

THE SEAWEED

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WINTER, 2006

I hope that you all enjoyed my first issue of the Seaweed. I really need your help to make my job a bit easier. I need you to tell me your stories about the Champlin. I am sure we all have a story to tell.

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In the last issue, President John Kennedy made the remark, "I can respond with a great deal of pride and satisfaction: I served in the United States Navy".

Well here is a little Naval History you may enjoy reading.

The U.S.S. CONSTITUTION (Old Ironsides) as a combat vessel was prepared to spend six months of sustained operations at sea.

She carried no evaporators (fresh water distillers). However let it be noted that according to her log, "On July 27, 1789, the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds

of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum. Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping."

Making Jamaica on 6 October she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,000 of rum. She then headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November, she provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine. On 18 November, she set sail for the shore of England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and she captured and scuttled 12 English merchantmen salvaging only the rum aboard each ship. By 26 January her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, and though unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whiskey distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn.

Then she headed home. The U.S.S. CONSTITUTION arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799 with no cannon shot, no food, no whiskey and 38,000 gallons of stagnant water.

Now that's the kind of Navy that Louis Gilbert and I would like to have been a part of.

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This sent in by Pete Kappes: A bit of Navy news. Little known but true. The U.S. Navy fired more rounds in Korea than was fired by all the ships of all the navies of WWII.

GUESS WHO?



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Here is a story I just love to tell. It all happened more than a few years ago. I am the founder of a Senior Racquetball Club. We played against each other for a lot of years. I thought it would be good to play other teams. So I booked a match with the U.S. Naval Academy. The man who owned the courts where we played asked if he could bring his son along to watch us play. I told him by all means. At that time his son was about 11 years old. On the way home his son told his dad, "Dad, when I graduate from high school I want to go to the Naval Academy. Well, he went to the Academy and graduated this past June. He is now going to flight school in Pensacola, Florida. His dad is so proud of him and so am I.

I also made arrangements to play the Cadets at West Point. I played the game for twenty years. I no longer play the game because of a hip and knee replacement.

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A little note from Helen Vecchione. "Thank you for the SEAWEED. I enjoyed reading it. I am going to try to make the mini-reunion in Wildwood. I'm not used to navigating far by myself. But I am going to find my way." So if any of you brave guys can find it in your heart, give her a call and maybe give her a ride to the reunion in Wildwood.

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Gal and I spent Thanksgiving week up in the Adirondacks with our son, his wife, our grandson and his wife and their dog Jackson. A good time was had by all. We had snow every day, but plenty of beer to keep us busy. I missed not being able to play golf, but we had a lot to pass away the time.

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"Wars may be fought by weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and the man who leads that gains victory."

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FLASH! This just in from Jim Robertson in California. The people that were at the reunion in Laurel, Maryland will be sure to remember Jim's granddaughter. Her name was Bonnie. Well, here is the letter that I received from Jim:

"Dear George. Here's a piece our granddaughter wrote for her school about her trip to DC and her visit with the boys of the U.S.S. CHAMPLIN.

I've been told of the World War II, and I've read the history books, but not till this year did I take the opportunity to let my eyes be opened to the generation that was part of the war. For an early graduation gift my grandparents offered to take me to Washington, DC for my grandfather's reunion with his shipmates who served aboard the U.S.S. CHAMPLIN during WWII.

I was reluctant to go because I would be the only 17-year-old; the others would all be 70-90 years old. I thought I would be uncomfortable amongst, not only people I had never met, but a group of people 60 years my senior. I went originally only because I wanted to see Washington, DC and come home with an album-full of pictures. What I came home with was a heart full of memories, personal revelations, and a new look on life.

"In observing crew members reuniting on that first day, it was difficult to accept that they were all elderly men; I've never seen such an excited bunch of jokesters except for people my own age. From then on I saw the crew and their wives as overgrown teenagers. The reunion was a chance for friends to relive the past if only for a week's time. I reveled in the atmosphere of friendship and love that

existed among everyone and I found it difficult to tear away from them in the end.

"While listening to the group's stories I found that things may change over time but the universal truths of life remain. I learned more about our history through the eyes who lived it, but what struck me were the subtle lessons in love, death and friendship that existed in that group. I am so grateful for the opportunity that I received to go and meet a generation that will soon be gone. One of the crew members I bonded with said, 'It's people like you that make me hopeful for the future.' I hope I can prove him right.--- Bonnie Robertson."

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An old sailor and an old marine were at the VFW arguing about who'd had the tougher career.

"I did 30-years in the Corps," said the marine proudly, "and fought in three of my country's wars. Fresh out of boot camp I hit the beach in Okinawa, clawed my way up the blood-soaked beach and eventually took out an entire enemy machine gun nest with a single grenade. As a sergeant, I fought in Korea alongside General MacArthur. We pushed the enemy inch by inch all the way to the Chinese border, always under a barrage of artillery and small arms fire. Finally, as a gunny sergeant, I did three consecutive combat tours in Vietnam. We humped through the mud and the razor grass for 14 hours a day plagued by rain and mosquitoes, ducking under the sniper fire all day and mortar fire all night. In a fire fight, we'd fire until our arms ached and our guns were empty, then we'd charge the enemy with bayonets." "Ah", said the sailor with a dismissive wave of his hand, "All shore duty, huh?"

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Don't forget, guys. No dues—no news. So if you haven't paid your dues yet, do it right now while you think about it.

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By the time you receive this newsletter, we will be in the heart of winter, spring won't be too far off, so start thinking of May and some nice warm weather in Wildwood. We can make this year one of the best yet, if we all plan on being there. You can be sure that Larry Suter will do a great job to make this year one of the best yet. He has cut out the trip to Atlantic City but will make it up some other way, I am sure.

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Some news for computer buffs: V.A. SURVIVOR BENEFIT WEBSITE. The D.V.A. has created an internet website which provides information for survivors of

veterans and military members. The site is organized into two categories, Death in Service and Death after Service, and provides information on a wide range of benefits that a survivor may be entitled to. The website can be found at WWW.Vba.va.gov. Good luck.

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LARRY SUTER

Talk about "Sweet Revenge". Larry came aboard the CHAMPLIN in September, 1942 and stayed aboard until she was decommissioned. He then went aboard the USS HAMBLETON (DMS-20) for about two years. He was aboard the CHAMPLIN when he heard about the HAMBLETON being torpedoed and in drydock. After repairs she was turned into a high speed minesweeper and sent back to the Pacific until the war ended. What makes it "sweet revenge" is the DD-445 was torpedoed by the U-130 and the CHAMPLIN sunk the U-130.

Happy to have you aboard, Larry.

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By the way, how many others were aboard the CHAMPLIN from start to finish? As for me, I came aboard in 1942 and was shipped out to Buckner Bay in Okinawa for he rest of the war.

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(Also sent in by Larry Suter) Two doctors and an HMO manager died and lined up at the Pearly Gates for admission to heaven. St. Peter asked them to identify themselves. One doctor stepped forward and said, "I was a pediatric spine surgeon and helped kids overcome their deformities." St. Peter said, "You can enter". The second doctor said, "I was a psychiatrist. I helped people rehabilitate themselves". "You can enter also". The third applicant stepped forward and said, "I was an HMO manager. I helped all the people get cost effective health care."

St. Peter said, "You can come in too." But as the manager walked by, St. Peter added, "You can stay for three days and after that you can go to hell".

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Hey, don't forget about Wildwood Crest. It won't be too long before Spring arrives and that means Wildwood. If you would like to join us, Larry will soon be mailing out the information, so keep it in mind. It is always a fun trip.

If you would like more information, get in touch with Larry Suter at 14 Devoe Place, Hawthorne, NJ 07506. (973) 427-2797. Also, don't forget your golf clubs.

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SOME WWII TIN CANS ARE STILL ROAMING THE SEAS AFTER 61 YEARS!

Amazingly, several ships that normally have a lifespan of no more than twenty years are still plying the waters of the world's oceans. Fifteen former U.S. Navy WWII destroyers and destroyer escorts are still on active duty. Seven DD's serve the Taiwanese fleet, two are in the Mexican navy, two DE's are in the Philippine navy and another four DE's are in the Indonesian navy.

Also, eleven DD's and DE's serve as museum ships. Two DE's and seven DD's are in the United States, while one DD is in Greece and another is tied up in Turkey.

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GET ON THE NAVY LOG...FOR FREE!

Now, all navy vets are welcome to enroll in the Navy Memorial's Navy Log without charge or obligation. There used to be a \$25.00 charge and an additional \$25.00 to have your photo included. I think the photo charge still stands, but the charge for listing alone has probably been eliminated because the WWII War Memorial, also in Washington, offers listings for free and the Navy didn't want to appear chickens**t.

So now there's no longer any excuse not to be listed in both—they're both free. To enroll in the Navy Log, get on the internet and log onto www.lonesailor.org/. If you have any questions, please contact the Navy Log at 1-800-NAVYLOG (1-800-628-9564). You owe it to your grandchildren.

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THE DESTROYER OF THE FUTURE

SPRUANCE-class destroyers will remain a major part of the Navy's surface combatant force into the 21st century. They were the first large Navy warships to use gas turbine engines and right now they are undergoing extensive modernizing. But the destroyer of the future is already on the drawing boards of Ingalls Shipbuilding, Northrup Grumman, Raytheon, Bath Iron Works and Lockheed Martin.

Unlike previous destroyer classes, which were primarily to counter deep water threats, the main mission of the so-called "DD-X" will be to provide land attack support for ground forces while still being able to carry out traditional destroyer missions. It will have a "tumblehome" hull form, i.e. a design in which the hull slopes inward from the waterline instead of the reverse. This significantly

reduces the radar cross section since such a cross section returns a much less defined radar image than a more hard-angled hull form.

The DD-X is planned to have a displacement of about 12,000, with a sustained speed of around 30 knots. The propulsion system will feature an all-electric drive with an integrated power system. The ship's two 155mm guns will be able to fire up to 100 miles at a sustained rate of 12 rounds per minute. The munitions are expected to also include land attack and ballistic projectiles.

The ship is planned to have two helicopter-landing pads and a crew of 95, including the helicopter detachment. This represents a major cost saving because DD's in the present fleet have crews of about 200. Needless to say however, this "saving" is peanuts in comparison with the enormous overall cost of the DD-X, which the Navy Department doesn't want to talk about but which is rumored to be in the range of \$3-billion each.

If you'd like to know about DD-X, go to: www.naval-technology.com/projects/dd21/index.html/

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U.S. Naval Strength in 1940

Number of Ships – 1,099
Number of Men – 203,127

U.S. Naval Strength in 1945

Number of Ships – 67,953
Number of Men – 4,031,097

U.S. Naval Casualties in WWII

U. S. Navy – 35,479 killed
U. S. Marines – 18,958 killed

Died in POW Camps

U.S. Navy – 908
U.S. Marines – 510

A total of 185 sailors were reported killed by friendly fire during WWII and 438 were wounded.

Kamikaze attacks on U.S. Ships caused the deaths of 3,593 American sailors and 5,538 were wounded.

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