



Nitro Blast

The Newsletter of the
USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23)
Association
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Editor: Jim Timmons
Assn. Membership 289

"A Very Special Reunion" *Keep the Memories Alive*

Nitro Association's 10th Anniversary

The Washington, DC (Herndon, VA) reunion marks the 10th Anniversary of the USS Nitro Association. Although two informal "reunions" were held prior to us formalizing the Association in 1998, we are unbelievably happy that the organization has grown into a very viable and vibrant Association with a fantastic mix of members. What a better place to hold our tenth anniversary than in the Washington, DC area.

Below is our agenda for our reunion:

Thursday, 21 June - The hospitality suite at the Crowne Plaza will be open afternoon and evening for crewmember check-in. The Association business meeting will be held at 7 PM. The hotel will host a one-hour cheese and wine reception in the evening, prior to our business meeting.

Friday, 22 June - *This is going to be a long day, so be prepared.* We leave the hotel around 11 AM by motor coach and travel to the National Mall area of DC. From approximately Noon till 3:30 PM, our members and guests will be able to visit the monuments and memorials, which include Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, the WW2 Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. We will be providing bottled water for all of our attendees, as we did in Las Vegas, on the trip.

Important Note: At this time, we are not planning on making any group reservations for the Washington Monument. Expect to have to deal with security checks at most monuments, most museums, government buildings and the White House while in Washington. It is suggested that anyone desiring to visit the Washington Monument during our time on the Mall make advanced reservations by either visiting the National Park Service ticketing website <http://reservations.nps.gov> or by calling 1.800.967.2283. There is a \$1.50 fee per order to reserve tickets ahead of time. These tickets may be picked up at the "will call" window of the monument ticket kiosk the day of your tour.

After our visit to the Mall, we will take a short drive to the Jefferson Memorial so people who want to have their picture taken may do so.

About 4:30 - 5 PM the motor coaches will proceed to the Pentagon City Mall where you will be able to shop and have dinner (everyone will be on their own for dinner and shopping). We will meet at a central location about 7 PM and then travel to the USMC 8th & I barracks to view **the Marine Corps' Evening Parade**. We will be receiving 80 tickets for admission to this event, so depending on the number of reunion attendees this may be a **"first come, first served" event**. The parade starts at dusk and last approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. We plan on returning to the hotel about 11 PM.

Saturday, 23 June - We will leave the hotel around 10AM and travel to the US Navy Memorial for our wreath laying & plaque dedication (**see article below**). After the ceremony, we will reboard the motor coaches and travel to Arlington National Cemetery.

While at Arlington National Cemetery, you will be able to visit the Tomb of the Unknowns, Women in Military Service for America Memorial, the Kennedy gravesites, the Arlington Mansion and much more. For those who have difficulty walking or climbing hills, you may want to purchase a ticket at the Visitor's Center for the Tourmobile. The cost for senior citizens is \$5.00, Adults \$6.00 and children (3-11) are \$3.00.

We will be returning to the Crowne Plaza around 5:20 PM and the Association dinner will start at 7 PM. The banquet room will be open at 6 PM for those of you who brought or would like to take a look at the auction items. The raffle/auction will begin as soon as dinner is completed.

Please fill out and return the attached activity form, with your payment, as soon as possible. The latest we can accept activity forms and payments is May 15th.

Crowne Plaza reminder:

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As mentioned previously, we have reserved a block of rooms (a mixture of king and double bed) - 25 for Wednesday, 50 for Thursday night and 50 for Friday & Saturday night at the special guestroom rate of \$84/night plus tax. ***Wednesday night room are going fast and are available on a "first come, first served basis". Please make your reservations as soon as possible because the hotel can not guarantee additional rooms for Wednesday night.***

King, Queen double bed or Standard double-bedded rooms are available, with occupancy of up to four people per room. Both smoking and non-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 national reservation center at 800-227-6963 or the hotel at 703-471-6700.

When placing your reservation for the 2007 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 to 6 PM (East Coast time) on your planned day of arrival. ***Up to an additional three nights either before or after the reunion (contracted reunion dates are 21 - 24 June), may be made at our reunion group rate on an "as available" basis.***

◆◆ **USS Nitro plaque at the Navy Memorial** ◆◆

The Board Members of the USS Nitro Association would like to thank everyone for their contributions to the USS Nitro Memorial Plaque Fund. Donations are still coming in, and I am very pleased to announce that we have received enough donations to have a memorial plaque made for both the USS Nitro (AE-2) as well as the (AE-23).

The general plaque design is to have each ship's picture (not line drawings or silhouettes of the ship) be prominent on their plaque. Appropriate wording and the listing of the awards and medals won by each ship will also appear on each plaque.

Please continue to refer to the USS Nitro Association's web site (www.ussnitro.org) for updated information on both the plaque drive and the Washington, DC reunion.

◆ **Board Member Elections** ◆

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This year's business meeting will also include **election or reelection of officers** for the next two years. Any Nitro Association member, having paid their 2007 dues and who is a member in good standing, is eligible to be elected as an officer of the association.

Positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Trustees 1 & 2 and Master At Arms and will be open for nominations. Current officers of the Nitro Association are: Jim Timmons*, President; Bob Eberlein*, V. President; Robert Peiffer*, Treasurer; Phil Wise, Secretary; Juan Reyes*, Trustee; Paul Licker*, Trustee and Oscar Santiago, Master At Arms. As of this writing, an asterisk (*) indicates the individual will run again for the same office. Anyone else desiring to run for office should contact Jim Timmons so your name can be added to the ballot.



The Crows Nest



2007 Dues packets will be mailed shortly. The 2007 Nitro Association Crew Member directory (for full dues paying members) will be shipped with the April newsletter.



Navy Times Article Recap



- 1) 84 year old Navy vet in Tucson, AZ building 21' replica of nuclear sub in backyard.
- 2) Generals frustrated over decline in Iraq.
- 3) Paperless service records coming to Navy.
- 4) Sailor gets life without parole for killing Marine.
- 5) CPON tells chiefs to show their leadership by teaching, listening to their sailors and speaking up to those in command.
- 6) June, '08 set for new Navy work and service uniform rollout.
- 7) Atlantic Fleet units compete in realistic shipboard situations.
- 8) French, German and Italian shipbuilders show plans for large-scale amphibs.
- 9) Iraqis train with sailors in US for riverine combat.
- 10) Navy okays new job codes for individual assignments.
- 11) Thousands of weapons, bought for Iraqi forces reported missing.
- 12) National Museum of the Marine Corps opens near Quantico, Virginia.
- 13) Low-fat chow lines hit all ships. Less fried foods, smaller portions.
- 14) Marine Corp. corporal, Jason Dunham, awarded posthumous Medal of Honor.
- 15) Chinese sub comes close to Kitty Hawk carrier strike group in October. Raising a number of questions in PacFleet.
- 16) Top US General in Iraq sees no timetable for reduction in forces.
- 17) USCG still looking for answers in deaths of two divers in Arctic waters. Command failures, inexperience and oversight failures cited as possible reasons. Admiral's mast for CO, XO and Ops Officer.
- 18) Female LDO (boot camp graduate '72) first to become 0-6.

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- 19) USCG cutter captures 50' fiberglass and wooden submarine carrying 3.5 tons of cocaine.
- 20) Naval Academy beats West Point in football - again!
- 21) Naval Hospital Jacksonville faces additional surgery-related law suits.
- 22) Navy looking to cut as many as 15,000 in FY 07.
- 23) SeaBees working on all kinds of work in Iraq with little fanfare.
- 24) More structural damage cited as reason for USCG to shelve extending 110' cutters to 123'.
- 25) A proposed military museum and memorial at former Quonset Point NAS receives \$500,000 gift, so construction can begin X- USS Saratoga (CV-60) will be the centerpiece of the facility.
- 26) Rating merger to hit the aviation and combat-systems community. Black-shoe ratings looking to be merged by group are (FC, ET, STS) and (CT&IT).
- 27) More civilians to fill Navy medical billets. By 2015, 20% of billets will be filled by civilians.
- 28) Sub sailor found guilty of espionage and desertion. Sentenced to a minimum of 12 years and dishonorable discharge.
- 29) Anthrax short are back for Central Command (Iraq & Afghanistan) and Korean sailors and mission-essential civilians and DOD personnel.
- 30) Robert Gates assumes SECDEF position.
- 31) US troops based in Iraq increase emphasis on training Iraqi troops.
- 32) EA-18G (Growler) will replace EA-6B (Prowler) in the fleet, starting in 2009.
- 33) USS Eisenhower replaces USS Enterprise in Persian Gulf. Carrier strike groups USS Stennis and Reagan ready for early deployment.
- 34) LCS Freedom to be commissioned in Milwaukee in summer of '07
- 35) President may push for permanent increase in armed forces personnel.
- 36) Mental health problems for returning Gulf troops seen as major concern.
- 37) Mail to troops getting there faster, on average 7 days for non-holiday period and 11 days for holiday period.
- 38) Navy's next carrier to be named after President Ford.
- 39) Naval Medical Center, San Diego will receive increasing numbers of Iraqi war casualties.
- 40) Experimental "M" hull ship to undergo more Pacific testing prior to being sent to Norfolk for trials. Ship being considered for use with SEALs.
- 41) Troop survey shows increasing discontent with President's course in Iraq war.
- 42) Navy Times web site gets face lift: www.NavyTimes.com
- 43) US Navy ships patrol coast of Somalia in search for terrorists.
- 44) Two sub sailors from USS Minneapolis-St. Paul die after being swept overboard in English Channel.
- 45) Navy officials look at subs and unmanned vehicles for new/expanded missions.
- 46) 3.5% pay increase to be sought for January 2008.
- 47) Help, Help! Navy frigate, Boone, loses rudder in Med.
- 48) President's troop surge (20,000) or "new way forward" receives mixed reviews from congress and military commanders. Longer deployments and accelerated training of Iraqi troops key to plan.
- 49) All subs on standdown after Gulf collision.

"Continuing Service to the Fleet"

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Prepaid Military Phone Cards



Military prepaid phone cards are still available to be sent to relatives or neighbors who are serving in either Operation Iraqi Freedom or Afghanistan. Please send us their APO or FPO address and tell us whether the person is serving ashore or afloat.



Chaplain's Corner



Many more troops are slated to be going to assist the war efforts in Iraq and the Middle East in the coming months, according to the plans which have been circulating in recent weeks. Not unlike previous evolutions, this news has been met with a pretty broad range of reaction, from politicians, from the public, and from those in the military.

I have been personally privy to discussions by troops at all levels of the chain of command, and the consensus appearing to me continues to be oriented to supporting our troops in theatre. Few complaints have surfaced regarding anyone's ability or willingness to serve. There seems to be, however, a growing sentiment that while the general public does indeed support the troops who are "over there," there is a growing volume to the troops both here and returning from theatre voicing opinions which question the efficacy of the operation, and not only the result wrought upon our troops in the field, but also the ramifications of where this war is going, and what could be the result of all of the efforts expended thus far and in the future. Our military--the service member in the field--once again reflects the macrocosm of the American people. Yet, they go and faithfully serve, just as many have done in the past even in the face of personal opposition to the policies and decisions handed down to those rank-in-file troops. The American military service member remains, in my estimation, the best troops we can dream of having...well-trained, loyal to their country and other service members, and they have brains--and USE those brains.

Whatever your particular feeling are regarding the current conflict, I hope you will exercise your constitutional rights and civic duties to make your representatives aware and cognizant of your feelings and why. This is what truly makes our nation a strong democracy and strong people. And please, whatever your feelings might be in a political manner, continue your prayers for our service members in harm's way and those supporting their efforts..on a daily basis. These are great folks out there serving, much as we did, in faithful execution of their duties. May God give each and everyone of them peace and protection, and may God bless each of us as we support them and do so with faithfulness and conviction.

Chaps...

****TAPS****

The listing(s) are of former USS Nitro (AE-2) or (AE-23) crew members, which we have received since our last posting:

Jake Smith, GMG2 (AE-23), '70; Delaware Hood, MM3 (AE-2), 43-45; James Windsor, (AE-2), 41-44;

**Nitro 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 289.*** The following shipmates (Nitro tour dates) have signed on as members during the month indicated:

November - Alden "Al" Baumgartner, PHM3 (APA-25) 45-50; James Schultz, RM2 (AE-23) 69-71

December - Joseph Walc, Jr., LT (AE-23) 80-82; William Turner, RM2 (AE-23) 78-81; Keith Vincent, BT2 (AE-23) 71-74; Larry Badgley, BM2 (AE-23) 78-81; Leslie Shuey
Associated member

January 07 - Carl Gunnar "Swede" Nilson, MM3 (AE-23) 70-73; Brenda McFarlin, HM1 (AE-23) 94-95;

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

2007 Association Dues are \$24.15 (including S/H of Assn. Packet). The dues packet includes a "challenge coin" of either the AE-23 or AE-2 (your choice), quarterly newsletters, membership certificate (for **new** members only), crewmembers directory and a laminated membership card. Additional challenge coins of either the AE-2 or AE-23 may be purchased for an additional \$10.50 (S/H included) as long as supplies last. These coins will not be reordered - when they are gone, they are gone!

There are also Associated Membership dues available for spouses of former or deceased USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) crew members, children of former or deceased 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 crewmember directory are not included in this classification.***) The cost of the Associate Membership will be \$14.20 (\$12.50 dues + \$1.70 S/H) per calendar year.

**The Nitro Sage**

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

Your blood tests show you have salt water in your veins.

The only pens you own have "Property U.S. Government" printed on them.

**A Final Thought**

It's been over 60 years since World War Two ended, around 30 years since Viet Nam ceased and 16 years since Operation Desert Storm. Does this seem possible? Where does the time go? Now we will add another year to our lives and hope for best.

Arrangements for the June reunion are coming along and maybe we'll see a few new faces in the group when we meet in our country's capital? If you're thinking of attending the reunion, now is the time to think about making reservations. When my wife called in for the Wednesday of the reunion week, the rooms were going fast for that particular day. Even though Jim Timmons has made arrangements for more rooms, waiting until the last minute could a problem if one delays until the mid-May cut off date.

For those of us who have never visited Washington, DC, this should be a real treat, especially with the planned events scheduled. There should be enough time to take in some of the sights, do some shopping and pay homage to our departed veterans. Be sure to bring a pair of comfortable shoes. Once more, every one is welcomed to join our group for any reunion.

The membership drive is coming along and the donations for the plaques are doing quite well. There is enough funding for a plaque for the AE-2 and one for the AE-23, this way both ships are represented on the Commemorative Wall.

Please remember our service personnel who man-the-watch in your thoughts and prayers.

Fair winds and following seas,

Bob Eberlein, Founder, USS Nitro Association.

**USS Nitro Web Site**

The place for frequent updates on the Nitro reunion, association and other related activities:

<http://www.ussnitro.org>