



# Nitro Blast

## A San Francisco Treat

Keep the Memories Alive

### San Francisco, 2017

By Jim Timmons

No, it's not Rice-A-Roni! Cable cars, sourdough bread, Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz are just a few of the places and things San Francisco have to offer.

After having spent numerous hours calling and visiting different hotels near San Francisco International Airport, we are in the final stages of making our selection. The selection process is a difficult one; not because of the lack of hotels to choose from, but from the pricing standpoint.

Most hotels, again near the airport (I didn't even want to consider the downtown hotels because of the rates and charges for parking), charge as their

regular non-discounted rate from \$259 to over \$359 per night. Several of the hotels being considered would not lower their rates for our group to less than \$199 per night; a couple were still over \$215.

The eight hotels visited, from South San Francisco to San Mateo were all major brand hotels and anyone of them will be a good choice for our group. Some of the hotels have lower per night costs but charge for parking, breakfast, etc. These hotels do offer discounts for both parking and breakfast (breakfast \$24 – \$36 per person, discounted to \$18 - \$24). Several had a higher per night cost but included the breakfast and parking. The hotels with lower per night costs wound up being the higher priced hotels.

We will block a group of 10 guestrooms for Wednesday, 21 June and 20 to 25 guestrooms for Thursday, 22 June through Sunday, 25 June, checkout. The guestroom block rate will be about \$165 per night, not including taxes. This rate does include complimentary parking, airport shuttle and breakfast for two persons per room. The City of Burlingame has a shuttle service to the hotels for those who wish to shop or go to restaurants in downtown Burlingame.

I am hopeful to have the hotel chosen shortly, and will keep everyone advised by either email or US mail. As always, you can find reunion information on our web site.

We are also in the process of finalizing the activities and this information should be ready, along with the reunion activity sheets, in time for the January newsletter. It will also be available on our web site: <http://www.ussnitro.org/reunion.htm>

During our October trip, Sue and I took time to visit the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno. We talked with the Director about hosting our Wreath Laying Ceremony. She said she would be delighted if we held our ceremony on their grounds. The grounds are very well maintained and would be a fitting place to hold the service. We are now in the process of making this happen.

There is a possibility that we may also be joined by West Coast members of our sister ship USS Pyro (AE-24). I have been in touch with one of their Board members and extended an invitation to their association members to join us in San Francisco. It has been some time since the Pyro Association has had a West Coast reunion.

I have had conversations with other members of the Pyro Association about holding a combined reunion but the dates have not worked in our favor. Perhaps some time in the future.

### USS Nitro Association Scholarship Fund Update

By Jim Timmons

The Nitro USS Nitro Association Scholarship Fund (NASF) is now ready to receive student applications. The full details of the Scholarship Guidelines, Application process/form and Funding mechanisms are available for viewing and downloading on our web site at the following address: <http://www.ussnitro.org/nasf.html>.

As a reminder of the process: Applicants must have a 2.0 grade point average or higher. The applicants must be a Senior

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Newsletter of the  
USS Nitro Association  
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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).

## 2017 Nitro Association Collector's Calendar

As previously mentioned, a 2017 Nitro Association collectors edition wall calendar is being produced as next year's dues premium. The top portion of each month will contain pictures of both the USS Nitro AE-2 and 23. Many of these pictures have not been seen before and

cover all decades both ships were in service.

On the lower portion of each month, will be a collection of historical dates, by year for each ship as well as additional historical information in the notes section.

These calendars should be ready for shipping shortly after the first of the new year.

## 2018 San Antonio

We have received a few activity suggestions for the San Antonio reunion but are continuing to look at activities and wreath laying ceremony sites for the Jun 2018 reunion.

There are many military installations in the San Antonio area that might be great locations for our wreath laying ceremony.

If anyone has or knows any contacts at any of the following facilities, please let

us know: Lackland Air Force Base (recruit training graduation), Joint Base San Antonio (Ft. Sam Houston [Medical Education and Training Campus – all services], Randolph & Lackland AFB) or the San Antonio Military Medical Center.

Information on area hotels would also be appreciated.

## 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:

**Kenneth "Kenny" Eggenschwiler, HM1, AE-23**  
**John Peter Fisher, SN, AE-23, 1964-66**  
**Joe Price, EM3, AE-23, 1970-72**

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### ***Editor's Correction***

In the previous issue of the *Nitro Blast*, I misstated that the Association had only one active member who had served during WW2, Korea and Vietnam.

The following people from our database (deceased, active or inactive members), served during those time periods:

Ralph Caldwell, Wallace Carey, Thomas Howe, Peter Martinek, Delmer Miller, Harold Odette, John Sachs, Lee Smith, Joseph Snyder

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***The Nitro Sage***

The fact that no one understands you doesn't mean you're an artist!  
Any connections between your reality and mine is purely coincidental.  
This isn't an office. It's Hell with fluorescent lighting.

**Navy Times Article Recaps**

1. Navy does away with enlisted rating classifications in favor of a code system (Navy Occupational Specialty) similar to that of the Army and USAF.

2. The military's medical malpractice 'safe haven' may be challenged in court.

3. The Navy Recruit Training Command ribbon is now available to anyone who completed tours at any of six commands, since 10/1/95, that train recruits and officer candidates.

4. An international panel (Permanent Court of Arbitration) rules against China's claim to the South China Sea.

5. Veterans disability backlog still a major problem for VA.

6. USAF veteran uses liquid nitrogen to make custom ice cream in his Provo, Utah store.

7. Navy to implement armed guards at some recruiting stations.

8. US and New Zealand reach agreement on US ships visiting in celebration of the Royal New Zealand Navy's 75<sup>th</sup>. anniversary.

9. President-elect Trump faces a Navy with morale problems, numbers of ships and manning levels, social issues and veterans health care.

10. A retribution controversy at previous command forces SEAL boss to retire.

11. Navy replacing 'Blueberry' work uniform with 'Woodland' cammies.

12. Illinois Historic Preservation Agency dedicates monument to Purple Heart medal recipients at cemetery where Abraham Lincoln is buried.

13. Navy Department lifts transgender band. Sailors and Marines can now declare transgender status.

14. Adm Harris, US Pac Com, warns of growing ISIS presence in Pacific.

15. Cracker Barrel to donate one rocking chair to a military family for every one purchased online.

16. *Navy Times* survey of best cities in US to live are: Large city (over 200,000 pop) – Virginia Beach, VA followed by Colorado Springs, CO.; Medium city (75 – 200,000 pop) – Alexandria, VA followed by Arlington, VA.; Small city (less than 75,000) – League City, TX followed by San Clemente, CA.

17. Navy moves forward with trial of LCDR accused of spying for Taiwan.

18. Navy's new Stingray drone will be used primarily as a refueling tanker.

19. With hazing reports down Navy-wide, focus is now on reducing bullying - both of a physical nature as well as in cyberspace .

20. Rare military collectibles are fetching high prices at auctions.

21. USAF Academy football team wins Commander In Chief trophy.

22. Man from north Texas will serve 4 years behind bars for falsely portraying himself as a Navy SEAL.

23. Iranian small boats continue to harass Navy ships in Persian Gulf.

24. Carrier George, H. W. Bush, rushing to meet deadline for first deployment late this year.

25. Navy Corpsman now identified as one of the original flag-raisers in Iwo Jima photo.

26. LCS Coronado suffers engineering problem, that has plagued several others in the class, and has to return to port from deployment.

27. In wake of scandal, Wounder Warrior Project undergoes significant overhaul in management and personnel.

28. President Obama proposes a 1.6% pay raise in 2017 for military.

29. Several high-profile professional athletes, from various sports, have made the decision to not stand during the playing of the National Anthem.

30. Former Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi establishes private fund to help US service members who say they became sick after participating in relief operations for the 2011 tsunami and nuclear power plant disaster.

31. Navy's Blue Angels are back to flying six planes after June crash and stand down.

32. In sea to shore rotation shake-up, 13 ratings (NOS) will see more sea duty, while 15 ratings will see less sea time.

33. DOD has temporarily intervened in cutting of funds earmarked for MWR (morale, welfare and recreation) facilities.

34. ITT Technical Institute closure earlier this year leaves thousands of veterans with financial and educational problems.

35. Sailor, unaware she was pregnant, gave birth on board carrier, Eisenhower, while deployed in the Persian Gulf.

36. USMC Gunnery Sgt receives law degree while on active duty.

37. Philippines president continues to pull the country away from alliance with US. May endanger DOD operations in the islands.

38. Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan has cost almost \$5 Trillion so far.

39. Congress at odds about continuing to allow military bands to perform at civilian functions.

40. The American Legion is calling on Congress to allow the use of medical marijuana in treating PTSD.

41. *Star Trek* celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September.

42. White House tells Pentagon leaders to not refer to either China or Russia as being 'competition'.

43. Pentagon to cover sex-reassignment surgery for troops.

44. DOD is requiring flu shots for all students attending DOD Education Activity schools.

45. Department of Education withdraws recognition of the nation's largest accreditor (Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools) of for-profit schools because of lax oversight. ACICS is appealing decision.

46. Editorial in the *Navy Times* calls Congress's inability to agree on almost everything a threat to national security.

47. According to a *Navy Times* report, SecNav Mabus wanted to resolve the issue of gender-neutral ratings in the Navy prior to leaving his post, and was presented with four options to take the word 'man' out of nearly two dozen job titles. He took the most extreme option and did away with ratings all together. Very little input from the fleet was gathered and only a handful of Navy brass (then-MCPON Stevens, CNO Admiral Richardson and VCNO Admiral Moran) were involved.

48. US military advisors continue to back Iraqi forces trying to take back the city of Mosul.

49. Navy and USMC play major role in Haiti hurricane relief efforts.

50. Navy ships come under missile attacks off the coast of Yemen. After second attack, destroyer Nitze given permission to fire Tomahawk missiles destroying three Yemen radar sites.

51. Navy Federal Credit Union to pay \$23 million to customers for improper debt-collection practices.

52. Over 100,000 signatures on White House petition fails to save ratings.

## ‘A Whisper in the Wind’- LCDR Richard Palleschi, USN, Ret.

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.

Respectfully submitted,

A USS Thor, ARC4 and USS Nitro,  
AE23 sailor, MM2 Steve Tyas

## Guest Columnist

By Michael Mullen, RM2, AE-23, 76-78

It came as quite a change from being with CPW-5 (Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing FIVE) as a radio-operator on a P-3 Orion hunting for Soviet subs but I really enjoyed flying. When I first got to NWS Earle, I had to wait a couple of weeks until the Nitro got back from a Med cruise. In that time I got to know the area and ended up in Army base housing @ Fort Monmouth. When the Nitro finally arrived it was basically ready for dry dock in Philly. It was actually pretty boring for the next 1 1/2 years, but made some very good



friends & explored every inch of the ship. I think the most un-nerving thing was to go into the dry dock and walk under Nitro.

Being duty ops for my section was interesting. I would take a chair up the mast and kick back enjoying the view, especially on July 4, 1976.....you could see the fireworks 360 degrees and could actually look into the football stadium. I got some pretty good photos too. I did send some photos to the Nitro Association and look forward to seeing them in the Nitro News one of these days, I'm sure my shipmates would enjoy them too. By the time we got back to Jersey it was time for my discharge and had one hell of a send off party at the Enlisted mans club. There's a lot of shipmates I'd like to see but it's getting kind of late for this, but I will say one thing, I'd gladly give my life to protect them and the ship.

My Nitro memories will always be in my heart forever. Well, I'm not much of a writer so I wish smooth sailing and happy lives for all my former ship mates and will always keep them and the Nitro in my heart. Hope you all enjoy this little article and that it brings back some fond memories for all my former ship mates. Hope to make it to another reunion in the future but I have a bad disabling injury so it is hard for me to travel. All my best to all. My deepest thoughts are always there for my former Shipmates.

## Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain Donna Wise

As I write this article it is November 11, Veteran's Day, and so let me begin by saying "Thank You." Thank you for giving years of your life in service to this great country. And though we have a day set aside for remembering your service and for remembering how indebted this country is to our military for keeping us free and safe it is not just on this day that you are appreciated. I know that some of you don't like to have people come up to you and thank you for your service,

because you didn't have any choice in the matter. You were drafted. You are appreciated anyway. You went. You didn't find a way out of doing what you were called to do.

Many of you served during the Vietnam years. You know that at that time many people did not appreciate your service and, in fact, despised your service. That only makes me appreciate you more, because you did what you had to do though it was unpopular. I am thankful that enough years have passed for most people to have gained perspective and have come to appreciate and respect those who served during a time when political decisions created great frustration for us all. We learned that what happens in Washington does not necessarily reflect the opinions and lives of ordinary citizens.

It is interesting that this Veteran's Day comes in the same week that a very contentious election was decided with a large percentage of the population cheering and throwing confetti while just as many are in deep mourning. It is unlikely that the results of the election will produce all of the good some expect and I pray that it does not lead to the bad that many fear. For me it is helpful to have the advantage of enough years to have seen this country through many election cycles and understand that however good or bad we may see things to be the sun still comes up in the east, the seasons change right on schedule and God is still God.

Besides Election Day and Veteran's Day, November is also the month of Thanksgiving Day. It is interesting that this secular holiday is one that most expresses the values of all major religions. Much of our time is spent concerned with whether we will have enough of those things we desire. An attitude of thanksgiving helps us keep perspective that though we will never have everything we want we do have "enough." It also helps remind us that

the most important things in life are not "things."

May you have a blessed and peaceful Thanksgiving celebration filled with all that is most important to you.

Grace and Peace,

Donna

## A Final Thought

*By Robert Eberlein,*

By the time you read this article the election should be over with, thank goodness. What a bunch of losers we had for Indiana, each one accusing the other of selling the people out. They sounded like six year olds ratting to mom.

Anyway, the Holiday Season will soon be here, and the stores trying to out do each other with "you really need this and you need that". Miss the good old days when the stores didn't come out with holiday decorations and store sales until around Thanksgiving. Man, are we that OLD?

With the last two months of the year here, now would be a good time to reflect on the past and how fast life goes by. We can remember a slower time when friends and family were treasured. Now our youth and just about everyone else's is lost to their hand held devices.

I remember we had a scrawny Charlie Brown Christmas tree in the medical office on the AE-23. No matter how many letters of greetings from the Navy big wigs in Washington, DC for the holiday season were received, there was nothing like being home. Well, maybe except for my aunt's rum soaked cake balls.

The officers of the Nitro Association wish you and your kin and friends all the best for a safe and healthy Holiday season and a joyous New Year. Hope to see ya at the San Francisco reunion in June of 2017.

Also, take a moment or two to remember there are men and women who man-the-watch here at home and around the world as we sleep in peace.

*Fair winds and following seas.*

*Bob Eberlein, Founder,  
USS Nitro Association*