



Nitro Blast

Sleepless in Seattle (well, Renton)

Keep the Memories Alive

Seattle 2009 Update

By Jim Timmons

Preparations for our 2009 Seattle reunion are well underway and information on the agenda and activities should be available shortly. When we complete the arrangements, the listings will be placed on the Nitro Association reunion web site: <http://www.ussnitro.org/09activity.htm> and/or will be mailed or emailed to you.

The Hilton Garden Inn, Renton, WA, has been selected as our reunion headquarters. The Nitro Association has blocked a group of 10 guestrooms for Wednesday, 17 June (for early

arrivals) and 25 guestrooms for each night - Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The guestroom rate is \$109.00/night for 2 adults and children 18 years old or younger. Also included with the room rate is a full American Breakfast - made to order omelets, French toast, waffles, oatmeal, toast, bagels, cereal, fruit, juice, yogurt, etc for each of the adults (2) and children 12 and younger. A limited number of guest rooms are available at our group rate, for up to 4 days prior to the reunion and 2 days after the reunion for attendees who want to visit the Seattle area prior to the reunion or stay later. You will need to contact the hotel concerning additional room night availability

Each person will be responsible for making his or her reservations. Individuals may call the hotel directly at 425-430-1414 or the Hilton Garden Inn toll free reservations number at 1-877-STAY HGI (877-782-9444), or online:

<http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/groups/personalized/SEARHGI-UN617-20090612/index.jhtml>.

Please use the Group Code: UN617 when making all reservations. When placing your reservation for the 2009 reunion, let the reservation clerk know you want to reserve a room for the **USS Nitro Association** reunion for "x" number of nights. Your credit card will not be charged until you check out and you may cancel your reservations up to 24 hours prior to your planned day of arrival. **Anyone requiring special assistance should inform the hotel when making reservations.**

This hotel has limited "smoking" guestrooms. If you want to reserve one,

for the reunion, please do so as soon as possible. Reservations must be received on or before the cutoff date of **5/17/2009**. On the cutoff date, all unreserved rooms will be released back to the hotel for resale. Reservations received after 5/17/2009 will be accepted on a space and rate available basis.

One of our association members, who lives in the Seattle area and will be attending the reunion, has offered to host an attendee or two at his house. If interested, please contact me and I will put you in touch with him.

Cruisebook to CD and T-Shirt Project Update

By Jim Timmons

Come on people, work with me! I thought these were good ideas. Responses to my requests for cruisebooks to copy and artwork for T-shirts have been somewhat disappointing. To date, I have received two responses from individuals who would allow us to make copies of their cruisebooks and "zero" interest in the T-shirt contest.

I thought for sure that we would be able to line up a number of books to copy and make available for our fellow crewmembers to purchase. Surely there are a number of cruisebooks out there collecting dust that we can copy to CDs and put in our ship's store.

(Cruisebooks/T-shirt Cont'd on page 2)

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Association Membership 316

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Newsletter of the
USS Nitro Association
PO Box 1254
MISHAWAKA IN 46546-1254

(Cruise books Cont'd. from Page 1)

As mentioned in the last issue of the *Nitro Blast*, the Association has cruisebooks from the following cruises: 1968-69 Med cruise, 1970-71 Med cruise and the 1995 decommissioning Crews Book. We have also been offered the 1979-80 Med cruisebook.

So, again, if you would be willing to "lend" us your cruisebooks, please let me know what cruise or cruises you have.

As for the T-Shirt contest, you still have till the end of February to submit your designs for either an AE-2 or AE-23 T-shirt. We would like to make decisions on the winning designs in March and hopefully have T-shirts for sale at our Seattle reunion. A prize or two (to be determined) will await the winner or winners of the contest.

Feel free to use the ship's hull numbers, profile or other suitable ship's pictures, come up with a design and a color scheme that would compliment a white T-shirt.

2010 Reunion Update

By Jim T.

The votes are in and Jacksonville, FL. will be the location for the USS Nitro Association's 2010 reunion. As was established at our 2005 reunion, the announcement of the next calendar year's reunion is to be announced prior to the current reunion so we can get a head start on lining up hotels to visit and locations for our activities.

With Jacksonville in mind, we want to give our Florida members an opportunity to help in making this reunion a successful one. If you live in or near Jacksonville, have visited or stayed in the area, we would be interested in your ideas for hotels, activities and possible locations for our

wreath laying ceremony. Keep in mind, since we take buses to most of our event, we do not need to stay in downtown Jacksonville.

So anyone who has suggestions or would like to help in setting up the Jacksonville reunion, please contact Jim Timmons.

* * * * *

The 2011 reunion is scheduled to be held in the East Region and the top three cities being considered are Boston, Massachusetts (4 votes), Portland, Maine (4 votes) and New York, New York (**Earle, NJ**) (12 votes). **NOTE:** Not to sway the voting, but as a reminder, Earle was the homeport for the AE-23 from July 1974 until April 1995.

If you haven't already placed a vote for one of these cities, you may do so at the Nitro Association's Yahoo Group site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NitroCrewmembers/> then click on Polls or by mailing or emailing your vote to Jim Timmons at: navy65-69@sbcglobal.net

Nitro Association Officer Elections

By Jim Timmons

This year's business meeting will also include election or reelection of officers for the next two years (2010-2011). Any Nitro Association member, having paid their 2009 dues and who is a member in good standing, is eligible to be elected as an officer of the association.

Positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Trustees 1 & 2 and Master At Arms and will be open for nominations. Current officers of the Nitro Association are: Jim Timmons*, President; Bob Eberlein*, V. President; Robert Peiffer*, Treasurer; Phil Wise, Secretary; Juan Reyes*, Trustee; Paul Licker*, Trustee and Oscar Santiago*, Master At Arms. An asterisk (*) indicates the individual will run again for the same office. Anyone else desiring to run for office should contact Jim Timmons so your name can be added to the ballot.

The Crow's Nest - News for and about Crewmembers



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

LCDR Ralph Mason (AE-23) (1960-64); LT Charles Smith (AE-23) (1959-60); EM1c James Herron, Jr. (AE-2) (1943-45); LT Jan Huyck (AE-23) (1959-60); IC1 John Klinefelter (AE-23) (1973-75); FN Anthony Dowidowicz (AE-23) (1961-63); SC1 George Livernois (AE-2) (1942-46); BM3 Gary Daniel (AE-23) (1967-69)

* * * * *

The Nitro Sage

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

You raised the thresholds and lowered headers of your front and back doors so you either trip or bang your head every time you pass through them.

You pack a seabag instead of a suitcase for a family vacation.

You refer to your family as your "boat crew".

Navy Times Article Recaps

- 1 1950's era Gunner's Mate school at Great Lakes to be demolished.
2. 3.9% military pay raise went into effect Jan. 1st.
- 3 Pirate attacks off Somalia increase and military contractor, Blackwater, might provide private protection.
- 4 CNO Roughhead - smaller crews with more automated systems and better ship readiness is key to Navy's future.
- 5 New GI Bill offers transfer rights to service member's immediate family.
- 6 Policy changes may allow some media coverage of Arlington funerals.
- 7 Lost WW2 sub USS Grunion found in waters off coast of Alaska.
- 8 USCG to spend \$1.8B for new patrol boat.
- 9 Six USAF Generals receive administrative actions for '06 Taiwan nuke parts foul-up.
- 10 A civilian and a former sailor are sentenced for impersonating Navy officers.
- 11 New Navy approach cuts red tape and saves money on repairs and parts for ships
- 12 Increasing emphasis being placed on more troops and equipment for war in Afghanistan.
- 13 CPOs to become more involved in writing future petty officer exams.
- 14 Details of May '08 fire onboard carrier George Washington reported. Inattention to hazardous materials, carelessness and communication errors resulted in 37 injuries and \$70 million in damages.
- 15 JCS chief calls for mandatory post-deployment PTSD testing.
- 16 Economic downturn may help military recruitment and retention.
- 17 Naval Operations Concept calls for shorter and more targeted cruises in works for Navy ships.
- 18 Navy doc awarded Navy Cross but can't wear because of classified mission in Afghanistan.
- 19 Navy's new blue and gray cammie working uniform becomes available.
- 20 Naval ships decrease simulations and return to live gunfire training.
- 21 Medical waste burning in Iraq called into question as health hazard.
- 22 Groundbreaking for new Pearl Harbor visitor center.

Nitro Association 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 316.* The following shipmates (Nitro tour dates) have signed on as members during the month indicated:

December 08: Dennis Keathley, LT (87-90); Gary Olson, CYN3 (70-71)

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

2009 Nitro Assn. Dues Classifications

Regular Association Membership Dues are \$25.00 (including S/H). The dues packet includes an USS Nitro Association watch cap (will have a silhouette of the USS Nitro (AE-23) and the hull numbers of both the AE-2 and AE-23 directly embroidered on it), quarterly newsletters, membership certificate (for **new** members only), crewmembers directory and a laminated membership card.

Active Duty Membership Dues - FREE

A new classification of dues for former USS Nitro (AE-23) crewmembers, who are still on active duty, has been created. Former Nitro crewmember, still on active duty, will receive the items described in the regular association membership packet at no charge to them. In order to qualify for this classification of membership, the active duty person will need to supply the Association with a copy of their military ID (to show active status) as well as a copy of their NAVPERS 1070/605 entitled "History of Assignments".

Associated Membership Dues are \$14.80 (\$12.50 dues + \$2.30 S/H) This classification of membership is available for spouses and/or children of former or deceased USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) crewmembers 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**).

All USS Nitro Association memberships are valid for one calendar year (Jan - Dec.).

Navy Times Article Recaps

- 23 MCPON Campa steps down. Will retire from Navy in April
- 24 Military anxious about Obama plans for services. Pay, benefits and health care top concerns.
- 25 Navy defines 'core values' in new ethos statement used primarily at training commands.
- 26 On base restaurant choices to increase (Chili's & IHOP mentioned).
- 27 USCG delivers first of 26 small boats to Iraqi Navy.
- 28 Navy commissions USS Freedom (LCS-1), lead ship in newest class of Littoral Combat Ships.
- 29 Mid-deployment oil leaks and failed welds plague Navy's newest LPD, San Antonio. Other San Antonio-class ships also have problems.
- 30 Norfolk joins San Diego in offering shipbased junior sailors (E2 & 3s) shorebased housing.
- 31 PC and SK ratings are merged.
- 32 SecDef Gates to remain in Obama administration.
- 33 World navies to share intel on pirate attacks. Lack of assets cited as reason for US Navy not becoming more involved in Horn of Africa. UN authorizes "aggressive" action against pirates.
- 34 Divers find wreckage of 19th century, US Navy ships Chippewa and Onkahye in Caribbean.
- 35 Naval Historical Center changes name to Naval History and Heritage Command.
- 36 Fleet Master Chief (SW/FMF) Rick West becomes new MCPON.
- 37 Military charities hit hard by economic slump.
- 38 Former Army Chief Of Staff Shinseki to head VA.
- 39 Pilot program of 4-day workweek on board Navy destroyer a success so far. Attempt to improve work, life balance.
- 40 Northrop's X-47B could be Navy's first unmanned carrier based bomber.
- 41 GAO reports Navy has \$7.5B in unneeded spare parts and equipment.

Guest Columnist

Ed Marino, Association Member

I was assigned to USS Nitro as an E3 SN on October 3, 1968 and was informed that the ship was deployed in the Med, and that I would meet the ship in Naples, Italy. It was an end to some real soft duty for me, as I had been in the transit barracks at the Newport Navel Base for over a month and was able to go home to Massachusetts every weekend.

I left Newport in the company of 2 other sailors bound for the Nitro, SN John Keegan and SN Gary Lynch. Our first stop was McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. We waited there for about a week and then caught a flight to Mildenhall, England. After a couple of days we then were flown to Germany where we changed flights and got on a mail plane to Naples. Once in Italy we found the Nitro had departed a few days before so we were put on a flight to Rota, Spain. At Rota we were put on the USS Saratoga which was due to replenish, and after another week we finally got to the Nitro during an UnRep.

Once on board Nitro, I was assigned to 2ND Division and have many memories of chipping and painting and once was over the side with SN Keegan when the young SA who was tending our tools and staging ropes dropped us in the bay in Gaeta in the November cold. I remember BM3 McBurnie helping us back aboard. We were completely wet and also covered with red lead and haze gray. We stayed in Gaeta for the Thanksgiving holiday and then cruised south to meet unrepl commitments. I will always remember the sight of all of that ammo spread out on the deck being readied for transfer. I also remember the fire in the ammunition hold at Augusta Bay Sicily when the fork truck burned. I was amazed by the quick action of the crew in response to the fire and how everyone exactly knew their job. I spent part of that month mess-cooking where I met CS3 Ed Gibbons who became a life long friend, and we still call each other now and then.

In early December, there was an opening for a postal clerk which I applied for, and during the interview with Lt. Holland, it was mentioned that there was an urgent need for a Quartermaster striker as 5 out of the 6 QM's were to be separated when we returned to the U.S. in February. Lt. Holland and I agreed that I would transfer to operations and give navigation a try. There was a lot to learn in terms of navigation and weather observation in a short amount of time, but with the help of QM2 Davidson and QM3 Derr, I was able to stand watches alone after a few weeks. The adjustment to steering the ship along side another ship while ammo was being transferred was a little harder. I found it best to focus on the gyrocompass and helm and tried not to think about the bombs that were dangling between the ships. We spent the holiday season in the French Riviera at Villafranche and Nice and enjoyed the beauty of this area and did some traveling and site seeing.

At the end of the 1968 Med cruise in Feb 69, QM2 Bertrand and I were the



only two QM's left aboard and we spent a short NATO cruise to the Caribbean doing 12 hour shifts.

Shortly thereafter, we were joined

by QMSA Eric Pauwels who was fresh out of "A" school, and SN Doug Willhide who had transferred from 1st Division. A little later we were joined by QM3 Salyers and SN Clark so we were at full strength for the 1969 deployment. In April the Nitro crew was treated to 2 wonderful weeks of Firefighting School in Philadelphia. The sign at the gate was memorable "learn or burn".

After Firefighting School, we began then planning for our next deployment, visiting the ammo depots at Earle and Yorktown to take on ammo. We did some training cruises to teach new crew

members and performed the usual preventive maintenance on shipboard equipment and systems. The QM team was busy updating and correcting navigation charts and laying out courses, etc. I found out in June that I had made QM3, and was thankful for the additional pay although it still wasn't much. Around the first of July we departed the US again for another 6 month deployment. The Nitro crew spent this time transferring ammo to many different ships and visiting many different countries. We had another fire, this time on the Captains gig, which was again handled quickly. We returned to the US a few days before Christmas 1969 and I was able to get leave to go home to spend Christmas with my family, returning to the ship so that others could get New Years off. In mid January 1970, I was transferred TAD to Shore Patrol duty in Providence and spent the next month or so working the night shift out of the Providence Police Station. Upon returning to the Nitro, we spent our time doing the usual training cruises on the Atlantic coast between Davisville and the Caribbean. In May I was transferred to Quonset Point Naval Air Station as a master at arms in a barracks where I remained until separation.

For the last 11 years, I have been a member of the USS Nitro association, and with my wife have been able to attend 4 of the reunions. Through these reunions, I have renewed old friendships and have made many new friends. One of my granddaughters has been with us on two of the reunions and my daughter, son-in-law, and three of my grandchildren were able to be at the Washington reunion for the dedication of the plaques. These have been wonderful times for all of us and I would recommend to all to try to attend these reunions.

Fair winds and following seas,

Ed Marino
QM3, Operations Division
USS Nitro 1968-1970

Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain Deanna Smitha

As I write this on the day set aside to remember the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the day before the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States, I am reminded of a few things which I would like to share for your consideration.

During the past number of years our nation has suffered enormously, at the hands of difficult people and circumstances in the world, and unfortunately—at our own hands as well. It has become very unfortunate that we—as a people—have often opted for the less arduous route when it is clearly indicated that it will come back to bite us significantly in the future, near and far. The easy answers—whether given by our religious leaders, our political leaders, or whomever—have

given many comfort in the short run and have proved to render great heartburn and heartache in the long term.

Our world is not a computer game, but rather a complex intermingling of relationships, of calm and turmoil, pain and prosperity and of challenges and opportunities. Listening to the simple, easy answers has led us to simplistic truths which turn out to be glaringly false, and often those simple answers are given to assuage people into a sense of false well-being, instead of meeting, addressing, and overcoming the wars, prejudices, economic trials, and global issues which threaten us all. We are a strong and proud nation, and at the same time we are part of a global community, more dependent on each other than most would like to admit.

The promises of good life and prosperity, as of freedom, come with paying the price and with substantial sacrifice. Many have lost jobs, homes, and economic well-being. Still others

have been denied equality and rights which are integral and tantamount to the way of life of a non-totalitarian society. Change does not come without pain, success without toil and trial. May we take the toils, pain and trials of our recent experiences and move forward in hope and faith to forge a renewed people and a renewed society, with a vision of freedom, truth and real prosperity and well-being for ourselves and ALL people.

May God continue to give our leaders and our country strong resource and direction in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Fair winds and following seas, and richest blessings to you and yours.....

Grace and peace....

Chaps...

A Final Thought

The stores are full of Valentine candy and summer and winter clothing sales are going on, so it must be the New Year already. America has a new Commander-in-Chief and an economy circling the drain. The two wars are still going on. Wow, let's all hope for the best in 2009.

The membership renewal is going on, and the numbers look good. Now is the time to send in the dues. All organizations are in need of members and it's one way to keep in contact with each other. Be it the Internet,

phone calls or even the chat line, the Nitro Association is an excellent way to keep in touch with your former shipmates.

Bob Peiffer, this time wearing the hat of webmaster, informs the officers of the dues collected and sadly the envelopes returned with outdated addresses or the death notices of our departed shipmates. The death notices are especially sad when it's a member who has attended one or more reunion and we can place a face with a name.

It's some time out, but June will be here before we know it. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of attending a reunion, we have a great time. Try to attend, you'll be glad you did.

Hope to see you in Seattle!

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

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder,