



Nitro Blast

Denver Reunion Hotel Chosen!!!

Keep the Memories Alive

DoubleTree Stapleton North Hotel

By Jim Timmons

The newly remodeled DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Denver - Stapleton North will be our reunion headquarters for the 2013 reunion. This hotel provides airport transportation as well as transportation to and from nearby shopping centers.

The Nitro Association has blocked a group of 10 guestrooms for Wednesday, 19 June (for early arrivals) and 25 guestrooms for each night - Thursday, Friday and Saturday (20 - 22 June). The association's guestroom rate is \$89.00/night. This rate is good for 2 adults and children 18 years old or

younger. Included with the room rate are a complimentary deluxe breakfast buffet and microwaves and refrigerators in each room.

Our group rate is available for up to 3 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 1-800-445-8667 or directly at 1-303-321-6666 (the preferred number to call). The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Denver - Stapleton North has also set up the following web page where you will be able to make reservation:

http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/D/DENSNDT-USN-20130619/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

(Editor's note: use Internet Explorer when trying to reach this URL)

When placing your reservation for the 2013 reunion, let the reservation clerk know you want to reserve a room for the **USS Nitro Association 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 4 PM the date of arrival.

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

Reservations must be received on or before the cutoff date of **5/21/2013**. 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 reunion agenda is taking shape. Tentatively, the activities are as follows:

- Thursday - crewmember check in and evening business meeting
- Friday – AM wreath laying ceremony and lunch at US Air Force Academy; PM trip to Pikes Peak (need 25 for group rates), for those able to make the trip to the 14,000+ foot top. Or, for those unable to make the mountain portion of the trip, our bus(es) will make a stop in Manito Springs (at the base of the mountain) for site seeing and shopping. Evening – Association dinner and raffle/auction.
- Saturday – (tentative) Visits to the Buffalo Bill Museum in Golden CO, lunch at 16th Street Mall (everyone on their own), the Denver Art Museum (Western Art & American Indian Collection), Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum.
- Sunday, crewmembers check out.

Since we do not have these activities finalized in time for an activity sheet to be included with this newsletter, I will send out a separate activity sheet to all as soon as possible. Also, as soon as we have the final details, they will be placed on the Nitro Association website <http://www.ussnitro.org/reunion.htm> and in the April newsletter.

Word of mouth is our best reunion advertisement, so make sure to let your fellow shipmates know about the reunion and our website.

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January 2013
Volume 15, Issue 3

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

Pike's Peak Reminder

Information provided by High Country Healthcare Family Practice in Breckenridge, Frisco and Silverthorne, Colorado. www.HighCountryHealth.com

The following recap is from the October newsletter and is provided as a comfort guide for those planning on going to Pike's Peak. The full text of the article will be reprinted in the April newsletter.

At altitude, the air is thinner, it is also colder, drier and the ultraviolet rays from the sun are stronger. Take it easy, drink more fluids, and reduce alcohol and caffeine intake. Use sunscreen (SPF 30 or more) and always wear sunglasses or goggles. Bring extra clothes for sudden temperature changes even during warm weather.

Above all, listen to your body! Do not push the limits of your physical capabilities.

2014 Norfolk Reunion

Jim Timmons

As previously published, Norfolk, Virginia has been chosen as the location for our 2014 South reunion. The dates are Thursday 19 – Sunday 22 June.

I would like to renew my call help in planning this reunion. We are in need help in the following areas: Placing reunion notices in Virginia and surrounding states' newspapers, TV and radio stations; locating and notifying former shipmates; recommendations of hotels where you have either stayed, attended or organized meetings, and bus companies to consider.

Two days of activities we are considering, and could use some help with, are Day 1) a visit to the USS Wisconsin (Nitro ship's bell on the bow) and Norfolk sites of interest. Day 2 (Preferably Saturday) Visit to NAVSTA Norfolk and help organizing the wreath laying ceremony on board ship.

We have a lot of former crewmembers living in Virginia and surrounding states and would like to see as many as possible attend this reunion.

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

Malcolm 'Skip' Geppner, AE-23, MM2, 1962-66;

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

2013 Nitro Assn. Dues Classifications
Regular Association Membership Dues are \$25.00 (including S/H). The dues packet this year will include a 2013 pocket calendar, RFID credit card sleeves, 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:

John Lubera, Sr., Coxswain, AE-2, 1942-45
James Leighton, MM3c, AE-2, 1942-44
Robert Kelly AE-2, years unknown
Henry E. Herrick, AE-2, 1937
Richard Menzil, AE-23, BT2, 1974-76

* * * * *

The Nitro Sage

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

You sit in your car and let it run four hours before going anywhere to insure that your engine is properly "lit off".

You periodically shut off the main circuit breaker and run around shouting "fire, fire, fire" and "restore power".

Navy Times Article Recaps

1. Asst. SECNAV squelches rumor about Navy going smokeless.
2. Producers of the TV show "NCIS" considering a spin-off called "Norfolk".
3. Percentage of veterans in Congress drops after 2012 elections.
4. Major business and industries are setting up regional training sites, in 2013, to match transitioning vets military skills with civilian jobs.
5. Fleet Admirals and MCPON call on senior leadership to be more responsive in cases of command discipline problems.
6. Navy placing off-limits more shops in Norfolk area that are selling the synthetic drug 'Spice'.
7. Former corpsman invents device allowing surgeons, involved in spinal-fusion and other orthopedic surgeries, to use more of the patients' own bone in the repair to lessen rejection risks and lower costs.
8. Some in Navy calling for the return of dungarees and chambray shirts for use in work-related situations.
9. Sub fire suspect could face 20 years imprisonment.
10. Army 1st. Lt, clinically dead from IED explosion, survives due to field and trauma surgery advancements over past 10 years.
11. U S military recruiting more non-citizens in critical skills areas such as doctors, nurses and language-speakers.
12. Sequestration for military a real possibility.
13. Among CNO's 2012 highlights are cruise surges, improved rate advancements and remanning of the fleet.
14. PT failures on rise in fleet and play key part in a sailor's retention.
15. Navy fires Stennis strike group RADM(lower half) mid deployment.
16. New Chief's exam shift focus to rating specifics over basic military topics.
17. In another Navy first, four women graduate from riverine course.
18. Navy officer spent 2 years on French carrier as part of an exchange program.
19. Sub and cruiser collision sends damaged sub to drydock.
20. MCPON replies to wide range of enlisted issues – multiple work uniforms will stay for present, eval problems do not mean system is broken, PT=Navy in fitness culture change.
21. Navy dumps 'Throwback' khakis because of cost.
22. Military divers memorial opens in Panama City, FL.
23. Snapped replenishment line injures four carrier Truman sailors.
24. Alleged rape in Japan forces liberty crackdown for all troops.
25. Office of Naval Research funding Virginia Tech robot program for fighting shipboard fires.
26. Hampton Roads skippers called to conference about recent ship collisions.
27. Navy mine-detecting dolphin program could be retired in 2017.
28. Two recruit division commanders face court-martial over G'Lakes hazing.
29. Energy drinks being studied for effects on sleeping.
30. Pentagon to look at setting combat uniform standards for all branches.
31. In light of sequestration, CBO report recommends branches combine training (in similar programs) and more consolidating and closing of facilities.
32. Amid much fanfare, carrier Enterprise has been decommissioned. Name to be carried on the third Ford class aircraft carrier.
33. CNO concerned after latest CO firings bring 2012 total to twenty-five.
34. NAVSTA Norfolk's solar power to provide 2% of base's needs.
35. Moving military equipment through Pakistan boarder still at standstill.
36. Navy now allows HIV-positive sailors and marines to serve overseas.
37. Navy Personnel Chief admits the service's enlisted drawdown was too large; now looking for 5,000 more sailors.
38. New 'cyber operations' major to be offered at US Naval Academy.
39. Navy adopts Army all weather coat for wear over most uniforms.
40. New Navy tests show that work uniforms burn and melt when exposed to fire; coveralls are no better. Navy dropped fire-resistant standard in 1996 and is now reviewing situation.
41. Effectiveness of behavioral health services called into question on increasing number of military suicides.
42. Pentagon engaged in sweeping overhaul to better Military Transition Assistance Program.
43. Navy steps-up programs on sex-assault prevention and reporting.
44. Defense Policy Bill passes Congress; keeps 20-year retirement and compensation in tact.

45. Senior enlisted continuation boards for E7 through MCPON convene Feb. 25th.
46. Ret. General Norman Schwarzkopf dies.
47. "Taps" has been designated by Congress as the National Song of Remembrance.
48. House VA chairman targets mental health and claims backlog.
49. Navy targets designer drugs known as 'bath salts'.
50. New 'skipper' screening process to start in 2013; to include writing an essay on leadership.
51. Engineman rating to become part of Machinist Mate rating in 2013.
52. With some restrictions, postal service lifts ban on shipping lithium batteries to troops overseas.
53. Ship INSURVs to happen every 2½ years instead of every 5 years.
54. WW2 sailor receives Distinguished Flying Cross and 10 other awards 70 years later.
55. Captain Sara "Clutch" Joyner is first woman to lead carrier air wing.
56. MCPON calls halt to 'new' Chief initiations.

Guest Columnist

SIDE TRIP to NORAD

John Holland, LCDR, USS NITRO (AE-23), 1967-69

There is the opportunity for a few members to get a private guided tour of the Cheyenne Mountain Facility (NORAD) in Colorado Springs on Saturday 22 June.

After 9/11, NORAD quit giving regular tours. The only tours available now are on the weekend, given as a favor by the guide who is off duty. I discovered by accident that I have a contact who works there, and has agreed to give a tour for up to 10 people.

The tour takes between 3 and 4 hours and involves a good deal of walking up and down stairs. I understand the interior of the facility was designed by the Navy, with a lot of catwalks, etc. If you have limited mobility, this would not be an

event for you. Because of the nature of the facility, they do require some of your personal information, such as Social Security Number (SSN) and date of birth (DOB).

For the people going, I will advise you exactly what is required. If you do not want to supply this type of information, then please do not consider this event. There is a possibility that if more than 10 people sign up that my contact can arrange additional guides.

If you want to be part of this tour, then contact me via email at 5dogs1999@att.net or telephone 573-686-6711. I will put the names on a list in the order I receive them. It seems to be a rare opportunity to see one of our major defense facilities.

John Holland, CDR, USN Retired
USS Nitro (AE-23) 1967-69

(Editor's note: In order to make the choosing of NORAD tour participants fair to both those receiving the newsletter by email as well as 'snail mail', we have put a deadline of February 16th to submit your name for this trip. At that time, names will be drawn to see who and how many will go on this tour. You will be notified shortly thereafter.

Those not chosen to go to NORAD will then have enough time to sign up to participate in our other Saturday activities as listed on the activity sheets that will be available on our web site or mailed or emailed out. The activity sheet will also be attached to the April newsletter.

The Association is looking into a smaller shuttle bus type van for your transportation to and from NORAD. If we are successful in locating a van, there will be a transportation charge, for each person going on this trip. If not, transportation to and from NORAD would have to be worked out among the attendees.)

Chaplain's Corner

A new hat is worn in our home—the hat of the concerned parent whose child is deployed. When we ourselves were in the shoes of the deployed and in harm's way, our sense of dread did not seem so pronounced and foreboding. The parental perspective doesn't allow us that bravado or invincibility we felt in our youth. As our children do now, we chose to be there, to be in service—defending our country and our way of life. Now we live at the mercy of the choices of others—in this case, our children. Our deployed children and grandchildren prepare by learning and training, practicing the skills of their military trades and missions. We as parents can support them, encourage them, and generally pray up a storm.

So if we older folks seem a bit distracted with our new hat—our new roles in support of our troops, just know we continue to do so in a spirit of love and concern for our loved ones. A new generation wears the hats that we once did, proudly, bravely, and with the sense of service that is renewed by the continuing promise of freedom and justice for our people, and hopefully for peoples throughout the world.

Grace and peace always to you and yours, with fair winds and following seas in all of your endeavors, continuing to serve the fleet and the world...“making the critical difference”.

Chaps...

A Final Thought

By Robert Eberlein

Happy 2013 to all. Wow, another year starting, where did the old one go? I guess we are all getting older, sorry to say.

Once again, if you belong to other military organizations and have the time to give them your support, please do as many of them are in great need of

volunteers. Should you meet other veterans, thank them for their service and welcome them home. This simple act goes along way; especially if they are from the Viet Nam era.

The 2013 reunion activities are slowly coming into place and June will be here before we realize it. So, mark your calendars for the third week of June, and hope to see ya there?

I also want to thank all of you who have renewed your membership in the USS Nitro Association. If you belong to any of the social web sites and you see other members of your particular crews, please let them know of the reunions. It's one way to spend time together and to relive the good old days of haze gray and under way.

Take time to remember those who now man-the-watch and our departed shipmates.

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder,
USS Nitro Association