

# USS RANKIN NEWS

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**USS RANKIN**  
Attack Cargo Ship

**Launched**  
Charleston, SC  
1945

**AKA-103**  
1945-1947  
1952-1968

**LKA-103**  
1969-1971

**GOLD E**  
1960-1961

**Sunk**  
Stuart, Florida  
1988



**USS MULIPHEN**  
Attack Cargo Ship

**Launched**  
Kearny, NJ  
1944

**AKA-61**  
1944-1968  
1952-1968

**LKA-61**  
1969-1970

**Sunk**  
Ft. Pierce, Florida  
1989

## RANKIN / MULIPHEN REUNIONS

### CHARLESTON, S.C., OCTOBER 6-9, 2011

These two famous AKAs are having separate reunions on the same days at the same hotel in beautiful Charleston, South Carolina. We'll see each other on tours and in the lobby, and both reunions will be managed by Larry and Brenda Eckard of Military Locator and Reunion Services, but other than that, the two reunions will be independent gatherings of people from independent ships.

Leaders of both groups have known one another since 2009, and have been talking about working jointly since then. Several Muliphen men attended the 2010 Rankin reunion in Branson, with the idea of seeing how compatible the two groups might be. Everybody got along famously, and it was decided to look into working together even more closely. This year's reunion is the result. So is the fact that this newsletter is being mailed to the people from both ships.

If everything works as well as we expect it to, we plan to do the same thing in 2012. While neither group wants to give up its identity, holding joint reunions has a lot to recommend it. First of all, it's cheaper. If management fees are spread over 150 people, each one pays less than if they're only spread out over 75. Second, if the groups are compatible, "the more, the merrier" applies. Everyone has more fun, tours can be offered that couldn't be offered with a smaller group, and there are added opportunities to make and build new friendships.

Finally, as age takes its toll and fewer shipmates are able to travel, joint reunions put off the inevitable day when it's no longer practical to hold reunions. Though that day is at least a decade away for our two ships, it has already arrived for many of the WWII-only AKAs.

We look forward to a wonderful reunion in October, and to many more in the future.

### GLORIOUS CHARLESTON

Charleston is one of the best and most popular cities for Navy ship reunions. Its naval history runs from the Civil War, from which the raised Confederate sub *Hunley* can be seen today, through WWII, when such ships as USS Rankin were commissioned there, to the 1990s, when the shipyard and most of the remaining Navy installations were closed down.

History buffs can visit the Patriot's Point Naval and Maritime Museum, one of the largest of its kind in the world, and Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, from which were fired the first shots of the Civil War.

Non-militarily, Charleston is an exceptional and unusual place to visit, with beautiful old homes unlike those in any other place, a charming downtown with nightlife suitable even for seniors, and a setting near the ocean with fabulous modern bridges and charming Atlantic Ocean beaches.

### THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

This newsletter includes an envelope for contributions to The USS Rankin Association and The USS Muliphen Reunion Association. It's addressed to the Rankin Association, but Muliphen supporters can use it without changing the address. We know which people served on which ship, so your money will definitely end up in the right account.

## FROM THE USS MULIPHEN REUNION ASSOCIATION



**G. R. Wotherspoon, YNSA**

Greetings from the Helm...well in 1964 it was the Captain's office. I was thinner, younger and one step up from a "Boot". I had a great time on the Muliphen. The "Mule" was my first ship and she taught me how to be a sailor. Oddly enough, I've used my Navy training all my adult life.

This year will be our first true co-reunion with the USS Rankin, but with separate banquets and hospitality rooms at the same hotel. We are encouraging members to mingle, and we have much more in common than you would think. At the 2010 Rankin reunion in Branson, Richard Markley and I met a wonderful group of Rankin people and we did not lack in Gator Talk. The Rankin's life spanned the same time as the Muliphen's, and we even participated in some of the same events.

Among some of the newly implemented things your Board will be discussing at our annual membership meeting are the updated By-Laws. You can see them with the current ones at the bottom of the page at [www.ussmuliphen.com](http://www.ussmuliphen.com).

The website has a Message Board that is open to all and can be very helpful in looking for a buddy or sharing a story.

We now have a "Ship's Store" operated by our shipmate George Hollins. Thanks to George's hard work at Christmas time, hats and shirts and other items were purchased by "family" members for our shipmates. Great job George, thanks for all you do.

Since we've dropped our \$25.00 annual dues and we've become a IRS 501(c)19 veterans organization, donations may now be used as a tax write-off. We still take checks or money orders, (Not Cash). You can donate on the website as well, using "PayPal" and you'll get a receipt directly from PayPal. Please take time to donate a little something to help defer the cost of mailings and the website operations. We have no paid employees, just us volunteers. I'm always looking for volunteers and input. The money also helps with research for members and updating equipment, such as printer, computer etc.

The St. Lucie County Historical Center museum we are affiliated with is in Fort Pierce, FL. (St. Lucie County) on the East coast of Florida. 15 miles east of that, you can find the USS Muliphen Reef. The new museum director Ms. Nancy Bennett at 772-462-1795 is onboard with collecting Muliphen artifacts. If you have something you would like to donate, call her and mention our name. If it's an item of value and you'd like to use it as a tax deduction, donate it to the USS Muliphen for a receipt and we will give it to the museum.

Do you have email? Are you on SKYPE or FaceBook or any other social network? If so contact me and I'll add you to my network. I do a lot of emails and I enjoy "SKYPEing" it's a great way to talk with Grandchildren.

Skip Sander of the USS Rankin and I have had long SKYPE discussions on the directions of our reunions. They have covered many subjects, but the main issue is "Shipmates Getting Together" and renewing old friendships. We both acknowledge that the reunions could be as simple as "Date, Time, City and Hotel" for coffee or lunch once a year, to "Big, Fancy and Elaborate" involving all the bells and whistles. It appears, as long as travel and overnight stays and family are involved, we should provide nice hotels, banquets, tours and hospitality—we want the family to have a good time too.

I'm always open to suggestions and assistance. When you think you have a good idea, please share it. Often, shipmates have good ideas, but they are afraid to say anything. I won't assign it as your responsibility, unless you want it. When ideas are in the open, they're easier to understand and implement. Example: We need a quarterly newsletter. I agree and would love to have one, but it takes more than one person for that commitment. Answer: We could have ML&RS (Military Locators and Reunion Service) publish a quarterly newsletter for a fee. Then the dues structure changes and articles for submission need to be sought out. Well, you get the idea, but the newsletter is still a good idea.

We need your help in finding members, in donations, and in suggestions for future reunions.

Best regards & smooth sailing,  
Gerald (Jerry) Wotherspoon,  
President

[grwotherspoon@msn.com](mailto:grwotherspoon@msn.com), or  
[president@ussmuliphen.com](mailto:president@ussmuliphen.com),  
or 813-685-9477

## FROM THE USS RANKIN ASSOCIATION



L. F. Sander, OLDF

### NEWSLETTERS

This is our first newsletter in a long time. You won't have to wait as long for the next one.

I've been extremely busy since our reunion in Norfolk, and I just haven't had time to give our Association the time and effort that I want to. Since these newsletters take several weeks to produce, they were one of the first things I had to let go of.

I'm in good shape for time and energy right now, and we should have four newsletters over the next twelve months, starting after the Charleston reunion.

Missing from this issue is our customary color on the first and last pages. Producing color has been extremely time-consuming, so we are planning to move to a better, but somewhat more costly, system in the future. If this year's fundraising goes well, we will easily be able to afford it.

### FUNDRAISING

Without newsletters, we haven't been able to do this year's Annual Fund Drive. There's an envelope included with this one, and we hope you'll see fit to return it to us with a contribution.

As always, any amount is appreciated, and most people who contribute send \$25.00

The next newsletter will contain the usual financial statement and list of last year's contributors.

In the meantime, we're running low on money to support our day-to-day operations, so we can *really* use your contribution right now.

The bottom line on our finances is that we still have plenty of money in our "rainy day fund," but our normal funds are depleted. So *please*, if you have \$25, or any amount, send it in the envelope enclosed.

There's no information update form for this year's fundraising, since we pretty much know how to reach all our members. We get most of the changes by email, so we no longer need to pay the postage to ask about them.

### HELP WANTED

Since the early days of our Association, I've been happy to be the "guy in charge," and to do all of the work that's connected with that position. I'm still happy to fill that role, but the best interest of the group will be served if additional people can get involved. Here's what I think we need:

**Vice-presidents.** Many groups like ours have a system for developing new leadership and replacing the old. We've gotten by without that since 2003, but it's something we need to start now. We need to have a First Vice-President, who will serve for one year and then become President, and a Second Vice-President, who will serve for a year and then become First Vice-President.

I'm absolutely willing to remain as Chairman of the Board and as the guy who does most of the work, but I need, and the group needs, some people who are learning the ropes and standing by to take over when necessary.

I see most of the VP duties as involving our reunions. The VPs

can work with whomever is planning them, to make sure they are attractive to members and provide lots of bang for the buck. They can work with our management company, and can get as much or as little involved in detailed planning as they want. Some other things we need, which could be done by the VPs or someone else, are...

**Membership Chairman.** We need someone to keep our membership list up to date, and to do things like sending letters to families of deceased shipmates, inviting them to join us. This work can also involve searching for new members, which we haven't done much of in several years. This person needs to have elementary computer skills, but basically should have an interest in keeping track of our people and finding new ones.

**Newsletter Coordinator.** Much of the work in putting out the newsletter consists in making sure that the other work gets done on time. I need somebody to take over that part of it, and as much else as they can and want to do.

We have lots of material to include in the newsletter, but it would be good to have someone to gather "real" news from members.

We have good systems for laying out the newsletter, printing it, and getting it mailed, so there's no need to do any work whatsoever in that area. If the coordinator wanted to become the Editor, he or she could do that after learning the ropes.

If you might be interested in one of these choice positions, please just let me know.

Regards,  
Louis "Skip" Sander  
President  
ussrankin@aol.com  
412-367-1376

## OLD SAILORS

Old Sailors sit and chew the fat  
'bout how things use to be,  
Of the things they have seen and the places they've been,  
when they ventured out to sea.

They remember friends from long ago  
and the times they had back then,  
Of the money they've spilled and the beer they have swilled  
in their days as sailing men.

Their lives are lived in days gone by,  
with thoughts that forever last,  
Of their Dixie cup hats and their bell bottom blues,  
and the good times in their past.

They recall long nights with a moon so bright  
far out on a lonely sea,  
And the thoughts that they had as amazing young lads,  
when their lives were unbridled and free.

They know so well how their hearts would swell  
when the flag fluttered proud and free,  
And the stars and stripes made such beautiful sights  
as they plowed through an angry sea.

They talk of the bread Ole Cookie would bake  
and the shrill of the bo'sun's pipe,  
How the salty spray fell like the sparks out of hell  
when a storm struck in the night.

They remember mates already gone  
who forever hold a spot  
In the stories of old when sailors were bold  
and lubbers a pitiful lot.

They rode their ships through many a storm  
when the sea was showing its might,  
And the mighty blue waves might be digging their graves  
as they sailed on through the night.

They speak of nights in a bawdy house  
somewhere on a foreign shore,  
And the beer they had downed as they gathered around  
cracking jokes with a busty whore.

Their sailing days are gone away,  
never more will they cross the brow,  
But they have no regrets for they know they've been blessed  
'cause they honored their sacred vow.

Their numbers grow less with each passing day  
as their chits in this life are called,  
But they've nothing to lose for they've paid up their dues  
and they'll sail with their shipmates again.

I've heard them say before getting underway  
that there is still some sailing to do,  
And exclaim with a grin that their ship has come in,  
and The Lord is commanding the crew.

*Larry Dunn*

## LAST FOUND, FIRST FOUND



**John "Tom" Smith and Louis "Skip" Sander**

As many people know, the USS Rankin Association takes great pride in having found all 437 officers who ever served aboard the ship. On June 15, 2010, the last one found and one of the first ones found finally met, at a coffee shop in Loveland, Colorado.

Skip Sander, along with John Feeley and Bob Reynolds, found each other in early 2003, through the power of classmates.com. The three quickly began searching for other shipmates of all ranks and rates. Because they had been junior officers on the Rankin in 1963, they naturally did best with the other officers they had known and lived with. Somewhere along the line, they decided to attempt the impossible—to locate every officer, living or deceased, who had ever served aboard the ship. It took a while, but they did it.

The last officer found was John "Tom" Smith, who had been aboard for a few months in 1960. With his short time on board, few people remembered him. With a name like John Smith, even fewer people thought we could ever find him. The search was harder than anyone expected.

A lucky call to the Supply Corps School revealed that Mr. Smith had lived in Denver and attended college in Oklahoma. Further research showed that his college had disbanded years ago. The people at his old Denver address had never heard of him, and his high school reunion group thought that he was deceased.

Somehow it was learned that he had been born in South Dakota. His birth certificate showed the names of his mother and father. Persistent searching found an 89-year-old Florence Smith in a Denver nursing home. We wrote her a letter, but never got a response.

On April 8, 2006, John "Tom" Smith called Skip and introduced himself. His mother had passed away, and he found our letters in her belongings. Naturally, he called us to let us know he was alive and well.

