



Nitro Blast

The Newsletter of the
USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23)
Association
Volume 7, Issue 3
January 2005
Editor: Jim Timmons
Assn. Membership 265

Don't Miss Ship's Movement *Keep the Memories Alive*

Corrected and Updated Copy

Editor's Note: I have decided to send out a corrected and updated copy of the January Newsletter. There were a number of spelling errors as well as a couple pieces of incorrect information. Corrections are underlined and new or updated info is in bold italics.

From 20 March - 10 April, Sue and I will be on vacation, so please contact either Bob Eberlein or Bob Peiffer about Association business during that time.

Also a 2005 dues reminder - This will be the last copy of the *Nitro Blast* 2004 Nitro Association members will receive unless they have renewed their dues for 2005 !!!

Bahamas Update

From our cruise director, Mark Sikes

Ahoy Shipmates & Significant Others

As of this newsletter, we still have 1 inside double occupancy cabin, 2 inside triple/quad cabins, 1 outside double occupancy cabin, 2 outside triple/quad cabins and 1 balcony junior suite cabin available for the June 2005 Bahamas cruise.

We will also be able to block rooms, at a local hotel, for those wishing to come to Miami a day early. I am expecting the rate to be about \$99 for the room per night. Let me know as soon as possible how many rooms we might use.

If you are interested in reserving cabin space for this long anticipated Return to Sea and/or are interested in overnight accommodations in Miami the day before our departure, please contact Mark Sikes at JetSet Cruise (toll free 866-201-2752 or 763-479-6477).

Reminder: The next cabin installment (\$175.00 per person) for the cruise is due February 16th. Mark says if he

does not hear from those who have used a credit card for the deposit, that same card will be used for the next installment or you may send a check to JetSet Cruise, 6625 County Road 26, Mound, MN 55364

NEW Info: As of this writing, the following crew members are going to be part of the "ship's company" to the Bahamas: Bobby Anderson, Jr.; Paul Licker; Ron Webb; Joel Magallanes; Richard Artale; John Mahler; Wilbur Brown; Ed Marino; James Caithamer; John Meissner; Mark Sikes; J. Daniel Corcoran; James Hugo; Walter Mullins; Mark Sikes; Rob Drake; Thomas Papsodero; Brian Evans; Robert Eberlein; Robert Peiffer; Lee Smith; Russell Garbutt; Juan Reyes; Joseph Gentleman; Howard Root; James Timmons; John Holland; Oscar Santiago; Phil Wise and David Jennings. With spouses, guests and extended family members, the total Nitro contingent is approximately 86 members.

I have secured 24 rooms for those wishing to arrive in Miami early for the best reunion yet (more rooms are available, if needed). The hotel is the Holiday Inn at 340 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami FL 33132. The rate will be \$85.00 + tax per room. If you need a rollaway, they charge \$10.00. The hotel has limited parking at \$10.00 per day.

I have heard from a few of you regarding smoking/nonsmoking. I am assuming nonsmoking unless I hear differently. Let me know if there are special circumstances that the hotel should be aware of. This Nitro rate will good for those wishing to arrive even earlier or stay after the cruise. Let me know ASAP.

I have also arranged for a shuttle to transport us from the hotel to the ship on Friday, June 24th. The cost is \$5.00 per person. I need to firm this up soon so let me know if you are on board with this shuttle.

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The cruise line has parking available at the pier. The rates are \$12 per day or \$20 per day for oversize vehicles. No reservation is required for parking at either the hotel or the cruise line parking lot. I am also checking out other parking options and will advise as soon as I have the info. I hope you are all looking forward to this reunion as much as I am.

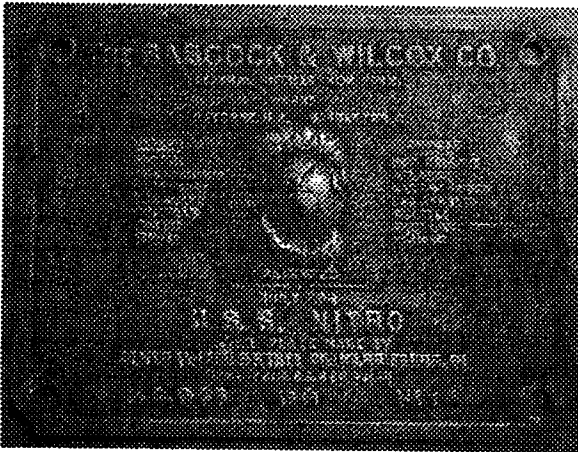
Additional information about ship boarding times, airport transportation to the hotel (for those arriving early and booking a room) and from the hotel to the ship will be available in the April newsletter as well as on our web site.



AE-2 Additions to Nitro Archives



It is with great pride that we announce the receipt of a piece of USS Nitro (AE-2) history. The family of the late John Lewis Povemick, MM2c, who served on board the AE-2 during WW2, has donated the brass plate pictured in this article to the Nitro Association in honor of their father's service to his country. This plate will be featured prominently at all future reunions.



In addition to this plate, the Nitro Association has also received a copy of a chapter on the USS Nitro (AE-2), which is part of the autobiography of F. William Cooper (Ensign - LT, 1941 to 1943). His son, John Cooper, made the chapter available to us. A special supplement to this newsletter (*went out with the original January newsletter*) contains the chapter on the USS Nitro (AE-2).



****TAPS****



Michael J. Hansen, of Columbia, MO., passed away on Dec. 6th. He served on board the AE-23 from 1972-75. His brother (George Hansen of McKinney, TX 75070) would like to converse with anyone who might have known Michael.

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His email and phone numbers are: ghansen@jackhenry.com and (972) 529-5349.

The son of Jorge Amaury Castro, SMSN, who served on board AE-23 from October 1974 to October 1978 has contacted us about his father's passing a couple of years ago. Jorge, Jr. would like to hear from any of his father's former shipmates who might have known him when he was on board Nitro. His son further states that he did not know much about his father's service because he did not live with him at that time.

If you served on board with Jorge Amaury Castro and would like to contact his 18 year old son, Jorge Jr.'s email address is spunk091@yahoo.com I am sure he would be very happy to hear from you.

Barbara Casdorff Christo has also contacted the Association about her father's passing. Charles C. Casdorff, SN, served on the AE-2 in World War II and also on the U.S.S. Bearss. He passed away several years ago and she and her brother and I are interested in finding out what he did in the Navy. Charles was on board with the skeleton crew during the decommissioning of the Nitro in Norfolk.

If you would like to contact Barbara about her father, her email address is: hmarklover@charter.net

◆◆ Tsunami Relief Effort ◆◆

I am pleased to report the USS Nitro Association, on behalf of its membership, has sent a check for \$100 to the American Red Cross for the tsunami relief effort which is now underway in the Southwest Asia area. Our prayers are with all those effected by this global tragedy.

✂ Crow's Nest ✂

Congratulations to Karen Reyes, daughter of Juan and Renie Reyes, on her advancement this past fall to HMC. Karen is currently on active duty in the Gulf War. Our prayers are with her and her shipmates. BRAVO ZULU, Karen.

✂ Navy Times articles ✂

Here are some excerpts from the past few issues. *The Navy Times*:

(1) Two sentenced to death for attack on destroyer Cole. Four others to get prison terms for their roles in bombing.

(2) *Command at Sea* (CAS) is becoming harder to achieve since the Navy has only 290 ships, so the Navy has come up with command options for thousands of SWO (Surface Warfare Officers). Those choosing to opt out of the CAS track can look into other tracks in Anti-terrorism and force protection, Anti-submarine warfare, Missile defense, Mine warfare, Strategic sealift and Shore installation management.

(3) Navy tightens its own budget belt. Looking to save over \$15 billion over the next six years, cuts include reduced hours, time in air and at sea.

(4) Naval Academy admission for the year 2009 reported to be down by 20%. The continuing War in Iraq is cited as one of the primary reasons for the decline.

(5) Navy pilot program aboard DDG puts CPOs in charge of certain departments, filling many billets traditionally held by first-tour officers.

(6) New Navy insignia (ACE-Anchor, Constellation and Eagle) to be stitched to pocket of test camouflage uniforms. Testing of camo uniforms is now being conducted to replace the current work uniforms.

(7) Basic pay for all service members went up 3.5% effective Jan. 1st. along with a host of other allowances, incentives and hazardous duty pay.

(8) Navy soundly defeats Army in annual December football clash then goes on to overwhelm New Mexico in the holiday Emerald Bowl. Navy finishes season at 10-3.

(9) Navy Command Ship Coronado tested new Navy/Civilian mariners manning during recent WestPac deployment. 145 civilians were responsible for navigation, deck, engineering and supply and about 120 sailors and officers ran two key war-fighting departments: combat systems and command, control, communications and intelligence.

(10) Navy plans to reduce force numbers from current 372,600 to 320,000 by 2011.

(11) Navy program to require college degrees for career CPOs by 2009. Bachelor degrees will be required in order to be considered for Command Master Chief and other senior enlisted jobs. Associate degrees will be required for advancement to Senior Chief.

(12) Navy proposes scrapping of service (white and blue) uniforms for E-6 and below. Out would go summer service whites and winter blues and in would come a USMC style

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uniform (black pants and gray or khaki shirts. Traditional summer dress whites and winter dress blue uniforms are safe - for now.



Nitro Membership Update



USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) Association membership continues to grow. ***Our membership roll (cumulative total from '98 to present) now stands at 265.*** The following shipmates (Nitro tour dates) have signed on as members during the month indicated:

November - Mabel Stralo (Associated Member)

December - Jeannine Gentlemen (Associated Member); Darren Razukiewicz (93-95)

January - ***Lawrence Little (58-60); Michael Mullen (76-78);***

Anyone desiring to become a member of the USS NITRO Association may do so by sending a **check made payable** to:

USS NITRO Association

% Mr. Robert Peiffer

PO Box 1254

Mishawaka, Indiana 46546-1254

2005 Association Dues are \$23.95 (including S/H of Assn. Packet). The dues packet will include a "60 Years Service to the Fleet" patch as well as two Association license plate frames, quarterly newsletters, membership certificate (for **new** members only), crewmembers directory and a laminated membership card.

There are also Associated Membership dues available for spouses of former or deceased USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) crew members, children of former or deceased crew members or for any former U. S. Navy personnel having an interest in or desire to join the USS Nitro Association. This classification would allow those members to receive a membership certificate & card and 4 quarterly newsletters each year (***dues premiums and crewmember directory will not be included in this classification.***) The cost of the Associate Membership will be \$14.00 (\$12.50 dues + \$1.50 S/H) per calendar year.



The Nitro Sage



MOTHER'S DICTIONARY

DROOLING: How teething babies wash their chins.

DUMBWAITER: One who asks if the kids would care to order dessert.

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FEEDBACK: The inevitable result when the baby doesn't appreciate the strained carrots.

FULL NAME: What you call your child when you're mad at him.

A Final Thought

On behalf of the entire USS Nitro Association board members, I would like to extend best wishes to our association members and their families for 2005. The number of those renewing their memberships is still coming, and it's good to see the continued interest in our ship's memory.

As evidenced by the attached chapter about the AE-2 and the 1944-45 cruise pamphlet on view at our reunions, we are in continual search for first-hand accounts (journals, diaries, video tape, audio tape, etc.) of life aboard either the AE-2 or AE-23. Anyone wishing to contribute any of these items to our ship's archives is encouraged to do so. This is a way to preserve the memories, we all share and have left, of the days of our youth. We not only collect this information for us to share among ourselves but to leave for future generations to share.

(Editor's note): All of you "sea dogs" do remember there is a difference between "first-hand" accounts and "sea stories". Save the questionable stories for the cruise book and our web site location:

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http://www.ticon.net/~stitch/Uss_Nitro/cruisestories.html

When you renew your membership, could you please take time to send me the list of cities you would like to see host future Nitro Association reunions? A listing future reunion cities was mailed with the last newsletter and you may also find a listing of cities by visiting the Nitro Association web site.

The 2006 reunion location is the one that needs the membership's approval. A final decision on location for this reunion will be made in April, based on the majority of those voting for the winning site. Even though you may have voted in the past for your choices, I have no real clean cut numbers as to which locations have the majority approval of the membership at this time. Any additional votes received will be greatly appreciated.

Please remember our service personnel who man-the-watch in your thoughts and prayers.

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder, USS Nitro Association.

 **USS Nitro Web Site** 

The place for frequent updates on the Nitro reunion, association and other related activities:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/nalc820/ussnitro.htm>