



Nitro Blast

The Newsletter of the
USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23)
Association
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Editor: Jim Timmons
Assn. Membership 296

"DC After Action Report"

Keep the Memories Alive



Washington Recap



The Nitro Association business meeting was held on Thursday, 21 June and covered a wide range of topics. Topics of interest were: 1) reconfirming the 2008 reunion to be held in Branson, MO and 2009 reunion in Honolulu, HI. 2) Entire proceeds of raffle/auction going towards charities this year (calling cards/emergency funding for injured military personnel at Bethesda Naval Hospital and a donation to the Bethesda Naval Hospital -Fisher House)

Most of Friday afternoon was spent visiting various memorials and monuments in downtown Washington. Upon arrival, we had a group photo taken at the WW2 Memorial and then split up into smaller groups to visit the other memorials on the National Mall.

Does the phrase "Hurry up and Wait!" ring a bell? Well you would have been reminded of it if you had been with us Friday evening as we waited to get into the Evening Parade at the USMC barracks at 8th & I. Our group, of about 70, had vantage points for the Parade from various locations around the parade grounds, so some of us had a better view of the President's Own USMC band, the Commandant's Drum and Bugle Corp, the Silent Drill team and the Pass in Review by several companies stationed at 8th & I streets. Regardless of where you were sitting, everyone was impressed with the history and pageantry of the evening. Thanks to John Holland for suggesting that we take in the Marine Corp's Evening Parade.

On Saturday we held a combination of Memorial Plaque dedication and wreath laying ceremonies at the US Navy Memorial. Since we arrived a bit early for our ceremony, we had an opportunity to view the commissioning ceremony of a new Ensign on the Memorial Plaza. We also raised an American flag, donated by former crew member and Association member Mike Mullens, which flew on board Nitro in 1976 as well as our new Nitro Association flag and a Bravo flag donated to our Association by the USS Siapan just prior to her decommissioning. We then went inside to the

Arleigh and Roberta Burke Theater for the dedications of the AE-2 and 23 plaques.

After Deanna Smitha, Chaplain, USS Nitro Association, gave the invocation, remarks were given by RADM Richard A. Buchanan, USN, Ret., Chairman and CEO of the US Navy Memorial; special guest speaker Captain James L. Vandiver, USN, representing the Chief of Naval Operations and Bob Eberlein, Founder of the USS Nitro Association. Much was mentioned about the histories of both ships and areas of operations, but Bob's quoting of a verse from *The Navy Hymn* best summed up the event:

**And when at length her course is run,
Her work for home and country done,
Of all the souls that in her sailed
Let not one life in Thee have failed;
But hear from Heaven our sailor's cry,
And grant eternal life on high!**

After retiring the ship's colors and other flags hoisted and having lunch at various spots around the Navy Memorial, we reboarded our buses for a trip to Arlington National Cemetery to pay our respects and visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. We then went back to the hotel for our Dinner and raffle/auction. The proceeds from the Nitro Association raffle (a Navy pocket watch) and auction items totaled over \$1,400.00, which will be divided between the two charities listed previously. Thanks to all who brought items for the auction and who generously purchased those items.

Bits and Pieces - The weather during the reunion could not have been better. Temperatures were in the 80s not the 90s as predicted. Here is a rundown on the attendees: Friday's tour 70; Saturday's plaque dedication/wreathlaying 92 and 90 at the dinner.

CDR Craig Huber, the last CO of the USS Nitro (AE-23) presented the Association with two gifts - a 3" 50 cal. shell cut lengthwise and mounted on a plaque and the AE-23 hull numbers from the captain's gig (also mounted). These were gifts presented to him by the decommissioning crew. The

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Association presented CDR Huber, as we have with all of the former commanding officers to attend the reunion, a Nitro Association ball cap with scrambled eggs. In addition to the ball cap, CDR Huber will be receiving the name plate from the Captain's Cabin, which was liberated from the AE-23 during a visit to the James River Reserve Fleet in April of 2003.

Special Reminder - For those interested in obtaining a mounted replica memorial plaque of either the AE-2 or AE-23, you may do so by contacting the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC. The cost of either plaque is \$125.00 until October 1st, the price will then be increased to \$150. This price includes shipping and handling. Please contact the Navy Memorial for details.

Also, RADM Buchanan wanted to remind all of our members to register their naval service on the US Navy Memorial Navy Log:

<https://logintoday.navymemorial.org/LogRegisterSelf.asp>

You may either use the above URL to register or contact the Navy Memorial for a form which you may fill out and return. This is a (**free**) service.

2007-09 Election results: Here is the listing of officers voted in at the Washington, DC reunion - *President* - Jim Timmons, *Vice President* - Bob Eberlein; *Treasurer* - Bob Peiffer; *Secretary* - Phil Wise, *Trustees* - Juan Reyes and Paul Licker, *Master At Arms* - Oscar Santiago.

Recognition of TEN & FIVE year members: The following members have achieved FIVE year status - Dominique Berardi, Jim Caithamer, Russell Fallon, Jr.; David Ferretti, Craig Huber, Jan Huyck, Tony Keena, Brian Powers, James Sepesi, Jose Silva, Raymond Smith, Robert Swafford, Jr., Augustine Test, Thomas Tighe.

The following members have achieved TEN year status - Frank Alley, Wallace Carey, Bob Eberlein (Founder), John Foley, Russell Garbutt, George Gregory, III, Ulric Grigsby, Jr., John Holland, Richard Leipfert, William Lewis, Thomas Lowe, Raymond Murray, James Musumeci, Jr., Walter Newsome, Bob Peiffer, Oscar Santiago, Jerry Satterfield, Frank Schenck, Sr., Don Skillman, Barry Smith, Christine Spurling (nee Crites), Dick Steinreich, Robert Theirrien, Jim Timmons, Lyman Whitman, Phil Wise, Larry Young.

Many of these members were present at the DC reunion and received their 5 & 10 year pins. Those not at the reunion will receive their pins by mail.

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Reunion DVD: The 2007 Washington, DC Reunion DVD will be available for purchase from the Ship's Store this Fall. The DVD will be approximately 1 hour in length and include both video and still pictures of activities and sights from this year's reunion.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the DVD, please send your payment of \$15.00 to:

USS Nitro Association
PO Box 1254
MISHAWAKA, IN 46546-1254

2008 Midwest Reunion

The 2008 reunion will be held in Branson, Missouri from 19-22 June. We will soon be setting up the activities. If you have been to Branson and have any thoughts on activities, please contact Jim Timmons.

The Crows Nest

Veteran's Day Cruise - 2 hour Baltimore harbor cruise aboard the World War II liberty ship John W. Brown, Saturday, November 10th. Cost \$20. If interested, visit the Project Liberty Ship web site: www.liberty-ship.com for more information or call 410-558-0164.

Crewmember Directory Changes

Email changes: Keith Vincent -knlv@att.net

Navy Times Article Recap

- 1) Bonuses to be paid for sailors sea duty extension.
- 2) Future DDG 1000 series stability called into question
- 3) 1,000-ship-(worldwide)fleet concept started this Spring with Navy ship training mission visits to Caribbean and Africa.
- 4) Equipment shortages for military branches may take years to fix
- 5) USAF to get WW2 style service uniforms
- 6) Last known WW1 vet died this past March.
- 7) Navy to take more control in deciding future fleet additions. Looking to lessen classes of ships and simplify designs.
- 8) Navy to up pay in critical rates they need to fill.
- 9) Navy cancels contract for third Littoral Combat Ship and may cut back program because of cost overruns.
- 10) Middie gets 2 years for indecent assault.
- 11) Five sailors die in Iraq in two days.
- 12) In war-funding battle, Pentagon threatens to take budget funds from USAF and USN to pay for Army costs.
- 13) X-Soviet sub/museum ship in Providence sinks in heavy rains.
- 14) USAF and Army in feud over UAV programs
- 15) USCG to decommission 8 recently refurbished patrol boats because of structural problems and the cost to repair them.
- 16) Congratulations on being promoted to HMCS, Karen Reyes. Announced in April Navy Times.

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- 17) Talks taking place on possible release of USS Pueblo by N. Korea.
- 18) The Blue Angel pilot killed in air crash is laid to rest.
- 19) USAF squadron turns portion of Iraqi desert into a forward operating base in 6 weeks.
- 20) Gen. Petraeus targets insurgent death squads in Iraq.
- 21) Congress investigating unusually large number of "personality disorder" discharges of returning Iraqi vets. May be a misdiagnosis of PTSD.
- 22) 3.5% target for pay raise in 2008.
- 23) House panel rejects \$2 billion cut in health care budget.
- 24) Six commanding officers loose commands in 6 weeks.
- 25) Helo crash in Nevada desert kills 5 Navy crew.
- 26) Chinese sub building program concern for CINCPAC.
- 27) San Diego Naval Medical Center to expand amputee clinic.
- 28) SECDEF Gates hints key to withdrawal of troops from Iraq depends on political progress.
- 29) VA Secretary Nicholson is under fire and may resign.
- 30) Navy to increase number of individual augmentee assignments in Iraq.
- 31) Navy to maintain presence in Western Africa waters for years.
- 32) CNO drops college degree requirement for Chief advancements because increased operations tempo.
- 33) Navy may test program to allow qualified sailors up to 2 years off (for school, child rearing, civilian career) without hurting their opportunity to return to the Navy.
- 34) CNO Mullen replaces Gen. Pace as Chairman, Joint Chiefs.
- 35) College courses for enlisted will add points to advancement possibilities.
- 36) Senate panel concerned over proposed cuts in Navy manning levels.
- 37) Royal Australian Navy pilots help USCG with pilot shortage.
- 38) Navy to test WW2 style service dress khakis and a new material for "Cracker Jack" uniforms.
- 39) With cuts in shore duty billets and drawdown of personnel, new sea/shore rotation will call for 5 years as sea and only 3 years on shore.
- 40) Navy vets blast study of biological and chemical warfare tests during SHAD testing from 1962 to 1973.
- 41) Congressional Budget Office says military pay and non-cash military benefits make compensation packages competitive with private sector (editor's comment - Huh!).
- 42) Disbursing Officer steals \$120,000 and receives \$14,000 fine and 28 months in brig.
- 43) OS and QM ratings will not be merged.
- 44) Navy recruiters can earn up to \$5,400 extra, if they meet quotas.
- 45) 2006 Sailor of the Year is SH1 Angela Crawford.



Prepaid Military Phone Cards



Military prepaid phone cards are still available to be sent to relatives or neighbors who are serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Persian Gulf region or Afghanistan. Please send us their APO or FPO address and tell us whether the person is serving ashore or afloat.

"Continuing Service to the Fleet"

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Chaplain's



Comer



Every time we've been able to attend our NITRO Assoc. reunion, I've been tremendously impressed at both the caliber of our shipmates and their families/friends, and also of the outstanding job our executive board has done in programming, accommodations, and extracurricular activities. Jim Timmons, Bob Eberlein and Bob Peiffer, along with the rest of the board, deserve a large BZ (bravo zulu) for the manner in which our reunions run so smoothly. The time, contacts, traveling, etc. expended are an undying labor of love by these committed people, and I hope that each of us remembers to express our gratitude to these dedicated leaders.

As I reflected on the happenings of our sojourn in D.C., I am reminded of the emotion and camaraderie we felt at the Navy Memorial, and the sight of those awesome Marines at the Evening Parade at 8th and I.

The efforts of many in our Association—from the inception of the idea for the plaques at the Navy Memorial last year at Las Vegas, to the dedication in D.C., was overwhelming. Kevin, Oscar and others who helped to suggest and made it happen, my personal thanks to you! The USS NITRO Association has much to be proud of in the Herculean efforts successfully executed.

And all of those Marines...those first and second lieutenants we saw arrive in their Charlies really made me feel like a now "senior" veteran. I only retired 11 years ago (for the second time), but I have UNIFORMS which were older than some of those young LTs. Those who defend our nation and our way of life (in this time much as it was in our own) are just children, whom we call upon to step up and serve. Those of us with children and grandchildren of service-rendering age now feel what our parents did, and maybe more so, as our generation was subject to conscription (the draft) while these kids are all volunteers. We truly have much for which to be thankful. Young folks who I helped push through boot camp so long ago are now 1st class POs, and chiefs, the leaders of those today who are just starting their careers/military journeys.

And to that end, I'm also so proud of our Association stepping up to support those troops...with contributions to the Fisher House program as well as direct support to troops overseas and their families through the phone-card program.

On behalf of all members and friends of the USS NITRO Association, I'd like to thank everyone who made this year's reunion and activities such a rousing success. May we all be blessed to continue doing what our Association motto reminds us we're about.. Continued "Service to the Fleet."

Grace and peace.... Chaps...

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The listing(s) are of former USS Nitro (AE-2) or (AE-23) crew members, which we have received since our last posting:

Sanford Walton BLANTON, Sr., S1c (AE-2)



USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) Association membership continues to grow. ***Our membership roll (cumulative total from '98 to present) now stands at 296.*** The following shipmates (Nitro tour dates) have signed on as members during the month indicated:

May - June: Stillman Bradish, AE-23 (59-61)

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

2007 Association Dues are \$24.60 (including S/H of Assn. Packet). The dues packet includes a "challenge coin" of either the AE-23 or AE-2 (your choice), quarterly newsletters, membership certificate (for **new** members only), crewmembers directory and a laminated membership card. Additional challenge coins of either the AE-2 or AE-23 may be purchased for an additional \$10.50 (S/H included) as long as supplies last. These coins will not be reordered - when they are gone, they are gone!

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 are not included in this classification.***) The cost of the Associate Membership will be \$14.50 (\$12.50 dues + \$2.00 S/H) per calendar year.



"You know you're a Sailor when . . ."

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You sleep on a shelf in your closet and replace the door with a curtain. Have your spouse whip open the curtain about three hours after you go to sleep, shine a light in your eyes, and say, "Sorry, wrong rack."



Reunion number TEN is now another page of our Association's history. There were some new faces in the crowd, which is nice to see that the reunions still draw 'em in. Hopefully everyone had a good time. For the new attendees, some of what we do might seem strange, but it works for us.

The Friday evening parade/concert was different as a bunch of old squids got to be part of the audience at the US Marine Barracks. Even though traffic was a mess, and the gate procedures were the same as at airports, it was worth attending. If anyone left there and didn't feel proud to be an American or a Veteran, then I don't know what to say.

Saturday morning at the US Navy Memorial was more than what was planned. We got our moneys worth. Observing a Navy officer being commissioned, having "our flags" being flown over the Memorial while we remembered our fallen comrades and plaques dedicated to our beloved ships. Staff of the Memorial met our every wish and Captain James Vandiver, who was the Representative for the Chief of Naval Operations, was most impressed with the ceremony and felt welcomed by our group.

The Association has a Wednesday evening chat line, which is for all members. The chat line, like the convenience store 7-11 is open 24 hours, seven days a week for all members to make contact with each other. If you're thinking of attending next year's reunion and you would like members of your particular division to get together, then the chat line is a way to talk about it and make those plans now. Let's use this important tool as a way to stay in touch.

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.



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

<http://www.ussnitro.org>