



# Nitro Blast

## Thank you, Minneapolis!

Keep the Memories Alive

### Reunion Recap

By Jim Timmons

It's not every reunion you go to and a family reunion breaks out! Well, we were privileged to have twenty-five members of the Smith/Peterson/Sapp (all related to Lee and Margaret Smith) clan.

In all, we had seventy people for our association dinner on Friday evening. This is a great number for a Midwest reunion.

With a minor mistake at our wreath laying ceremony at Fort Snelling (forgot the floral arrangement), the activities went as planned. A highlight of the visit to the new Minnesota Viking stadium was the appearance of our Association

challenge coin, 'full size' on their 8,100 square foot scoreboards!

The weather could not have been better; no rain and hot and humid.

As it turned out, not bringing the floral arrangement to the ceremony, was a good thing because all attendees at the dinner were able to see it and take pictures.

The Crowne Plaza Bloomington served as our reunion headquarters and the staff could not have been more attentive. Just ask Juan about his 'hot chocolate' for breakfast. After a full day of activities on Friday, we were greeted by the hotel staff who handed out roses to all of the women on the tour, and gave small American flags to the men.

Thank you Crowne Plaza staff for making our stay so enjoyable!

Also at this year's reunion, as a Commemorative Partner of the Department of Defense's authorized United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration program, we presented



21 Vietnam War Commemoration pin packets to former crew members and a few guests who were on active duty during the periods of 1 November 1955 to 15 May 1975, as well as 2 pins to the wives of deceased Association members.

**NOTE:** During Bob Eberlein and Bob Peiffer's researching of our databases, it was determined that Lee Smith has the distinction of being our only Association member having been on active duty during WW2, Korea and Vietnam.

In accordance with President Obama's Proclamation of 25 May 2012, authorizing the commemoration and the Defense Department's authorization to issue the commemorative pin, all veterans are eligible and authorized to receive and wear the pin regardless if they served in country or not.

We have ordered enough of the commemorative pin packets for each veteran on our database and will continue to present the pins to those who attend the ceremony at future reunions. It is our hope to see many more of our shipmates at our upcoming reunions so they may receive the recognition so richly deserved.

Votes were also taken, at this year's business meeting, to discontinue our "Free" Active Duty Association membership (because no one has taken advantage of it), and to redirect half of the funds for prepaid military calling cards (which we have had no requests for in the past several years). Upon completion of discussion and vote, those funds were deposit into the USS Nitro Association Scholarship Fund.

### USS Nitro Association Scholarship Fund

By Jim Timmons

The Nitro Association Scholarship Fund (NASF) was voted on and established at this year's reunion. The full details of the Scholarship Guidelines, Application form and Funding mechanisms are now on our web site at the following address: <http://www.ussnitro.org/nasf.html>.

#### Inside this Edition

July/August 2016  
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Editor: Jim Timmons  
Association Membership 348

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

Here is a thumbnail sketch of the process: Applicants must have a 2.0 grade point average or higher. The applicants must be a Senior in high school or already enrolled in any of the schools outlined in the guidelines. Maximum eligible age to receive a scholarship is 25.

Applications must be postmarked and mailed to the Association by April 1<sup>st</sup> each year. There will be a 'blind pool drawing' from all qualified applications received at each year's reunion, and scholarships will be awarded if funds are available. Initially, three scholarships will be funded with a total maximum value of \$1,500 (\$500 each for full time students or \$250 for part time students).

On behalf of the Nitro Association's Board, I would like to thank everyone for their input, thoughtful discussion and for those having made generous gifts/donations.

## 2017 - San Francisco

We are now focusing on our 2017 reunion in San Francisco. Hotels will be contacted shortly, with on-site visits being made in early October. Bob Eberlein is reviewing a list of activities and locations for our Wreath Laying Ceremony. In addition to a Bay cruise, which might include a stop at Alcatraz, we welcome additional suggestions.

I know, from discussions with other associations and researching hotel rates, this reunion's guest room rates will probably be higher than those of past reunions. We will do our best to get the best rate with the most perks available.

## 2018 - San Antonio, TX

Texas is now in our sights for the USS Nitro Association's 2018 reunion. We have tentatively set the date for our San Antonio reunion for 21 – 24 June.

Home of the Alamo, several military installations and it's famous Riverwalk, San Antonio will be dynamic location for our reunion. If anyone has previous experience with hotels, activities or tours in the area, please let us know so we can check them out.

## 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 348.*** 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

### 2015 Nitro Assn. Dues Classifications

***Regular Association Membership Dues are \$25.00 (including S/H).*** The dues packet this year will include an Association 70 page 6" x 7" notebook and pen, quarterly newsletters, membership certificate (for **new** members only), crew members directory and a laminated membership card.

***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) crew members 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 crew member 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:

**Mike Sanyk, MM2, AE-23, 1968-70**  
**Gerald Lohrmeyer, LTjg, AE-23, 1968-69**  
**Ronald Darling, GMG2, AE-23, 1966-69**

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### **The Nitro Sage**

*Things you'd love to say out loud at work :*

*I don't know what your problem is, but I'll bet it's hard to pronounce.*

*How about never? Is never good for you?*

*I'm really easy to get along with once you people learn to see it my way.*

*Ahhh... I see the screw-up fairy has visited us again.*

**Navy Times Article Recaps**

1. Gator fleet welcomes newest addition, USS America
2. Navy forced to evacuate Arctic ice camp, to nearby submarines, because of crack in ice at their site.
3. Early Spring *Military Times* poll of active duty showed Trump and Sanders as favorites.
4. The April 4<sup>th</sup> incoming class of Great Lakes female enlisted recruits first to receive 'dixie cup' hats.
5. Pentagon issues new medal for war on ISIS. Personnel must have been deployed to Iraq or Syria (airspace or territorial waters) since 15 June 2014.
6. PACCOM would like to conduct Naval exercises in areas of the contested, Chinese man-made, islands in South China Seas.
7. As of late June, Navy rating name change recommendations have not yet reached SECNAV Mabus's desk.
8. New Navy policy will allow married Navy couples to submit requests to serve at same location.
9. DOD to monitor installations in 27 states, DC, Guam and Puerto Rico for mosquitoes possibly carrying the ZIKA virus.
10. A late March 'blue ribbon' panel recommended closing of all VA health care and out-patient facilities over the next 20-years and transition patients to private care.
11. Russian jets buzz Navy ships in Baltic Sea.
12. Navy proceeding with classified trial against a Navy LCDR accused of sharing classified information with unnamed Far East countries.
13. UBER now has 50,000 military family members among its drivers.
14. Senate and post-9/11 veterans group respond to a House attempt to cut millions from GI Bill housing allowance funding and redistribute to other veterans programs.
15. Navy shore establishment COs can now 'spot' advance sailors (up to 800 Navy-wide) without need for them to take advancement tests.
16. Navy will close all but 4 on base college offices, Moving towards on-line and call center approaches for applications for tuition assistance and counseling.
17. Carrier arresting cable snap during flight recovery injured eight sailors, some severely, earlier this year.
18. Navy considers dropping blue and gray (NWU) and replacing with woodland green for shore-based sailors.
19. In latest draft of next Defense Authorization Bill (NDAA), House of Representatives look for 27,000 more troops and 2.1% pay raise, but families could pay more in housing and medical costs.
20. DOD report to Congress estimates \$2 billion annual savings with another BRAC. Excess or under utilized Army and USAF capacity would be top of list.
21. With more than 4,000 'advisers and trainers' in Iraq, several having been wounded or killed, JCS chairman tells Congressional committee 'it's combat'.
22. Navy's new ad agency looks to revive hunt for the next Navy slogan.
23. Carrier Truman task group sees Gulf deployment extended to 8 months.
24. Loss of oxygen, to flight crew, incidents in F/A 18 Hornet aircraft doubled (115) in 2015 from 2014 numbers.
25. Navy changes tattoo rules to allow them on exposed areas except head, face and scalp.
26. Pentagon are at odds with retired military associations and veterans organization over the value placed on lump sum payouts retirees may take vs value of future retirement monthly checks.
27. Debate continues on arming qualified personnel at military recruiting offices.
28. House votes to expand benefits for Vietnam 'Blue Water Navy' vets .
29. XO of Riverine Squadron, whose sailors were captured by Iranians earlier this year, has been fired.
30. USCG institutes leader education overhaul for E-7 hoping to make E-8.
31. Pentagon leaders squabble over making changes to or leaving alone military personnel system.
32. USPS issues Military Service Cross stamps to honor those who have received the service cross medal.
33. Navy looks for civilian cyber specialists to sign up for direct commission and enlistments from E-7 to the O6 level.
34. Navy researches possibility of extending life-cycle of the MH-60 helicopter. Now in it's third decade, Navy hopes to extend another 10-20 yrs.
35. USS Zumwalt (DDG1000) joined the Fleet in May.
36. Damage Controlman makes Chief in 5 ½ years; average is 13 years.
37. President Obama increases number of troops to stay in Afghanistan. Instead of announced 5,000, the total will be closer to 8,400.
38. USMC Blue Angel pilot killed in June crash during practice.
39. Eisenhower carrier task group to relieve Truman CTG
40. Senate targets 'basic allowance for housing' in Defense Authorization Bill.
41. Navy takes part in massive NATO Baltic Sea exercises.
42. The Navy's newest LCS, USS Jackson, takes part in tests to see how it's hull survives nearby water explosions of mines.
43. Carrier George Washington prepares to enter Newport News shipyard for mid-life refueling.
44. Fired Seabee CMC refuses NJP (non-judicial punishment) in travel fraud case; may face courts martial.
45. CNO taps Navy Fleet Master Chief Giordano as next MCPON.
46. Attack sub, Minnesota, rejoins fleet after 2 year overhaul.
47. U.S . CYBERCOM is growing and needs funding for large scale training environments.
48. Pentagon still reviewing options for transgender policies.
49. NASA releases recruitment posters, for future manned missions to Mars, to the general public.
50. Russian ships in the Mediterranean shadow the Eisenhower CTG.
51. USMC to remove the word 'man' from 19 of its job titles in order to make them more gender neutral.
52. CNO presents CO of French Carrier, Charles de Gaulle, with the Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal for coordinated ISIS strikes with the Carrier Truman in the Persian Gulf last December.
53. Navy Department urging Sailors and Marines who were forced out of the service, because of their sexuality, in previous decades to come forward and appeal their discharge for an upgrade.
54. USS Wasp, amphibious assault ship, deployed for the first time in 10 years, takes part in recent air strikes against ISIS in Libya.

## Guest Columnist

*Our guest columnist is under the weather for this issue, so here is a cruise (or sea) story from Tom Smith, GMG2c, AE-2, 1942-44, Deceased*

I would like to bring up names like our old chief Coblenz. A very nice Chief who was called back in service for ww2. Then there was an Ensign, a ninety day wonder, who was one of the best officers on the old AE 2. The only academy man who was Captain was a older man name I believe Ed Miltner He was the very best officer I ever served under. (**NOTE:** COs during the time Tom was on board were actually Chippendale, Johnson, Ragonnet, Thompson and Trimble).

We had one skipper (Captain Trimble) who had a dog all the time he was aboard. When he went on deck, it was comical. One of the crew was assigned to clean up the poop and that was funny.



**Rivits**

Then there was the time we pulled out of Guantanamo Navy base and were picked up by a U-boat. We were alone and that was our first stop on delivery of ammo, so we had almost a full load. That place was full of U-boats. We had only a sub chaser as an escort on way to Recife, Brazil. They figured we were too dangerous to put us in regular convoy. The U-boat got as close to shore as we still had AE 2 on bow which indicated we were ammo. Between our old vintage 5 inch 50 caliber guns and the sub chaser, we are pretty sure we'd put it away due to the oil slick.

Does anyone remember Nash Morris, era WW2, who was from a place called Boone, North Dakota? Was up in Dakota a couple times and the post office had no city like that. It (Boone) must of been a store.

Nash was in the gang one night and received an anchor tattoo on his hand. I missed that Liberty but about ten of us received the same tattoo. We were in Norfolk loading up with ammo on the ancient but great AE2. Nash would be about 90 now as I will be 83 on the 22nd of December.

Now, I did not send information why we changed the tips of the projectiles for the four 40 millimeters. It was because the salt water was killing the inside and they would not work as should. They were set to go off by the enemies vibration of their aircraft engine, which could be set in wheelhouse by the controlman. We were servicing mainly battleships and cruisers.

Another bad incident was the time we hauled about 5,000 rusted aircraft bombs from Recife, Brazil to the Navy disposal center in Bayonne, New Jersey. There are not many who would remember this, but could be important to some who have chronic lung problems. The cargo holds had to be checked every day and it had to be done by the gunnery division. When we loaded them, the gunners mates were in charge of cargo holds. I will never forget that you took a crayon and scraped it on the side of the bomb. If it turned a pinkish color it went topside and over the side because it had a leak.

I woke up that night and burnt from my neck down to my bronchial tubes. I spent three years in VA TB hospital after war and have had chronic bronchitis ever since. It was one reason for my move to Florida. I still draw disability and go to VA for some of the medicines I need.

Some may not remember that, but you can check the logs in navy records; unless it was taken out. By the way, they were mustard gas bombs. I think they kept it pretty quite as we were ready in case the Krauts were to use it again.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Tom submitted his cruise stories in 2010 and passed away 6 November 2011

## Chaplain's Corner

*By Chaplain Donna Wise*

Is anybody tired of the political campaigns yet? I think most of us are very tired of it and we still have over three months to endure. And even more annoying than the campaign ads on TV and cards filling our mailboxes are the offensive, false or mean-spirited memes on Facebook and other social media sites.

It's a given that many of us will not agree on political candidates or social issues. If we were all in agreement there would be no need to have elections. The idea behind political campaigns was to give the candidates an opportunity to persuade voters to vote for them and/or the issues. It seems that today the campaigns have devolved into an opportunity to give inaccurate, misleading information with the intent to lure voters who don't have the time or means to investigate the claims to vote for the loudest candidate. And that's just on the state and local level!

What is most disturbing to me is the personal relationships that are suffering as a result of the divisive political climate. I have known a number of people who make comments indicating anyone who disagrees with their political views are absolute idiots and there is no other room for discussion. There seems to be no desire for reasonable discussion of the facts – just emotional outbursts followed by name calling. Has our country really become that dysfunctional?

It would seem that we are falling victim to a pervasive “divide and conquer” tactic. If we are convinced that the “other side” is to blame for all that is not as we want it to be, then perhaps we will not notice that the true divide is not Democrat vs. Republican.

There are many things that divide us in this country, but the two party system has been around for a long time. When we get caught up in the “blame game”, we begin to see those on the other side as evil. I think we need to remember that those on either side of a discussion are usually good people who have differing ideas regarding the best solution to what we see as a problem. Fighting each other to get our way is seldom going to make things better. How much better it would be if we poured the same amount of energy into listening to each other to find a solution that would address all of our concerns.

Matthew 7:12 in the New Living Translation of the Christian bible says, "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." Most other major religions have a verse somewhere in their sacred writings that say something very similar. It is generally called "the Golden Rule." It's a pretty simple concept. Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Without exception. Even if they support whichever candidate or issue you oppose. We can find a way to disagree without being disagreeable.

It is still a long time until the election. Let's make that time as enjoyable as we can by treating each other with respect.

Grace and Peace,

Donna

## A Final Thought

*By Robert Eberlein,*

What another fun filled reunion! I would say we got our moneys worth, old Ft. Snelling, The 934th Air wing visit, with many demonstrations and, finally the new US Bank Stadium Viking Football Team Stadium. The Saturday city/river cruise with the boat captain indulging us with the sea and anchor detail announcement. Hey Howard, how did the mail buoy watch go?

The Association was honored to have the Lee and Margret Smith Clan/family reunion dinner with ours on Friday evening. Two families meet under one social event, the Nitro family and the Smiths.

Our association motto is "Continuing Service to the Fleet" and now we can add a scholarship fund to assist our members' family members in their pursuit of higher education. The funds are gifts/donations from members of our group and a member of the USS Pyro group; no money from the general funds.

Here in the area where Jerry Satterfield, Bob Peiffer and I live, there are weekly

veteran lunches and a Friday morning coffee and doughnut breakfast. The veterans range from all times and branches of service. We know where each one served and the only thing that matters with these veterans is that we served. Be it World War Two, Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm to Iraq and Afghanistan.

When the big holidays such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor Day come around, the news media go looking for veterans to exploit. No matter the branch or time frame, a veteran and his story is good for publication or a short TV segment. As for newspapers, there are good reporters who take good notes and then there are some who do not remember what was exactly told to them - My brother served in Vietnam, I did not.

As the recent world events continue to unfold, we really need to keep our military in our thoughts and prayers.

*Fair winds and following seas.*

Bob Eberlein, Founder,  
USS Nitro Association