



# Nitro Blast

## It's Time to Rediscover Norfolk!

Keep the Memories Alive

### Not the Norfolk You Remember!

By Jim Timmons

A fresh and revitalized Norfolk awaited me on my recent visit to this Navy town. It had been some time since I was last in Norfolk, Virginia, home of the largest Naval Base in the US, and I was very pleasantly surprised with what I saw.

The downtown area is continuing to evolve into a vibrant gathering place. Among the attractions in the downtown area are the MacArthur Memorial, Chrysler Museum of Art, Nauticus (where the USS Wisconsin museum ship and the National Maritime Center is

located), the Hampton Roads Naval Museum and for shopping – MacArthur Center Mall (140 stores, anchored by Dillards).

For the Revolutionary War and Civil War buffs, you can follow the Cannonball Trail to learn about how Norfolk was almost burned to the ground in 1776 and what happened during the Civil War.

The waterfront area reminded me of our Jacksonville reunion with additional shopping, restaurants, marinas, harbor cruises and a view of the General Dynamics repair and floating drydock facilities.

Getting around Norfolk has been made substantially easier with the introduction in 2011 of The TIDE, Norfolk's inexpensive, modern light rail system. For more information about the revitalized Norfolk, take a look at the 5-minute video at <http://www.visitnorfolktoday.com/2013-news-releases/240-norfolk-is>. A link to the video is also on the Nitro Association website.

### Norfolk Hotel HQ

By Jim Timmons



While in Norfolk, the Hilton Airport Hotel will be our headquarters. The contract has not yet been signed, so they

are not ready to receive reservations. Please hold off on making any reservations until December 1<sup>st</sup>, so the hotel has adequate time to set up the phone and online reservation system, and we have time to adequately review the contract with the hotel.

Our group guestroom rate for this Hilton is \$104/night. This rate includes a full hot breakfast buffet, including a made to order omelet station, and is good for up to 3 days before and after the reunion. This hotel is a pet friendly, non-smoking property and is currently undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation to what is already a well-appointed property. Max and Erma's, a nationally known restaurant chain, is located in the hotel. The Hilton is one of the few hotels in the area with a restaurant open for breakfast lunch and dinner.

The hotel provides complementary airport transportation, has ample parking (even for those traveling in motor homes or tag along trailers). The hotel's van can also be used to transport our attendees to local shopping and restaurants within a 3-mile radius of the hotel.

We are pretty close to finalizing the activities, including the Friday night banquet. The banquet will be a plated (sitdown) 2-entrée dinner, which we are now in the process of choosing. The dinner will also include a house salad, vegetable, starch, rolls, dessert, coffee and iced tea. The banquet room will be set up again with a special place of honor for our POW/MIA table.

Tour activities will include a visit to NAVSTA Norfolk for a ship board wreath laying ceremony (Navy chaplain,

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Editor: Jim Timmons

Association Membership 340

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bugler and honor guard), lunch at the naval station and a tour of the base and hopefully the ship. The other tour day will be a visit to Nauticus (USS Wisconsin visit), lunch if possible on board the Wisconsin or at MacArthur Center Mall, then an afternoon visit to the MacArthur Memorial.

## Portland, Maine - 2015

We have already heard from several people who were delighted to see that we are going to hold our 2015 reunion in Portland. Several of our Association members, who either live in New England or were looking forward to coming to New England, have never been to a reunion or haven't been to one in some time.

So, if you know a former crewmember living in New England, make sure they know about the 2015 Portland Reunion. The tentative dates are Thursday, 18 June through check-out on Sunday, 21 June.

## Pre Reunion tour

Robert Eberlein

Jamestown Settlement or Williamsburg –

do these historical sites sound interesting? I am interested in putting a group together to visit either of these towns on Wednesday 18 June, prior to the reunion's official opening.

If you would be interested in joining me and Carol, please contact me by either calling 574-277-3128 or email at [ebb23@aol.com](mailto:ebb23@aol.com). Since our group rate will apply 3 days before or after the reunion, it is the perfect time to come in early or stay after the reunion to visit these and other historical sites.

## 2014 Dues Premiums

The pocket calendars provided as part of your full membership 2013 dues premium was such a great hit, we decided to make the 2014 calendar part of this year's premium. In addition to this item, we have added a Nitro Association multi-purpose key chain. The key chain also contains a flashlight and bottle opener



## 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 340.*** 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

### 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:

### None this quarter

\* \* \* \* \*

### The Nitro Sage

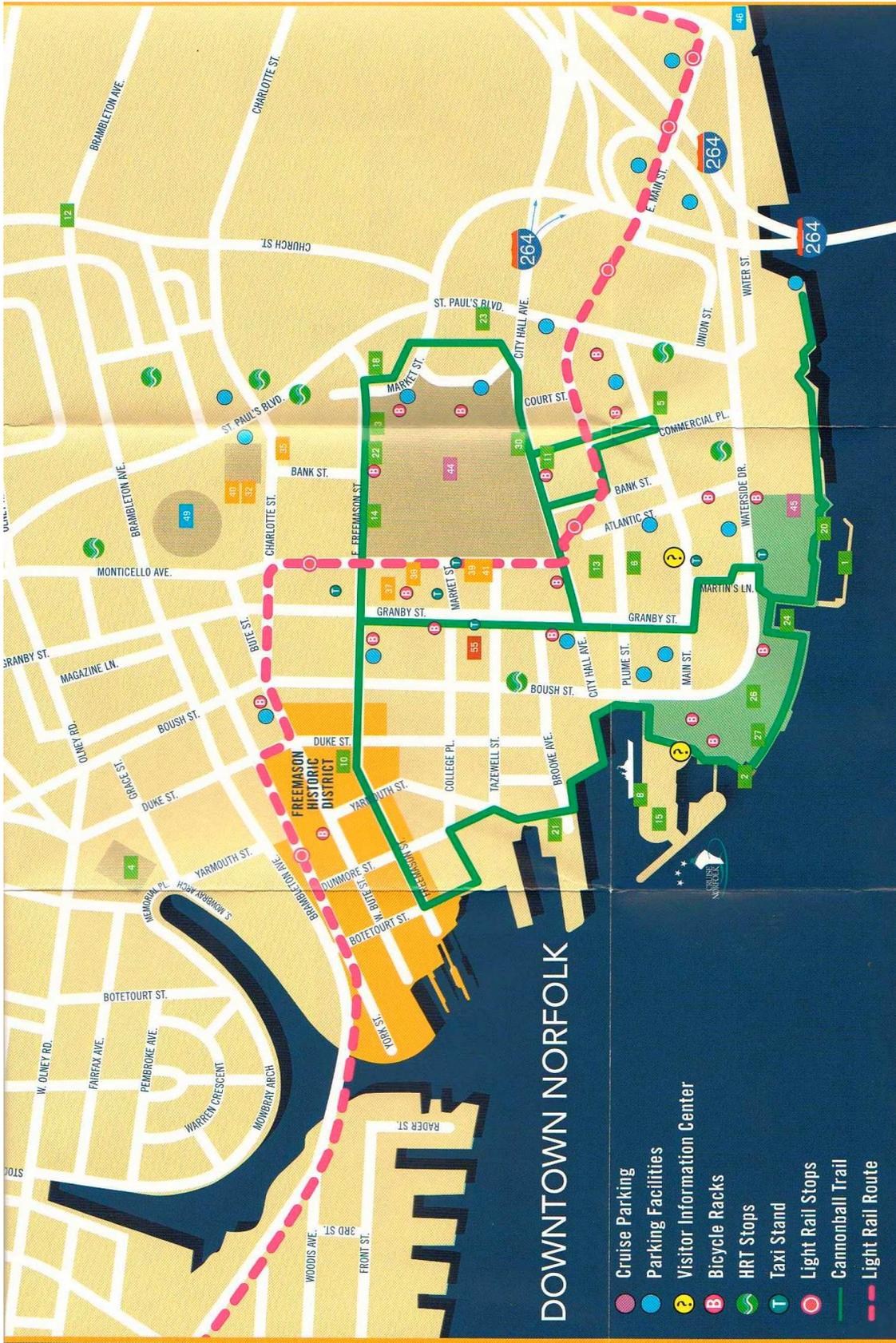
***"You know you're a Sailor when . . ."***

*Your school-aged daughter asks her teacher if she can 'go to the head'.*

*Your kids ask if they have to hold field day on the weekend.*

*You hear 'bong, bong, e-mail arriving' when you get e-mail at work.*

***This marks the end of "You know you're a Sailor when . . ."series.***



**Points of Interest**

1. American Rover Tall Ship Cruises
2. Armed Forces Memorial
3. The Cannonball Trail
4. Chrysler Museum of Art
5. Confederate Monument
6. d'ART Center at Selden Arcade
8. Hampton Roads Naval Museum
10. Hunter House Victorian Museum
11. The MacArthur Memorial
12. Martin Luther King, Jr. Monument
13. Monticello Arcade
14. Moses Meyers House
15. Nauticus, Half Moone Cruise & Celebration Center/Battleship Wisconsin
18. Norfolk History Museum at the Willoughby-Baylor House
20. Paddlewheel Ferry
21. The Pagoda
22. Police & Fire-rescue Museum
23. St. Paul's Episcopal Church
24. Spirit of Norfolk
26. Town Point Park
27. Victory Rover Naval Base Cruises
30. Windows on History
32. Chrysler Hall
35. Robin Hixon Theater
36. The NorVa
- 37/55. Tidewater Community College/ Roper Performing Arts Center
39. Virginia Stage Company
40. Virginia Symphony Orchestra
41. Wells Theatre
44. MacArthur Center Mall
45. Waterside Festival Marketplace
46. Harbor Park/ Norfolk Tides Baseball
49. Norfolk Scope/Norfolk Admirals Hockey

\* Numbers for points of interest not listed here are not on this map. \*

If you are unable to read the numbers on the map, you may view a copy of it on our web site or a link to an interactive map at: <http://visitonorfolktoday.com/plan/guides/norfolk-attractions-map>

### Navy Times Article Recaps

1. Navy finally does away with vehicle decals for entry onto bases. 100% ID checks continue.
2. SecDef calls for 20% cuts in DOD and other HQ staffing.
3. Fleet leaders plan to put at-sea sailors in flame-resistant uniforms within 9 months..
4. Navy researching making parts for ships by use of 3-D printers.
5. Sexual assault and suicide prevention head list of new chief's training on fleet real-world problems.
6. Perform To Serve is now a thing of the past. Automatic re-up approvals for most sailors.
7. For Normandy duty during WW2, retired Master Chief finally receives France's Legion of Honor.
8. USCG opens new DC headquarters.
9. Joint Chiefs push for harsher sexual assault punishment without major changes to UCMJ.
10. **Enlisted Retention Board** lawsuit dismissed, sailors plan on appeal for termination.
11. Navy task force is planning for enlisted women on subs by 2021.
12. Navy ditches plan to cover historic Ford Island (Hawaii) runway with solar panels.
13. CNO looks to reduce dumb or redundant paperwork to lessen admin burden of commands.
14. USCG eyes closer ties with Chinese Coast Guard.
15. Former carrier Enterprise to be towed from Newport News to Washington state in 2016 to be scrapped.
16. Senate committee again declines DOD request for round of base closings in 2015.
17. Navy reports widespread service record inaccuracies, which could lead to missed promotions or retention.
18. Navy wages war on parasites and scavengers, the bug kind, onboard ships and shore establishments.
19. Three Midshipmen face an Article 32 hearing at Washington Navy Yard, after being accused of rape and sexual assault.
20. House and Senate panels support single combat uniform to end unique style uniforms.
21. Navy still trying to determine what is and what is not hazing.
22. Navy version of Joint Strike Fighter to be carrier operational in 2019.

23. USCG looking for women coasties to fill billets onboard a second cutter.
24. Chinese and Russian navy took part in joint naval exercises in Sea of Japan in July.
25. Navy's surface force commander concerned about manning gaps, deployment pace, future budget cuts and ship INSURVs.
26. Chief advancement rate at 8-year high of nearly 27%.
27. Darwin, Australia and a radar site in Deveselu, Romania are among hot new ports for sailors.
28. The National Veterans Museum to be built in Hoffman Estates (suburban Chicago) with grand opening targeted for late 2016.
29. Navy and USMC officials look at expanding Marine presence aboard more types of naval ships.
30. SecDef says promotion and bonus freezes would be only part of items to be hit by sequestration for 2014, .
31. E-6, chief selectees, will no longer undergo 'induction' but rather the CPO365 program of year long training to develop their leadership skills.
32. US and Philippine governments talk about increasing Navy presence in the island; possible temporary base.
33. **Littoral Combat Ship** duty considered one of the premier sea duty assignments for advancement and quals.
34. LCS 1, USS Freedom, which lost power in July, is again sidelined with propulsion problems and unable to take part in Pacific naval exercise.
35. After reports showed regional VA officials received huge bonuses, while facilities were considered substandard, House bill aims to hold managers more accountable.
36. Sailors tell brass punishing all for the wrongs of a few does not send the right message or solve the problems.
37. E-6s who take a tour as **Recruit Division Commander**, at Boot Camp, have higher chance of making E-7.
38. Newly proposed military retirement scheme would allow retirement after 10-15 years with a 401K style package. Twenty-year or more retirees would qualify for traditional annuity not collectable until age 55.
39. USCG may assign unmanned aircraft to national security cutters by 2017.
40. LCS 17 to bear the name USS Indianapolis, in honor of the WW2 cruiser which sank in 1945.

41. Attack sub, USS Miami, severely damaged by an arsonist fire will not be repaired, but will be inactivated instead.
42. Three coastal patrol boats shift homeports from Little Creek, Va. to Mayport, FL.
43. DOD looks at reducing housing allowance.
44. Pentagon proposal would restrict 'working-age' retirees from Tricare coverage.
45. After a decade of drawdown, sequester brings a new round of personnel drawdown challenges to new Chief of Naval Personnel.
46. Peer intervention is one of Navy's key components in reducing excessive drinking, fighting and other potential offenses.
47. Sailors answer call for Navy to fix problems they experience, among top are: consolidate websites and databases, create an easier way for sailors to find what awards they should receive and to fix the evaluation process.
48. DOD studying possible US Command realignments worldwide.
49. In a Back to the Future '60s scenario, the Navy may play major role in ocean recovery of Orion capsule returning from future missions to Mars.
50. Navy christens DDG 1000 named the USS Zumwalt.
51. Navy Captain, Judith Epstein, MD, heads team making major breakthrough on malaria vaccine.
52. DOD and VA award \$107M in contracts to study traumatic brain injuries.
53. Two sites, California and South Carolina, vie for the cruiser Olympia (circa 1892-1922), now in museum status in Philadelphia. Since the Philly museum can no longer fund the ship, the two sites are trying to keep the ship from the scrap heap.
54. Fire Scout, the unmanned helicopter, finishes 28-month deployment to Afghanistan.
55. Cash for voluntary assignment to sea duty cuts some manning problems, other critical requirements has seen sailors pulled from shore duty to fill.
56. Navy has 9 teams of retired master chiefs and warrant officers, mainly engineering ratings, on contract going from ship to ship to teach maintenance to younger crewmembers.
57. Downsizing of Navy will result in 32 flag officers being shelved over the next four years.

## Chaplain's Corner

By Deanna Smitha, Nitro Association  
Chaplain

### Life's Milestones

This past Sunday we participated in the 100th Anniversary of a church we served BEFORE my service aboard NITRO. This turned out to be a most joyous celebration of a faith community which has not only served over that period of time, but also is in the midst of cultivating and growing new avenues of service and ministry. This church family has also been the home of many military families, before--during--and after serving their country. I was the pastor there when they celebrated their 75th anniversary, so to be invited back for this milestone was very heartwarming for my family. Our two sons were born into that church, and we share a lot of common history, both rich and challenging. We are thankful to have joined in celebrating a momentous milestone and our prayers and wishes go with them into their future endeavors of ministry and service.

On top of one celebration came another for our family, a milestone which many of us have anticipated, and brings great joy.

For like many other parents we are thrilled to have our servicemember son home from challenging deployment. Our youngest son, who I've spoken about numerous times and has attended the NITRO Reunion on occasion, has returned from his latest deployment with his unit to Afghanistan. Anticipating the homecoming a few weeks prior, we had found out that a soldier of a subordinate command to which he was attached before deployment was killed defending a position very close to where our son Steven was stationed. In fact, Steven knew and had worked with the young SSGT when he himself had been in that unit. We were much relieved to get our son's message that he was okay right after the incident, and then were

simultaneously saddened to remember the family of his fellow soldier who would not be receiving such reassuring news.

For all of us who have served, and all who have waited for the return of loved ones and friends from overseas---these messages and lessons of life within the military family give us all wonder to stop and take notice of the time we have and the gifts and opportunities we both share and those we have missed. Sometimes we do not take seriously the sacrifices given by our troops and their families, and fail to take the opportunity to thank them for their service. As we prepare our hearts and homes for Thanksgiving and other important holidays, I would hope that each of us might seize those opportunities and share our care and concern for our family, friends, neighbors and even for those we may not know---to give thanks to them and to the one who brings to our lives such opportunities. May our preparations of home and heart be filled with gladness, and may we never forget the sacrifices of others for our country and the values we hold so dear. May this latest milestone be a CORNERSTONE for celebrating the upcoming holidays.

As you gather with friends and family to celebrate your milestones, please be mindful and remember those whose loved ones may be afar or may have passed on this year, and share your caring with them when that opportunity may present itself.

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 a critical difference."*

Chaps...

## A Final Thought

By Robert Eberlein

By the time you receive the newsletter, we should know our lodgings for the

2014 annual Reunion. So, let's make this event as one of the things to do for next year. Jim has stated all the old businesses that preyed on sailors are now gone, and the area around the base is now more Navy friendly.

With the Holidays and the year-end in sight, now is the time to renew your memberships, if it be the USS Nitro AE-2/AE-23 Association or any other military organizations. As the older veterans pass away, the younger ones, not at a time of their lives when they are in need of military organizations help.

To all members, hope you will try to attend any Veterans Day activity that will honor your service to the country. We all served in whatever capacity we were assigned, so be proud of time in the Navy or the other branch(s) you served in.

At this time of the year, be sure to keep the members of our military in your thoughts. I know we can all remember where we were at a particular Holiday. A care package from home met a lot, especially at the Holidays.

From my Clan, and the other Association officers and their families, we wish you all a safe Holiday Season and a Happy New Year! See ya June!

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder,  
USS Nitro Association