



# Nitro Blast

## Milwaukee Reunion Update

Keep the Memories Alive

### Nitro Association Headquarters!

By Jim Timmons

Our 2012 reunion headquarters will be the Country Inn & Suites Hotel in Brookfield, WI, which is located just west of Milwaukee. This hotel offers our attendees a chance to relax in a suburban location while being close to a number of Milwaukee area attractions.

The Nitro Association has blocked a group of 10 guestrooms for Wednesday, 20 June (for early arrivals) and 30 guestrooms for each night - Thursday, Friday and Saturday (21 - 23 June). The association's guestroom rate is

\$104.00/night for a Country Standard room and \$119 for a Two Room Suite. This rate is good for 2 adults and children 18 years old or younger. Included with the room rate is a complimentary deluxe continental breakfast buffet, which includes waffles, omelets as well as cereals, fruit, pastries and breakfast beverages.

Our group rate is available for up to 2 days prior to and after the reunion. Each person will be responsible for making his or her reservations. Individuals may call the hotel's toll free reservations number at 1-800-456-4000 or directly at 1-262-782-1400. The Country Inn & Suites Hotel will be setting up a reservation page on their web site shortly and you will be able to make reservations there as well.

As soon as we know what the URL is, it will be published on the Nitro Association's web site. When placing your reservation for the 2012 reunion, let the reservation clerk know you want to reserve a room for the **USS Nitro Association's 15<sup>th</sup> Reunion** for "x" number of nights. Your credit card will not be charged until you check out and you may cancel your reservations up till 6 PM the date of arrival.

*Anyone requiring special assistance should inform the hotel when making reservations.*

The State of Wisconsin is a 'indoor' non-smoking state; therefore so is the hotel. Reservations must be received on or before the cutoff date of **5/30/2012**. On the cutoff date, all unreserved rooms will be released back to the hotel for resale. Reservations received after the cutoff

date will be accepted on a space and rate available basis.

### A Wisconsin Surprise

Something special is being planned for those Wednesday arrivals. The surprise will take place Wednesday evening and is something extra to kick off our 15<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary celebration. We have an increasing number of attendees who arrive a day or two early for the reunions, so come join us to see what the *surprise* will be.

We are in the process of finalizing the activities for the Milwaukee reunion, but here is the current agenda:

**Wednesday:** Early arrivals, evening Wisconsin surprise

**Thursday:** Crewmember check-in, evening Association business meeting

**Friday:** Trip to Great Lakes for graduation, wreath laying ceremony, lunch and a stop or two on the way back to Milwaukee. Annual dinner and raffle/auction in the evening.

**Saturday:** Milwaukee trip will include some of the following: Harley Davidson Museum, possible stops at Miller Park (Milwaukee Brewers) and Sprecher Brewery, brief tour of downtown Milwaukee and a visit to the Milwaukee Art Museum (one of the world's great buildings!)

We hope to finalize the stops for Friday and Saturday soon and will be sending out the reunion activity sheet as an attachment to your email or as a separate mailing. This information will also be available on our web site [www.ussnitro.org](http://www.ussnitro.org)

### Inside this Edition

January 2012  
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Editor: Jim Timmons  
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Newsletter of the  
USS Nitro Association  
PO Box 1254  
MISHAWAKA IN 46546-1254

## 15<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary Dues Premium

As this is the year of our 15<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary, we decided to have a unique dues premium made.



Our Anniversary glass paperweight is deep etched with the Association crest and the dates 1998 – 2012. We have ordered a few extra paperweights, so there may be some available from our ship's store once all the dues shipments are made.

These premiums will be shipped to all full dues paying members shortly and as they continue to come in.

We are planning on a couple other surprises for the Nitro Association's fifteenth anniversary reunion. We want to make this the best reunion so far, and we can not do this without your attendance. So, make plans to attend our Milwaukee reunion and relive old memories with your former shipmates, while meeting many other Nitro sailors. You won't be disappointed.

## 2013 Denver Reunion

As previously mentioned, our reunion next year will be in Denver. The preliminary dates of the reunion are 20 – 23 June 2013. Any suggestions for hotels or attractions in the area, to check out, would be greatly appreciated. We are hoping to visit the Air Force Academy for our wreath laying ceremony. All other activities will be scheduled around this very important event for our attendees.

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

**December:** George Affeldt, LTjg 1968-70; Trent Catalusci, SK1, 1985-89; Susie Papsodero (Associate Mbr)

**January:** William Benzi, EMCS, USN

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

### 2012 Nitro Assn. Dues Classifications

**Regular Association Membership Dues are \$25.00 (including S/H).** The dues packet this year will include a USS Nitro Association 15<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary paperweight, quarterly newsletters, membership certificate (for new members only), crewmembers directory and a laminated membership card.

### **Active Duty Membership Dues - FREE**

Former USS Nitro (AE-23) crewmembers, 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 photocopy of their military ID (to show active status) as well as a photocopy 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.).

### *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:

Captain A. L. Stickles, II, USN, Commanding Officer, USS Nitro (AE-23),  
Sep 1964 - May 1966; Gene E. Stucky HM2, 1960 – 62;

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#### **From John and Trudy, Bob and Carol Eberlein,**

We thank the USS Nitro AE-2/AE-23 Association for the gift of remembrance for the memory of Nora Jane Eberlein to the St Joseph Medical Center's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

As with any loss, time will heal our hearts, but the memories of her short life will be with the families forever.

Once more thank you and bless you all.  
Bob Eberlein Family

### Navy Times Article Recaps

1. Navy considering dual-use (ballistic and attack) subs for future builds.
2. Planned active duty personnel cuts in tuition assistance shelved for now.
3. Overseas and absentee ballot returns for 2010 elections down significantly.
4. GOP candidate Romney calls for growing the fleet as major plank in defense strategy.
5. Navy Seals training mission part of movie 'Act of Valor'.
6. USCG says increased Arctic patrol missions for icebreakers could pose problems with their budget.
7. 15,000 tons of scrap metal earns Thule AFB \$1 million in savings.
8. Navy mine detection software modified to hunt cancer cells.
9. Carriers Lincoln and Nimitz to change homeports.
10. Supreme Court to hear arguments on Stolen Valor Act.
11. Because of 'Supercommittee' failure to make decision on budget cuts, influential Washington 'think-tank' estimates Navy could see cuts of up to \$350-400B through FY2021. However, they call for more future \$\$\$ to USN and USAF and less focus on ground forces.
12. USS Nitro sister ship USS Pyro to be scrapped in April.
13. Sixty-four sailors, fifty on carrier Carl Vinson, busted in drug sting.
14. New guidelines for aging Aegis radar systems for destroyer & cruisers.
15. Marine JSF F-35B STOL (short take off and landing) tests on USS Wasp favorably concluded.
16. 1.6% pay raise effective Jan 1st.
18. Pentagon personnel chief resigns amid IG investigation.
19. VA ends ban on religious expressions at funerals and services.
20. Navy Seals involved in tracking down terrorists in Horn of Africa.
21. Navy takes part in new hyperbaric oxygen therapy for brain injuries. First reports of uses are very promising.
22. Navy and NASA developing nasal spray for motion sickness.
23. Iraq & Afghanistan burn pit links to cancer and other illnesses is inconclusive.
24. First combat-zone MRIs delivered to Afghanistan.
25. American Legion strongly opposes cuts in military spending.
26. Budget cuts force CNO to rethink Mayport carrier move.

27. Adm. Willard, PACOM, warns of China assertiveness in Pacific while US face 'drawdown' of personnel and equipment.
28. A full 1/3 of 2011 CO firings were alcohol related.
29. Former destroyer Momsen CO, guilty of rape and assault, gets brig and no retirement.
30. Navy shelves plans for civilians to run amphib engine room.
31. New class of USCG cutters will boast 6-man enlisted staterooms with desks and flat screen TVs.
32. In response to China's naval increase, Vietnam is acquiring 6 Kilo-class diesel subs from Russia.
33. Pressure being applied to USAF in regards to Dover mishandling of Afghanistan and Iraq war personnel remains.
34. Senate committee finds counterfeit Chinese made parts for US military on the rise.
35. Senate bill would allow 13 sailors killed in the First Barbary War (Tripoli, Libya - 1804) to be brought home, identified and buried at Arlington National Cemetery.
36. Joint Chiefs oppose adding seat to JCS for National Guard commander.
37. Online program will train civilian psychologists to help vets with traumatic brain injuries and PTSD.
38. CNO's top priorities: relaxing NWU rules, PT tests, fleet size and choosing commanding officers.
39. Clogged toilets still a major problem aboard carrier George H. W. Bush.
40. Twenty-nine hundred E-4 & E-8 sailors to be cut from Navy by next September. No specific 'official' reasons to be given to sailors.
42. Navy commissions first airship in 50 years to be used as flying test lab.
43. Fewer ships, high demand mean 6 month deployments may be a thing of the past Navy-wide. Also, look for shorter homeport time.
44. Civilian DOD jobs could be cut by almost 20% over next ten years due to budget cuts and probable base closings.
45. Military, in uniform, with official orders may soon be able to get expedited security checks at airports.
46. Some universities may drop military tuition assistance program because of changes to DOD program.
47. Navy Work Uniform (NWU) may now be worn off-base, except on liberty and certain specified areas.

48. An additional 4-6,000 Marines could leave Afghanistan by year end.
49. USCG vets who worked LORAN stations can now file claims for possible exposure to radiation.
50. Iran downs US surveillance drone.
51. Women to serve on British subs.
52. DOD to purchase 450,000 gallons of biofuel (used cooking oil & algae) to be mixed with traditional fuels at a cost of \$26/gallon, which is about five times more than traditional fuel.
53. Iran threatens to close Straits of Hormuz over US Navy presence.
54. Navy woodland work uniform in field-testing. Only about 10K sailors would be eligible to wear.
55. Boot camp facing service dress blue jumper shortage.
56. Navy families using petitions and social media to fight enlisted separation boards (ERBs).
57. Drawdown resulting from end of US involvement in Afghanistan combined with budget cuts could result in significant compensation changes for future military personnel.
58. DOD examines increasing use of wireless devices to balance security and efficiency.
59. USS Independence (LCS-2) to stay in Florida homeport for now.
60. Australian Navy may be interested in recruiting US sailors separated by retention boards.
61. Advocates look to upgrade status of military dogs from 'equipment'.
62. Sexual assault reports at service academies were up significantly in 2011.
63. GAO reports Pentagon can't keep track of its own budget. GAO also rips Navy accounting practices.
64. DOD checking to see if classified information may have been given to film company making movie about the killing of Bin Laden.
65. Inspector General reports Naval Historical & Heritage Command archive storage areas are unsuitable because of inoperative temperature and humidity controls.
66. More US military activity scheduled for Australia as administration focuses on Pacific.
67. Obama signs \$662B Defense Authorization Bill for 2012.
68. US Navy continues to save Iranians from Somali pirates and small boat mishaps, while sabers rattle over Straits of Hormuz.

## Guest Columnists

Steve Tyas, MM2, 1967-69:

I entered the Naval Reserves in February of 1965 with the intentions of going on active duty upon high school graduation in June. My parents were pushing me toward college but, at that time, my sights were not set that far ahead. I knew I had to do something though or the draft was going to induct me into the Army, which didn't seem all that appealing. Two weeks after graduation, I landed at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center for boot camp and then Machinist Mate "A" School.

After completing school, around January of 1966, orders were received to go to Kittery, Maine to board the USS Thor, ARC 4. This was an old 400-foot cable layer which, along with two others, was laying the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) cable to listen for and monitor Russian submarines. We didn't know that then; all we knew was we were laying a cable in the North Atlantic Ocean in the middle of the winter, in very rough seas with no flag flying and our hull numbers painted over. I spent a year and a half on that ship and the entire crew received some sort of cryptic commendation in our records after completion. Twenty-plus years later, we learned what the cable actually did.

Now comes the good duty – a transfer to the USS Nitro, AE 23 in June of 1967. We had to wait about a month in Norfolk before the ship came in from the Baltimore shipyard. This ship was almost brand new and had just gone through a refit. It was like a floating hotel when compared to the Thor. The engine room was very clean and quite spacious and the mess deck and sleeping accommodations were immaculate. In my mind, I'm saying "brother, did you get lucky!" and to think, its homeport was Davisville, RI which was about 15 minutes from my home. It can't get any better than this! This was going to be my home for the next two years and I was going to make the most of it. Upon arrival on board, I was already an E-4 and nine months later an E-5 with a coffee cup. I had also been recommended for the Naval Enlisted Scientific

Education Program (NESEP) by my Chief Engineer, LT Richard Palleschi and my Captain, Joseph Snyder. That recommendation got me accepted into Bryant University in 1969 and graduating three years later with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. It would be terrific to be able to salute both of these gentlemen one more time while we still have our health.

We sailed up and down the east coast and



the Caribbean Sea, going in and out of Guantanamo Bay in Cuba many times for training exercises with the cattle car transport to the EM club when we came in to port. It was hot down there so we would take our lunch break on the new flight deck to get a tan. It didn't take very long to get one either. As stated previously, this was some ship. We had only one distillation unit to make fresh water, but it was a flash evaporator and put out more water than any two standard units. As long as it worked properly, water was not a worry and we kept it working well. The main engine was something else. At 600 psi steam pressure, we could crank out enough rpm's to turn out 22 knots which is 4 faster than it was supposed to be able to do. We did lose the # 1 main spring bearing twice; once coming out of Davisville and once on the '68 Med. cruise, but we had a spare and it only took a day or two to replace it each time.

In the latter half of '68, we headed out for that Med. cruise to meet up with the sixth fleet, but first, we had to stop in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Captain seemed to have an affinity for that place as we had stopped there a few times before. We seemed to be very well respected there which was a bit different than in the USA at that time. For me, the girl chasing was fantastic. They called us Yanks, which seemed to relate back to WWII to me, and greatly appreciated. We could stay out all night if we wanted and that came in handy at times. I too came to have an affinity for that city, most likely for a different reason than the Captain though. We continued over to

the Med. and spent about six months there where I took five days of leave, toured Rome (what a city!) and then pulled a lot of shore patrol for the rest of the cruise. The reason for that was to stay out of trouble on shore. LTjg, Ledyard would surely agree, since he was the one who had to come get me out of confinement twice in the USA and one didn't want that to happen again. Three strikes and you're out.

In June of '69, between reserve and active duty, I had four years and four months on the books and was ready to go to college and start another career. Thanks to my time on the Nitro, I was now a more mature minded individual and ready to continue my education at a greatly increased pace. That pace stays with me to this day and has enabled me a degree of success. Without my time on the Nitro, I would have never met the individuals who incited this incentive in my mind. They are: Lucien Ferland, MM1, deceased; Mike Sanyk, MM2; Gordy Durocher, MM3; MPA, W2 Mr. Zak; Chief Engineer, LTCDR Richard "Mr. P" Palleschi, Ret. and Captain Joseph Snyder, Ret. The Navy has a lot more to offer than just seeing the world.

Steve Tyas, USS Nitro (AE-23)

## Chaplain's Corner

A couple of Blasts ago, I shared that our youngest son is now an active-duty soldier with the Army's 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division out of Ft. Drum, NY. This has been a very exciting year for our family and for our family's latest service member, PFC Steven Smitha, who came home to California on leave at Christmas. From a bright, brash young man who left home 5 years ago, a very grown-up and mature young soldier returned home to enjoy a wonderful holiday with his family. I can guarantee you that his family was thrilled and excited to have him share a joyous holiday and reunion with us.

In my capacity and work as an armed forces chaplain, I had both the pleasure and the challenge of walking through life in the military with many young people. At times it seemed daunting, as these

young lives were being shaped to perform their duties and understand the nature of freedom and real sacrifice involved in their service to our country. At the same time, these young persons were being shaped into mature individuals who came to a much deeper understanding of faith and commitment to something much larger than themselves.

Like many parents, we sent a growing young person off to serve, and had someone remarkably grown-up return home, whether on leave or at the conclusion of their service obligation. Also like many parents, we are tremendously proud of our soldier, and at the same time share the nervousness of anticipating our loved one in Harm's Way.

As a veteran and a parent, I now know the deep sense of pride and concern having one's own children now serving, completing life's cycle that we experienced and our parents did as well in their generation. It's truly amazing, and incredibly satisfying.

As life's challenges and achievements are experienced and weighed in the larger picture, the strength of our nation and its resolve come into clear focus. The realization of maturity in our younger population gives those who have already served an ongoing sense of optimism and hope for today and the future. The fulfillment of a younger generation in following family and nation in honored tradition can give us...joy, and our nation...peace.

I pray that the holidays you have celebrated this past season have been able to grant you great joy and incredible peace as well.

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

What started out as an idea is now fifteen years old. Little did Bob Peiffer and I know that on the night he set up the website for the USS Nitro reunion that we would still be here fifteen years later.

It's now January and before we realize it, the June reunion will be upon us. Some really good events are planned and I hope there will be another good turn out.

There are changes in policy with the government that will not allow us privilege to eat in the Great Lakes base chow hall. Arrangements are now in the final stages, so let's make plans to attend this record setting event.

There is now a Facebook website where there seems to be a large number of former members. I hope these members are trying to make contact with other crewmembers to get together at some future reunion. The reunions are one way to re live the good old days of your Navy time. There's a large amount of items from the USS Nitro AE-2 and the USS Nitro AE-23 that members can examine.

The Association officers wish you and your families all the best for 2012 and hope many of you are planning to attend our fifteenth annual reunion.

As always, remember those who are still man-the-watch.

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder,  
USS Nitro Association.