

# The SEAWEED

Publication of the  
U.S.S. CHAMPLIN REUNION GROUP

FALL 2007

## 13 questions for Jack Brawdy

### Where were you born?

I was born in Denver, Colorado. My parents honeymooned in Colorado and liked it so much they stayed there. I'm the oldest of four kids. Later we had a tragedy in the family: one of my mother's brothers was killed. We all went back to Pennsylvania for the funeral and stayed. I grew up in South Park, PA, about ten miles south of Pittsburgh.

I spent four years in a Carmelite Missionary Seminary. But I dropped out: The girls who came to watch us play on the athletic field looked much too good... much too good for me to be a seminarian.

### Why did you choose the Navy?

My younger brother joined the army and came home from basic training wearing a uniform with a shirt and a neck tie—and he didn't like it at all. I joined the Navy because I wanted to wear comfortable clothes.

### Boot camp?

Newport, RI, for about nine weeks. There they decided, for some reason, I had some aptitude for working with tools and shipped me off to torpedo men's school for 16 weeks of training.

### When did you board the Champlin?

From torpedo school they sent me to Pier 92 in New York City where I spent three or four days; me and another man; he was a TM2c I was a TM

striker. One day they sent us to pier 42 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It was winter and they loaded us in the back of a pick up truck; it was so cold our eyes and our teeth ached. I've never been colder. We reached the Champlin and boarded her—next day we sailed on our first trip to Casa Blanca. All totaled we crossed the Atlantic 15 or 17 times while I was aboard, that included crossings to Ireland and Wales.

### Where did you bunk on the Champlin?

The after portion, way down below decks.

### What was your biggest adjustment to living aboard ship?

The times when you got really sea sick. You had to learn to ignore it and do your work.

### Where were you stationed?

We were on deck most of the time taking care of the torpedoes and torpedo mounts. We also took care of the depth charges. There were depth charge stations port, starboard and on the fan tail.

### What is your most vivid Champlin recollection?

Chasing the U Boat; bringing it to the surface; firing on it; ramming it and the loss of our skipper. That was a dramatic, emotional experience.

### How long were you stationed on the Champlin?

About a year and a half. While the Champlin was in the Navy yard being

repaired, after ramming the sub, the Navy sent me to advanced torpedo school at Bremerton, WA. Then I was assigned to a new destroyer, DD 594, the USS Hart. I spent the rest of the war in the Pacific.

### When were you discharged?

1945 in Sampson, NY

### What was the first thing you did as a civilian after being discharged?

Bought the biggest vanilla milkshake I could find.

### Tell us about your life after the Navy?

After about 45 days I took a security job at a plant which printed Chinese currency. But that didn't last long. I went to work for General Motors in Pittsburgh and stayed with them until I retired 31 years later. I've been retired nearly 25 years and pretty soon I'll turn 87. Ruth and I married in 1947 and had four children. We have four grand children and one beautiful great-granddaughter.

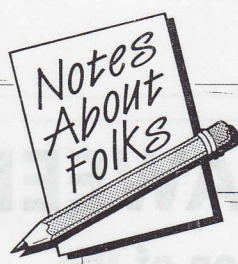
### How important was your Champlin experience?

The time I spent on the Champlin had a profound effect on my life—the camaraderie; the experiences we shared. I tell people, the friends of my Navy days are still the most special friends of my life.

PLAN TO BRING  
A DOOR PRIZE

**SEE YOU IN CHARLESTON OCTOBER 10TH—14TH, 2007**





"YOU  
WON'T  
BE  
HAPPY  
WITH  
MORE,  
UNTIL  
YOU  
ARE  
HAPPY  
WITH  
WHAT  
YOU'VE  
GOT."

"A TRUE  
FRIEND  
IS A  
TREASURED  
GIFT  
THAT  
MAKES  
LIFE  
MORE  
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COINCIDENCE  
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WHEN  
GOD  
WORKS A  
MIRACLE  
AND  
CHOOSES  
TO  
REMAIN  
ANONYMOUS

## GODDARD F. BECK

**Editor's note:** *Nat Lerner took the message below from the USS Champlin website. It appears to be from a son, but efforts to contact the sender were unsuccessful.*

**From :** Lancaster, Pa.

**Comment:** My Dad, Goddard F. Beck remains very proud of his years of service with this great ship, USS Champlin. He continually shares all his memories with all of his seven children and ten grandchildren and one great grandchild. He enjoyed going to the reunions, especially with his friend Paul Day.

He also enjoyed all the newsletters, The Seaweed.

He is doing well and keeps busy. He will be 90 years young on August 27. He would love to hear from any of his shipmates at 1064 Wheatland Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17603.

He lost his wife Dorothy in April, 2007, after 66 years of marriage.  
Signing off for now.



**From George Style**

**Doris DiSanto**

Just a note with a little sad news. I believe most of the crew knows that Caesar DiSanto is in a nursing home in Florida. Caesar is doing ok and has adjusted to being there. The sad news is his wife, Doris, has just passed away; I believe it was in July.

**Senior Olympics**

Now for a little happy news: Every year since 1987 I have entered the Long Island Senior Games. This year I made out fairly well. I won five gold medals—two in bowling, two in table tennis and one in golf. A few years back, I won seven medals taking part in swimming and track and field. Other than that, all is well.

**Charleston Reunion**

As for Charleston, at this point I don't know if I will be there or not. My wife can't fly and it's too long a drive for me. There is still time, so I will wait and see. I may very well be the oldest guy in our crew. At this point I am pushing 91. Hey! Take care! Keep well! And, God bless! /s/ George Styles, CPO ret.

**Editor's update:** Since George wrote, he and Lou Gilbert have gotten together. George and Lou will be carpooling to Charleston together.

**Harry W. Cuthbert Jr.**

It is my sad duty to report my Father-in-law, Harry "Hank" Cuthbert Jr. died on March 22, 2007 after a valiant effort in Beaufort County Hospital. Dad suffered from pulmonary fibrosis and after a bout with a cold he developed pneumonia in his lungs and was unable to recover. His 3 daughters Linda, Betsy and Debbie were at his side tending him for his last week reaffirming to him their love, admiration and thanks for being a great Dad. He was extremely active in his community up until the day he was admitted to the hospital and completed all his duties in those final days, turning over his watch of key projects. He was delivering "meals on wheels" the day he was admitted. Transitioned his chairmanship of the "Friends of the Library" book sale committee to the next in leadership. He wrote the last check due out to the "Thrivant" (Lutheran Church group) recipient the week before he died and passed on the baton to the second on that committee. Joyce, his bride of 60 years left this world in July of 2006. His family will dearly miss his humor, candidness and love. His remembrance in the Seaweed, to the Champlin organization, the memories of which he cherished. Sincerely Richard Bores





## CAPTAIN KANGAROO



*Jack Brawdy found a longer version of this item in another veterans' publication*

Captain Kangaroo passed away in 2004 at age 76, which is odd, because he always looked to me to be 76. His death reminded me of the following story.

Some people have been offended that the actor, Lee Marvin, is buried in a grave alongside three and four-star generals at Arlington National Cemetery. His marker gives his name, rank (Private) and service (USMC). Nothing else. Here's a guy who was only a famous movie star who served his time, why the heck does he rate burial with these guys? Well, following is the amazing answer:

I always liked Lee Marvin, but didn't know the extent of his Marine Corps experiences. In a time when many Hollywood stars served their country in the armed forces often in rear echelon posts where they were carefully protected, only to be trotted out to perform for the cameras in war bond promotions, Lee Marvin was a genuine hero. He won the Navy Cross at Iwo Jima. There is only one higher award, the Medal of Honor. If that is a surprising comment on the true character of the man, he credits his sergeant with an even greater show of bravery.

Dialog from "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson": His guest was Lee Marvin

Johnny said, "Lee I'll bet a lot of people don't know you were a Marine in the initial landing on Iwo Jima and that in that action you earned the Navy Cross and were severely wounded."

Lee: "Yeah. Yeah. I got shot square in the bottom and they gave me the Cross for securing a hot spot about halfway up Suribachi. Bad thing about getting shot up on a mountain is that guys getting shot hauling you down But, Johnny, at Iwo I served under the bravest man I ever knew. We both got the Cross the same day, but what he did for his Cross made mine look cheap in comparison. That dumb guy actually stood up on Red beach and directed his troops~ to move forward and get the hell off the beach. Bullets flying by, with mortar rounds landing everywhere, he stood there the main target of gunfire so that he could get his men to safety He did this on more than one occasion because his men's safety was more important than his own life.

"That Sergeant and I have been lifelong friends. When they brought me off Suribachi we passed the sergeant and he lit a cigarette and passed it to me, lying on my belly on the litter and said. 'Where'd

they get you Lee?' (I said) 'Well Bob ... If you make It home before me, tell Mom to sell the outhouse.'

"Johnny, I'm not lying, Sergeant Keeshan was the bravest man I ever knew. The Sergeant's name is Bob Keeshan. You and the world know him as Captain Kangaroo."

America's real heroes don't flaunt what they did; they quietly go about their day to day lives, doing what they do. But they earned our respect and the freedoms that we all enjoy. Look around and see if you can find one of those heroes in your midst. Often they are the ones you least suspect, but would most like to have on your side if anything ever happened.

Take the time to thank anyone that has fought for our freedom. With encouragement they could be the next Captain Kangaroo.

**YOUR DUES ARE DUE IN SEPTEMBER— MEMBERS \$15.00 includes Seaweed**

**Subscription to Seaweed only \$5.00**

**Make check to: Champlin Reunion Group.**

**Mail to: Norman Prewitt—2049 Eastridge Drive, Excelsior Springs, Mo. 64024-2869.**

**CHAMPLIN OFFICERS:** President: Richard "Dick" Berman (845) 758-1014,

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Editor: Ted Johnson (970) 744-0105,

Website: Gustin: usschamplin.com

**CHAMPLIN REUNION GROUP — CHARLESTON Oct. 10-14, 2007**

We hope you are planning to attend. We have been working with White Star Tours, we need a minimum of 30 attendees, at present we do not have close to that number. We are still working to make this the reunion as published, some adjustments may be necessary, we may need your cooperation. Hope you have mailed your checks!

**"TIME CAN BE  
GIVEN,  
LOST, OR  
REPLACED,  
BUT NEVER  
RETURNED"**



## From the Kitchen table of LOUIS GILBERT

Some of my memories of the Champlin--which may not be entirely accurate, as time may have dulled my memory.

At 17 years of age I enlisted on December 2, 1941. The Japanese, upon learning of the quality of recruits, such as I, decided to strike five days later. They didn't think the Navy could possibly survive, with the likes of me. After three weeks at Newport, Rhode Island, I was on my way to Ireland aboard the U.S.S. Wilkes DD 441. After nine months aboard this ship, which went through serious damages, unrelated to combat, I was transferred as a Fireman 2/C to the Champ, along with Albert Lee Starr, Cox and S1c Parker. We were plank owners, but were not sent to Fore River, but waited for her 1<sup>st</sup> at Fargo, and later at Frazier Barracks in the Boston, Navy Yard.

After serving three months mess cooking on the Wilkes, I wasn't too happy being assigned to compartment cleaning. When it finally ended, I was sent to the after Fire Room under Chief Joe Kratovil and 1c Water Tender Chester Grabowski who became my mentor.

For some reason we N.Y. lads were looked at as wise guys, who couldn't keep our traps shut. "Garbo" taught me when to speak out, and when to shut up. With his and Martin Cover's lessons on civility, I went on to become one of the youngest 1/C petty officers in the Navy. Some of my memories: While in charge of Fire rooms, while two sections were on 48's, I was approached by Lt. Fitzhugh, J.G. Asst. Eng. Officer, and told we were to go into dry-dock in the a.m. My job was to put the ship on an even keel so that it would rest properly. I asked, "How"? I was shown #'s on the bow & Fan tail water lines and told to pump oil as necessary to accomplish this. With great ingenuity I hooked up shore steam of only 80lbs pressure, and was pumping oil at a very slow rate, from forward to aft, with hoses I had rigged. I was due to go on my own 48 at 8:00 am the next day. I was up all night, and at 8:00 a.m. had made very little headway. When Lt. Simmons Senior Eng. Officer returned from his own 48 and asked, "What the hell was I doing?" When I informed him, he laughed and told me neither Fitz or myself were very well informed. The ship is balanced by a crane laying heavy lead weights on the high end until balanced. "Go get cleaned up and go on your liberty."

I recall no one had a very high opinion of Fitzhugh, but I shall always remember Fitz, George Styles and Bos'n Powell, with ropes tied to them, trying to haul in survivors in a rough ocean. There is good in everyone. While on the subject of being good, we in the fire room were not responsible for blowing tubes, when the crew

was airing bedding. The order always came from the bridge. We took a lot of flak over that.

Another strong memory was being tied up to the Sea wall at Mers EI Kabir, near Oran, the day President Roosevelt died. The P.A. announced it while we were swimming nude. They played taps while we stood at attention that way.

Though I can't remember the date, while in the middle of Atlantic where subs were sinking one of our convoy regularly, we lost our fires, our steam, and our generator power. The forward fire room had lost its fire because of water in the oil. Some great brain decided to open connecting valves to the after tanks. Problem was they didn't shut down the forward pump and it had greater pressure than the aft. Result, bad oil put out the fires aft. There we sat dead in the water for about an hour, while we hand pumped good oil into the boiler till we got enough steam to run the steam pump, and eventually enough to start the generators. Talk about luck, no subs found us.

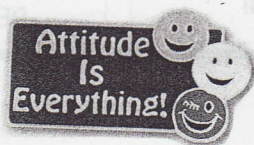
There are probably many other sea stories to relate, but I'm sure they've been kicked around before and don't come to mind right now.

I would like to add though, that discipline at times may have seemed chicken poop. I never found it to be bad enough to make me miserable. All of my memories are of great shipmates and officers. Walter Tempinski was a very good friend of mine. He was huge, and muscular, but he didn't have a mean bone in his body. Likewise Rollie Hollinsworth was a great outgoing guy. I only had one fight while aboard the Champlin and I don't even want to relate it. We were a fine ship, and a great crew who always attacked any assignment we were given.

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## FROM THE TIN CAN SAILOR

We have word from the USS Laffey in Mt. Pleasant, SC, "The Ship That Wouldn't Die", that they hosted a working party made up of folks from the Laffey Association for a week starting on 14 April. It was a live aboard experience for them and while on board the members prepared the after superstructure and after mast for painting. They also prepped and painted several areas back aft. They were also able to do some hot work on the port side breakwater and did waterway combing removals. They continued painting the bos'n locker, radio room passageway doors and began work on the renovation of the mess decks. As usual, the work that was performed was of the highest quality, and was indispensable to the overall maintenance effort on this critical member of our naval and maritime museum. The Laffey Association continues to prove its love for the ship and their fellow crew members and set a standard for cooperation, devotion and dedication by a ship's veterans association. The are shipmates of the highest order.





From Seaweed Archives: Spring 2000

## Wake Island Bombardment

*The following entries are from the diary of Richard I. Berman and cover the period July 29, 1945 to August 8, 1945.*

July 29. Sunday. At sea. Passed the International Date line today so we skipped Saturday. Sea calm as usual, very hot and sunny.

July 30. Monday. At sea. Refueled from USS Pennsylvania about 1330. Yesterday we were plane-crash party for carrier. Also had sea-mail duty.

July 31. Tuesday. At sea. Tomorrow we strike at Wake Island. The Pennsylvania will begin bombarding at approximately 0730. If they return fire, we three destroyers will try to knock out their shore batteries. The carrier's planes have a water distilling plant as their target.

August 1. Wednesday. At sea. Approximately 0545 we sighted Wake Island. About 0600 the carrier's planes opened their attack; at 0630 we went to GQ. The Pennsylvania commenced firing at 0700 to 0730. She knocked out two eight inch shore batteries. At 1000 we went in ourselves to keep the island under fire while the Pennsylvania and two cans went around the other side of the island. We fired till 1230. The Japanese return fire was very little and ineffective at times, although two shells hit about 200 yards off our port beam. The battlewagon also had a few close ones. One of the carrier's planes was damaged by AA fire and returned to the carrier. At 1230 the Pennsylvania and the two cans returned to lay down another barrage. The planes also attacked the island twice, again in the afternoon. As a whole the enemy didn't want to return our fire. We secured at 1430 to continue on our course. The attack was considered fairly effective and successful. The island is barren and desolate with no vegetation at all visible. The Ordranax came alongside at 1600 to take our mail off. The Pennsylvania lost one of her planes. It cracked up while landing.

August 2. Thursday. At sea. Proceeding to Saipan with Pennsylvania and two other cans. The carrier and two flush-deckers left us last night to return to Pearl Harbor. There is no sun today and some heavy swells, and inconsistent rain.

August 3. Friday. At sea. Still having rain and swells.

Payday today, paid off a few small debts and won \$10 in a poker game.

August 4:--Saturday. At sea Sunny today. At 1400

we had a GQ, sighted an unidentified ship which turned out to be a liberty ship. Secured about 1430. Expect to arrive Saipan tomorrow afternoon.

August 5. Sunday. At sea - nice and sunny today. Had GQ at 1000 for AA fire. Knocked down five sleeves. Arrived Saipan at 1500, anchored out. Had a condition watch all night. Received mail.

August 6. Monday. Saipan - received fuel and ammunition in the afternoon. The projectiles came at night, but we didn't take them as we were under-way when they came about 1900. Rendezvous with a convoy about 2230.

August 7. Tuesday. At sea - our convoy consists of four LCIs, two LSTs and four liberty ships. The escorts are three cans and one DE, our convoy speed is six knots to Okinawa. GQ at 1530 for firing.

August 8. Wednesday. At sea - convoy increased speed to nine knots. GQ at 1500 for more firing. Sunny and very hot again, little rain at night. Expect to arrive Okinawa the 12th.

**EDNote:** Aug 1, the near miss shook the pin in the station holding the hatch of the ammo locker, and it fell on Norm Prewitt's foot as his foot was extended slightly over the opening. Broke twelve bones in the foot. When anchored at Okinawa Doc Faaland took him over to the Pennsylvania for xrays. 2 hours after they left, the Pennsylvania was hit in the sick bay.

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### **NEEDED!**

#### **Up-to-date E-mail Addresses**

Nosing for news for the Fall issue of *The Seaweed*, the editor recently sent out a series of e-mails to the e-mail addresses listed on the latest Champlin Reunion Group Roster. Eleven of them were returned as undeliverable! That was about one-third of them.

Please send your latest e-mail address to me, Ted Johnson and Norm Prewitt. Norm produces the Reunion Roster. Here are our current e-mail addresses:

Ted: WriteTLJ@comcast.net  
Norman: LilBitPBP@aol.com

Please—Do It Now!

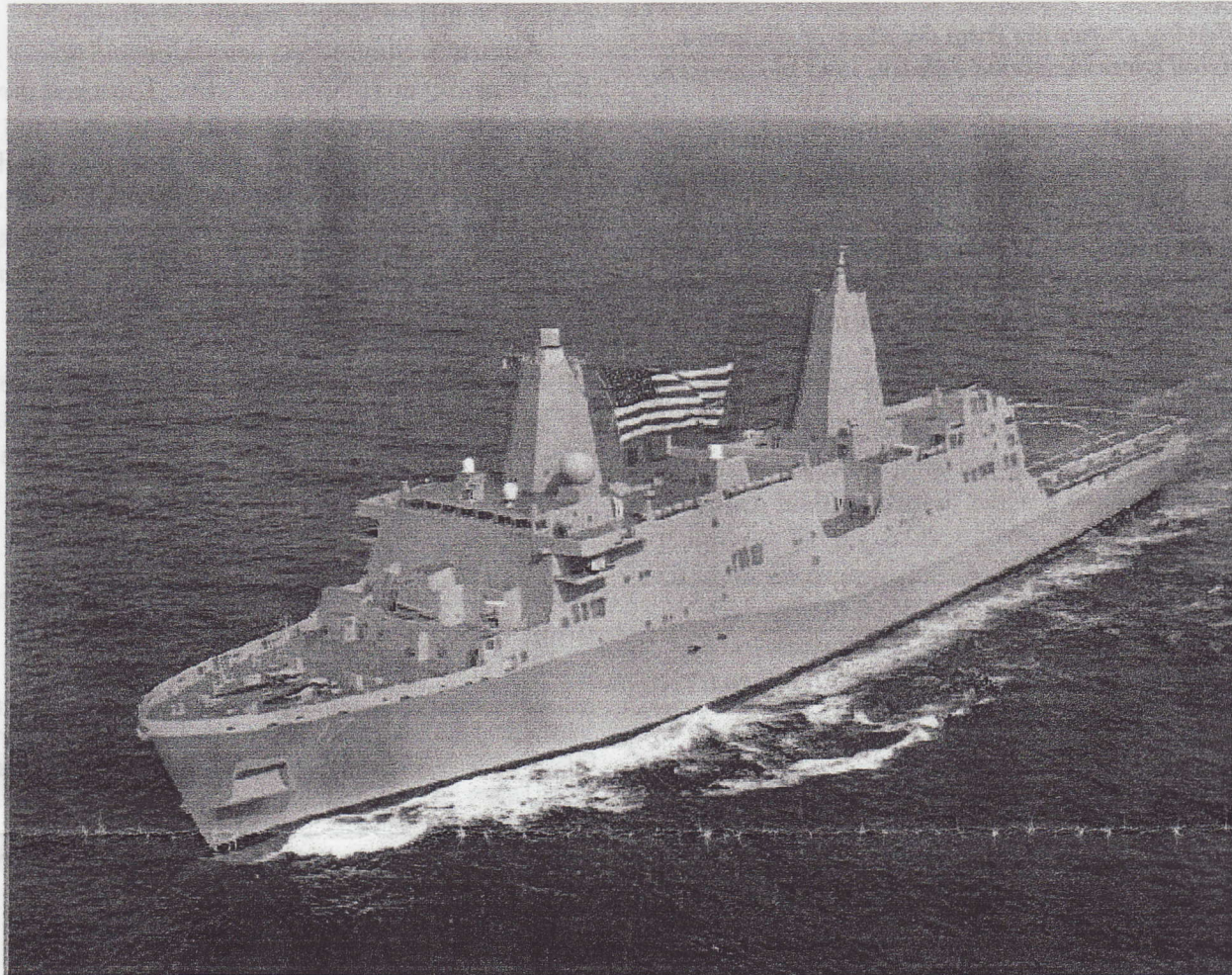
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"The truest happiness is found in making others happy."

**DOOR PRIZE  
BRING ONE!**

Here SHE is, the USS New York, made from the World Trade Center!



### *USS New York*

*It was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Center.*

*It is the fifth in a new class of warship - designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat-ready Marines to be delivered ashore by helicopters and assault craft.*

*Steel from the World Trade Center was melted down in a foundry in Amite, LA to cast the ship's bow section. When it was poured into the molds on Sept 9, 2003, "those big rough steelworkers treated it with total reverence," recalled Navy Capt. Kevin Wensing, who was there. "It was a spiritual moment for everybody there."*

*Junior Chavers, foundry operations manager, said that when the trade center steel first arrived, he touched it with his hand and the "hair on my neck stood up." "It had a big meaning to it for all of us," he said. "They knocked us down. They can't keep us down. We're going to be back."*

*The ship's motto? "Never Forget"*

PLEASE PLAN TO BRING A DOOR PRIZE

**ATTENTION!! Please read . . .**

**Notice this form or one like it, with payment must arrive in Excelsior by September 5th as WHITE TOURS CHECK MUST BE MAILED BY SEPTEMBER 8th**

*SPECIAL ATTENTION: Because of the lack of attendees there may have to be some adjustments made in our tours. This is still a work in progress, but we wanted to make sure that you are aware of this problem. Gather your friends and join us, the more the merrier!*



**CHAMPLIN REUNION OCTOBER 10-14, 2007**

*Please read the attached sheet on both sides to see what is contained in the package.*

**The cost for the five days and 4 night package is \$379.00 per person.**

**You WILL NOT make your reservation with the hotel.**

**This will be handled by White Star Tours.**

**We realize that this is different from the way things have been done before, but we ask that you cooperate with us to make this a wonderful experience for all.**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM**

**Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse /Guest \_\_\_\_\_**

**Address \_\_\_\_\_**

**Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ e:mail \_\_\_\_\_**

**Room: Double Beds \_\_\_\_\_ King \_\_\_\_\_**

**Do you need a handicap room? \_\_\_\_\_**

**Make your check to: Champlin Reunion Group - \$379.00 per - \$758.00 for two**

**Mail your check to: Norman Prewitt**

**2049 Eastridge Drive  
Excelsior Springs, MO. 64024**

DOOR PRIZES ARE FUN  
PLAN TO BRING ONE

**Checks must be to Norman by September 5th, 2007. Full payment to be paid to White Star Tours. They will then complete the reservations with the hotel.**

**White Star is who the LaQuinta Riverview Hotel will be working with assigning rooms**

**We realize this is different, but please, we ask that you work with us, as we will work with you when you host a reunion.**

**Questions: Norman or Phyllis 816-630-7272**

**This is a package deal—\$379.00—5 days 4 nights**

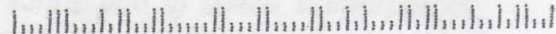
**Becky 410-674-2217**

DOOR PRIZE  
BRING ONE!



**SEAWEED**

1760983121 0097



This isn't a Navy story, but thought it interesting enough to share:

Subject: Read this... Bet he feels stupid now

Check this out... Luke AFB is west of Phoenix and is rapidly being surrounded by civilization that complains about the noise from the base and its planes, forgetting that it was there long before they were. Apparently, an individual who lives somewhere near Luke Air Force Base wrote the local paper complaining about a group of F-16s that disturbed his/her day at the mall. When that individual read the response from a Luke AFB officer, it must have stung quite a bit.

The complaint:

"Question of the day for Luke Air Force Base: Whom do we thank for the morning air show? Last Wednesday, at precisely 9:11 a.m., a tight formation of four F-16 jets made a low pass over Arrowhead Mall, continuing west over Bell Road at approximately 500 feet. Imagine our good fortune! Do the Tom Cruise-wannabes feel we need this wake-up call, or were they trying to impress the cashiers at Mervyns early bird special? Any response would be appreciated."

The response:

Regarding "A wake-up call from Luke's jets" (Letters, Thursday): On June 15, at precisely 9:12 a.m., a perfectly timed four-ship flyby of F-16s from the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Luke Air Force Base flew over the grave of Capt. Jeremy Fresques. Capt. Fresques was an Air Force officer who was previously stationed at Luke Air Force Base and was killed in Iraq on May 30, Memorial Day. At 9 a.m. on June 15, his family and friends gathered at Sunland Memorial Park in Sun City to mourn the loss of a husband, son and friend. Based on the letter writer's recount of the flyby, and because of the jet noise, I'm sure you didn't hear the 21-gun salute, the playing of taps, or my words to the widow and parents of Capt. Fresques as I gave them their son's flag on behalf of the President of the United States and all those veterans and servicemen and women who understand the sacrifices they have endured. A four-ship flyby is a display of respect the Air Force pays to those who give their lives in defense of freedom. We are professional aviators and take our jobs seriously, and on June 15 what the letter writer witnessed was four officers lining up to pay their ultimate respects. The letter writer asks, "Whom do we thank for the morning air show?" The 56th Fighter Wing will call for you, and forward your thanks to the widow and parents of Capt. Fresques, and thank them for you, for it was in their honor that my pilots flew the most honorable formation of their lives.

