



Nitro Blast

Welcome to Wisconsin !!!

Keep the Memories Alive

Nitro Association 15th Anniversary!

By Jim Timmons

Two months left until the USS Nitro Association's 15th Reunion in Milwaukee. We hope to see many of you at this year's reunion. If you will not be able to attend and would like to send a note of well wishes, please send them either Bob Eberlein or myself and they will be read at the reunion.

NOTE: Activities for the reunion are set; however, we have experienced an increase in our lunch costs at Great Lakes. We have also had to cancel the tour at Sprecher Brewery, because the

time between lunch on Saturday and our visit to the Milwaukee Art Museum just did not allow enough time for the brewery visit. If you have already paid the activity fees, there is no additional charge. The additional GLakes lunch costs has been added to the Friday trip and the Sprecher stop has been taken off of the new activity sheet, which is attached to this newsletter.

Our agenda for the reunion is as follows:

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 at the Jelly Belly (jelly beans, yeah!) factory and store on the way back to Milwaukee. Our annual dinner and raffle/auction will be held in the evening.

Saturday: Milwaukee trip will include the following: Harley Davidson Museum, Miller Park (home of the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club), lunch at TGIFriday, a brief tour of downtown Milwaukee and a visit to the Milwaukee Art Museum (one of the world's great buildings!)

Reservation Reminder

We have expanded the number of guestrooms available for Wednesday, 20 June (for early arrivals) and can expand the 30 guestrooms for each night - Thursday, Friday and Saturday (21 - 23 June) if needed. 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 make their reservations by calling the Country Inn and Suites at 1-800-456-4000, directly at 1-262-782-1400 or the online link at <http://www.countryinns.com/ussnitro>.

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 15th. 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.

The Wisconsin Surprise - Update

We have had several questions about the Wednesday 'surprise' for early arrivals. All we are prepared to say is, if you arrive before 5 or 6 PM you will be in time for the 'surprise', and it involves

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Newsletter of the
USS Nitro Association
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something most families do about that time.

15th. Anniversary Raffle Item

The 15th. Anniversary raffle item will be the famous Navy Lone Sailor with Seabag statue.



The 8-Inch Lone Sailor with Seabag Statue is made of high density resin and bonded with bronze. Molded from the original cast sculpted by Stanley Bleifeld and mounted on wood base with official engraved plaque.

If you were to purchase this statue from the Navy Memorial, the cost would be over \$100. The statue is in high demand and it took us some time in order to purchase one.

As is our custom for the after dinner raffle/auction, we would like to ask the attendees, if they are able, to bring an item or two for the auction. Items do not have to be expensive and they can be something you made or purchased. Military, Navy or USS Nitro items are great to have along with any other items that might be of interest at an auction.

Denver in 2013

Denver, Colorado is our destination next year. The preliminary dates of the reunion are 20 – 23 June 2013. We are taking suggestions for hotels and/or attractions in the area to check out. Anyone with knowledge of the Denver area, who would like to volunteer to help plan the 2013 reunion, can contact Jim Timmons.

We are hoping to visit the Air Force Academy for our wreath laying ceremony during our time in Colorado.

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

February: K Baird Tolbard MM2, 1978-79

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 15th. 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 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:

Charles G. Weekes, (AE-23) 1983;

The Nitro Sage

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

Your kids ask for an advance on their allowance and you tell them to "run a chit through their chain of command".

Most of your vocabulary consists of abbreviations and acronyms.

You're assigned to Hawaii, but own vacation homes in San Diego, Norfolk and Naples, Italy.

Navy Times Article Recaps

1. Jobless rate for young veterans almost 5% above national average.
2. DOD shifts strategic focus to South-west Pacific and use of Special Forces.
3. Fourth LCS christened USS Coronado. Project manager fired for inappropriate behavior.
4. Deployed troops to get more mental health screenings, as result of new law.
5. Sea Swap (changing crews on deployed ships) may be in offing for more of the surface fleet.
6. Cruiser CO, fired for cruelty to her crew, will be allowed to retire honorably, which is at odds with unanimous recommendation of board of inquiry.
7. 4th Fleet drug-busting ops in Caribbean showing signs of success.
8. USAF unveils a new faster and stealthier armed but unmanned drone.
9. Sailors with 15 years service, if chosen by enlisted retention boards for separation, may be allowed to retire.
10. Vietnam launches its first domestically made war ship.
11. For decades, military personnel have not been able to sue the government for medical malpractice. Now government lawyers want to extend law to their spouses and children.
12. New sex-assault policies expand confidential reporting and training.
13. Congress again tables Cold War Service Medal.
14. Four command master chiefs fired in 2011 but not reported to public as with CO firings.
15. Manpower data shows some ashore and afloat commands better for rate advancement than others.
16. USCG overhauling enlisted testing procedures. May allow open-books.
18. USNA football team to join Big East in 2015.
19. More health woes linked to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.
20. USAF #2 civilian tapped to be DOD personnel chief.
21. New Ensigns to undergo 8 week Basic Division Officer course prior to sea duty.
22. Seven cruisers and two amphib to be retired early (to save on maintenance) as part of DOD budget cuts.
23. Navy investigating increase in numbers of physical training deaths.
24. Sailors sought for year-long duty aboard USS Ponce, the Navy's first forward staging base in Persian Gulf.

25. Virginia lawmakers petition the Pentagon again to not base CVN at Mayport Naval Station.
26. Pentagon admits to growing problem with Afghani troops firing on Allied troops.
27. SecDef Panetta says US troops will move into an 'advise and assist' role in Afghanistan in late 2013.
28. DOD to start testing troops for 2 highly addictive prescription drugs, Valium and Xanax.
29. Twenty-seven corpsmen kicked out of HM school for cheating.
30. DDG Burke deployed with an auto-pilot as an aid for helmsmen, which could free them up for other duties.
31. Carrier Enterprise is on her final deployment before decommissioning.
32. Reserve sailor count by end of 2012 (3,800) will be about ½ of a 2010 high of 7,008.
33. Navy manning levels could fall to 314,500 by 2015, 4,500 lower than initially projected.
34. Manpower officials say retention boards were necessary to 'manage the mix' of sailors.
35. The first of two Army heavy brigade combat teams will be withdrawn from Europe in 2013.
36. Eight hundred + (E5 and higher) Coasties face retirement screening.
37. Sailors in certain ratings, facing ERBs, may save their career by volunteering for sea duty.
38. Amphib ships Essex and Bonhomme Richard to swap homeports during Essex drydock overhaul period.
39. Bataan amphib readiness group completes 10½ month deployment. Extended deployments of 8-10 months may be on horizon for more ships.
40. USMC to cut 20,000 from Corp over the next five years. DOD wide 103,000 troops may be cut over 5 years.
41. Next 3 DDGs built will honor three sailors from WW2, Vietnam and Iraq.
42. MSC hospital ship Comfort to move from Baltimore to Norfolk in 2013.
43. As part of the European Defense Shield, destroyers The Ross, Donald Cook, Carney and Porter will be based in Rota, Spain starting in 2014.
44. VA budget for next year increased by 10.5%.
45. New Women in Combat policy opens less than 3% of available combat jobs to women.
46. Budget cuts could see Navy's officer corp reduced by 2,200.

47. Funding cuts hurt Navy and Air Force less but shipbuilding to continue to shrink.
48. Navy wants new San Diego LCS training facility and new bachelor enlisted quarters in Coronado, CA.
49. Senior enlisted continuation board could force 600 into retirement.
50. NAVSTA Mayport could get Amphib Readiness Group by 2015.
51. Scrapping super carriers a challenge for Navy because of scrap metal prices and security while scrapping.
52. Gen. Janet Wolfenbarger becomes USAF first female 4-star.
53. Sub CO relieved of command because of mishandling classified materials.
54. Congress looks into cases involving military hazing.
55. Enlisted cross-decking (volunteering to leave homeported ship to fill billets TAD on deploying ship) may be harmful for career because performance evals are done by homeported ship not by TAD ship.
56. Inspections, additional training and increased oversight are recommended for Dover AFB morgue staff.
57. USAF puts hold on iPads use to replace flight crew manuals.
58. USCG budget request eliminates 2 long-term cutter builds.
59. Marine pledges to do 1 million push ups this year to raise money for Wounded Warriors.
60. White House dinner to honor select number of Iraq vets.
61. Three female supply officers, joining the sub force, removed from crews prior to joining subs because of alleged fraudulent travel claims.
62. House panel chairman says that proposed 2013 budget 'breaks faith with military'. Concerned with cuts, proposed pay freezes, higher out of pocket health care cost, etc.
63. VA bracing for flood of vets over next few years due to downsizing of military.
64. Senate Budget Committee chair warns of additional military budget cuts over the next 10 years on top of \$486B already in motion.
65. Breathalyzer tests for all sailors by year's end. Random tests to continue as part of drug abuse crackdown.
66. LSU facial reconstruction experts, using 2 skulls found in the Civil War ironclad, Monitor, were able to reconstruct models of their faces.

Guest Columnists

'A Whisper in the Wind'

By *Anonymous*

When I was five years old, my parents divorced and went their separate ways. My sister and I obviously went with our mother and she, in turn, married another man and gave birth to two additional children. The boy was six years my junior and the girl was ten years younger. From the moment my brother was born I noticed a distinct lack of attention from my stepfather. He even told me he wasn't going to be able to give me that attention anymore because he had to give it to his own son. He told me that several times over the next twelve years. I grew to be an independent type, not having an example as how to govern myself and nobody to set that example.

At the age of eighteen I joined the military and was still looking for that father figure type of individual to emulate and set a firm example as to how to conduct oneself throughout life. I found him at around the age of twenty in the military. He was a self-made man; a military officer about sixteen years my senior and he never knew of my previous situation, or how I had adopted him as a surrogate. I merely watched how he conducted himself and how he worked with his peers and the people who reported to him. We would speak to each other, every now and then, about his time as an enlisted man and how he so enjoyed it and to his future after retiring. He wanted to teach school because of the positive way he could interact with kids. The stability this man showed was so overwhelming; it was never to be forgotten. Just recently, we have spoken to each other twice conveying our experiences over the past many years. I made an effort to tell him how he had affected my life, but don't think it was expressed very well. He said he was just "a whisper in the wind", thus the title of this piece. This low-keyed modest man

had no idea he had this type of an effect on anyone, let alone this writer.

Certainly, there are many others out there who have experienced a similar situation trying to fill a void in their lives. In this particular case, after my time in the military was over, I now had the example as to who I wanted to be and how to conduct myself throughout life. In many situations, where those difficult decisions had to be made which would change the future of others; looking back to this gentleman and how he would deal with these, helped me make them in the proper manner. Helping others get through this difficult period of time in their lives became something I was doing as part of my being. Little did I realize from where it was really coming? It came from "A Whisper in the Wind"; the man who didn't realize how he affected others.

A USS Nitro Sailor

Chaplain's Corner

Last holiday season brought our soldier son home for a long overdue visit. This holiday was spent at distance with my stepsister's family, enjoying the opportunity to meet and get to know some newish (to us) members of our extended family.

Along with the obvious importance of the holidays in our faith communities, it is also important to acknowledge the significance of bringing the family and community together at special times like the holidays. The lack of seizing chances to bring us together only leaves emptiness and lost opportunities in its wake. All such gatherings are not without pitfalls... Families have difference of opinions, memories of difficult previous encounters, and just plain family feuds. Some of these differences can harken back many years—some going back many generations. This reality brings close to us the sadness that the human condition of conflict usually begins at home, and then is allowed to spread through

communities, nations and far-too-often globally.

As you might celebrate upcoming holidays, I would hope that you might consider each new chance as one to maximize, not miss all together. I believe that the results will change your life and attitudes towards the world for the better.

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

Never volunteer, was the warning when we were in the US Navy. If you were smart, you never did, because you were never for sure what the project was. Well, those days are long gone, and there are lots of military organizations that are in need of volunteers.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and other groups. The VFW is now dying a slow death because those who were in charge did not want the Vietnam veterans. Their reason for this is because "it wasn't a declared war, and besides, you didn't win". In my area, the local VFW and the American Legion have a combined burial squad, because there aren't enough members from one or the other to support this effort.

Is it April already? Yep, and time is closing in for the cut off date to make your reservations for the reunion. If you are planning to come, now is the time to get on the ball. There are some really good surprises in store for those who arrive early.

For those who are coming once more, if you have any memorabilia you wish to

share, bring it long. Photos, videos or other items that took a liking to you and went home with you when you left the Nitro(s). Again, does anyone remember the bright yellow flag with Snoopy holding a sling with bombs in his mouth? Would like to find out what ever happen to it.

With Memorial Day next month, please take time to remember those who "gave all," freedom isn't free. And to remember those who man-the-watch.

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder,
USS Nitro Association.