

USS R.E. KRAUS DD 849 MEMORIAL SERVICE
MARCH 24, 2010
ON BOARD THE USS KIDD, BATON ROUGE, LA
DR. WILLIAM PERRY



At one point in time during his career, Admiral Hyman Rickover, the father of the Nuclear Navy, was commander of a carrier task force, and had his flag on the carrier.

For exercise, Adm. Rickover walked a lap around the flight deck every day. It became the custom for sailors to approach the Admiral during his walks, and gripe, complain, etc., and the Admiral would take care of the problems brought forth by the crew. It was a great morale booster.

Well, the day came when Admiral Rickover was reassigned to Washington, and a helicopter carried him off. The crew was so despondent at his departure that the helmsman wasn't paying attention to his job, and the carrier hit a sandbar.

Yes, they grounded the warship he walked on.

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding: in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight."

Ladies and Gentlemen; it is so wonderful to be here, as a matter of fact it is nice to be anywhere these days. Each day as I look over the obituaries and I don't find my name listed, I take a deep breath and say thank you Lord for another day! What an honor it is to have been asked to be a part of this memorial service!

As I look out over this group of beautiful people, I am reminded of another time, a time long past, a time when many of us were barely out of high school and trying as best we could to get our lives on track, trying to pull it all together. Trying to merge our new navy life with what we called our real life. We were all so young back in those days, yet with responsibilities that would cause us to shutter, even today. And you know, some of the things we got ourselves involved with, got ourselves into, would cause many of us to wonder how we ever survived at all. But more often than we would even want to think about, during this time in our life, to say the least, life became a little overwhelming, as we tried to figure out what in the world this life was all about. But you know, through it all, because of it all, and at times, in spite of it all we were able to make some accomplishments, and found the time to have some good times.

We had fun this week, as I have had the opportunity to meet with many of you, get reacquainted with some of my old ship mates, and get to know new ones. I look around and I find that it is true that far too many of our fellow shipmates are missing; far too many are unable to be with us for this reunion. For a few, it's because of health reasons, but for some, it's because they just were not able to make the trip for whatever reason. And yet for others, sad to say, death has taken them from us. So it seems appropriate at this time to pause for a moment of silence as we remember each one of our missing shipmates..... Amen.

As we continue our time here, we enjoy the swapping of sea stories, and bringing one another up to speed as to what each of us have been up to over the last 10-20-30 or even 40 years or more. As our stories are told and re-told, our stories become similar to so many other stories of men and women who have so gallantly served our country proudly. You are truly heroes as far as I'm concerned and I proudly salute each of you as we also salute one another.

The Sailor's Prayer reads:

"The Lord is my pilot, I shall not go adrift; He lighteth my passage across dark channels; He steereth me through the deep waters, He keepeth my log. He guideth me by the evening star for my safety's sake. Yea, though I sail mid the thunders and tempest of life, I shall fear no peril for Thou art with me. The vastness of thy sea upholds me. Surely fair winds and safe harbors shall be found all the days of my life; and I shall moor, fast, and secure, forever Amen.

With that, I will close with the immortal words of Tom Lewis:

“May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be at your back, may you find old friends waiting to greet you, there on the outside track. We’re gathered together old times to remember, ‘tis but for ourselves we would grieve, so we’ll sing you a chorus and bid you farewell—fair winds and a following sea.”