



# Nitro Blast

The Newsletter of the  
USS Nitro (AE-2/AE-23)  
Association  
Volume 9, Issue 4  
April 2007  
Editor: Jim Timmons  
Assn. Membership 295

## "Memorial Plaques Become A Reality"

*Keep the Memories Alive*

### Nitro Memorial Plaques



Plaques honoring the crews of both the USS Nitro (AE-2) and (AE-23) are now in the process of being made. We have signed off on the designs that are on page 6 of this newsletter. Although the design varies slightly from the ones submitted to the Navy Memorial, due primarily to their guidelines, the information about the ships and the pictures chosen are as submitted.

The original single plaque design, submitted to our membership, would have been dedicated to the crews of both ships. However, the response for funding of the plaque was overwhelming and we ended up having enough funds for two plaques. We then went back to the drawing board and came up with a plaque design for each ship.

The process of plaque design took some time and we saw many variations for each plaque. Bob Peiffer, our Association treasurer and webmaster, provided most of the plaque designs from which two of his final designs were chosen..

Most of the research on both ships came from various sources (Nitro Change of Command booklets, cruise books, online sources and Navy publications). Bob Eberlein then

contacted the Naval Archives to get confirmation on the awards for each ship

After a few rounds of changing words and their placement, we finally had plaques we felt we could submit to the Navy Memorial. The project was then handed off to Oscar Santiago, our very capable Master-At-Arms and Memorial Plaque project coordinator.

Oscar has been in touch with both the Navy Memorial's chief plaque designer as well as the office in charge of Memorial Plaque Wall, and has sheperded the project through the initial and subsequent redesign of the final plaque versions you will see on page 6. Through his contacts with the Navy Memorial, Oscar was able to have one of their board members (whom we found out is also x-Nitro) choose a very desirable location for the plaques on the Memorial Plaque Wall. The location of the AE-2 and AE-23 plaques on the Memorial Wall are spaces K56 and K57.

We, the board members of the Nitro Association, would like to thank everyone who made contributions to the plaque fund. As with the decommissioning and final dispositions of Navy ships, their names and what the crews who served aboard them have done fade from memory. The plaques to be dedicated in June will help preserve our ships' memories for all future generations visiting the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC.

Replicas of the USS Nitro Memorial Plaques may be ordered from the Navy Memorial. Please see the attached order forms for details. The cost of either the AE-2 or AE-23 plaque is \$125.00 until October 1<sup>st</sup>, the price will then be increased to \$150. This price includes shipping and handling. Order forms will also be available at the reunion..

Final Reunion agenda:

**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:** We are not 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 National 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 8<sup>th</sup> & 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.

**\*\*\* IMPORTANT "NEW" INFORMATION \*\*\***

We have made arrangements for one of our buses to take members who wish to return to the hotel after visiting the Pentagon City Mall. The buses will first drop off those going to the Marine Corp Evening parade, then one bus will go back to the hotel and return to 8<sup>th</sup>& I to pick up the tour group.

**Saturday, 23 June** - We will leave the hotel around 10AM and travel to the US Navy Memorial for our wreath laying & plaque dedication. 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 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Crowne Plaza reminder:**

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.***

 **Board Member Elections** 

### 3 NITRO BLAST

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. 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



**Please Note:** Email address for Nitro Assn. Treasurer, Bob Peiffer, has changed: The new address is:  
[treasurer@ussnitro.org](mailto:treasurer@ussnitro.org)



#### Navy Times Article Recap



- 1) California limits Navy use of sonar training due to harmful effects on whales and marine mammals. Navy says it will not comply with restrictions.
- 2) Citing loss of confidence, CO of attack sub USS Minneapolis-St. Paul is sacked after 2 crewmen were swept overboard into the English Channel. Navy officials reviewing recent sub mishaps.
- 3) MCPON Campa shares vision of CPO's role in today's Navy. Emphasis on training of junior sailors and officers, enforcing institutional and technical standards.
- 4) Retired Generals bash Pres. Bush's troop "surge" proposal. General Petraeus, new commander of Multi-National Forces Iraq, says plan will work.
- 5) Congress and President at odds about war funding bill. Want way to measure progress and time limits for troop withdrawal.
- 6) 1,000 Guard and reserve members send an appeal for redress to congress. Asking for immediate end to war in Iraq.
- 7) New "honor" covers, with representation of American Flag, to cover caskets of fallen troops during transit, so proper respect can be achieved by personnel handling caskets
- 8) FCC looking to reduce fees for troops overseas to call home.
- 9) Navy Medical Center looking at deploying antibiotic beads to help in wound cases.
- 10) Naval "Brown-water" Riverine Squadron 1 deploys to Iraq.
- 11) Marksmanship training for fleet sailors to increase.
- 12) Aircraft Carrier JF Kennedy to be officially decommissioned in September; however, a decomm ceremony was held in March.
- 13) ADM William Fallon becomes first admiral to head Central Command.
- 14) Navy evaluating crew size for new LCS ships. May need higher manning levels. Congress reviewing cost overruns. Cost on first LCS has more than doubled and similar overrun is likely for the second LCS. Future LCS built with fixed-price contract.
- 15) USS Ronald Reagan CSG is caught in 'surge' of forces. Shorter than expected turn-around time.
- 16) USCG and Office of the Inspector General at odds over new deepwater cutter designs and oversight of contracts. Sen. John Kerry calls for termination of contract and asks for new bids.
- 17) Some military housing being rented to general public and is raising concerns in military.
- 18) SECDEF Gates wants 'stop-loss' retention, which prevents service members from getting out of service on schedule, minimized.
- 19) Force reduction - Navy plans to separate 23,000 sailors by 2013, while raising pay in certain critical rates is possible.
- 20) Naval aviation may shrink because of increased shipbuilding costs.
- 21) Navy Reserve to trim 3,500 billets next year.
- 22) Navy cleaning up former bombing and weapons training range in Vieques, Puerto Rico and finding thousands of unexploded bombs and munitions.
- 23) Posthumous award of Medal of Honor may be given to Navy seal LT Patrick Murphy.
- 24) War-zone E-6s get one-time shot at advancing to E-7 without having to take Chief's test. E-6's command must submit waiver.
- 25) Navy recruits 'Battle Stations' training to take place on board a 210' destroyer replica based on the Arleigh Burke class.
- 26) Walter Reed Medical Center under scrutiny for slow medical evaluations of injured troops as well as uninhabitable housing. Commanding General dismissed.
- 27) Citing security, USMC to restrict access to Hwy 172 to military stickered vehicles or cars with base visiting passes. Unpopular decision with locals using road as shortcut for decades.
- 28) VA Secretary and Congress battle White House over proposed budget increase.
- 29) USAF catches officer and airmen in child porn ring. Officer sentenced to 12 years. CMC at Naval Base Kitsap, WA. charged in child sex case.
- 30) New Arizona museum in Honolulu to be opened in Dec. 09.
- 31) City of Norfolk, VA to take over operation of former battleship Wisconsin.
- 32) Navy to pay extra for critical rates to extend their time at sea.
- 33) US analysts keeping a close eye on Iranian war games.
- 34) Ship repair yards looking for former sailors with machinist mate, enginemen and hull tech ratings. Reservists may be asked to pick up the slack.
- 35) Chaplain dismissed from Navy over military policy and nondenominational services.
- 36) New dry cargo/ammunition ship, Sacagawea, joins the fleet.
- 37) Former Navy QB still waiting to hear whether or not he will be allowed to stay in the service, after being acquitted of rape.
- 38) CNO Mullen seeks meetings with allies to discuss 1,000-ship world navy. Cooperation and intel sharing key to success.
- 39) National Guard looks for seat on Joint Chiefs. Committee reports a majority of Guard units are not ready for combat.
- 40) Officer promotions in British Navy on hold for at least next five years.
- 41) Navy investigating submarine, San Juan, 10-hour disappearance during training exercise.
- 42) Navy Seals and Special Warfare units recruiting fleet sailors.

*"Continuing Service to the Fleet"*

**4 NITRO BLAST**

- 43) Navy Medical Center, San Diego receiving positive reviews from troops receiving treatment for war related injuries.
- 44) Navy expands Bronze Star eligibility policy.
- 45) Marines to rotate billets in support of war with war billets, so every Marine shares in the fight.
- 46) GAO report indicates that securing and destroying Iraqi ammo bunkers were not a high priority on DOD list in 2003. Munition from bunkers is main source of roadside bombs.
- 47) Ships from 13 nations patrolling 2.4 million square miles off the coast of Africa in an attempt to stop pirate attacks.
- 48) Budgeting Army and USMC near term requirements may cut short other service requirements.

**Prepaid Military Phone Cards**

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

**Chaplain's Corner**

It has been almost a year since our gathering together for the NITRO Reunion in Las Vegas. Daily bulletins from the Mid-East indicate mounting casualties among our service members and the civilian populace. Perils are much in the news, even here at home, as we also remember the tragic loss of life here at home most recently on college campuses. Whether it is terrorism in Iraq or Afghanistan, or in the streets and schools of our own country, we have steady reminders that our world is unstable at best, and very scary at worst.

I share along with you the sorrow and concern for the victims and families of the young people killed and injured at Virginia Tech this week. The event is a sad reminder that things at home are not always as tranquil and safe as we would like them to be. This type of situation also highlights the peril our troops face daily in the many locations and situations throughout the world.

Those of us who served aboard NITRO are so aware that danger and peril are part of life in the military, and knowing one's mission and carrying that mission out in a proper, judicious, and safest way lends itself to successful operations and minimizing casualties. If the mission is not clear, or its methodology is not well-planned and executed, the end result will not be successful, and the likelihood of numerous and serious injuries and death becomes real.

As veterans, we have some serious ways we can support those who are now where we once were. First, we can do all we can to show the troops we DO care. Sharing things with our troops (greetings, items of personal comfort, etc.) is a

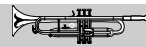
*"Continuing Service to the Fleet"*

direct, hands-on manner and is so helpful. Also of tremendous help to our troops is by making life easier for their dependents at home...being of support to those who support their loved-ones overseas. Contacts with dependents, and a helping hand when necessary, do so much to put our service members at ease, that their families are "okay" at home, and families are being assisted when needed.

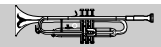
Finally, a serious way that we as veterans can make a significant impact is by demanding and holding accountable policymakers and those in command, assuring that plans and orders given will lead to successful completion of the mission at hand. The troops are not always in a position to exert that kind of oversight in regards to policy and superiors in rank. We ARE in that position, and can do our part to keep mission on track, the effort moving forward as prescribed, and successful outcomes happening. The sooner the mission is accomplished successfully means the sooner our folks can come home and move on with other facets of their lives.

Fair winds and following seas in your endeavors, continuing to serve the fleet and "making the critical difference."

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:

James Monroe 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 295.*** The following shipmates (Nitro tour dates) have signed on as members during the month indicated:

**March** - Shawn Cali, AE-23, LT(92-93); John Golding, AE-23, SK3 (60-61); Nancy Golding, Associated Member; David Barnette, AE-23, SH3, (93-95); Delmer Miller, AE-23, MM1 (59-62); Donald Courteau, AE-2, F 2/c (42-43)

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),

## 5 NITRO BLAST

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 . . ."*

*You get up at 2340, drink a cold cup of coffee, put on your PJs, grab your binoculars, go out on the porch and count cars for four hours.*

*You fill your pool at home with salt water.*

### **A Final Thought**

I suppose all of us at one time or another have attended a funeral of a deceased veteran. The flag draped casket, the final hand salute by other veterans, firing of the 21-gun salute and then the haunting sound of TAPS as the final good-bye. There are other veterans who receive a less than honorable send off. They are cut into scrape metal or sent to the bottom with no fan fare. They are the ships we severed on. Rusting away in some anchorage until the government decides what to do with them.

As part of the weekend in Washington, we will take time to honor the two ships christen Nitro. The plaque designs that will be used to immortalize them will be two of the best to be placed on the wall. At least everyone who will take time to visit the Navy Memorial will be able to see what an ammunition ship looked like during World War Two, Vietnam up to Operation Desert Storm. From the Association officers and myself, thank you the members and nonmembers who donated funds for the ship plaques

As a quick reminder, if you have anything that you would like to share or donate as part of the archives, at the gathering of the crews of the Nitro's, now is the time to search your sea chest. We are especially interested in old photos, jacket

*"Continuing Service to the Fleet"*

APRIL 2007

patches, and anything else that will invoke memories of a time now long past.

***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.



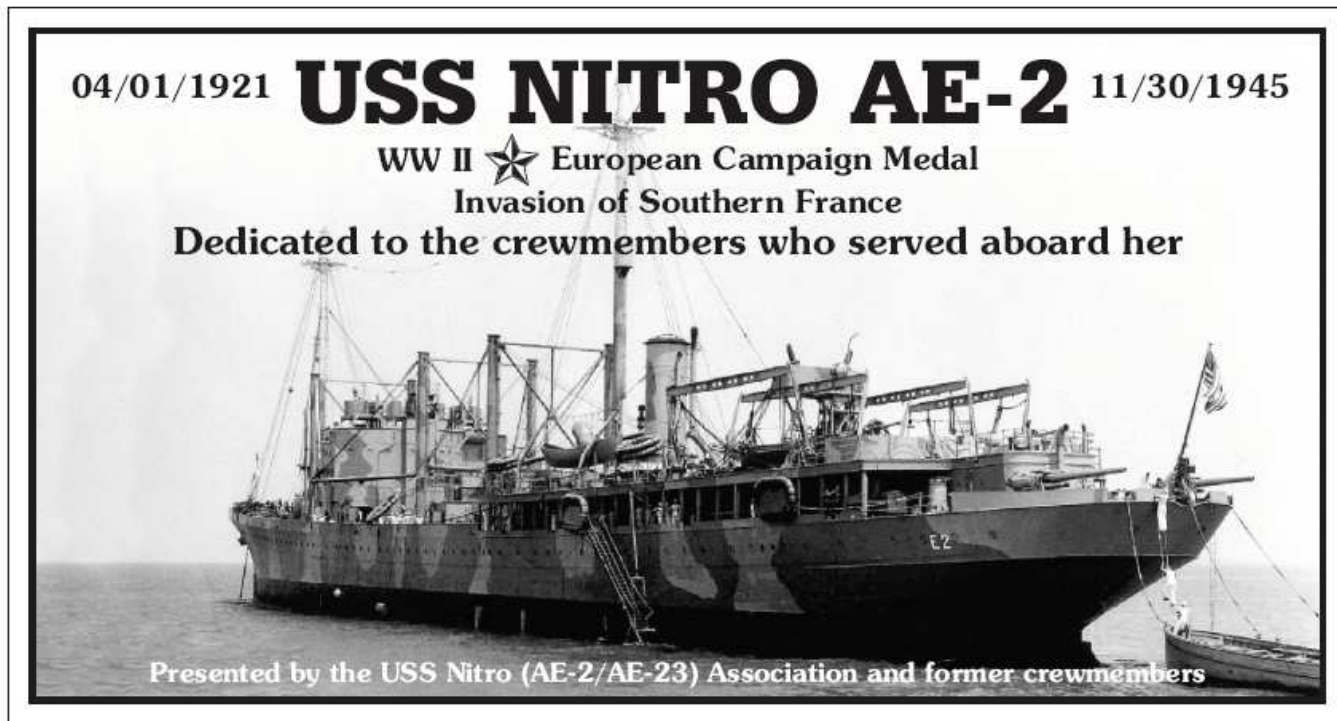
**USS Nitro Web Site**



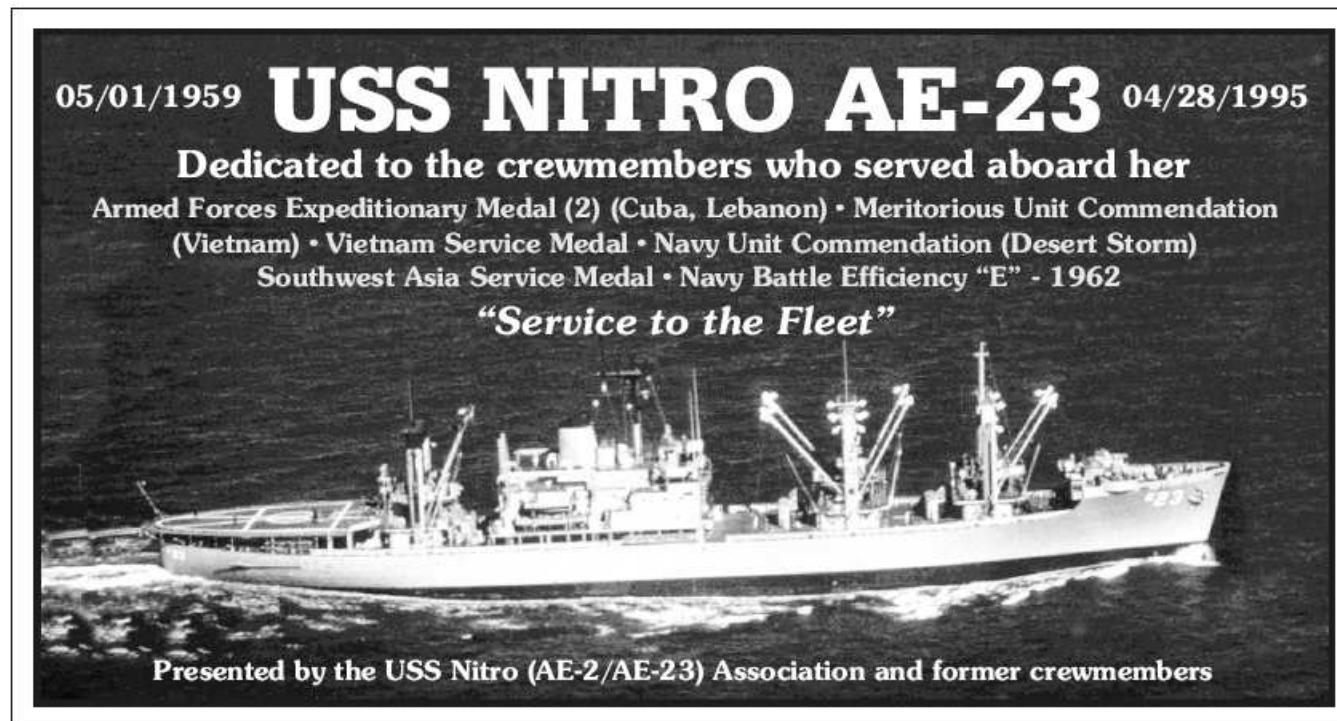
The place for frequent updates on the Nitro reunion, association and other related activities:

<http://www.ussnitro.org>

### USS Nitro Memorial Plaque Final Designs



Plaques' design concept by Robert D. Peiffer



*"Continuing Service to the Fleet"*