



Nitro Blast

Reunion - What's it all about?

Keep the Memories Alive

Reunion at the Reunion

By Jim Timmons

At our Seattle reunion, many former Nitro shipmates had the opportunities to reunite. None more memorable than those of five of our AE-2 shipmates. Several of these WW2 AE sailors have been to previous reunions, but this year they had a chance not only to visit sites in the area where their ship was built and commissioned but to reunite with a former shipmate, Raymond Walters (86) whom they had not seen since 1945. Another AE-23 shipmate, Russell Garbutt was reunited with Alan

Fleming, and they had not seen each other since serving aboard Nitro in the early 60s. *These are examples of what reunions are all about!*

In total we had sixty-three attendees at this year's reunion and thirty-seven of the attendees (Charles Cousins, Mark Sikes, Russ Garbutt, Paul Licker, George Gregory, Jim Timmons, Bob Eberlein, Bob Peiffer, Juan Reyes, Bill Wasser, Stillman Bradish, Phil Wise, Deanna Smitha, Steve Tyas, George Demko, Bob Knoll, Lee Smith, William Baer, George Argy, Dominick Berardi, Steve Boerstler, Kenneth Marvin, Ron Webb, Ed Gibbons, Rich Artale, John Bochicchio, Tom Papsodero, Rod Tibbetts, John Golding, John Meissner, Bob Fluder, Allen Fleming, Jeff Marlow, Peter Scott Joel Magallenas, Raymond Walters and Bill Jimerson) were former crewmembers.

We were also fortunate to have several of these crewmembers bring extended family to this year's reunion. For many, it was their first time to attend a Navy reunion and our wreath laying ceremony.

USS Ingraham (FFG-61)

As with all of our reunions, one of the highlights involves our wreath laying ceremony. When possible, we try to hold these ceremonies at or near an active military facility. This year we were very fortunate to hold this meaningful ceremony on board the USS Ingraham (FFG-61), which is homeported at NAVSTA, Everett, WA. William Baer represented the AE-23

and Raymond Walters represented the AE-2 as wreath bearers for this year's ceremony. In addition to the attendees, we had a contingent of Ingraham officers and crew attend the ceremony. The Navy Band Northwest provided the bugler for the playing of "Taps" and the presentation of the colors were presented by the color guard from the Naval Hospital at Oak Harbor, WA. We presented a framed collection of Nitro Association and ships patches to the officers and crew of the USS Ingraham and also presented a check for \$500 to a representative of the Everett office of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. This check represented 50% of the proceeds of our annual raffle/auction that was held on the evening before.

After the ceremony, the attendees spent some time touring the USS Ingraham prior to having lunch at the All American Galley at NAVSTA, Everett.

A Seattle Afternoon

The weather for Saturday's activities could not have been better. The overcast of the morning gave way to a bright, sunny afternoon for our visit to various places in downtown Seattle. We had bus stops at two locations (the Space Needle and Pike Street Market) where our attendees could be dropped off and picked up and spend as much time as they wanted to see the sights in and around those locations. A great time was had by all.

Other Association Business

Inside this Edition

July 2009
Volume 12, Issue 1

Editor: Jim Timmons
Association Membership 319

1	2009 Reunion Recap
1	USS Ingraham (FFG-61)
1	A Seattle Afternoon
2	Other Association Business
2	2010 Jacksonville Reunion
2	Bravo Zulu
3	Navy Times Article Recaps
3	Nitro Membership Update
4	Guest Columnists
5	Chaplain's Corner
5	A final Thought

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

2009 Reunion Pictures and 2009 Dues Premium

2009 Dues Premium (substitutes)

Best Bombs

Gun Gang



Bremerton Naval Museum



Hilton Garden Inn, Renton, WA



AE-2 WW2 Crewmembers



Phil & Donna receive Service Plaque



Attendees on tour

Ice Cream for the entire crew!

USS Nitro (background)

Naval Undersea Museum, Keyport

USS Pyro (foreground)

**Sub sail in front of Naval Museum
& NISMF, Bremerton**

Hatches a bit smaller on subs

Will the real dummy please stand up?

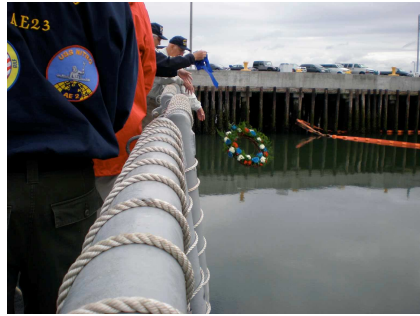
Range, 5,000 yards!

Poulsbo, WA

**< Carrier - Bremerton Mothball Fleet
POW/MIA Table >**



Berardi, Marvin & Walters at dinner



**Raymond Walters & William Baer
toss wreath overboard**



Where's the Gun?

Wreath Laying Pictures



USS Ingraham (FFG-61)



Bugler playing "Taps"



Questions anyone?



Wreath Laying Party



**Bob Peiffer, Treasurer presents
check to Navy/Marine Corp Relief
Society**



Seattle, WA



Crew observes Ceremony



**Nitro patches presented to
Ingraham XO & PAO by Bob
Eberlein**



Seattle Stadiums



Prayer by Assn. Chaplain Smitha



Yep, that's an anchor chain!



Space Needle

The following personnel were elected or re-elected to offices in the Nitro Association for the fiscal years 2010 - 2011 (July 2009 - June 2011): Jim Timmons, President; Bob Eberlein, Vice President; Bob Peiffer, Treasurer; Paul Licker, Secretary; Juan Reyes, Trustee; Ed Gibbons, Jr., Trustee and Oscar Santiago, Master at Arms.

Paul Licker is checking into the cost of having Battle Streamers made for the campaigns, conflicts and wars that the ships named Nitro have served in. The decision reached at the Seattle business meeting was to try to limit the cost of having them made to under \$1,000 and then look at a special project to fund them, similar to the way we funded the Navy Memorial ship's plaques.

When the information is gathered and discussed by the Nitro Assn. board, we will inform the members of our progress.

2010 Jacksonville Reunion Update

By Jim Timmons

Mark your calendar *now* for the 2009 Jacksonville, Florida reunion. The dates of the reunion will be from Thursday, 17 June through Sunday, 20 June 2010. We will be making decisions on activities, hotel and location for our wreath laying ceremony in the early Fall and hope to have the information available for the October newsletter.

Thanks to Steve Tyas and Paul Licker for doing some preliminary legwork on this reunion. Based on previous East Coast reunions, we will be blocking between 30 and 40 guestrooms for Thursday through Saturday nights and probably 25 for Wednesday night

It's never too early to start contacting other former crewmembers about the Jacksonville reunion, so as Frank Sinatra sang, "*Start spreading the word*".

It never ceases to amaze me that former crewmembers find out about the reunion, held in their area, only after it has been held. We try to get as much information out to newspapers and online sites that list reunions, but nothing does the job better than "word of mouth" notifications. So, for those of you know of former shipmates living in Florida or the Southeast; make sure they know about the location and dates of the reunion. Have them check the Nitro Assn. web site for updates, and above all make sure they get to the reunion!

Seattle Reunion BRAVO ZULUS

By Jim Timmons

This year's reunion presented many challenges - uncertain attendee numbers because of a down-turned economy, the distance many had to travel to get to the reunion, working with the hotels to eliminate the guest room attrition rate clauses in our contract and setting up

our visit to NAVSTA, Everett.

I was fortunate to work with several exceptional individuals during the time leading up to and during our visit to Seattle and would like to acknowledge them in our newsletter (even though the chances of them seeing it is remote).

Thorsten Reim and the staff at the Hilton Garden Inn were exceptional in accommodating our requests and the most helpful staff with which we have ever worked. *Rick Huling and MCI Sonja Chambers* of NAVSTA, Everett's PAO were most helpful in arranging our visit to the Naval Station and in working with the USS Ingraham (FFG-61) to make our visit the success it turned out to be. And finally, the officers and crew of the USS Ingraham made our time on board their ship the most memorable parts of our visit to the great Northwest. The task we laid on their PAO, *Ens. Todd Chen*, for the wreath laying ceremony and tour could not have been executed any better.

BRAVO ZULU -OUTSTANDING job!

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:

MM1c Richard Steinreich, AE-2, 1942-45

The Nitro Sage

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

You've been to Hong Kong and purchased a set of tailor-made gabardine dress blues, bell-bottom, 13-button, silk-lined trousers, and a jumper with left-side zipper and dragons inside the cuff and dragons and lions on the silk lining.

Friends and family have to request permission to come aboard when they enter your living room.

You have fire drills at 3 a.m. in your home and you live alone!

Navy Times Article Recaps

- 1 Former Mississippi Gov. Ray Mabus new Secretary of the Navy.
2. New cammie uniforms spells end of 40+ years of wearing command ball caps with work utilities.
- 3 Because of high retention rates, re-up bonuses may be cut.
- 4 Military relief societies tighten belts due to financial losses in recession.
- 5 A March collision may end Submarine Hartford's deployment.
- 6 2010 pay raise could be 3.4%.
- 7 Chief's "stay-or-go" eval panel to meet in Sept. to review Chiefs with 20+ years.
- 8 LCS-2, built mainly with aluminum, will bring new challenges to fleet.
- 9 CNO wants to decommission USS Enterprise 2 years early.
- 10 Review of "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy put on hold.
- 11 Afghan soldier shots and kills 2 Navy officers.
- 12 Osprey, tilt-rotor aircraft, to be assigned to East Coast amphibs.
- 13 SecDef Gates wants more Arleigh Burke and less Zumwalt (DDG-1000) destroyers built.
- 14 Navy offers ships crews cash for best energy savings while underway.
- 15 Mayport, FL may not get another aircraft carrier. Caught in political squabble between FL and VA lawmakers.
- 16 Name change could be coming for Dept. of the Navy, to add Marine Corp.
- 17 VFW reports that jobless veterans outnumber troops in Iraq.
- 18 Upgrades to USCG housing lags behind other branches.
- 19 Navy puts hold on 14,000 PCS (permanent change of station) orders until Oct. because of lack of funding.
- 20 Carrier Gerald R. Ford to use electromagnetic launch system.
- 21 Medical billet recruiting falls short for all military branches.
- 22 450,000 applications expected for first year of post 9/11 GI Bill.
- 23 2008 InSurvs expose serious flaws in surface and sub fleet
- 24 Audit investigation shows base anti-terrorism security needs improvement.
- 25 USCG Commandant tells Congress about aging fleet.

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

May 09: Richard Niederriter, MM1 (61-66)

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

- 26 Wounded troops ask for more funding support for caregivers.
- 27 Lawsuits filed over burn-pit exposure to medical waste in Iraq.
- 28 SecNav says spending is out of control.
- 29 Carrier Stennis XO relieved for misconduct.
- 30 Recruits get new NWU (Navy Work Uniforms - cammies).
- 31 Postal clerks now called Logistic Specialists. Rating combined with SK
- 32 Newly commissioned DDG named after former POW, Vice Admiral James Stockdale.
- 33 MCPON stresses warfare qualifications and discipline programs
- 34 Plan to have 10 carrier fleet by 2015 dictated by budgets.
- 35 Mine countermeasure ships to be homeported in San Diego.
- 36 CNO wants to see a 25% decline in alcohol related incidents in 2009.
- 37 \$664 Billion DOD budget for FY 2010. Congress balks at dropping of major weapons systems and jobs.
- 38 Swine flu has cancelled deployment of San Diego based USS Dubuque.
- 39 Navy Joint Strike Force fighter (F-35C) to debut this summer.
- 40 More IED attacks in Afghanistan as surge in forces builds up.
- 41 USS Kitty Hawk decommissioned in May at Naval Shipyard, Bremerton.
- 42 Carrier George H. W. Bush accepted by the Navy on May 11.
- 43 Afghan top US General resigns.
- 44 Twenty-eight percent of military absentee ballots were not counted in 2008 election. Online voting a possibility.
- 45 Stop-loss compensation waiting for congressional approval. Up to 185,000 current and former service members could be affected.
- 46 Navy does more 'synthetic' task force training (pierside and simulator) of crews and ships prior to deployment.
- 47 Some US-flagged commercial vessels may have guards on board when entering 'pirate' areas.
- 48 Afghan-Pakistan boarder is CNO's top concern.
- 49 Enlisted rank advancement pay can lag as much as 6 months behind.

Guest Columnist

Dominick Berardi
USS Nitro (AE-2)
Association Member

I enlisted in the U S Navy on September 11, 1942, when I was 17 years old, and went to boot camp in Newport, RI. We were there for three weeks. Just enough time for our shots, one hour rowing in a whaleboat, one hour on a firing range, one hour in a swimming pool and learning to march in formation. That was our training.

I then went to Electrical School in Newport, RI for sixteen weeks. At night we all took 2-hour turns guarding Narragansett Bay, with empty rifles, from German subs. After completing school, I was ordered to the Norfolk, VA Navy Yard for duty aboard the USS Nitro (AE-2), which was undergoing repairs and modifications. I had no idea what kind of a ship she was. Boy was I surprised. She looked like an old cargo ship with some guns.

My first assignment the next day was fire watch for a welder for a few days. I was then assigned to the Electric Shop. My first battle station was the forward 24" carbon arc search light on the upper deck of the bridge, out in the open with no protection.

After repairs, we made our first trip to Recife, Brazil by the way of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, San Juan, Puerto Rico and Trinidad. On the way to Recife, we crossed the Equator on September 1, 1943 and those of us who had not crossed the Equator before were initiated into The Ancient Order of the Deep and are now shellbacks.

On the second trip, we were in a convoy and, in the middle of the night watch, a steam line to the turbines ruptured and we were left dead in the water. We went into General Quarters until the lines were

repaired. We were happy that there were no German subs around.

In April of 1944, we left for north Ireland with a full load of ammunition, then to Scotland and then to Plymouth, England where we supplied ships with ammunition for the Normandy invasion. We then sailed to Corsica where we supplied ships with ammunition for the southern France invasion.



We were then ordered to the Pacific with a stop in the Virgin Islands. On the way to the Virgin Islands, while refueling a DE (destroyer escort), she put her anchor through our side. When we arrived at St. Thomas, we all had liberty and as I remember we all got loaded.

We then went though the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbor where we reloaded with ammo and sailed for Ulithi. While there, a transfer to an electronics school in Camp Perry VA arrived for an EM2c. Both James Herron and I wanted the school. We were both EM2c. We tossed a coin and I won. I left the Nitro around April 1945. I came back to the states on a victory ship, the U S Sea Fiddler, which was converted to a transport with bunks 6 high in the holds.

It took us 4 weeks to reach San Francisco. I then went to Camp Perry, VA. By the time I completed school, the war was over. I was then sent to the USS Hanson (DD-832) and again went to the Pacific.

In December 1945, I was told I was being discharged. I returned to Lido Beach, Long Island, NY, and on January 14, 1946 was discharged.

Dominick Berardi
EM2c, "E" Division
USS Nitro (AE-2) 1943-1945

Editor's Note: This is the first of several articles to be written by our WW2 association members.

Junior Guest Columnist

Ryan Webb, Grandson of Ron and Maureen Webb, from Portage, WI

TO ALL MY FRIENDS FROM THE
2009 NITRO ASSOCIATION
REUNION:

I HAD THE BEST TIME EVER WITH
ALL OF
YOU.

THANKS
TO ALL
OF YOU
FOR
MAKING
THIS A
GOOD
TIME
FOR ME.
I WOULD
LIKE TO
REUNION



COME TO ANOTHER
SOME TIME.

THANKS TO MRS. P. (Papsodero)
AND JUAN. I LOVE THE DOLPHIN.
I SLEEP WITH IT.

JIM, DON'T EAT TO MANY
COOKIES.

RYAN

Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain Deanna Smitha

Our Seattle reunion was an absolutely incredible experience, as we gathered at point-prime of the Nitro legacy, the shipyard where AE-2 was built, and from where it was launched and began its fleet service. Five of our AE-2 shipmates stood in front of the picture of their ship's launching in December, 1919, and in the proximity of the bell which rang out the important events aboard the ship day in and day out during its service. Although the museum setting itself was rather new, it had a spirit of embodiment which sailors throughout time can sense...times and places of beginnings, and remembrance of concluding chapters of some very incredible journeys.

This reunion also marked our first get-together since the recycling of AE-23 took place in Brownsville, TX at the end of last year. Plank owners of NITRO AE-23 were present, and I suspect felt a sense of loss in the closure of the most recent chapter in the story of our ships called NITRO. I know I sensed this very deeply even as a later crewmember who served aboard her. Along with our ships, we remembered

A Final Thought

Weather wasn't the greatest, but the reunion was a real success as usual. The Naval Museum and the Underwater Museum had naval history in a nutshell. Too bad there was a break down in communication as the Nitro AE-2 bell wasn't present for our World War Two members to be photographed with it.

Our wreath ceremony aboard the USS Ingraham (FFG-61) was one of the best we have held to honor our departed crewmembers. The comments from Raymond Walters about his buddy who was killed on

and celebrated friends, both those close in reunion and those departed.

We also experienced connection with newer ships, young sailors as many of us once were, and new uniforms (that one is certainly going to take THIS sailor quite a while to get used to). We dined at a new base where the buildings matched, something few of us saw in the Navy we served in. We toured great museums and wonderful scenic spots. Finally, I continued to answer the questions of many of more experienced/veteran NITRO sailors about what life was like aboard in the days when women served as members of the crew. In some ways, those days are so fresh in my memory while being almost twenty years in the past.

NITRO, both ships bearing that proud name, has brought our family together for yet another special moment. The spirit of NITRO lives on strong, as do the memories of friends both gathered and missed. Again I take this opportunity to thank our awesome executive board for their tremendous efforts in making this year's reunion one we can remember with special fondness. And I thank each and every crewmember, family member and friend who shared in being such special parts of this incredible gathering and event. It is through each of you that the

board another ship helped to make the event even more meaningful. Having the duty crew of the Ingraham present to observe our honoring our members and what they will most likely do in the far future.

After the ceremony, the Old Navy (the USS Nitro group) and the New Navy (the USS Ingraham crewmembers) had ample time to intermingle. These young men and women were proud to show off their ship and were genuinely interested to comparing notes on life in the US Navy. We can rest easy at night knowing our shores are being watched over by a new breed of

greatness of the NITRO family lives on now and will continue to do so in the coming years.

MC1 Sonja Chambers was our escort aboard NAVSTA Everett this year, and wrote a wonderful account regarding our Association and of our wreath-laying ceremony aboard USS INGRAHAM (FFG-61). A WWII war journalist/correspondent of wide-renown died this past week, a man by the name of Walter Cronkite. The stories continue, and chapters are always added to the book. There is a sense of newness built upon the strong foundation of our past. As these fine persons have done, let us too continue to chronicle the service of the great and committed people called Americans, who serve their country and the world in the cause of freedom, and may we continue to reach out our hands in support of those who are now serving to preserve and protect that freedom for all people. May God bless them, and indeed us all.

Fair winds and following seas in your endeavors, continuing to serve the fleet and "making the critical difference.

Grace and peace....

Chaps...

sailors. We wish them "fair winds and following seas."

Next year's reunion will take place in Jacksonville, FL. so let's start making plans to meet there and relive the days of our Nitro service. Time, third week of June as usual. Hope to see all of you there

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.