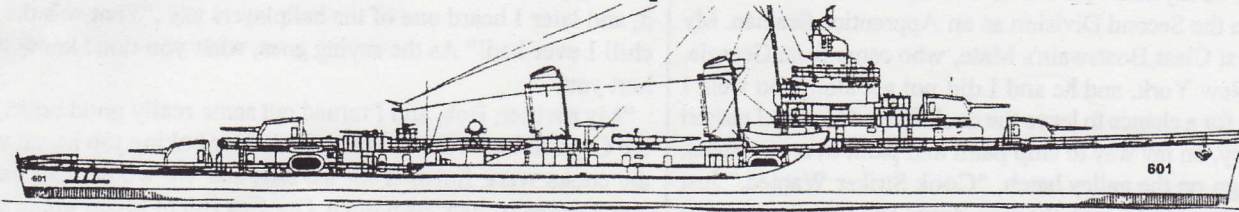


# USS Champlin DD-601



Page 1

skivywaver@myrealbox.com

## THE SEAWEED

626 East Bluff Drive, Penn Yan, NY 14527-8924

Summer 2004

www.usschamplin.com

### LAST CHANCE !!

Time is running out to make your reservations for the 2004 Champlin Reunion to be held 29 September - 3 October, 2004 at Buffalo, NY in the Adam's Mark Hotel, 120 Church Street, Buffalo, NY 14202. The hotel is located downtown and has a great rate: \$77.00 per night plus 13.25% tax equals \$87.20. Self-parking fee is \$5.25 daily with in and out privileges. The \$77.00 rate will be honored for those wishing to arrive one day early and staying after the reunion for two additional nights. Reservation cutoff date is 29 August, 2004 at the \$77.00 rate, after that date, on a space available basis at the high contract rate or rate available at that time. To reserve call 1-716-845-5100, ask for "Reservations" and identify yourself as part of the USS Champlin DD601 Reunion Group. The hotel will provide a reservation number for your records. Do it now!

### ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the USS Champlin Reunion Group will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel on **Saturday, 2 October, 2004** at 10:00 a.m. in a room to be announced. The agenda will include election of officers to serve three-year terms as President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Historian. Also of interest will be the selection of the site for the 2005 Reunion, expected to be held in the Washington DC area.

### SHIP'S PLAQUE FUND DRIVE

Dick Berman reports that "The fund drive is essentially completed as of 6 August 2004. We have exceeded the goal. The generosity of shipmates was overwhelming and very gratifying as well. To each of you, thank you - thank you. I have moved forward to secure a premium eye-level spot on the wall with a deposit on the plaque. Additionally, the plaque is now in the design stage with information I furnished, photos, etc. All of this, of course, is subject to approval at the upcoming reunion meeting and can be changed in any way desired. I am bringing with me two design drafts for our commentary and discussion.

Again, to one and all of the contributors - thank you - thank you. See you all in Buffalo. If you haven't signed up yet. . . **DO IT NOW!**

Contributors to the Plaque Fund drive include: **Allen**, Elsie

(honoring husband Robert W.); **Anastasion**, Steven N.; **Baughan**, Robert L., Jr.; **Berman**, Richard I.; **Black**, Joseph W.; **Carpenter**, Max W.; **Cole**, Howard R.; **Craig**, James G. Jr.; **Cruthers**, Gerald M.; **Day**, Mary Jane (honoring husband Paul E.); **Ecklund**, Glenn E.; **Estes**, Gerald L.; **Finch**, James D.; **Gilbert**, Louis; **Glass**, Norman R., Jr., (honoring father Norman R., Sr.); **Haskell**, John W.; **Hayes**, Charles J.; **Higgins**, Doris A. (honoring husband Donald G.); **Horjus**, Marvin J.; **Hotard**, Sidney J.; **Knowlton**, Archa O.; **Koster**, Francis C.; **Krajcik**, Stephen; **Lerner**, Nathan R.; **Levin**, Marvin J.; **Lipfert**, Gloria (honoring husband Ralph G.); **Maitre**, Robert J.; **McPherson**, Rose Mary and Trudy (honoring husband & father Truman); **Medvedef**, Harold; **Meehan**, Charles P.; **Mitchell**, Eugene E.; **Morton**, Thomas W.; **Murbach**, Warren J.; **Olson**, Carl H.; **Palen**, Edward P.; **Prager**, Adolph; **Ragusa**, Joseph A.; **Rarick**, Robert O.; **Reidy**, James T.; **Robertson**, James R.; **Ropog**, Mrs. James (honoring husband James S.); **Roseman**, Richard; **Russell**, Virginia Rendell (honoring husband John); **Styles**, George H.; **Suter**, Lawrence J.; **Unkuski**, Walter; **Valentine**, Richard J.; **Weber**, Fred H.; **Williams**, Richard A.; and **Wright**, Victor B.

### SECRETS OF A NAVY COOK

George Styles writes in his *Secrets Of A Navy Cook*, "Before enlisting in the U. S. Navy I worked in a machine shop, so I had only a little knowledge of cooking. This I learned while in the Civilian Conservation Corps, where I cooked for two Army Officers and six Forest Rangers. I only had to cook breakfast for them, so I got pretty good at cooking bacon and eggs. That was way back in 1935.

"I enlisted in the Navy in September 1942, after World War II broke out. I was sent to Newport, Rhode Island, for my boot camp training. My first taste of Navy chow came on a day to remember. I stood in line with my new haircut and still in civilian clothes, along with all of the other new boots. Our first meal was breakfast, which consisted of half a grapefruit, which I think had been cut with a meat cleaver, oatmeal so thick we could have used the meat cleaver to cut it, and coffee strong enough to curl you hair—if you had any left.

"After six weeks of boot camp training, I was sent to Casco, Maine, to wait for my ship. She entered Casco Bay about two weeks later. It was the USS Champlin DD601, a Benson Class destroyer,



and she was to be my home for the next two years.

"I was put in the Second Division as an Apprentice Seaman. My boss was a First Class Boatswain's Mate, who came from Georgia. I came from New York, and he and I did not get along too well. I began looking for a chance to leave the deck force. One day I passed the ship's galley, on my way to chip paint and paint over rust spots, and I saw a sign on the galley hatch, "Cook Striker Wanted." Just what I was looking for! I took the sign down and saw the Chief in charge. I got the job as Cook Striker, and so began my career as a Navy Cook.

"Frying eggs in the CCC was snap compared to frying eggs on a pitching and rolling destroyer. It took a while to learn how to keep the eggs from slipping off a grill, but it can be done, believe me. After a few months as a cook, the Chief asked me to try my hand at baking. So I, along with my good friend Bob LaVorgna, took on the job as the ship's bakers. Bob had gone to a Navy Baking School.

"The galley in the Champlin did not have any machines for mixing dough, so all of the dough was mixed by hand, in a stainless steel sink. Each night we had to bake 108 loaves of bread, along with cookies, pies, and cakes, or whatever the Chief had on the menu. The galley also had no proof box in which to let the dough rise, so we had to let it rise on top of the range. There were many nights when we had the dough all ready to go into the oven, but the ship would run into some rough seas. The pounding of the waves would make the dough fall, and that meant only one thing—start all over again.

"I continued to cook as well as bake. At one point, we were in the Boston Navy Yard and the Chief, who had the weekend off, asked me to prepare Navy beans for breakfast. I put all the ingredients in the copper, so they could simmer overnight, and went to a movie in the Navy yard. I had however turned the steam up too high, and as a result the water had boiled away and the beans were hard and tiny, like BBs. It was too late to start over, so in the morning the crew was served bacon and eggs.

"One of the very best things about being a cook on the ship was the food the cooks got for their own meals. We ate better than anyone on the ship, officers included, because when the food was brought to the galley we picked out the best of everything for ourselves—steaks, chops, everything. Once I noticed that the same men used to show up among the first in the chow line almost every day, and originally I thought they were just chow hounds. But I soon learned the reason they wanted to be in or near the front of the line. There were many times we would run out of the main course—steaks, chicken, whatever the main course was—and then would break out the canned Spam. If ever a cook ate Spam as part of his meal, it was because he liked it!

"We kept it quiet that we were picking out the best food for ourselves, and sometimes there were other things we also kept quiet about. One day when we were in port in Oran, Algeria, I made chili for the crew and it turned out pretty good, if I say so myself. One of the messcooks told me the entire crew had been fed after the chowline had dwindled to nothing, and he had been ordered to secure the chowline. He was told to get rid of any chili that was left, which he did by dumping it into a G.I. can. As soon as that was done, I was reminded that the softball team was still ashore playing another team. I told the messcook to pour the chili back into a

servicing pan, and put the pan back on the line. He did, we served it, and later I heard one of the ballplayers say, "That was the best chili I ever had!" As the saying goes, what you don't know won't hurt you.

"My partner, Bob, and I turned out some really good bread, and the Captain had a special taste for it. Our baking job began when the cooks were finished for the day, and we would start baking about seven o'clock each night. Our first run of bread would come out of the ovens in the early hours of the morning. As soon as the first loaves came out of the oven, I would have to cut off both ends of a hot loaf, butter each end, and send it, with hot coffee, for the Captain. Our first Captain was Charles Melson, who later became Rear Admiral and Superintendent of the Naval Academy.

"Our Commissary Chief, Clyde Bain, was the best. There would be times when we would be at sea for months. We would run short of food, and have to cut down to two meals a day. Chief Bain would really make up for it when we got back to port. He would load the menu with plenty of steaks, chops, and roast beef, and always plenty of milk and ice cream.

"Being a cook did not excuse you from taking part in the action.

When general quarters sounded I raced to my battle station, which was Number Three 5" 38 Gun Mount. I was hot shell man in the turret, meaning it was my job to get the spent powder cans out of the mount as fast as these came out of the breech of the gun.

One day we were off the shore of Anzio, doing rapid fire at the shoreline, and I caught one of the hot shells in my face. There was blood running down my face, but I couldn't seek medical attention until we ceased rapid fire.

"When the war was over in Europe, I was transferred from the Champlin to an Advanced Base Training Camp in Williamsburg, Va. There I learned how to use a field oven, and how to cook in the field. After about a month of this training, I was put aboard a troop ship bound for Okinawa. On our first day at sea we got our chow cards. These cards were different colors, and when your number was called you lined up for chow. When my color was called the first time, I went to the chow line and saw it ran all around the main deck. This wasn't for me! I ran down to the galley, found the Chief in charge and asked if he could use some help in the galley from a cook and baker. I was put right to work, and never had to stand in a chowline on that ship.

"After the war with Japan was over, I had enough points to be aboard one of the first ships bound for the States. She was a cruiser, the Duluth. I remembered the chow cards and long lines on the troop ship, so the first thing I did was to volunteer to work in the galley. Needless to say, my offer was accepted and I never stood in a chowline on the Duluth.

"That was all more than sixty years ago, but I still look back on the good times along with the hard times. I stayed in the Navy for eight years, and then switched over to the U.S. Coast Guard. I retired from the Coast Guard as Chief Commissary Man, with twenty-four years of service.

"On the basis of that long experience, I offer a piece of advice to all new recruits and for any sailor unhappy with his rating: If you like to eat the best food on a ship, and don't like to wait in line, then become a cook or baker."



## GORDON STEVENS

In a letter to Norman Prewitt, Gordon Stevens writes, "Hello Norman Prewitt - Gordon Stevens here. (Enclosed is) My 5 dollars to pay for the Seaweed until the next dues are due.. I often wonder where all the regular navy guys went after the 601 was no more. I suppose they got another tin can and went back to war again. I suppose maybe some of them were lost in action. I went back to lower Michigan, got a job for life, drank a lot of beer, and retired with a nice check. Remember that old fort on top of a hill near Oran. There was a big break water there. One day after supper the door was pushed open and a fellow took a swan dive for freedom but hit the beach and got killed. A nice swan dive that went sour. We need more stories for the Seaweed like this. Be happy. Gordon Stevens. P.S. Just about 80 years old."

## ANZIO - AND WE WERE THERE

The following article is published with the permission of the author shipmate Irwin J. Kappes (aka "Pete") and was taken from the website: [militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/articles/anzio.aspx](http://militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/articles/anzio.aspx) entitled, *Anzio -- The Allies' Greatest Blunder of World War II*

"Much has been written by military analysts about the conceptually faulty OPERATION SHINGLE—the Anzio beachhead in January, 1944. But the story that has been overlooked is the naval aspect of the operation, which was a resounding success.

"On the 50th anniversary of the Anzio landings, the office of the Chief of Naval Operations released a statement reading, in part: "A half-century ago American, British, Dutch and Greek naval forces landed soldiers of the American and British armies on the Italian coast. German resistance was unexpectedly powerful and rapidly increased in strength. For four months the invaders battled foul winter weather, heavy bombing and artillery fire to sustain the Anzio beachhead. Throughout this long struggle on the Italian littoral, our troops were strongly supported by naval gunfire, airpower and a shuttle of ships and craft that braved air and submarine attack to deliver reinforcements. Late in May 1944 the main Allied advance linked up with Anzio's defenders, and Rome was liberated a few days later. In what many consider a land battle, there were a total of 17 ships lost: ten British and seven U.S. Navy. In this action, 166 American sailors were wounded and 160 made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

"Anzio was hard-fought and hard-won. By drawing off troops that could have opposed the main Allied offensive in Italy, the Anzio operation helped tilt the balance in our favor and contributed to the drive that led to the fall of Rome." "Anzio beachhead," naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison later wrote, "should endure in our memories as a symbol of heroic tenacity".

"Imagine the situation: In December 1943 Allied forces had taken the lower third of Italy and were stalled almost midway between Naples and Rome. The well-fortified Gustav Line of German Field Marshal Kesselring was holding against continuous murderous assault from Gen. Mark Clark's 5th Army 60 miles south of Rome. In Allied war rooms, pressure was building for an end run that would draw enough German resources away from the Gustav Line to allow a breakthrough. This would enable a link-up of the two

forces for the final push on the Eternal City. The principal advocate of this bold strategy was Prime Minister Winston Churchill. General Eisenhower had strong misgivings, but as the newly-appointed Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces he was now preoccupied with preparations for OPERATION OVERLORD—the invasion of Normandy. This left British General Sir Henry Wilson in command of the Mediterranean Theater. Wilson did not possess the courage to challenge his headstrong Prime Minister, so despite the doubts of Eisenhower, General Mark Clark and the sacrificial lamb who was put in charge of SHINGLE, U.S. General John P. Lucas, the plan moved into high gear.

"Actually, such a diversion behind the Gustav Line made a lot of sense from a tactical standpoint. But to succeed, a massive force would be required—one that could quickly overwhelm the Germans and prevent their reinforcement until General Clark was able to break through the Gustav Line. But in January of 1944 these forces were simply not available.

"At one time, Eisenhower had approved an earlier version of SHINGLE. It called for Army Rangers to land at Anzio and secure the port. This would have been followed by the dropping of paratroops to seal off the area. It also called for an amphibious assault on Anzio, but only after the Fifth Army breached the Gustav Line and reached a point just north of Frosinone. Intelligence reports had five to six German divisions in the area, while only two divisions (one American, one British) could be mustered for SHINGLE. It took no von Clausewitz to see that the outlook was not auspicious.

"Further, it required at least 44 LSTs (Landing Ship-Tank) to land one division along with all its materiel and equipment. OPERATION OVERLORD, the upcoming Normandy invasion, was the top priority at this time and naval resources were rapidly being shifted away from the Mediterranean to the British Isles. A mere 56 LSTs and the smaller LCIs and some British LSI's were available. (At the last minute, Churchill succeeded in cajoling and threatening the U.S. Naval Command into making 88 LSTs available). In the end, there were barely enough amphibious craft to land the two divisions, but not enough to keep them supplied for a protracted period. Everything depended upon two unlikely events: That the Anzio landing would catch the superior German forces completely by surprise and enable the invaders to quickly consolidate their position and capture the rail lines and highways providing the link to Rome. Secondly, General Clark would in short order breach the Gustav Line and link up with the Anzio forces in the area of Frosinone. It would be one of the riskiest gambles of World War II.

"Nevertheless, just after dawn on 21 January 1944 a motley armada of 240 ships—mostly amphibious landing craft—set sail from the bay of Naples. In peacetime, the receding view of the beautiful bay with a lazily smoking Vesuvius in the distance would have thrilled cruise ship passengers. But the 35,000 infantrymen who were about to be flung into the maw of mortal combat had other concerns. Some attempted nonchalance by avidly playing card games. Others penned what they thought might be their last letters to loved ones. Understandably, the anxiety wasn't nearly as high among the 31,000 British and American sailors. Besides,



many of them had already been through the landings at Sicily and Salerno. None knew exactly where they were headed, but a rehearsal for the landing had left little room for speculation. It had to be somewhere between Naples and Rome, right where German strength was concentrated.

"Overall command of the two Anzio assault forces was under Rear Admiral Frank J. Lowry aboard his flagship U.S.S. BISCAYNE. He also commanded "X-Ray Force" which was made up of about 175 vessels (mostly amphib) escorted by two light cruisers, 12 destroyers, 24 minesweepers and one sub. It landed troops just south of Anzio, at Nettuno. The "Peter Force" landing was five miles north of Anzio and was commanded by Rear Admiral Thomas H. Troubridge of the Royal Navy. It was comprised of four transports and three LSTs, escorted by three cruisers (U.S.S. BROOKLYN, H.M.S. ORION and H.M.S. SPARTAN), eight destroyers, two gunboats, six minesweepers, and four PCs. At first the fleet sailed toward the southwest to throw any lurking German reconnaissance planes off the scent. But at 1740 the order came from Adm. Lowry to "Execute course change to 010". All the debates, strategizing, logistical preparations and rehearsals were culminating in their ineluctable end—the fury and confusion of battle and the stench of cordite and death.

"H"-hour was 0200 and two British LCTs were first to open fire—with five-inch rockets. Three assault waves of LCVPs and LCIs landed troops without incident. So Lowry had achieved his share of the mandate calling for achieving surprise and the rest was up to General Lucas. In fact, surprise was so total that some of the German troops were captured asleep at their posts, despite all the rocket fire and the whining of five-inch shells from offshore destroyers. With the exception of Tinian, no other landing in Europe or the Pacific was initially as successful as that at Anzio. After only 22 hours, Lowry and Rear Admiral Troubridge had landed 36,034 men, 3069 vehicles and 90% of the U.S. VI Corps' assault equipment. Losses were only 13 killed, 44 missing and 97 wounded.

The big problem was re-supplying the forces landed. The captains of the Liberty ships were civilian merchant marine officers and therefore not under direct control of the naval commanders. When cargo arrived at the beachhead "after working hours", they would often refuse to unload it and Navy amphibious craft tied up alongside would simply have to wait. Because of the German shelling that soon erupted, they were also refusing to go in close enough to be unloaded by the Army DUKWs (2 ½-ton 6x6 amphibious craft). Finally, Adm. Lowry was obliged to assume liability for any damage to Liberty ships that might result from enemy attack. The real heroes of Anzio were unquestionably the black soldiers who manned the DUKWs. They braved attack from German shore batteries and from sporadic strafing by enemy fighters—and did so with good-natured courage and élan.

Despite having achieved surprise, Gen. Lucas delayed, feeling that insufficient forces had been landed to make the push inland. This is the major point of contention between historians who continue to debate SHINGLE. Most American strategists at the time felt that Lucas would have been dealt a severe sucker punch. British tacticians on the other hand reasoned that Lucas was lacking in courage and that a more forceful general like Patton or their own

Field Marshal Montgomery would have pushed inland rapidly, encircling the Germans north of the Gustav Line. But while Patton was courageous he was not reckless. His words to Lucas have been reported in nearly every account of the Anzio invasion: "John, there is nobody in the U.S. Army I would less like to see killed than you, but you can't get out of this alive. Of course, you might get wounded and nobody ever blames a wounded general".

In spite of submarines, mines, air raids and artillery fire, there was a steady inflow of supplies. The real reason has often been overlooked. One supply officer who had served with the 7th Fleet in the South Pacific remembered an efficient plan that had been devised there for the unloading of LSTs. It called for driving loaded trucks ashore to storage dumps while the LSTs quickly doubled back with empty trucks from the previous trip. When the method was proposed by American officers it was disapproved by British Adm. Cunningham, by U.S. General Walter Bedell Smith and by Churchill himself. But gutsy American colonels adopted it anyway because it reduced unloading time from 20 hours down to one. Adm. Samuel Eliot Morison concluded in his history of SHINGLE that this insubordinate move alone prevented the invasion from becoming an utter disaster.

The day following the landing, the Germans staged their first all-out attack on the ships in the anchorage. They followed this up by rapidly encircling the beachhead. At one point, they nearly succeeded in cutting it in half. To complicate things further, there was another raging dispute between the British and American leaderships. The egotistical Gen. Mark Clark, having originally opposed an end-run but now eager to go down in history as "The Liberator of Rome", wanted a rapid push north. British Gen. W.R.C. Penney felt that Rome could wait. The important objective now was to capture the German army stationed south of Rome. But the grandstanding Clark prevailed, and the German army escaped north and set up the "Gothic Line". This would have to be dealt with later at great cost. And on their way, the Germans massacred over 300 civilians at the Ardeatine Caves.

World War II was the first war demanding entire fleets of highly-specialized landing craft. Each was designed to accomplish a unique task. There were craft for putting the first wave ashore; craft to fire rockets and lay smoke screens; craft to provide anti-aircraft flak. Most important were the huge craft that were purposely run aground to open their three-story doors and spew forth battle-ready troops and tanks. Among Navy ships, the LSTs, unlovely as they were in appearance, were second only to aircraft carriers among surface ships in their contribution to final victory. To their crewmen, the 88 LSTs that took part in SHINGLE were referred to as "Long Stationary Targets". But despite their vulnerability, only three LSTs and one LCI (Landing Craft-Infantry) were lost in SHINGLE. This is a resounding tribute to the fire support they got from the cruisers and destroyers assigned to keep German artillery and aircraft disoriented.

In many ways, Anzio was much like the Pacific war. There was no rear area that was safe from attack. If you were at Anzio at all, you were in the front lines. No bunker, no ship, was safe. One sailor aboard the U.S.S. TRIPPE described it as a "vision of hell. For four hours we were under continuous attack. The bombers were merciless and the sky was ablaze with shellfire. Hollywood



couldn't have staged it any better except for the terror. And no movie can simulate that".

"One of the more heroic destroyer actions of SHINGLE was staged by the U.S.S. MAYO, under the command of Commander A.D. Kaplan. It was assigned the hazardous task of coming in close ashore to impede the reinforcing of Nazi infantry units. MAYO and other ships of DESRON 7 shelled enemy forces attempting to cross the Mussolini Canal for more than 17 hours. Out of ammunition and on her way back to Naples, a mine blew open a large hole in her starboard side, flooding the after fire and engine rooms and damaging her propeller shaft. A British tug took her under tow for temporary repairs in Naples. But the enemy hadn't seen the last of "The Merry Mayo", as she was known to her crew. She escorted five more convoys to Europe and even took part in the Okinawa operation.

"Typical of the intensity of the naval battle of Anzio was the sinking of the British cruiser SPARTAN on 29 January. She was anchored close to shore when she was hit amidships by a guided missile. Farther out, another missile hit a Liberty ship. A U.S. salvage tug that stood by SPARTAN until she was beyond help went to the aid of the Liberty and was itself badly damaged by the air raid that followed. The Liberty's cargo of fuel and ammunition lit up the sky for over eight hours before she finally exploded in a ferocious pyrotechnic display and slid beneath the Tyrrhenian Sea.

"Several new German weapons made their debuts during SHINGLE. The "Fritz X" guided missile had already been introduced during the Salerno campaign but it was now being used more extensively. This rocket was primarily an anti-ship weapon. In a sense, it was the precursor of today's cruise missile. It had fins so it was designed to glide rather than drop and was radio-controlled from the launching aircraft. Fritz had an armor-piercing warhead with 320 kilograms of amatol, which surrounded a set of central explosive tubes. It had a range of nearly four miles and a speed of 600 mph. But the radio-controlling feature which made it so effective turned out to be its Achilles heel. Its reliability depended on a radio beam, but this could be detected and jammed. The U.S. and British navies quickly equipped three destroyer escorts with jamming devices and the early-warning equipment was so efficient that it could detect the German bombers on the runway just outside of Rome before their takeoff. Then a desperate game of cat-and-mouse ensued, with the bomber pilot trying to keep his glider bomb on target while the destroyermen fought to stay on the beam to direct the bomb away from the target. They weren't always successful. On 23 January a bomb evaded the defenses and hit the British destroyer JANUS. She went down in 20 minutes with the loss of her captain and over 150 men.

"When Fritz proved a dud, the Nazis came up with the midget submarine, steered by one man in a diving suit. The pilot sat astride one torpedo moving along the surface, with a second one slung underneath. When he reached his target and fired it, he could make a wide swing to return to base. The problem was that the craft was underpowered and was usually spotted and destroyed within minutes of firing its first shot.

"While they cannot be said to have been decisive, there were two minor elements that hindered the Anzio operation. The most serious was the nearly constant backbiting between the top-level British and

American commanders. For example, Mark Clark's diary for 16 February 1944 said, "I want to record my definite feelings that Adm. Cunningham [Royal Navy] has been as uncooperative as possible in this SHINGLE operation. Yesterday, Lucas asked for cruiser gunfire support and did not get it. Today he asked again. Admiral Cunningham will give it only if it comes from Lucas through his liaison officer, not honoring my request".

"Curiously, this jealousy and rivalry was entirely absent at lower levels. Lt. Cdr. Martin N. Chamberlain, executive officer of the U.S.S. PARKER reports that "Our squadron was attached to a British command—Flag Officer Western Italy (FOWIT), operating out of Naples. Our assignment was to provide fire support for the Allied troops which were hunkered down in trenches...then to support the British First Army in its advance up the Italian West Coast.

"Operating under British command was quite different but pleasant. They were much more laid back than we and we appreciated the informality. I recall one time being on deck when we were anchored in Naples harbor and watched a local fishing boat approach our gangway. Someone in that boat held up a long pole. The OOD [Officer of the Deck] noticed this, grabbed the pole and removed the paper. It was our orders to get underway and proceed to Anzio. Can you imagine the U.S. Navy doing anything that simple?"

"Of lesser consequence was a factor that constitutes one of the dirty little secrets of World War II. It came into play in nearly every major operation of the war. Generals and admirals not directly involved in an invasion would often appear on the scene uninvited, when there was no longer much physical danger, just to pick up another campaign ribbon or battle star—and to view the action as a spectator from a safe distance. Anzio was no exception. Several generals sailed up from Naples in a party that even included "Wild Bill Donovan", head of the O.S.S., the predecessor of the C.I.A. It is not difficult to imagine what an annoyance such visitors constituted to Adm. Lowry and his staff.

"When Gen. Lucas finally attempted a breakout on 31 January it was beaten back by the six available German divisions. Lucas had predicted that his head would roll in a basket and this proved to be prophetic. He was replaced by his subordinate, Maj. Gen. Lucien Truscott. But Truscott wasn't able to work a miracle either. Three months later, he finally broke out just as the Gustav Line was being breached. And two days after that, he made contact with Mark Clark's forces. So in the end, SHINGLE had accomplished little except to serve as a diversionary tactic. However, at long last the push toward Rome was on.

"But at least the Germans were not permitted to withdraw gracefully. Enemy encampments north of Anzio at Practica di Mare were mercilessly pounded by five plucky U.S. destroyers, CHAMPLIN, KEARNY, KENDRICK, MACKENZIE and PARKER. With shore fire-control parties providing coordinates, they rained an incessant barrage of 5-inch rounds on Nazi guns, tanks and troops, giving the enemy no opportunity to either retreat or respond. Each shell was 70 pounds of steel and explosive traveling at 3000 feet per second. Lieutenant Steve Anastasion's matter-of-fact entry in CHAMPLIN's log of 2 June tells the story: "1721: Completed firing shore bombardment having expended



"Assigned to evening patrol about four miles offshore in an area believed to be mine-free, the night was uneventful. But at daybreak, CHAMPLIN's lookouts spotted three mines in rapid succession. Each was dispatched by rifle fire, leaving the crew pondering the big "what if" question.

"Even after 53 years, the words, "Red Anzio" are indelibly stamped on the minds of the surviving British and American sailors who participated in the ill-starred Anzio operation. These were the code words signifying a call for all gunners, fire-controlmen and ammunition handlers to man their battle stations. "Red Anzio", the cautionary "Yellow Anzio" and "White Anzio" (all clear) were alternately piped dozens of times each day aboard the scores of ships anchored in and patrolling the small harbor of Anzio-Nettuno between the invasion date of 22 January and 24 May 1944 when the operation officially ended.

"One day aboard the U.S.S. CHAMPLIN, "Red Anzio" was piped five times within a two-hour period. It is difficult to imagine the strain and terror of the call to battle stations. What really shattered the nerves of the sailors at Anzio beachhead was the fact that "Red Anzio", "Yellow Anzio", and "White Anzio" were often sounded in rapid succession, providing little opportunity for sleep or even getting a bite to eat. Still, they got periodic respite through R&R—sometimes even at fashionable Capri. Toward the end of SHINGLE the atmosphere became so relaxed that the CHAMPLIN's popular Recreation Officer, Ensign Norman Glass, was able to organize a swimming party for the crew off the ship's fantail during an extended period of "White Anzio".

"Was a great strategic opportunity lost between 22 January and 1 February 1944? Did nearly 5000 British and American soldiers and sailors die a needless death because of an ill-conceived strategy? How could a nearly flawless naval effort have been allowed to turn into a near-rout on the ground? These are questions that are still being debated after more than a half century. British historians such as Wynford Vaughn-Thomas, author of "Anzio" insist that the area north of Anzio was lightly defended and could easily have been overwhelmed by a swift inland drive. But Field Marshal Kesselring's memoirs (*Bis zum Letzen Soldat*) give the lie to these claims. According to his postwar account, the Germans had sufficient reserves in the area to turn any northward offensive into a massacre. One thing is not in doubt. Those who were there would never be able to forget the sheer terror inspired by that feared and angst-ridden command, "Red Anzio, Red Anzio".

#### SUGGESTED READING:

"Anzio. Edge of Disaster" by William L. Allen

"Anzio. Epic of Bravery" by Fred Sheehan

"Anzio 1944. An Unexpected Fury" by Peter Verney

"Bis Zum Letzen Soldat", the memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring  
Written by Irwin J. Kappes

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### THE RETURN OF THE DREADNOUGHT

Readers of the Seaweed will recall an article in the Winter 2004 issue describing what The Seaweed could learn about destroyers of

the future, describe therein as the DDX class. I recently found the following article on the Internet which describes some of the armament to be installed.:

"Nearly a hundred years ago the British Royal Navy launched a revolutionary warship, HMS Dreadnought. The was the first "all big-gun" capital ship powered by steam turbines and her advent made all other battleships, including older vessels of the Royal Navy itself, instantly obsolete. She was the expression of the almost abstract idea of sea control. Because vessels of her class could theoretically sweep the enemy battle fleet from the oceans and fall upon commerce, their mere existence would deny the use of the oceans to the enemy unless a rival fleet could sink them.

"In one of the great ironies of history classic sea control passed from Britannia to the United States during the Second World War. For nearly sixty years vessels have plied the great waters at the sufferance and under the guaranty of the USN. Yet even as the USN attained supremacy of the deep ocean, the Blue Water, the character of its principal enemies changed from rival great powers to teeming nests of terrorists in the deep hinterland. To this enemy ashore, indifferent to maritime commerce and sheltering behind civilian populations, the Blue Water navies held no terrors. Two hundred and forty one Marines were blown up in their barracks right under the huge guns of the USS New Jersey and there wasn't a damn thing the Navy could do about it. Colin Powell recalls: 'I was developing a strong distaste for the antiseptic phrases coined by State Department officials for foreign interventions which usually had bloody consequences for the military, words like "presence," "symbol," "signal," "option on the table," "establishment of credibility." Their use was fine if beneath them lay a solid mission. But too often these words were used to give the appearance of clarity to mud'.

"On August 29, before the airport truck bombing, two Marines had been killed by Muslim mortar fire; on September 3, two more, and on October 16, two more. Against Weinberger's protest, McFarlane, now in Beirut, persuaded the President to have the battleship U.S.S. New Jersey start hurling 16-inch shells into the mountains above Beirut, in World War II style, as if we were softening up the beaches on some Pacific atoll prior to an invasion. What we tend to overlook in such situations is that other people will react much as we would. When the shells started falling on the Shiites, they assumed the American "referee" had taken sides against them. And since they could not reach the battleship, they found a more vulnerable target, the exposed Marines at the airport.

"Although Powell had hoped America would never again stick "its hand into a thousand year-old hornet's nest" Beirut was to prove the rule, rather than the exception in the coming decades. The new enemy facing America did not have to cross the ocean in fleets to kill thousands. They got visas, flew over the Navy in commercial flights and crashed wide-body airliners into skyscrapers. The Navy could no longer remain serene on the Blue Water. It would have to wade ashore to exterminate the enemy in his own nest.

"Suddenly, the inshore water or Brown Water became as important as the great ocean highways. The control of that became



debatable. Asian countries worried about the vulnerability of their lifeline through the Straits of Malacca, bounded on either side by two Muslim majority countries. A Navy which had never come close to losing a major surface combatant since the close of the Second World War nearly lost the Burke-class superdestroyer USS Cole while docked in Aden. Yet this was but a harbinger of a worse fear: ever since the September 11 attacks the threat of a nuclear detonation aboard a ship docking at an American port became a recurring nightmare.

"The US Navy responded by reinventing itself as both an inshore defense and power projection force. All ships approaching the United States, whether merchantmen, smallcraft or men-of-war would be tracked and boarded if necessary. Sensors would be sown on the seabeds. Long endurance airborne sensors would throw an aegis over American approaches. That was the shield. For a sword, the Navy envisioned basing expeditionary logistics at sea in anticipation that America would take the fight right to enemy doorstep. To provide immediate fire support to relatively small groups of soldiers and Marines maneuvering in the enemy heartland the Navy literally needed to create a terrestrial equivalent of the early 20th century concept of sea control.

"The notional problem was to project the fleet's firepower hundreds of miles inland on a 24x7 basis and to make it available at a few minute's notice. Part of the solution was to bring extra-long range manned and unmanned aerial strike assets into the Navy's inventory. The other was to reinvent, almost exactly a century later, the 21st century equivalent of the HMS Dreadnought. The electromagnetic rail gun which is being developed for employment in the Navy's next class of destroyers, the DDX, allows the entire ship's power output to be directed into an acceleration device which will shoot a projectile at anywhere from Mach 7 to Mach 16 clear out of the earth's atmosphere onto targets hundreds of miles away. They will be devastating.

"To put things in perspective, our current 5-inch gun has a muzzle energy of 10 megajoules. ... In contrast, naval rail guns will achieve muzzle energies from 60 to 300 megajoules. ... Research indicates that a notional first-generation naval rail gun could deliver a guided projectile with an impact velocity of Mach 5 to targets at ranges of 250 miles at a rate of greater than six rounds per minute. An important advantage of rail guns is the ability to exploit the high kinetic energy stored in the projectile ... One test demonstrated that the release of the rail gun projectile's kinetic energy alone would create a 10-foot crater, 10 feet deep in solid ground, and achieve projectile penetration to 40 feet.

"Since the shells will be solid darts, a destroyer will carry 10,000 rounds in its current magazine space, without ever again facing the danger of a powder explosion. The DDX, in common with the other new generation USN vessels, will be all-electric warships running an Integrated Power System (IPS) that will enable the ships captain to transfer the entire energy output of the vessel at need, to defensive lasers, propulsion or to offensive darts which will eventually range out to thousands of miles. If the new carriers (CVX) will provide the remote sensors, the manned and unmanned attack aircraft to range over the enemy, the new dreadnoughts can provide a rain of kinetic darts. Unlike aircraft which must be held ready on deck or prepared for flight, the rail guns can fire at very short notice.

"A first-order analysis comparing the 200-mile volume of fires capability of a single hypersonic naval rail gun to the ordnance delivery capacity of a carrier air wing of F/A-18s is instructive. In the first eight hours of conflict, a single naval rail gun could deliver twice the payload, three times the energy, to ten times as many fixed aim points as carrier aviation.

"Yet like the Dreadnought of 1906, the technology will remain lifeless unless harnessed to a valid theory. Absent a conception of victory, it will remain the mere "presence," "symbol," "signal," "option on the table," "establishment of credibility" -- the diplomatic stage props -- that Colin Powell derided in 1984. Without the political will to defeat the enemies of civilization, the naval marvels of the 21st century will be as impotent as the guns of the USS New Jersey at Beirut airport. Posted by wretchard | Permalink: 12:08 PM Zulu

## REUNION GROUP NEWS

### GONE. . . TOO SOON

**Esposito**, Louis Armageddon, S1/c, born 3 June 1919. He enlisted 23 March 1943 at New Haven, CT, came aboard Champlin 4 August 1943 and served 787 days before leaving Champlin 29 September 1945. He was discharged 30 October 1945 at Lido Beach, NY. He died 8 July 2004 in CT.

**Russell**, John, GM3/c, born 10 December 1925. He enlisted 16 February 1943 at New York, NY, came aboard Champlin 4 August 1943 and served 912 days before leaving Champlin 1 February 1946. He was discharged 6 February 1946 at Lido Beach, NY. He died 3 July 2004 in FL.

**Therriault**, Joseph William, RM2/c, born 5 December 1921. He enlisted 11 September 1942 in New Haven, CT, came aboard Champlin 21 October 1942 and served 939 days before leaving Champlin 17 May 1945. He was discharged 4 October 1945 at Camp Perry, VA. He died 25 June 2004 in FL.

### CHANGING BERTHS

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**Staller**, LeRoy M., 1210 S. Abbe Road, Elyria, OH 44035-7275 (440) 366-8997





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- Janes Fighting Ships of World War II*, published 2001 by Random House Group, Ltd., Pg. 282
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- The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1943*, Volume I, Samuel E. Morison, Little, Brown & Co., Pages 357 and 358.
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- United States Destroyer Operations in World War II*, Theodore Roscoe, (1953) Naval Institute Press, pages 282, 302, 320, 321, 335, 375 and 545.

World War II Encyclopedia.

**Magazines:**

- Sea Classics*, Challenge Publications, Vol. 32 #9, March 1999, "Red Anzio" by Irwin J. Kappes.

**Newspapers/Newsletters:**

- The Tin Can Sailor*: Vol. 25, No. 1, page 3.
- The Tin Can Sailor*: Vol. 25, No. 4, page 32.

**Internet:**

- <http://uboaat.net/boats/u130.htm>
- <http://uboaat.net/boats/u856.htm>

[www.usschamplin.com](http://www.usschamplin.com)

[www.destroyers.org](http://www.destroyers.org) (Tin Can Sailors Web Site)

[www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/DD/DD-601\\_Champlin.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/DD/DD-601_Champlin.html)

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