

# The Sierra Wave

The Newsletter of the Navy League of the United States  
Carson City Council #347

Betty Rowe, Editor  
July 2009

**July 17, 2009**  
**Dinner Meeting**  
**Carson Nugget**  
**5:30 Social Hour**  
**6:30 Buffet Dinner**

**Colonel Norman L. Cooling, USMC**  
**Dinner Speaker**



Our next meeting will be at the Carson Nugget, Friday, July 17, 2009. The social hour is at 5:30 PM followed by a buffet dinner at 6:30 PM. The calling committee will be contacting you for your reservations unless you call Bob Prater, 888-2050 first or you may email Bob at [Robert\\_Prater@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Robert_Prater@sbcglobal.net). The price is \$25 per person.

For last minute reservations, you may call Bob through noon, **Monday, the 13th**. We must request that "no shows" be responsible for the price of their uneaten dinners.

## ***Fair winds and Following seas***

Henry William White and George W. McRoberts both passed away in recent weeks. Henry White was a Pearl Harbor Survivor; while both he and George saw action in WWII and went on to have successful careers. Henry was 93 and George was 90, both were family men, both very modest and very patriotic. I can only hope that history will show as much appreciation for these men whose sacrifices secured the freedoms that this nation enjoys today. May God bless each of them. Pictures on page 2.



## **Norman L. Cooling, Colonel USMC**

A native of Baytown, Texas, Colonel Norm Cooling graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1986. After serving as a language instructor at the Academy, he completed The Basic School in 1987. Attending the Infantry Officer Course preceded his assignment of duty with 2d Bat, 4th Marines at Camp Lejeune, NC where he served as a platoon commander and company executive officer during deployment with Landing Force Sixth Fleet Med. He was reassigned to 2d Light Armored Infantry (LAI) Bat in 1989 where he served as a platoon commander during operations in Panama, and as a detachment commander with

*(Continued on page 2, column 1)*

## **Skipper's Corner**

As Rear Admiral Mark Fox assumed command of NSAWC during the Change of Command Ceremony at Fallon, June 26, Rear Admiral Mark T. "Waldo" Emerson concluded his 33 year Navy career in adjoining retirement ceremonies. I am sure that all of those who have passed between the side-boys and rendered their final official salute can share the emotions of the occasion.

As a token of appreciation for RADM Emerson's support of the  
*(Continued on page 2, column 3)*

## **Featured Member Howard Spreeman (See page 3)**



**Bring a friend, neighbor and/or a vet to the dinner! Last minute reservations to Bob Prater, 888-2050**

**COOLING** (Continued from pg 1, column 2)

Bat Landing Team 3/8 during a second Med deployment.

In April 1991, Col. Cooling reported as CO, Light Armored Vehicle Training Co, School of Infantry, Camp Pendleton, CA. and later as the S-3 Ops Officer for the School. In March 1994, he attended the Armor Officer Advanced Course at Fort Knox, KY, returning to Camp Lejeune as CO, Company A, 2d Light Armored Recon Bat. In May 1996, Col Cooling reported to H Q Marine Corps, Washington, DC as the Deputy Marine Liaison Officer, U.S. House of Representatives. From 1998 to 1999, he served on the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps' Staff Group. He graduated with distinction from the Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Quantico, VA with a Master of Arts Degree in Military Studies. In June 2000, he reported for duty as the Director, Joint Operations Center, Special Operations Command Europe, in Stuttgart, Germany. The following year, Col Cooling was reassigned to Supreme H Q Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium for as a Special Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR). He concluded this tour as the Executive Assistant to the SACEUR.

Col Cooling reported for duty with the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton in November 2002. Deploying for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) I, he served as the Information Management Officer, Deputy G-3 Operations Officer, and Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 1st Marine Division (Forward). Returning from Iraq in September 2003, he served as the Executive Officer, 5th Marine Regiment. In June 2004, he reported to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii as the Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, and subsequently deployed with the Battalion to Afghanistan, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom IV, and again to Iraq, as part of OIF V. Relinquishing command in October 2006, he reported to the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, where he subsequently graduated with a Master of Arts De-

gree in National Security and Strategic Studies and as the class honor graduate in November 2007. After serving briefly as a member of the faculty and as the Senior Marine Representative to the Naval War College, Colonel Cooling assumed his current duties as the Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Center in Pickel Meadow, CA on 1 July 2008.

Colonel Cooling's personal awards include the Bronze Star Medal with gold star in lieu of second award, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal with gold star and the Combat Action Ribbon with gold star.



**Henry William White**



**George McRoberts**

**SKIPPER** (Continued from pg 1, column 3) Navy League we presented him with one of our custom made plaques. As good Naval Tradition we wish Admiral Emerson Fair Winds and Following Seas.

If you have attended funeral services recently for former military personnel you will note that in most instances there is seldom a full Honor Guard. Family members travel long distances expecting a full military funeral only to find out that the necessary assets are not always available. When it comes to retirees, local commands do not necessarily have a say in the matter until it is cleared through channels.

From my more recent experiences I would strongly suggest a couple of things. One is that if you want a military funeral, honor guard etc, make sure your family members know where you keep your DD214 Discharge, otherwise it all becomes a big hassle. Don't forget, all of us are going to get our liberty card pulled sooner or later so get with the program.

I would like to compile a list of contact information for making arrangements with the military for Honor Guards. These services are available provided that the request is submitted in time, a week or more ahead. Anyone who has information that you would like to share with me please feel free to do so.

One other tid-bit, locally, the American Legion has the only full Honor Guard of which I am aware.

See you at dinner.- Bud

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# Pearl Harbor Survivor, Howard Spreeman



I was in the mess hall about 7:30 in the morning when the first plane went over – low and fast. One of the guys at the table said “Geez, who was that”. Facetiously, I replied, “it’s the Japs.” We looked out the window as the plane turned and we saw the red “meatball” of Japan. And so it started on Sunday, December 7, 1941 at Kaneohe PBV base in Hawaii. When the second flight of Japanese planes concluded their attack, only six of the 36 PBV aircraft were usable. Three of those had been on patrol and the other three could be fixed. The remaining 30 planes were burned or shot up beyond repair. (The PBV airplane is a sea plane used primarily for patrol. It had a range of over 2,000 miles and was armed.)

**Note:** On his first attempt Howard Spreeman didn’t get into the Navy, as there were no openings. His next choice was to join the National Guard. After a period in the Guard he was allowed a discharge to join the Navy and, in April 1940, he found himself at Great Lakes, Illinois attending boot camp. Following boot camp it was off to San Diego for radio school. At the conclusion of that challenge, Spreeman boarded the USS Platte for the trip to Hawaii, arriving in December 1940. Radioman Spreeman was as-

signed to Patrol Squadron 23, and thus began his career in the Navy.

When the sky seemed clear, Spreeman and his mates ran to the hanger area. Someone suggested “let’s get some guns”. Seeking a gun and ammo, Radioman Spreeman climbed into a damaged plane. As he went for the bow gun he was wading in gasoline. He and a fellow sailor got off some rounds, but trying to hold a 30-caliber gun and shoot it proved to be almost impossible.

Having been told to stay out of the barracks, Spreeman and his mates spent the night of December 7<sup>th</sup> digging a hole – which they occupied in the rain.

As the United States was now in the war, patrol flights were continuous. For the next few months Radioman Spreeman alternated between a communication center and flight assignments. On July 6, 1942 Spreeman was assigned to a regular flight crew. Four days later they were told to pack for a two week trip. The first stop was Palmyra Island. At first light they were air born for Suva, Fiji via Canton Island.

The second day of flying patrol out of Suva the crew spotted a huge fleet of ships. This proved to be the US Guadalcanal invasion group.

The squadron was scattered over the Pacific with only two or three planes at any one place. The day after the crew landed at Ndeni. They spent three hours tracking a Japanese battleship force. They were fired upon, but by staying low and flying smart, they escaped being hit.

Upon returning to Espirito, Spreeman’s pilot and two others volunteered for an attack on the Japanese fleet in Bougainville. This mission was personally approved by Admiral Halsey. Taking off at dusk, they flew 900 miles – the last 150 at about 20-feet above the water – for the attack. Each plane was armed with a torpedo and two 500 pound bombs. The mission was a total surprise and the bombs

scored direct hits. The anti-aircraft fire was intense as the Japanese came to battle stations. The PBV’s all left the area safely.

Radio Spreeman flew additional missions in the Pacific, but on January 1, 1943 the crew was relieved of duty. After a brief period in San Diego the crew was notified they could apply for Navy Flight School.

Hearing nothing in response to his application, it was back to Kaneohe Bay for Spreeman. He continued flying patrols from Midway, Palmyra, Canton Island, Lathoula Bay, Fiji – and spent some time in Australia. When he returned to Perth, he was notified his flight school application had been approved.

“After two and half years and 509 hours spent in the air and many hours in the classroom, I was now a qualified naval aviator.

Howard Spreeman qualified to fly 20 different naval aircraft during his career. He made his last flight May 25, 1960 and retired June 1, 1960. He accumulated nearly 10,000 flight hours and indicated he would not trade his life and adventures for any other life.

Editor’s note: In some instances the direct quotes are taken from the book *Icarus Updated – A Boy and His Dream*, written by Howard Spreeman in 1992. This book is available for pur-



chase: ISBN 978-4134-9259-0. Contact Xlibris Corporation 1-888-795-4274. Interview and article by Don Dallas

## Coming Events

July 17, 2009, Friday Dinner Meeting, Carson Nugget, Social 5:30, Dinner 6:30  
August 4, 2009, Tuesday Board Meeting, 1093 Gambrel Drive, Bud's, 5:00  
September 11, 2009, Friday BLUE ANGELS AIR SHOW, NAS FALLON  
September 18, 2009, Friday Dinner Meeting, Carson Nugget, Social 5:30, Dinner 6:30  
October 6, 2009, Tuesday Board Meeting, 1093 Gambrel Drive, Bud's, 5:00  
November 20, 2009, Friday Dinner Meeting, Carson Nugget, Social 5:30, Dinner 6:30

**We'd like your help!**

### Navy League of the United States, Carson City Council #347

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The enclosed check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is a gift to the NLUS, Carson City Council for the support of our adopted Sea Services units.

Mail to: Carson City Council #347, NLUS, Attention: Mike Russo, Post Office Box 4404, Carson City NV 89702-4404. The Board of Directors thanks you in advance for your generous support. The Navy League is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization

## Council Dinner Meeting

*Friday, July 17, 2009*

**Social hour, 5:30 PM**

**Buffet dinner, 6:30 PM**

**\$25 per person**

*Carson Nugget*

*Speaker*

*Colonel Norman*

*Cooling, USMC*

*CO Pickel Meadows*

**Call for reservations**

**888-2050 or 882-7960**

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**Carson City Council #347  
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