



Nitro Blast

Milwaukee Memories!!!

Keep the Memories Alive

Denver (USAF Academy) Reunion 2013

By Jim Timmons

The USS Nitro Association 2013 reunion planning is already underway. We have already been granted permission for our Association to hold the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the United States Air Force Academy while in Colorado.

We are quite mindful of the wild fires, which took place in and around Colorado Springs, and will keep you advised of any changes in our plans as we progress. At the moment we are planning on spending the remainder of the ceremony day at two places. Pikes Peak, for those

able to make the trip to the 14,000+ foot top, will be our afternoon destination. For those unable to make the mountain portion of the trip, the bus(es) will make a stop for shopping and site seeing in Colorado Springs.

The second day's tour is still being organized. Anyone with knowledge of the Denver area, who would like to volunteer to help plan the 2013 reunion, can contact Jim Timmons. Hotel visits are tentatively scheduled for October.

Milwaukee Reunion Update

As this was our 15th Anniversary, we wanted to do something special for our early arrivals (50 or so). The Country Inn & Suites allowed us to bring in all the equipment and food necessary to have a surprise "Wisconsin Tailgate Party" – everything Made in Wisconsin (beer from 16 different micro breweries, brats, hotdogs, German and American potato salads, cheeses, sauerkraut, pickles, etc). To top off our Made in Wisconsin tailgate, we had the best locally made frozen custard (better than ice cream) for dessert! The hotel allowed us to hold our tailgate, at no charge, in their beautiful courtyard, which was complete with gazebo.

Crewmember Attendees: George Afeldt, George Argy, Richard Artale, Bill Baer, Dominick Berardi, Stillman Bradish, Carroll Denison, Bob Eberlein, Allen Fleming, Bob Fluder, Russell Garbutt, Ed Gibbons, George Gregory, Dennis Johnston, Paul Licker, John Mahler, Jeff Marlow, Joel Pagano, Tom Papsodero, Bob Peiffer, Juan Reyes, Howard Root, Michael Sanyk, Mark Sikes, Gordie Sokolowski, Lee Smith, Jim Timmons, Bill Toohey, Steve Tyas, Bill Wasser, Ron Webb, Tom Wibbels and Phil Wise.

On Friday of the reunion, we visited Great Lakes Naval Training Center for

recruit graduation, our Wreath Laying Ceremony (held main side, Naval Station Great Lakes), lunch at the Port 'O Call Club, tour of the Naval Station and a visit to the Navy Exchange. An afternoon stop at Jelly Belly's Wisconsin warehouse (jellybeans) was made before returning to the hotel for our Annual dinner and raffle/auction.

We had two additional dinner surprises. The first surprise was an Association 15th. Anniversary champagne flute for Bob Eberlein's toast to the Association, it's members and our POW/MIAs. The second surprise was the unveiling of a model of the USS Nitro (AE-23) which Bob E., Jerry Satterfield and a couple of Bob's USMC buddies helped make.

This year's, raffle/auction, recipient of a check for \$500 was the United Service Organization (USO) of Illinois. It has been the Nitro Association's way of giving back to organizations or funds, which have helped military personnel in the past and continue to do so now.

On Saturday, we made tour stops at the Harley Davidson Museum, Miller Park (home of the National League Milwaukee Brewers - with lunch at TGIFriday at Miller Park), a brief bus tour of some of the sites in Milwaukee before ending our day at the Milwaukee Art Museum on the beautiful Lake Michigan shoreline. The Milwaukee Art Museum is known worldwide for the architectural design of the building's Burke Brise Soleil (a moveable wing-like structure) and the Santiago Calatrava-designed Quadracci Pavilion. This is a must-see when visiting Milwaukee.

Inside this Edition

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Editor: Jim Timmons
Association Membership 338

1	Denver 2013 Reunion
1	Milwaukee Reunion Update
2	Mt. Soledad (CA) Update
2	Crow's Nest
2	Norfolk, VA 2014 Reunion
2	Association Membership
3	Navy Times Article Recaps
4	I am The American Sailor
5	Chaplain's Corner
5	A Final Thought

Newsletter of the
USS Nitro Association
PO Box 1254
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Mt. Soledad Legal Challenge Update

From the RAO Bulletin

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an Obama administration appeal aimed at preserving a 29-foot Christian cross at a veterans' memorial on federal land in San Diego, California. The justices, without comment, left intact a federal appeals court decision that the display of the cross is an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion. The federal government took over the site from the city in 2006 under a law Congress passed during a court fight over the cross that began in 1989.

The appeals court ruling "called for the government to tear down a cross that has stood without incident for 58 years as a highly venerated memorial to the nation's fallen service members," the Obama administration said in its appeal to the high court. Those challenging the display, a Vietnam veteran and the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, said the cross was "erected

for an avowedly religious purpose and used for religious ceremonies for decades." Lower courts haven't completed consideration of the case. A San Francisco-based appeals court returned the case to a federal judge to consider a remedy. The appellate panel said it is leaving open the issue of whether the memorial could be modified to comply with the Constitution or whether any cross could be displayed there.

Norfolk, VA in 2014

While the date of the Nitro Association 2014 is not yet determined, the location of Norfolk, Virginia has been chosen. There have been a lot of changes happen to the Norfolk area since most of us were there last and we look forward to seeing a lot of our Virginia and southern shipmates at this reunion.

Anyone with knowledge of the Norfolk area, who would like to volunteer to help plan the 2014 reunion, can contact Jim Timmons.

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:

None 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

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:

Thomas Smith, LCDR, AE-23, early '80s; Jack Van Tol, RD2, AE-23, 1960-64; William Dunn, EM2, AE-23, 1959-61;

The Nitro Sage

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

You perform a weekly disassembly and inspection of your lawn mower.

You start comparing the creamed chipped beef served in the chow hall to the commercial brand sold in the frozen food section of the commissary

Navy Times Article Recaps

1. US Naval Academy receives 20,000+ applications for class of 2016.
2. Carrier, USS Enterprise, returns to US later this summer from final deployment prior to decommissioning.
3. Navy takes receipt of first P-8A Poseidon ASW aircraft. Replaces aged P-3s.
4. PTSD rates climb among female troops.
5. SECNAV readiness program to include breathalyzer tests and random drug tests for oncoming duty sections.
6. Enlisted Retention Boards may make for better chances of advancement for sailors who are retained.
7. CA lawmaker calls for delay in decommissioning cruisers because of impact on PacFleet readiness needs.
8. DDG John Paul Jones crew saves tanker crew after explosion in Persian Gulf.
9. Stars & Stripes newspaper, mainstay in WW2 and Cold War, circulation drops from high of 220,000 to 70,000.
10. New policies for Surface fleet ships: undergo tougher inspections and training prior to future deployments.
11. More minesweeping assets headed to Persian Gulf.
12. Civilians to man first Australian Navy ship due to shortage of sailors.
13. MCPON answers tough questions from House committee on hazing.
14. Single E-4s may lose BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing).
15. DOD tells Congress unless changes to benefits are made, up to 60,000 troops may be cut by 2017.
16. Budgeting pressures may force military to look at base consolidations ahead of next round of BRAC.
18. Congress challenges SECNAV on biofuel costs vs. goals for Navy.
19. Navy to reduce number of IAs (individual augmentees) in combat.
20. CNO reassures shipbuilders that fleet cuts and forward basing won't damage their business.
21. USCG to close 23 recruiting offices because of budget cuts.
22. USCG sinks Japanese fishing boat which broke loose during last year's devastating tsunami.
23. Slow ship-board internet and long lines a stressor for younger sailors.
24. Federal judge orders Sudan to pay \$300+million to USS Cole bombing victims but doubts if restitution will be paid.

25. New retention bonus rules are costly to senior Surface Warfare Officers.
26. Navy to test unisex uniforms for both officers and enlisted. Enlisted female to test crackerjack uniforms
27. SECNAV focuses on PacFleet challenges, fitness of crews, gender equality and future fleet.
28. Navy still sees relevant future for LCS despite many setbacks.
29. Navy reports the third Zumwalt class destroyer will be named after Lyndon B. Johnson.
30. Modified Global Hawk drones operated by Navy for surveillance in Persian Gulf.
31. CNO: Navy near breaking point because of increased op tempo, longer deployments, and shorter homeport and maintenance time.
32. CNO still pushing for nuclear carrier home port in Mayport, FL., but Navy budget may be a negative because of expensive expansions needed.
33. Navy selling stealth boat Sea Shadow for minimum bid of \$10K. The catch is the boat must be scrapped.
34. A 1.7% military pay raise for 2013 clears first congressional hurdle.
35. House subcommittee looks to slow down the military troop drawdown.
36. All sexual assault reports must now be reviewed by an O-6 or above.
37. Naval History and Heritage Command to have change of command.
38. Prescription meds added to fleet drug screening tests.
39. Navy in process of redefining what is considered a 'warship'.
40. Dashboard display to show ship's energy consumption (fuel and electricity) to go fleetwide in 2017.
41. Replacement of an inexpensive bolt along with compound crew and officer errors sideline guided-missile sub Georgia in 2011. Propulsion shaft repair costs total of \$2.2M.
42. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard worker charged for starting \$400 million fire aboard nuclear sub Miami in May.
43. Australian Navy hiring former US Navy personnel in certain ratings.
44. CO of the destroyer The Sullivans is their third commanding officer to be fired in 2 years.
45. Shipboard testing of laser weapons may happen within next 4 years.
46. Nine female medical personnel assigned to USMC combat battalion in Afghanistan.

47. USPS bans shipping of lithium batteries or items containing them to APO, FPO & DPO addresses.
48. New crackerjack uniforms approved for 2015 release to fleet.
49. Navy phasing out Perry-class frigates by 2019.
50. New patrol boats for Navy riverine force to be delivered in 2014.
51. Top military reserve officers tell Congress how budget cuts threaten readiness and morale.
52. Advancement to petty officer or to higher PO rank up by 1/3 over pre ERB test. Highest % advancement in over 5 years.
53. Awarding of MOH still way down from percentages of other conflicts. Inconsistency in applying standards for the award part of the problem.
54. VA overwhelmed by returning troops who need mental health care.
55. USAF researchers study effects of 5-hour energy drinks on troops.
56. An item in upcoming Defense Authorization Bill would place an officer in charge of Arlington National Cemetery and other national cemeteries instead of civilians.
57. Civilian legal assistance may be available for enlisted separated from service by ERBs.
58. Pacific subs ban personal electronics (laptops, iPods, etc.) when boats are pier-side.
59. First LCS, Freedom, finally passes major material inspections and is deemed 'fit for service'.
60. Navy celebrates bicentennial of War of 1812 with events taking place at selected locations.
61. CNO sets tougher standards for Commanding Officer screening.
62. Dozens of corpsmen and doctors who hit the beaches on D-Day will receive Bronze Stars.
63. New GI bill program to provide jobless vets, ages 35 to 60, with an extra year of training.
64. DOD orders freeze on conference travel and large event spending.
65. Admiral warns of drop in ASW expertise because surveillance aircrafts are used over land in Gulf region and not for sub searches.
66. Three amphibs to be homeported in Mayport next year.
67. Watchbill of 3 on / 9 off being tested onboard ships and subs. Researchers believe new bill more in line with sailor's 24hr clock rhythm.

I am The American Sailor

- Author - An original work by Navy Band personnel. The music was written by MUCM Jeffrey Taylor and the words were written by MUCM Jere Wallace, both retired.

Hear my voice, America! Though I speak through the mist of 200 years, my shout for freedom will echo through liberty's halls for many centuries to come.

Hear me speak, for my words are of truth and justice, and the rights of man. For those ideals, I have spilled my blood upon the world's troubled waters.

Listen well, for my time is eternal - yours is but a moment.

I am the spirit of heroes past and future.

I am the American Sailor.

I was born upon the icy shores at Plymouth, rocked upon the waves of the Atlantic, and nursed in the wilderness of Virginia.

I cut my teeth on New England codfish, and I was clothed in southern cotton.

I built muscle at the halcyons of New Bedford whalers, and I gained my sea legs high atop the mizzen of Yankee clipper ships.

Yes, I am the American Sailor, one of the greatest seamen the world has ever known.

The sea is my home and my words are tempered by the sound of paddle wheels on the Mississippi, and the song of whales off Greenland's barren shore. My eyes have grown dim from the glare of sunshine on blue water, and my heart is full of star-strewn nights under the Southern Cross.

My hands are raw from winter storms while sailing-down around the Horn, and

they are blistered from the heat of cannon broadsides while defending our nation.

I am the American Sailor, and I have seen the sunset of a thousand distant, lonely lands.

I am the American Sailor.

It was I who stood tall beside John Paul Jones as he shouted, "I have not yet begun to fight!"

I fought upon Lake Erie with Perry, and I rode with Stephen Decatur into Tripoli harbor to burn the Philadelphia.

I met Guerriere aboard Constitution, and I was lashed to the mast with Admiral Farragut at Mobile Bay.

I have heard the clang of Confederate shot against the sides of Monitor.

I have suffered the cold with Peary at the North Pole, and I responded when Dewey said, "You may fire when ready Gridley," at Manila Bay.

It was I who transported supplies through submarine infested waters when our soldier's were called "over there".

I was there as Admiral Byrd crossed the South Pole.

It was I who went-down with the Arizona at Pearl Harbor, who supported our troops at Inchon, and patrolled the dark deadly waters of the Mekong Delta.

I am the American Sailor, and I wear many faces. I am a pilot soaring across God's blue canopy, and I am a Seabee atop a dusty bulldozer in the South Pacific.

I am a corpsman nursing the wounded in the jungle, and I am a torpedoman in the Nautilus deep beneath the North Pole.

I am hard and I am tough.

But it was my eyes that filled with tears when my brother went-down with the Thresher and the Squailus, and it was my

heart that rejoiced when Commander Shepherd rocketed into orbit above the earth.

It was I who languished in a Viet Cong prison camp, and it was I who walked upon the moon.

It was I who saved the Stark, and the Samuel B. Roberts in the mine infested waters of the Persian Gulf.

It was I who pulled my brothers from the smoke filled compartments of the Bonfish, and wept when my shipmates died on the Iowa, and White Plains.

When called again, I was there, on the tip of the spear for Operation Desert Shield, and Desert Storm.

I am the American Sailor.

I am woman, I am man, I am white and black, yellow, red and brown. I am Jew, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist. I am Irish, Filipino, African, French, Chinese, Indian, and Australian Aboriginal.

And my standard is the outstretched hand of Liberty.

Today, I serve around the world; on land, in air, on and under the sea. I serve proudly, at peace once again, but with the fervent prayer that I need not be called again.

Tell your children of me.

Tell them of my sacrifice, and how my spirit soars above their country.

I have spread the mantle of my nation over the ocean, and I will guard her forever. I am her heritage, and yours.

I am the American Sailor.

Chaplain's Corner

FAST AND FURIOUS

As the title suggests, there are times in our lives when things just seem to be moving at a fast and furious pace. I'm not speaking now about movie titles---especially remembering those who have lost their lives and those who have lost family and friends in the recent tragedy in Aurora, Colorado, on the opening night of the latest movie in the Batman franchise.

So many lose their lives for the most difficult reasons, and still these things seem to happen. Two active service members lost their lives in that most recent tragedy, one from the town my parents live in an hour away from us. We keep all of these folks, and indeed our entire nation in our fervent prayers for comfort and healing in the aftermath of yet another tragedy.

I also was again saddened tonight at the report of a number of our service members in Afghanistan who have today given the ultimate sacrifice for our country and freedom, and we remember them and their families/friends as well.

These saddening events often walk hand in hand with our personal moments of 'fast and furious,' most recently in our house having included a possible new job upon an impending retirement. In these moments when we don't remember whether we are coming or going, it's good to remember that in the midst of tremendous chaos, deep sadness, and significant loss, we are not alone in our journeys.

We must remember that we have one another, our shipmates, our families, our communities, and those in our country who will stand by those in their times of desperate need to provide help and comfort at its most needed moments. We also are thankful we can call on even higher authority and the foundations of our faith to give us the wherewithal to

move THROUGH these perilous times to better ones. I hope that you might call upon those resources most intimate and precious to your own journey to assist you through these troubled moments in our walk through history. Grace and peace to you and yours.

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

"One of the best to date" is what I heard from some of the attending members this June. I believe the "surprises" along the way helped make this a real memorable one. A Wednesday evening cook out by the Bob Fluder clan with local beer, cheese and just plain good company. A postal postmark to commemorate our visit to Naval Training Base Great Lakes, IL. This would be the second one, and I was told to be in demand by individuals who look for the first day of issue by a postal clerk who waited on me.

The buffets ran over with good chow. If you went hungry, it was your own fault. Bet everyone who attended are now looking for ways to loose the weight that found us on this adventure.

When it comes around for the twenty-fifth reunion, the officers will have to pull a reunion of all reunions out of our hats. At least we have ten years to plan this one.

The hotel was only a three story one, but the personnel where there for us if we needed anything. I can say without a doubt this is true. Had a small accident that needed the assistance from the hotel's maintenance crew. My model of the USS Nitro AE-23 took a nosedive from luggage cart and needed some emergency care.

We had a few new faces and some that were missing from other reunions this year. Hope the new attendees went home with some good memories? If so, hope to see ya next year in Denver, Colorado, that's if it didn't burn down. So mark your calendars for the third full week of June 2013.

As always, take time during your day to remember those who man-the-watch, our veterans in VA facilities, and our departed members.

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder,
USS Nitro Association