it or not. Oh yes, we did enter Philadelphia Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1945. It was a very special homecoming for me, then a young 18 year old sailor!

Ernie DeYoung: I remember the hurricanes at sea; we were over 250 miles off shore. All the life lines and ready boxes tore away. I remember when we were at Dutch Harbor, in the Aleutians, there was a distress signal sent by a fishing boat. When we got the message and proceeded to look for the boat, we discovered that the little fishing boat was right alongside us! We escorted the boat back to the safety of the harbor. I remember we were part of Squadron 72 - there were 9 destroyers and 2 obsolete cruisers .

Bill Hurst: I have many fond memories of my time on the Stoddard in the latter part of World War II. I remember the crew and officers as a mature and experienced group of men. Whether fueling at sea, shooting at shore targets or shooting down kamikazes, we operated as a trained unit. We knew we were good and were always ready to prove it.

Yet when I look back on it, the crew was made up mostly of 18 to 20 year old young men, some who had not even completed high school. The officers were old men in their early twenties. I was really an old man as Executive Officer, all of 26 years. We had all grown up fast with the tempo

of operations and the responsibility of operating a new destroyer in conditions of war.

In my later peacetime tours on destroyers, I often wished I could have the old World War II Stoddard Crew on board—they were the best!

Gene Deffebaugh: When I got on the Stoddard, I met Lt. Bill Hurst, who was from San Obispo, also from the class of 1938 & 1943. I said to him, “I’ll bet I used to buy donuts from the bakery where your mom worked!” Since those days, I still keep in touch with Capt. Bill. When we were in Tokyo Harbor during the signing of the peace treaty, everyone was there celebrating the end of the war; and then there were these two that got hold of two kamikaze planes, and were doing a suicide dive bombing run. So during the celebration, we had to man the guns and shoot them down.

Gene Downs: I was a seaman on the Stoddard, I retired from the Navy as Chief of damage control. While we were in Okinawa, one day at sundown, we were patrolling 50-60 miles offshore. At supper time, general quarters sounded and we manned turret #3. There were 8 - 10 kamikaze planes headed for the ship. We shot our guns for about 15 minutes, and got them all. One time we were steaming with the destroyer Higby. A first class storekeeper jumped off the ship. We used the ship’s bow hook and found him. I remember heading to Tokyo Harbor. A few days before we got there, I was in the crows nest. From there, looking from horizon to horizon, there was nothing but ships! It was an unforgettable sight. I got a Japanese rifle while at Tokyo Harbor; I gave it to my uncle. I remember the skipper sitting on the bridge, shooting at the fish . . .

Don Rhinehart: Being a chow hound, I remember our trip home to San Diego, and the Thanksgiving dinner that we *almost* had. (There is a copy of the menu posted on the Stoddard website.) We had been battling a storm for several days, and Thanksgiving was no exception. In the end, some of us found that it was almost impossible to keep any food on the tables, and most of it landed on the deck!

Alva Carlton: Captain Myers had a large flag made (it was VERY large). He called

it his “what the hell flag.” When another ship ran up a signal flag that was obviously wrong or misleading, Capt. Myers would have his “what the hell flag” run up.

John Montgomery: Remember those navy blue dungarees we wore? I worked in the fire room, it was always hot there. Those dungarees always discolored your underwear. So I tied the legs together and dragged them with a line in the wake along side the ship when I was up on deck. It gave the dungarees a great wash and got rid of the extra dye. I told my buddy about it, and he wanted to try the same. But instead of tying the pant legs together tight, he tied the belt loops to the line. In no time, his pants were ripped away and disappeared in the sea!

Dave Turner: I was the throttle man in the engine room. I got on board the Stoddard at Adak, in Alaska. We then went down toward Japan - 7 destroyers and 4 cruisers. We bombarded the Japanese coast, and then run like xxxx home on full throttle. The waves were huge, and the sky overcast. At 15 knots, the waves pounded the ship. We got such a beating from the waves that the bow was damaged and we had to go to the Hawaiian Islands for repairs. That was a nice break. We then went to South Pacific, to join the Third Fleet.

When we returned to Philadelphia by way of the Panama Canal (where we let one of the officers off), it was Christmas eve. My home was at the Rogue River inlet, in Oregon, where the December rains always flooded the area - it is known as one of the three “wild” rivers of the US. Nine foot tides were frequent. I got off the ship in Philly, and had a heck of a time trying to get home for Christmas. It took me three transfers before I finally made it.

John Schmidt: Perhaps no one “chased” the Stoddard like I did to get aboard. I live in the Bremerton, Harbor Island area. But when I reported for duty, the Stoddard had already left port (in June 1944) and was headed for shake down in San Diego. When I got there, I was sent back to Treasure Island to take radar school. By the time I got back, Stoddard had left port, again. I chased her up the west coast, then flew to Hawaii. But when I made it to Hawaii, she had left again for the Aleutians. In those days, you just don’t catch a flight to Alaska. I got on board a Navy supply ship, chipped deck the whole

Stoddard WWII Years continued from Page 4

time - using an air hammer to break rocks from the area bombed by the Japanese.

Then I got to San Francisco, then to Seattle, and on to the Aleutians to "catch" the Stoddard. When I got to Kodiak and Atu, there was an outbreak of chickenpox so I was quarantined for 10 days on shore. We had to fend for food on our own. We found a still, and thought we had it made, but the locals told us to lay low, as there were Japanese still around, and we had to be careful.

We were part of Destroyer Div. 113 (included the Rowe, Smalley, Stoddard, Wren) along with the Missouri, when we steamed toward the Philippines, then on to Japan. We were assigned to the carrier to rescue POWs. Supplies were being flown in daily. We fired the 40mm guns to blow up mines, and luckily, no ship hit a mine during our watch.

Compared to my fellow shipmates, I was small - 5 ft 5, 130 lbs. I remember once the ship's anchor got loose and punched a hole in the deck. Because I was small, I was given the assignment to crawl through the hole on mattresses in order to plug up the hole made by the anchor.

Len Rostek: I remember when we were in Yokosuka, after the surrender. At the Navy yard, they made several basketball courts and we would challenge the crew from the other ships to basketball game. We beat the team from the Battleship New Jersey, and they were not about to accept defeat by the crew of the "little destroyer." After much negotiation, we finally agreed to a rematch to give them an opportunity to avenge their loss. That night we got orders at midnight to return to the States—by morning we were steaming out of the harbor.

Stoddard's Ship's Store

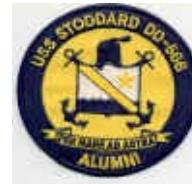


Stoddard Ball Cap
w/Ship Silhouette
and USS Stoddard
DD-566 - \$15



History Channel Video—
Heavy Metal
The Destroyer
(USS Stoddard is in Video)
VCR -\$22

Stoddard Alumni
Patch- \$ 4



Golf Shirts
and
Sweatshirts

White or Navy -

\$ 25

(Sizes: M, L, & XL)

Navy blue light weight jackets—\$50

"NOTICE"
FOR SHIP'S STORE ORDERS

Please remember in addition to
the price, there is a \$6 shipping fee.

Make checks payable to:

USS Stoddard Alumni Association

Send orders to:

Marilyn Harpster,

751 Intek Way,

Westerville, OH 43082.



from chaplain ,
byron goodwin

TAPS:

Anderson, Vernon
(Deceased 3/21/05)

57/60 MMC

Bann, John T.
(Deceased 3/2/2005)

54/57 DC3

Flewellen, Johnny W.
(Deceased 2001)

54/55 SD2

Niebuhr, Bob
(Deceased 1/4/05)

Ohlson, John
(Deceased 6/22/05)

Plank Owner Baker 2c

Olimpio, Anthony D.
(Deceased 1989)

53/55 SN

Pecora, Dominick J.
(Deceased)

53/54 ME1

Phillips, Ray
(Deceased)

1964 QM2

Sobbell, Joseph J.
(Deceased 1998)

53/55 FN

Walser, Calvin D.
(Deceased 3/27/2005)

53/55 MM1

Whitworth, Don
(Deceased 3/28/05)

44/45 Plank Owner S1

from secretary,
marilyn harpster...

jharpster@intekflow.com



HELP!!!!

Marilyn is again making a request for someone to take the office of Alumni Secretary. **Marilyn has served for 8 years.** It's time to give her a well deserved break.

If anyone would be able to share some of their time, please let us know. If you have questions for Marilyn she would be glad to talk with you. Give her a call or email her.

It may take more than one of us to do the job—but all help will be greatly appreciated.

USS STODDARD DD566 WWII * Korea * Vietnam

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email: dpietz@infostations.com

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Marilyn Harpster, Secretary
Intek, Inc.
751 Intek Way
Westerville, OH 43082

Fax: 614 895-0319

USS STODDARD -HISTORY



Keel Laid - 10 March 1943
Launched - 19 November 1943
Commissioned - 15 April 1944
**Decommissioned (Mothballed),
Charleston SC - 8 July 1946**
**Recommissioned Charleston SC
9 March 1951**
**Decommissioned Mare Island
26 September 1969**
**Removed-Navel Vessel Registry
1 June 1975**
**Target Ship- Tomahawk Project 30
June 1976 - 1983**
**Phalanx Development Project
November 1983 - March 1991**
**Disposed-Sunk off of Kauai, Hawaii
22 July 1997**

WELCOME ABOARD!

Bacon, Bernard W.
175 14th Ave., North Tonawanda, NY
14120
63/66 FN

Bister, Marvin L.
P.O. Box 753
Battle Ground, WA 98604
63/64 QM2

Brinkley, Andrew C.
108 Mallard Glen Dr., Dayton, Ohio 45458
63/64 FT3

Coffmann, Lyle W.
7848 Hillside Trail S, Cottage Grove, MN
55016
63/64 RM3

George, Ollie M.
1008 Wimbledon Dr., Melbourne, FL
32940
64 YN3

Glasser, Bernard W.
187 Beal Street, Trenton, NY 08610
52/53 SN

Hastings, Gale
HC 64 Box 944, Grassy, MO 63753
63/64 RD1

Lechner, David O.
2509 Wildwood Blvd., Toledo, Ohio
43614
64 ET2

Louis, Wellington
3910 W. Beachwood Ave, Fresno, CA
93711
63 EMFN

Macho, Anthony
104 Thurber Ave, Attleboro, MA 02703
53/57 SN

Mariette, Merle
476 W Lake Drive, Lake Norden, SD
57248
63 PN1

McLernan, James J.
650 West Ave. Miami Beach, FL 33139
53/55 PN2

McPike, R.R.
1933 Bowling Green Dr., Sacramento, CA
95815
60 SN

Reich, Ronald J.
W 1591 Sawyer Lane #5, E Troy, WI
53120 or
14302 W Shawnee Trail, Surprise, AZ
85374
53/54 BT3

Rhodes, Ronald T.
1124 Oceanwood Dr. S., Neptune Beach, FL
32266
53/55 TE3

Shields, Shaun
308 Fitch St., Healdsburg, CA 95448
64 RD3

Sturges, Harry J.
40 Woodside Ave, Malverne, NY 11565

Thomson, Stuart D.
18 Patricia Lane, Amherst, NH 03031
53/55 BT3

Westphal, Walter E.
1340 Country Acres, Wichita, KS 69212
64 RD2



from email coordinator,
bob hoag...

rwh@donobi.net

Please remember to notify us if you
change your email address.



from treasurer,
Jay Romack...

Alumni dues are now due. Your \$10 dues help pay the costs of the newsletter and website.

Following the 2005 Reunion in Sacramento, Fred Grimm will take over as the new Treasurer. Fred volunteered at the last reunion and Jay agreed to stay on board until then.



Fred Grimm
PN2—56-60

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM

Hawthorn Suites Hotel
321 Bercut Drive
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-441-1200 or www.hawthornsuites.com

17th USS STODDARD REUNION September 28 – October 1, 2005

Send this official reunion registration form directly to David Pietz as shown in the bottom of the form, along with your registration payment.

Name: _____ Lady's Name: _____

Stoddard Service Years & Rating: _____

Guest Attending with me: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Fax: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Accommodations (Please make your hotel registrations directly with Hawthorn Suites. Request the Stoddard Reunion group rate \$99.00 single/double, \$109.00 triple occupancy, \$119 for quad and \$139.00 for two-room suites single/double/triple/quad; tax additional)

Check-in Date: _____ Check-out Date: _____

Driving to Reunion? Yes No E-Mail me driving directions: Yes No

Please choose from the following selections:

Thursday 9/29/05 San Francisco / Wine Country Tour _____ X \$ 75.00 = \$ _____

Thursday 9/29/05 Ice Breaker with barbecue buffet _____ X \$ 30.00 = \$ _____

Friday 9/30/05 Old Sacramento & gold panning Tour _____ X \$ 80.00 = \$ _____

Saturday 10/1/05 Dinner Banquet at Museum _____ X \$ 65.00 = \$ _____

USS Stoddard Alumni 2005 Dues → \$ 10.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks payable to: **USS Stoddard Alumni Association**
Mail to: **David Pietz, 7133 Lily Way, Brownsvalley, CA 95918**
Telephone: **530 742-2661** E-Mail: **dpietz@infostations.com**