

Reunion 2010 – Make Your Reservations Now

Plans for the 2010 USS Boyle/Champlin/Ordroneaux Reunion are now complete, and Registration Packages have been mailed out. Don't miss this year's event!

Dates: Sept. 29, 10010 – Oct. 3, 2010

Hotel Information: Crowne Plaza Hotel
801 Greenwich Avenue
Warwick, Rhode Island
(800) 227-6963

Room rates are \$99.00 plus tax per night for a standard room. Hot breakfast, hospitality room, and free local shuttle are all included in your room rate. Reservation deadline to guarantee this rate is August 25, 2010 – so make your reservations soon.

Reunion Events/Information:

Dinner Buffets Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings, and a Dinner Banquet Saturday evening are included in your Registration Fee. After dinner activities are planned.

Trips and Tours are planned for:

Foxwoods Casino
Newport Naval Base
Charlestown Navy Yard – USS Constitution

Registration Fee: \$250.00 per person – due by September 1, 2010 (includes dinners and tours)

Contact Information:

Audrey Woodard – (603) 364-7315
Email: audrey_woodard@yahoo.com

Registration material can also be downloaded from the USS Champlin Website www.usschamplin.com

The Seaweed

A Publication of the DESRON 16 Reunion Groups

Why We Call a Ship a She?

By Rear Admiral Francis D. Foley, U.S. Navy
(Retired) - *Naval History*, December 1998

A salty retired U.S. Navy flag officer shuns the current trend toward political correctness. Ships are referred to as "she" because men love them, but this encompasses far more than just that. Man-o'-war or merchantman, there can be a great deal of bustle about her as well as a gang of men on deck, particularly if she is slim-waisted, well-stacked, and has an inviting superstructure. It is not so much her initial cost as it is her upkeep that makes you wonder where you founder.

She is greatly admired when freshly painted and all decked out to emphasize her cardinal points. If an aircraft carrier, she will look in a mirror when about to be arrested, and will wave you off if she feels you are sinking too low or a little too high, day or night. She will not hangar around with duds, but will light you off and launch you into the wild blue yonder when you muster a full head of steam.

Even a submarine reveals her topsides returning to port, heads straight for the buoys, knows her pier, and gets her breast-lines out promptly if she is single-screwed. On departure, no ship leaves port asleep, she always leaves awake. She may not mind her helm or answer to the old man when the going gets rough, and can be expected to kick up her heels on a family squall. A ship costs a lot to dress, sometimes blows a bit of smoke, and requires periodic overhauls to extend her useful life.

Some have a cute fantail, others are heavy in the stern, but all have double-bottoms which demand attention. When meeting head-on, sound a recognition signal; whistle! If she does not answer

up, come about and start laying alongside, but watch to see if her ship is slowing . . . perhaps her slip is showing? Then proceed with caution until danger of collision is over and you can fathom how much latitude she will allow.

If she does not remain on an even keel, let things ride, feel your way, and do not cross the line until you determine whether the "do" point is right for a prolonged blast. Get the feel of the helm, stay on the right tack, keep her so, and she will pay off handsomely. If she is in the roaring forties, however, you may be in the dangerous semi-circle, so do not expect much "luff," especially under bare poles. She may think you are not under command or control and shove off.

If she edges aweigh, keep her steady as she goes, but do not sink into the doldrums. Just remember that "to furnish a ship requireth much trouble, but to furnish a woman the cost is double!" To the women who now help us "man" our ships, my apologies for the foregoing. Only the opening phrase presents my true feelings. After all, a ship's bell(e) will always remain her most prized possession, and every good ship has a heart, just like yours.

A trick at the wheel, like you, would have been welcome aboard when I was on "she" duty for 40 years. May God bless you all, sweetheart!

Admiral Foley is a long-time contributor to *Naval History* and the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*. He lives in Annapolis, Maryland.

At *Naval History's* editorial offices, in the presence of the author, the editor reacted to the above with a resounding: "Most of our readers will love it; the women will hate it!" Coincidentally, the U.S. Naval Institute's chief financial officer, obviously sensitive to such statements, overheard and inquired: "The women will hate what?" She then heard of plans to publish "Why We Call a Ship a She." Unaware of the author's presence, she asked: "If they call ships she, then why do they name them Arleigh Burke?" To that, Admiral Foley responded, "Good point!"

(This article was submitted by Joe Howard – USS Boyle)

Naval History USS William Porter

NAVAL HISTORY: The following "Revelation" on the USS William Porter is a bit of Naval History that you won't find in the History books. It is rather funny today, but hardly humorous then. I can't vouch for its word by word authenticity, but it is a good story and many of the major events noted can be verified:

From NOV 43, until her demise in JUN 45, the American destroyer 'William Porter' was often hailed - whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships - with the greetings: 'Don't shoot, we're Republicans!' For a half a century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation. A Miami news reporter made the first public disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer's crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice. The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads. This destroyer was placed in commission in JUL 43 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy's fast career track. In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew. The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa.

The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa, the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship's side and her anchor tore down her railings, life rafts, ship's boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor but her career of mayhem and mishaps had begun. Just 24 hours later, the four-ship convoy consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers and two other destroyers was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. The Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt along with Secretary of State, Cordell Hull and all of the country's WWII's military brass. They were headed for the Big Three Conference in Tehran, where Roosevelt was to meet Stalin and Churchill. As they were going through a known U-

boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defense. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced anti-submarine maneuvers. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The 'safety' had not been set as instructed. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become side-tracked.

Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn't lashed down. A man was washed overboard and never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers. The Captain, by this point, was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa on the Willie D's difficulties. It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk. But, no, she sailed on.

The morning of 14 NOV 43 the Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda and the president and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, Iowa launched a number of weather balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the President was proud of his Navy. Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J King, the Chief of Naval Operations; large in size and by demeanor, a true monarch of the sea. Up to this time, no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean. Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker sent his impatient crew to battle stations. They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity. Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship. On this particular morning, they unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3. Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing. "Fire 1, Fire 2," and finally, "Fire 3." There was no fire 4 as the sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whooooooshhhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo. Just after he saw the torpedo hit water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, 'Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?' Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through naval history... although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal 'Damn the torpedoes' figured centrally within.

Initially, there was some reluctance to admit what had happened or even to warn the Iowa. As the

awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of imminent danger. First, there was a flashing light warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated it was headed in another direction. Next, the Porter signaled that it was going reverse at full speed! Finally, they decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence. The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "'Lion (code for the Iowa), Lion, come right.'" The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first. Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo. Meanwhile, on the Iowa's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive maneuvers, all of her guns were trained on the William D Porter. There was now some thought that the Porter was part of an assassination plot. Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed.

The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it." Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the US Navy. The ship was surrounded by Marines when it docked in Bermuda and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened. Torpedoman Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake. The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy. Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years hard labor. President Roosevelt intervened; however, asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident. The destroyer was banished to the upper Aleutians. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any

for the ship and anyone who came near her. She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was re-assigned to the Western Pacific.

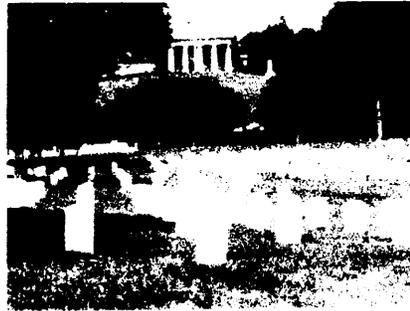
Before leaving the Aleutians, she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired into the front yard of the American base commandant, thus rearranging his flower garden. In DEC 44, she joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft. Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers. In APR 45 the destroyer was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa. By this time, the greeting "Don't Shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing. But the crew of her sister ship, the USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire.

On 10 JUN 45, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally) attacked underwater. A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defense. Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter but just at the last moment veered away and crashed along side the unlucky destroyer. There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible location. Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water. Not a single soul was lost in the sinking. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.

Source: www.usshancockcv19.com/histories/willie-d.htm Naval Historian Kit Bonner Mar 08

(This article was submitted by Steve Anastasion – USS Champlin – with the comment - "Good story with one error I believe. ADM King was not the CNO, he was the equivalent of the Chair of the Joint Chiefs, as FDR's senior military advisor. ADM Stark was the CNO.")

Sounding Taps



USS Champlin

Thomas William Morton BM2c – 7/5/2010

USS Boyle

Scott Taylor
Conrad Perillo

USS Ordronaux

None Known

"Rest easy, sleep well my brothers. Know the line has held, your job is done. Rest easy, sleep well. Others have taken up where you fell, the line has held. Peace, peace, and farewell..."

Anyone interested in writing a tribute to a fallen ship mate is encouraged to do so. Just sent your tribute or testimonial to us and we will make sure it is published in the next Seaweed - Editors

Quotable Quotes

"A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America' for an amount of 'up to and including my life.' That is Honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it."

Only in the Navy...

"There's an old sea story in the Navy about a ship's Captain who inspected his sailors, and afterward told the Chief Boatswain that his men smelled bad. The Captain suggested perhaps it would help if the sailors would change underwear occasionally."

"The Chief responded, "Aye, aye sir, I'll see to it immediately!"

"The Chief went straight to the sailors berth deck and announced, "The Captain thinks you guys smell bad and wants you to change your underwear."

"He continued, "Pittman, you change with Jones, McCarthy, you change with Witkowski, and Brown, you change with Schultz."

Now GET TO IT!"

The moral of the story is:

Someone may come along and promise "Change", but don't count on things smelling any better.

Dues are Due – Pay Your Dues

USS Champlin Reunion Dues, and Seaweed Subscriptions become due on October 1, 2010

USS Champlin Reunion Group dues, include membership in the reunion group, as well as a subscription to the "Seaweed Newsletter". Dues are \$15.00 per year and due in October at the time of the Reunion Group's Annual Business Meeting.

Newsletter Only Subscriptions are also available to all interested parties, including: USS Boyle, USS Ordranax crew and officers, other destroyer squadron crew, family, and friends at an annual cost of only \$5.00.

To subscribe to the "Seaweed" send your annual subscription fee of \$5.00 to Norm.

Norman Prewitt
2049 Eastridge Drive
Excelsior Springs, Missouri
64024-2869

USS Champlin Merchandise

Norm Prewitt has a small quantity of the following USS Champlin items available for sale. He can also arrange for ordering more where needed. To purchase any of the following, or for more information on the items – contact Norm Prewitt by phone at: 816-630-7272

Embroidered Hats - \$10.00 plus shipping
Colors: Navy, Light Blue, White

Polo Shirts - \$25.00 plus Shipping
Colors: Navy, Light Blue, White
Sizes: S-M-L-XL

Sweatshirts: \$20.00 plus shipping (XXL \$25.00)
Colors: Navy, White
Sizes: S-M-L-XL-XXL

I Like the Navy

(Reflections of a Blackshoe by VAdm Harold Koenig, MC, USN (Ret) * Former Surgeon General of the Navy 1995 – 1998)

I like standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe - the ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drive her through the sea.

I like the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswains pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I like the vessels of the Navy - nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries, sleek submarines and steady solid carriers. I like the proud sonorous names of Navy capital ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea - memorials of great battles won. I like the lean angular names of Navy tin-cans': Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix, McCloy - mementos of heroes who went before us.

I like the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the

topside speakers as we pull away from the oiler after refueling at sea. I like liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even like all hands working parties as my ship fills herself with the multitude of supplies both mundane and exotic which she needs to cut her ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there is water to float her.

I like sailors, men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trust and depend on them as they trust and depend on me - for professional competence, for comradeship, for courage. In a word, they are "shipmates."

I like the surge of adventure in my heart when the word is passed "Now station the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port", and I like the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pierside. The work is hard and dangerous, the going rough at times, the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the 'all for one and one for all' philosophy of the sea is ever present.

I like the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flit across the wave tops and sunset gives way to night. I like the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and join with the mirror of stars overhead. And I like drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that tell me that my ship is alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch will keep me safe.

I like quiet midwatches with the aroma of strong coffee - the lifeblood of the Navy - permeating everywhere. And I like hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed keeps all hands on a razor edge of alertness. I like the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations", followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transforms herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war - ready for anything. And I like the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I like the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I like the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones. A sailor can find much in the Navy comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent can find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods - the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and messdecks. Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, they will stand taller and say:

"I WAS A SAILOR ONCE. I WAS PART OF THE NAVY AND THE NAVY WILL ALWAYS BE PART OF ME."

Help Wanted

This is your newsletter, and I need your help to make it meaningful to all of you. The best stories (and series of stories) have always been written by the officers and crew aboard ship. So please take a bit of time and write down your memories and stories (you've told them to others - so share them with us), and mail them or email them to me at:

Gary S Gustin – Seaweed Editor
11751 Tradewinds Blvd
Largo, Florida 33773

Email: photos@usschamplin.com

I'm particularly interested in hearing from the USS Boyle and USS Ordronaux group!

This Month in Naval History

July 1, 1797 - Naval Regulations passed by the United States Congress

July 1, 1851 - Naval Academy adopts four year course of study

July 2, 1945 - USS *Barb* (SS-220) bombards Japanese installations on Kaihyo Island, Japan; first successful use of rockets against shore positions.

July 8, 1944 - Naval bombardment of Guam begins.

July 10, 1943 - Naval gunfire help Allied troops land on Sicily. It was first extensive use of LST's and smaller landing craft to deliver heavy equipment over the beach

July 19, 1940 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs second Naval Expansion Act.

July 20, 1969 - Former Navy pilot Neil Armstrong is first man to set foot on the moon. While taking the first step, he said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Armstrong was Commander of Apollo 11 which during its 8 day mission landed on the Sea of Tranquility. Recovery was by HS-4 helicopters from USS *Hornet* (CVS-12).

July 23, 1958 - USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) departs Pearl Harbor for first submerged transit of North Pole.

July 31, 1874 - Commissioning of USS *Intrepid*, first U.S. warship equipped with torpedoes

Please Complete the Bottom of this Form and Return NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

___ **YES** I plan on attending the reunion and have included a check for \$250.00 per person attending made payable to Audrey Woodard – DD600 Reunion

___ **NO** I will be unable to attend, but would like to continue receiving reunion notices and I have completed the information below.

Name: _____ **Guest:** _____

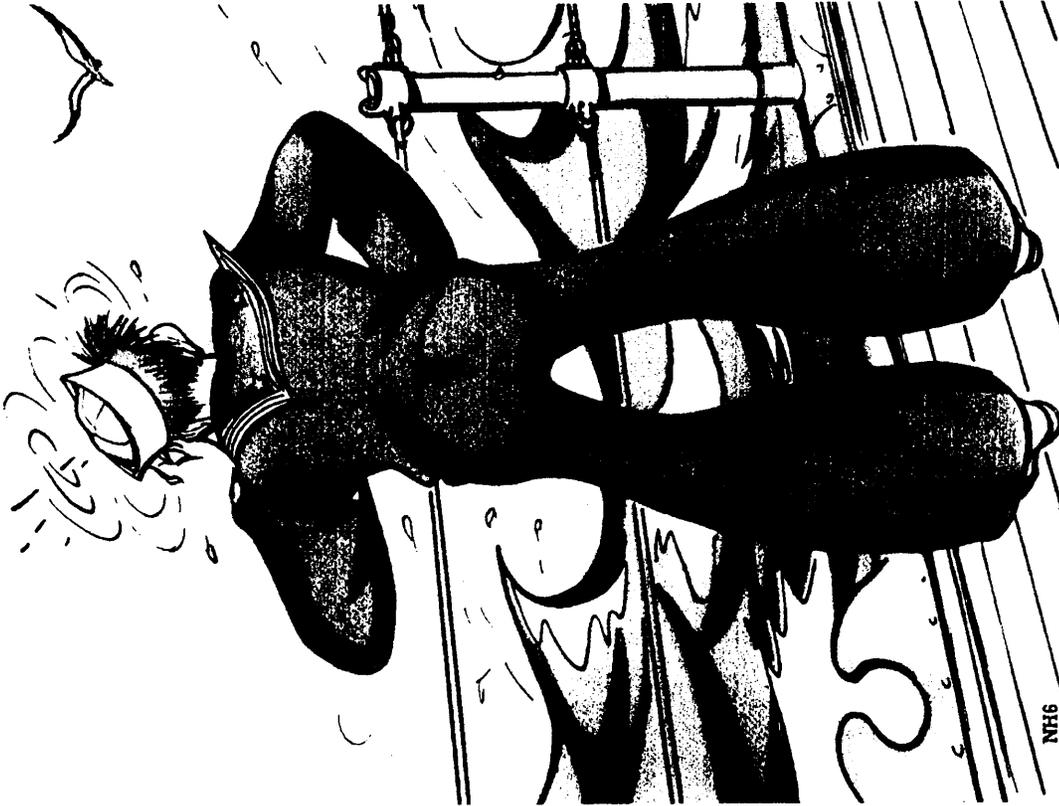
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Telephone # _____ **Email:** _____

Return Registration Form & Fees to :
Audrey Woodard- DD600 Squadron Reunion
PO Box 284
Gilmanton Iron Works, NH 03837

HOLD EVERYTHING!
UNTIL YOU HEAR FROM ME



NH6

**I'M NOT SICK OF THE NAVY~
ONLY THE SEA!**

William D Gustin – Editor
USS Champlin Reunion Group
6207 East Bluff Drive
Penn Yan, NY 14527

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