



# Nitro Blast

## Next Up – The Big Apple!

Keep the Memories Alive

### 2011 Homecoming Reunion

Start planning for the 2011 USS Nitro Association New Jersey Homecoming reunion. From July 1974 until her decommissioning on 28 April 1995, the USS Nitro (AE-23) was homeported at Naval Weapons Station, Earle, NJ.

This will be a great time for all of those crewmembers, on board Nitro at that time, to gather from Thursday, 16 June – 19 June 2011 at our New Jersey based hotel. We have narrowed down the selection of hotels to two of the hotels serving the Newark airport, and hope to have our selection made shortly.

#### Attendance Drive for 125!

This will be our 14<sup>th</sup> annual reunion and hopefully will be our largest. Now is the time to start making phone calls and sending emails to all of your former shipmates to tell them about the upcoming reunion. Because this is a homecoming reunion, we are attempting to hold our annual wreath laying ceremony at NAVWEPSTA, Earle (nothing has been confirmed). The wreath laying ceremony is always a very special moment and the focal point of our reunion activities.

As in the past, we will be placing notices on military web sites, which serve as bulletin boards for reunions; newspapers in and around the NJ, NY, PA and other mid-Atlantic states.

### Reunion Activities

Coming up with activities for reunions is always a challenge and we are in the process of lining those up. Depending on which day we will hold our wreath laying ceremony will determine how our group activities develop.

Friday and Saturday are the two days we use for our group activities. The morning we hold our wreath laying ceremony we will also see about touring the base/ship and having lunch on the base. That afternoon we are looking at a harbor cruise that make stops at the Statue of Liberty as well as Ellis Island. The other day, TBD, will involve a tour of NYC with a number of stops (hopefully at Ground Zero), possibly the Empire State building, etc.

In an earlier issue of the *Nitro Blast*, we had asked if there was enough interest in starting the reunion earlier in the week, so that we might plan additional group activities. We had a very limited response and there will not be any additional time added to the reunion for large group activities. However, we have arranged for a block of rooms on Wednesday night for those attendees arriving early. Wednesday nights have become increasingly popular and this would be a perfect time for smaller group activities to take place.

**Broadway Shows, Baseball Games and other activities** – These are just a few activities that have been mentioned as possibilities for reunion ‘free time’. As of the writing of this newsletter, our reunion schedule looks as follows:

**Wednesday** – ‘Free time’ for early arrivals.

**Thursday** – Daytime crewmember check-in and evening annual business meeting.

**Friday** – Daytime tour, Assn. Dinner and Raffle/Auction in the evening.

**Saturday** – Daytime tour and evening ‘free time’.

**Volunteers needed** to set up any smaller group activities. If you are interested in setting up a show, baseball game, fishing or any other event, please let me know. Once we have the small group activity volunteers lined up; I will put their names, email and/or phone numbers in the next issue of the newsletter. Attendees interested in that activity can then contact the volunteer.

Volunteers will be responsible for contacting the specific event, finding out what dates are available, how many are

#### Inside this Edition

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Editor: Jim Timmons

Association Membership 326

1	2011 Homecoming Reunion
1 & 2	Reunion Activities
2	Nitro/Enterprise Rent-a-Car
2	Crow's Nest
2	2012 & 2013 Reunion Info
2 & 3	Association Membership
3	Navy Times Article Recaps
4	Veteran's Day Dining
4	Chaplains Corner
4	A Final Thought

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

needed for a group price, what the cost of the activity will be (including transportation to and from). Collection of money for the activity will be separate from monies collected for official reunion related activities, and will be collected by the leader of the group.

*FYI, although we are staying at a Newark area airport hotel, there are some very inexpensive transportation modes for those wishing to go into Manhattan. The transportation will be mentioned once our hotel is selected.*

We are anticipating a very large and fun filled reunion, so make sure you get your reservations in as soon as the information about the hotel and activities are published in the newsletter and on our web site: [www.ussnitro.org/reunion.htm](http://www.ussnitro.org/reunion.htm).

## Nitro Association & Enterprise Rent-a-Car Agreement

As of this issue, the Nitro Association has entered into an agreement with Enterprise Rental Cars for a 5% discount for any of our members renting cars from Enterprise. Rentals need not be just during our annual reunions. The discount can also be applied to business and personal usage. Enterprise Rent-a-Car has some of the best prices in the rental car industry. Additional info will be available on our web site soon.

## 2012 USS Nitro Association Reunion

*By Nitro Executive Board*

The *Brew City* of Milwaukee, WI has been selected as the site of our reunion in June of 2012. Dates for the 2012 reunion are not finalized yet, but the reunion is usually held during the third week of June. One of the activities we will be attempting to attend is a Boot Camp graduation at Recruit Training Command, NAVSTA, Great Lakes. The last time we

### *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:

Robert McGee, FN, AE-23, 1979

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#### **The Nitro Sage**

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

*They refuse you as a blood donor because of the high salt content.*

*Both your e-mail address and license plate begin with "IM4NAVY".*

*Your wife introduces you as her shipmate.*

visited Great Lakes we held our wreath laying ceremony on the base and had lunch in one of the enlisted dining halls.

## Vote for 2013 Nitro Association Reunion

*From Jim Timmons*

Planning two years out, we are looking at our West region reunion city. Among the cities under consideration are San Francisco, Portland, Salt Lake City, Denver/Boulder, Phoenix, San Diego, Alaska cruise. If you haven't voted for a site yet, please do so on line at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NitroCrewmembers/>

## Guest Columnist

*Our guest columnist is on hiatus this quarter and will return shortly!*

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

***No new members this quarter.***

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

### **2010 Nitro Assn. Dues Classifications**

***Regular Association Membership Dues are \$25.00 (including S/H).*** The dues packet this year will include an USS Nitro Association watch cap (with 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

1. x-USS Forrestal has been towed from Newport, RI to NISMF, Philly.
2. As economy worsens, Congress and DOD looking at military benefit cuts.
3. CNO calls for larger ship crews instead of 'optimal manning' of ships.
4. Congressional committee suggests \$1.1 Trillion defense budget cut. Carriers, aircraft and personnel top list.
5. Active-duty Army Staff Sgt. to receive Medal of Honor.
6. Review board, responding to QDR, wants more sailors and ships.
7. Congress looks at tighter restrictions for medical discharges.
8. Poor performance reviews may lead to cutting thousands of enlisted sailors.
9. Naval Academy head leaves amid slush fund allegations.
10. Navy and Air Force to combine UAV personnel training.
11. Pentagon has sent out survey to troops on gay troops.
12. Admiral Willard, Commander, US Pacific Command, eyes N. Korea threat and growth of Chinese Navy as major challenges for Pacific fleet.
13. Navy testing 4 hours on and 8 hours off watchstanding in engine rooms of line ships.
14. More vets qualify for PTSD claims under new VA system.
15. *Fast food* on bases in Afghanistan.
16. As many as 3,700 Navy officers and enlisted considered for drawdown over next few years. Navy looks for 325,000 manning level.
18. Eleven Navy and MSC ships to leave the fleet over next year.
19. Senator proposes restrictions on GI Bill education benefit transfers
20. Navy to cap quarterly tuition funds for active duty personnel.
21. On base clubs may become a thing of the past.

### Navy Times Article Recaps

22. Submariners' rate advancement better than aviation and surface ship.
23. RADM Nora Tyson first female commander of carrier strike group.
24. Arlington National Cemetery bosses leave positions over records foul up.
25. Surface fleet readiness problems may result in 'readiness commands' to simplify areas of responsibility.
26. USMC Gen. Mattis to head CENTCOM.
27. 61,000 sailors may get new woodland cammie work uniforms.
28. Army stop-loss program to be phased out by March 2011.
29. Joint Forces Command, Navy 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet and several other commands victim of cutbacks.
30. Postal Service to resume tobacco deliveries to war zones.
31. E-4 and below must earn Warfare qualifications by Feb. 2013.
32. Fourteen skippers have been sacked this year so far for various reasons.
33. Newest amphibious assault ship still having steering problems.
34. Decision on a single LCS design for production has been delayed.
35. Iraq may buy as much as \$13B worth of American arms and equipment
36. New Agent Orange rules could offer benefits to 250,000 Vietnam vets.
37. New rules will make it harder for E-5s to advance to E-6.
38. 60,000 sailors not receiving new NWU will have to pay for them out of pocket. Could cost as much as \$700.
39. CNO: "Navy will reimburse sailors for NWU purchases."
40. RI congressman Patrick Kennedy backs plan to have the carrier, JFK, brought to RI as museum ship.
41. Navy to invest millions in waterproof equipment covers for surface ships.
42. Current 'Don't ask, don't tell' policy upheld by US Circuit Court.
43. Post 9/11 GI Bill educational benefit wording causes confusion between students and schools.
44. New reenlistment rules to look at more than just test and physical fitness.
45. Naval aviator surplus could mean serving in some non-aviation billets.
46. Senate Appropriations Committee cuts \$8.1B in 2011 military spending.
47. Navy sidelines coastal patrol ships due to hull cracks and severe wear.

### Navy Times Article Recaps

48. New rules for fighter pilots limit bombing and increases strafing.
49. USAF Chief of Staff will not support future joint bases.
50. States still have problems getting election ballots to troops on time.
51. Navy to move 8,000 marines and sailors from Okinawa to Guam.
52. Remains of two WWII servicemen found on island of Tarawa.
53. Navy football team to play Notre Dame in Ireland in 2012.
54. Congress asks DOD to scrutinize online colleges to make sure military paying for quality education.
55. Congress divided on citizenship-through-service for undocumented foreigners.
56. To ease budget woes, re-up bonuses may be cut.
57. LCS-1 (Freedom) engine breaks down and will have to be replaced.
58. Longer and more frequent deployments taking toll on ships and sailors.
59. Associate degree will be required for all sailors in Legalman billets.
60. Stateside based USCG aviators becoming targets of laser strikes.
64. 61. State of Ohio to pay bonuses of up to \$1,500 to troops who have served in the Persian Gulf War since 1991.
65. 62. x-destroyer Radford to become reef 30 miles east of Cape May, NJ.
66. 63. Tricare fee hikes could be on the horizon of offset budget shortfalls.
67. 64. Younger vets are saying Congress ignores their needs in benefits bill.
68. 65. Navy may test combo of civilian/Navy crews on Amphib ships.
69. 66. 10<sup>th</sup>. anniversary of Cole attack has changed Navy's view of force protection, training and gear.
70. 67. Design of San Antonio class amphibs on trial along with former XO, in death of sailor.
71. 68. Slots for enlisted soldiers to attend USMA, West Point are going unfilled
72. 69. USAF national and regional band members may receive PCS orders to fill non-band billets.
73. 70. Thousands of Coast Guardsmen may have to face retention boards.
71. Troops showing alarming

## Veterans Day Dining

*From various sources*

Participating Applebee's and Golden Corral restaurants will again be serving free meals to active duty and military veterans, in celebration of Veterans Day. Applebee's will serve meals during their normal business hours on Thursday, November 11 and Golden Corral will serve meals on Monday, November 15.

While Applebee's requires proof of military service, such as an active-duty or retired veteran's military ID, Veterans Organization Card or copy of DD214, Golden Corral does not have any requirements for proof of military service. (Editor's note – it probably wouldn't hurt to have some form of ID).

Both restaurant chains have long histories of supporting active duty and veterans' organizations.

## Chaplain's Corner

*By Chaplain Deanna Smitha*

I don't know about anyone else, but the constant barrage of political campaign literature in my mailbox, the ads on the television and the din of all of the infighting and rhetoric often made me cranky! Being a member of the American electorate, I felt it to be my duty to be informed, to study what is put forward for consideration by vote, and to be responsible in the exercise of the franchise. For me, maybe this was reinforced by a degree in political science/constitutional law, my military service, and my work for many years in the public safety/criminal and justice/law enforcement fields.

That said, I believe that as citizens we are charged with a very important duty, which is never to be trivialized or taken lightly. Further, when we go to the polls we must exercise due judgment, remembering that ALL are subject to the law and to its constraints. There seems to be a significant population in our country, however, that have operated under the assumption that because of their birth,

class, vocation, or current occupation that exempts them from the rules, or from the parameters that the rest of us must abide.

As someone who now tells "guns and badges" where to go on a daily basis, I have a zero-tolerance to dirty cops. As a voter and taxpayer, I have zero-tolerance to those who legislate yet do not abide by the rules, or make rules exempting them from law. This is happening with alarming frequency these days and those so exercising such abuse of power need to be called into account for their unlawful and immoral actions.

It is my deepest hope and concern that you, the electorate of our nation, have given due consideration to the people and issues at hand, and that you have VOTED—with very informed preparation and with good conscience. It is the citizenry of our nation that makes it great, and we owe to each other and to our nation the responsible exercise of the voting franchise; not only in this election, but in every election.

Fair winds and following seas in all of your endeavors, continuing to serve the fleet and the world...“making the critical difference.

*Grace and peace....*

Chaps...

## A Final Thought

*By Robert Eberlein,*

Can it be the calendar is correct? October/November already? Trees are wearing their finest fall colors and no snow in the forecast, yet! The stores are full of Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas items. What ever happen to having one holiday and then the next? Nothing like rushing the seasons.

The association officers are in the final stages of the selecting the lodging for the 2011 reunion. For all those who were aboard the Nitro AE-23 from 1974 to 1995, mark your calendar for the third

week of June so that you may attend your Weapons Station Earle, NJ "home coming" reunion. Hope to see a large turn out from our New England and mid-Atlantic state members.

For anyone who has been with the Association long enough, you know that in the last newsletter of the year I visit a ghost of my Christmas past. Not this year though. I want you, the reader, to take time to remember a Holiday, event or person that left you with some good memories. With the Holidays on the way, parties and gatherings to attend, take time to remember. As the vice-president of my local Vietnam Veterans of America told us this month, it's later than we think.

From all of the association officers and our families, we wish each and everyone all the best for the Holiday Season and a great 2011!

*Fair winds and following seas,*

Bob Eberlein, Founder,  
USS Nitro Association.