





## SUMMER

The sun  
is always  
shining.  
Whether  
gray or  
bright,  
day or  
night,  
the  
sun  
is  
shining  
somewhere.

TREATED  
GENTLY,  
THINGS  
BECOME  
GENTLE  
EVEN  
PEOPLE.  
TRY IT!

Laughter  
needs to be  
encouraged,  
like a small  
child, given  
room to grow,  
like a  
teenager,  
and highly  
respected, as  
one would a  
person  
of age.

## THE TRIP HOME FROM CASABLANCA—JOE BLACK

I really enjoyed the Spring issue of *The Seaweed*.

Going along with Admiral Baughan's 1942 Christmas memories, I remember the trip back from Casablanca. We had two meals per day; breakfast consisted of two very thin pancakes and lunch was a very thin spinach soup. I don't recall having dinner. To curb our appetites we were advised to smoke cigarettes.

The return trip was prolonged by a violent storm east of Cape Hatteras that delayed us five days just lying to.

When we came into New York, Commander Beverly Harrison ordered a DD tied up at a pier to move out so we could tie up, and that DD backed up in a hurry. I had liberty that night and went ashore; got the biggest steak I could find and mush-

rooms and two beers . . . For about \$6.00. I only had \$10.00, so I bought some sandwiches and brought them back to the ship where they were quickly consumed.

I couldn't attend the last reunion, but I read a statement that Capt. Schaffer was the only person lost off the USS Champlin. That is not entirely accurate, maybe the only one lost in an enemy action. During an alert one morning, Eddie Miller, a torpedoman striker, we washed overboard. Bill McGovern, a gunners mate, was shot coming back from liberty when he tried to board a DD tied up behind the Champlin.

JOE BLACK

*Note: "The quote from the Memorial Service was that Captain Schaffer was the only person lost in enemy action aboard the Champlin".*

## CAMPAIGN BARS AND STARS

When is a campaign ribbon not a campaign ribbon? And a battle star too? *When a poser wears them!*

Not long after I (Ted Johnson) joined the Champlin crew another guy came aboard. I've forgotten his name . . . And I'm glad I did. But I recall he was red-headed and a tad on the chunky side.

Getting acquainted, I learned he'd been in the Navy for three years. In all that time, all stateside, he'd been in three or four naval training programs—including officer candidate school—and flunked out of or quit every one.

I didn't think a whole lot about it at the time, except to wonder how a man could screw up so many opportunities.

A week or so later my buddy and I were taking, walking through a Charleston park when we spot chunky, red-haired guy sitting on a park bench soaking up the South Carolina's winter sunshine, but something's not right;

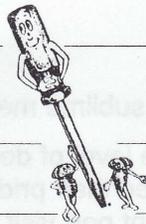
On the left breast of his uniform are three rows of campaign ribbons with a generous sprinkling of battle stars. Buddy and I look at each other; and I ask: "What the (bleep) are those? I thought you spent all your time flunking out of training schools?"

His answer: "I've been in the navy over three years. I figure I have the right to wear them!"

My buddy and I are processing this piece of strange logic when three other Champlin crewmen came swaggering down the sidewalk toward us—guys who really earned ribbons and stars, but weren't showing them this day. Buddy and I looked at each other thinking: "This should be interesting."

The trio of Champlin vets stop and chat a minute or two and move on, leaving us perplexed. Then we look down where chunky red-head is sitting. All those ribbons and stars were gone in one of the slickest, quickest disappearing acts I ever saw.

We didn't rat the guy out. Maybe we should have. But we didn't spend any liberty time with him from that day on. *Ted Johnson*



## JOHN RUSSELL GM3c

*John Rusell GM3c loved the sea and he loved the Champlin. The remembrance and insights are shared by his wife Virginia Rendel Russell.*

As a youngster, John wasn't much for being trapped inside a school house, so he would skip school or get into trouble while in class.

He was more at peace fixing things or building things with his dad. He also loved hunting and fishing which was a pleasure but also a necessity as it was the 1930's and deep in depression times.

His dad sent him to trade school to enhance John's exceptional mechanical aptitude. John turned 17 on December 10th and the following February joined the Navy. He loved the sea all his life and saw the Navy as a chance to break free from his tiny fishing village of Mystic, NY. He had never before been away from his parents so this was a big adventure at first. Even the storms of the North Atlantic didn't worry him.

The guns and the ship were a wonderful fit for his mechanical interests. He loved to tinker with all the machines. He enjoyed his shipmates who were from

places new and different to a young man who had always lived in the very, very rural country and somewhat backward compared to the rest of Long Island, NY.

John did not submit well to authority and ended up on report for not wearing his hat; and also ended up in the brig for climbing down the ropes and over the rat catchers to make liberty in Panama.

The incident which shook him up and brought the reality to him—"this is real war, not fun or make believe" - was when the Champlin rammed U-856 and Captain Schaffer was killed. The Captain's burial at sea changed the way John saw events from then on. A young man, Captain Schaffer, who John knew and admired, was now dead and not even able to be brought home.

Sounds of guns were no longer exciting; now they were terrifying. And until John died he couldn't tolerate thunderstorms as they reminded him of the big guns.

*Virginia Russell*

Be greedy  
with criticism  
and generous  
with praise,  
and you will  
have happy  
children,  
devoted  
friends,  
appreciative  
parents,  
admiring  
co-workers,  
and spouses  
not to mention  
a contented  
self!

"Heaven is a  
great big hug  
that lasts  
forever"

## MINI-REUNION 2007



The USS Champlin Mini Reunion was a major success, based on reports from the Ocean Holiday Inn in Wildwood Crest, N.J. The mini, held May 14 through May 18th, included wining, dining, dancing, a trip to Atlantic City and leisurely strolls along the boardwalk.

Champlin veterans attending included Tom and Honey Morton, Doris Higgins, Lou Gilbert, Larry and Margaret Suter, Dick and Shirley Berman, Bob McAfee, Charles Meehan and Harold and Becky Medvedeff. A number of special Irish guests also took part.

Truly missed were George and Gal Styles, Joe and Marie Tricarico, and Dick Valentine and Barbara Jones, key original motivators behind the mini reunions. The were unable to be present for various reasons.

Mini Reunion events: Monday: socializing and dinner at Duffy's on the Lake. Tuesday: a visit to Trump Casino in Atlantic City and a tour of the Renault Winery with dining, dancing and other entertainment. Wednesday: a promenading on the board walk and dinner and the show at Giardino's Ristorante. Thursday: Lunch on the open air deck of Lighthouse Point restaurant on Shawcrest Island.

Plans for the 2008 Mini-reunion are pending.



THE GRAND  
ESSENTIALS  
OF  
HAPPINESS,  
SOMETHING  
TO DO,  
SOMEONE  
TO LOVE  
AND  
SOMETHING  
TO  
HOPE FOR.

## THE LAST SURVIVING FEMALE WORLD WAR I NAVAL VETERAN DIES

*(Editor's note: This article from the Navy News Service suggests the oldest of us Champlin veterans can look forward to many good years.)*

Washington (NNS) - The last surviving female World War I veteran, Charlotte Winters, died March 27, 2007 in Boomsboro, Md. She was 109 years old. She was a veteran of the US Navy.

Winters served in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a yeoman, including service at a gun production facility at the Washington Navy Yard. She continued to work for the Navy in Washington until her retirement in 1953.

The Naval Reserve Act of 1916 enabled the Navy to begin enlisting women in mid March 1917. Nearly 600 were on duty by the end of April 1917. That number grew to more than 11,000 by December 1918, shortly after the armistice. These women were popularly known as "Yeomanettes."

They all held enlisted ranks and served in support positions, mainly secretarial and clerical, and almost all served in the U.S. Many worked in government and naval offices in defense companies and hospitals. They were all released from active duty in July 1919. Two of them ultimately became Naval officers in the Reserve, Capt. Joy Bright Hancock and Lt. Eunice Whyte.

Funeral services were held March 30 in Boomsboro, Md., with internment at the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Frederick, Md. The U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard presented military honors during the internment ceremony.

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## "BIG JOHN" Decommissioned After 38 years of Service

MAYPORT, Fla. (NNS) The aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy (CV67) was decommissioned in Mayport, Fla. March 23.

After a 17 gun salute, USS John F. Kennedy Commanding Officer Capt. Todd Zecchin addressed the more than 5,000 guests, former commanding officers, city officials and distinguished visitors. In his speech, he described his feelings for the ship and the legacy of its crew.

"While preparing for today, I realized that serving on this ship is akin to having a relationship with a tried and true friend," Zecchin said.

"Saying goodbye is a sublime melancholy."

Zecchin described the level of dedication the crew revealed. He illustrated their pride in professionalism in terms of a recent port visit to Boston, when 21 degree below zero wind chills made working conditions at night unforgiving.

"None of the watchstanders complained. In fact, I had to order them back inside the skin of the ship because they were so intent on getting the job done."

The ship's commanding officer took time not just to remember the crew's efforts, but of those backing each of them.

"Nobility of purpose, service to people, devotion to a cause and a deep belief in each other is what sustains us. We could not have done it without the support of family and friends," he said.

Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command Admiral John B. Nathman talked about the ship's history and the deployments to the Middle East that made headlines in the 1980s, 1990s and the present decade.

"You have served with honor and distinction," Nathman said, addressing the crew. "I commend you for facing challenges head-on and for welcoming your responsibility. Feel privileged to bear your responsibility. Wear it as a mantle on your shoulders with the pride it deserves."

To recognize some of the former commanding officers of USS John F. Kennedy, Zecchin asked all who had once commanded the warship to stand. A hearty applause erupted from all of the seated guests, young and old, military personnel and civilians.

The 80,000 ton warship, namesake of the 35th President of the United States, saw 18 deployments and 30 commanding officers in its 38 yrs of service. For more news from around the fleet, visit [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil).

Aviation in Pensacola, Fla.  
([www.navalaviationmuseum.org](http://www.navalaviationmuseum.org).)

**Note:** Christened on May 27, 1967, by 9 year old Caroline Kennedy, "Big John" spent much of its career overseeing political tensions in the Middle East. In 1991 *Kennedy's* aircraft took part in the Gulf War. The carrier returned to the region in 2002 to suppress Taliban and al Qaeda targets. *Kennedy's* in port Captain's cabin, designed by Jacqueline Kennedy and outfitted with Kennedy family artifacts, will be disassembled and rebuilt in the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Fla.

([www.navalaviationmuseum.org](http://www.navalaviationmuseum.org)) Military History Vol.25 #5



