



Nitro Blast

The Newsletter of the
USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23)
Association
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Troops, You have our Hearts & Prayers

Keep the Memories Alive



Operation Iraqi Freedom



Editorial



There is hardly a family or community in the United States which has not been affected by the operations in Iraq. As the "Coalition of the Willing" try to bring a semblance of what we all take for granted, let us remember the old saying: "Freedom is not free".

Whether or not you support the war effort, all of the soldiers, sailors and airmen in "harm's way" deserve our support and prayers. For many (the three or four year enlistee or reservist called to active duty who are serving, it is literally the "luck (or unluck) of the draw" to have the war happen on their watch. For the career military professional, this is something they have been training for all of their life, hoping that it never happens. As anyone who has served in the military knows, no one wants to go to war and that it is certainly the last resort. With minor exceptions, each service member has had to come to terms with his or her deployment and have done so with great pride and belief in what they are doing. It is never easy to leave family behind, having to make out your will and knowing that some of your unit members are unlikely to return alive.

I have been watching, with considerable concern, the reactions here at home which both supporters and protesters of the war have been exhibiting. From my perspective, it is too easy to tie one's feelings into a specific reason why you are either for or against the war, and as the conflict either goes better or worse positions will harden and the divide will become greater. My hope is that we all try to take into account why the people on the other side of this issue feel the way they do.

I can understand the position of those who do not want to see the death of truly innocent civilians or destruction of property, and I can also understand those who want to stop the spread or use of WMD and see the cruelty and repression of the Iraqi regime stopped. What I can not understand are the positions of those who think this war is solely for oil, a land-grab or to boost an administration's ratings. These reasons are too shallow and/or could be obtained by other means than war.

It would have been far more preferable to have had more international support for this war, but that didn't happen. The leaders of countries, choosing not to support the coalition's efforts, have their reasons either valid or not. Only time will tell whether or not they were correct or justified. But one has to ask, how long can you let a brutal dictator like Saddam Hussein run what was one of the wealthiest countries in the Middle East into the ground.

Now that we are joined in this conflict, it is imperative that "all of us" give as much support as possible to the families and friends of those serving our country. As in all previous conflicts, parents and wives or husbands are going to be receiving phone calls and visits late in the night to inform them of the loss of a loved one. Those who are serving as well as their families deserve our prayers and respect. It is the least we can do for this, the most recent, generation in the service of OUR country.

May God bless and protect them as well as all of the innocent civilians who are caught up in this conflict.



2003 Reunion - Coming Soon



The "Blast" (no pun intended) that is the Nitro reunion will be coming to Rhode Island soon - very soon. If you have not yet made your reservations or signed up for various reunion activities, please do so as soon as possible.

As noted in previous newsletters, there are two major deadlines that need to be considered. The guest room reservation group rate deadline is 19 May 2003. The association has reserved a block of 50 guest rooms for most nights. The group rate is \$99/night for either a "king" or "double bedded" room. Smoking and no smoking rooms are available as well as handicap rooms. Anyone requiring special assistance should inform the hotel when making reservations.

Each person will be responsible for making their reservations and may do so by calling the Crowne Plaza at 401-732-6000. Let the reservation clerk know you want to reserve a room for the **USS Nitro Association** for "x" number of nights. Your credit card will not be charged until you check out and you have up to 24 hours before the date of arrival to cancel your reservations.

The other deadline is for the clambake, which is part of the joint Seabee/Nitro Memorial Ceremony, on Saturday 21 June. There is a limitation of 500 persons for the clambake and those wishing to attend must have their reservations in by 1 June.

Activities

The following is a recap of 2003 reunion activities.

Wednesday – Optional Day – fishing, golf or sightseeing.

Thursday – Afternoon - crew member check in.

Evening – Annual Business meeting. This business meeting will also include **election of officers** for the next two years.

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Friday – Day tour to Battleship Cove (Fall River, MA.) and Newport, RI. Evening –Nitro Association Dinner, raffle and auction (Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick, RI)

Saturday - Trip to Davisville Seabee Center for joint Seabee/Nitro Association Memorial Ceremony, wreath laying and clam bake.

Officer Election Reminder

A reminder of elections to be held during the Providence reunion. All offices are open for either election of or reelection of officers for the next two years. The offices are as follows: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Master at Arms and two trustee positions.

Please refer to the Nitro Association Constitution and Bylaws for descriptions of the duties of these offices. If you are interested in running for office, please notify any of the current officers so that your name may be included on the list of candidates. If there are more than one candidate for an office, ballots will be available to vote for the candidates to fill the office in question.

Current candidates for offices are: President - James Timmons; Vice President - Robert Eberlein; Treasurer - Robert Peiffer; Secretary - Phil Wise; Master at Arms - NONE; Trustee #1 - Juan Reyes-Matos; Trustee #2 - Paul Licker.

Wednesday Fishing Trip Reminder

We are short of people for the fishing trip we are trying to schedule for Wednesday. Three additional people are needed or we might have to cancel the trip. Thursday's

fishing trip is already filled and booked. If interested in going fishing on Wednesday, please contact Juan Reyes at 203-874-3797, within the next two weeks, for details.

TAPS

From Mrs. Jean Scudero - Santo (Sandy) Scudero, husband, SN, 61-64, passed away on January 11, 2000.

From Mrs. Mildred Smith - CDR Charles Smith, USN, Ret., husband, LT, 59-60 passed away November 30, 2002.

From grandson - John Povernick, , AE-2, WT3c, 44-45 passed away February 15, 2003.

Last Call for Reunion Auction Items

The Third Annual Nitro Association Raffle and Auction will be held following Friday night's dinner. The auction raises additional funds for the Nitro Association, which are then used to offset Association expenses and/or are donated to worthwhile Navy related organizations. Any inexpensive item you would like to donate would be appreciated.

Association 5 Year Award

As of this writing, the following people have been members of the Nitro Association for 5 years and will receive their "star" pins at the reunion or by mail if unable to attend the reunion: Charles Ball, James Cahill, John Fisher, Joseph Gentleman, Henry "<arty" Hope, Sr., Captain Thomas Howe, William Kohlruss, Bennett Landry, George Livernois, John Mahler, Ed Marino, Kenneth Marvin, John Meissner, Harold Odette, Roy Rose, Arthur Sanders, Peter Scott, Lee Smith and Vincent Troiola.

Nitro Membership Update

USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) Association membership continues to grow. Our membership roll now stands at 233. The following shipmates (Nitro tour dates) have signed on as members during the month indicated:

February - Michael Bartlett (85-88); Jerry Bowler (63-66); John L. Miller (75-76); Brendan O'Sullivan (62-64); Joseph Amico (1945)

March - Howard Robinson (43-45); Cheryl Dorwin (90-92); James Sepesi (68-72); Donald Willoughby (70-73)

Newsletter & Directory Changes

Effective with this newsletter, the "Nitro Blast" will be published during the months of January, April, July and October. The time frame, in reference to the reunion and scheduling of hotel and activities, works out better.

The Publication of the Cre3w Member directory will also be changed from September '03 to January '04 to coincide with the '04 dues payments.

The Crow's Nest

John Povernick, the grandson of John L. Povernick, WT3c on board the AE-2 in 1944-45 would like to contact anyone who might have known his grandfather while on board Nitro during WW2. Please either call 856-863-4045 or email John at kpov@earthlink.net.

The Nitro Sage

Mother's Dictionary!!!

DEFENSE: What you better have around de yard if you're going to let de children play outside.

DUMBWAITER: One who asks if the kids would care to order desert.



A Final Thought

The final arrangements are being made and the names of Association members are being added to the growing list of attendees. It seems like we just held our last reunion a short time ago. Boy, time sure flies by all too quickly.

When you turn on TV, it's Operation Desert Storm once more only 12 years later. This time the USS Nitro (AE-23) and her crew will not be on station, and I will not be at Twenty-nine Palms, CA. We are now the observers.

There have been two service members from within seventy-five miles of my home killed in action in Iraq. Some of the US Marines who I had the pleasure to drill with when I was with them are now back fighting in the desert. Let's take time to remember all the military personnel who now "man the watch" in our prayers.

Fair winds and following seas,
Bob Eberlein, President, Nitro Assn.

