

# The 820 Newsletter



Volume 1, Number 1

November 1994

## Inaugural Newsletter

This is the inaugural 820 newsletter for the U.S.S. RICH. Two ships carried the name RICH; the first RICH DE-695 and her successor RICH which carried two designations during her lifetime: DDE-820 and DD-820. This will be your newsletter and like all similar communications will depend upon you to provide it with items of interest to all our shipmates. We don't, as of this date, have a formal RICH association but I think one will be coming to manage our funds and to provide organizational continuity as we move our reunions around from place to place. I have volunteered to edit the newsletter, for the time being, and at first I will try to keep it to a one or two-pager, front and back, but will expand it when your materials come in. I suspect the "two-pager" will be the case once we get underway. OK, so you are not a writer like Tom Clancy or Robert Ludlum and are not used to writing for this sort of thing. Just get the information to me, it doesn't have to be typewritten, and I will get it in for you. To coin a nautical rules-of-the-road phrase we are now "underway with no way on." No doubt this condition will change rapidly. In any event we'll need your help to pull The 820 Newsletter off.

What sorts of information will we need? Information on the ship's history for openers; particularly the time you were aboard. We have found some very formal material published by the Navy Department and extracts from it will be made from time to time. You might have logs or diaries or notes you kept during your stay on board or old Plans of the Day (PODs) squirreled away in your mementos. Perhaps you might be willing to share extracts from letters you wrote home describing deployments that wives, sweethearts or parents kept for you. Reminiscences, anecdotes, sea stories, humorous events you can recall, unforgettable characters and that sort of thing. Unfortunately we don't have the capacity, or the budget for that matter, to publish photos even though the computer technology is out there to do it. We can copy, however, printed materials and with some creative, enlarging and shrinking fit it in the newsletter.

We can publish your "letters-to-the editor" to air views on our association, what we should attempt to do in it and where we should be headed with our organization. The less formal we are the better all around. Items of general or specific interest to a tin can sailormen and the vessels in which they sailed (or more correctly steamed) would be great. Many of you served on other DDs or Des and while each ship had its own character they all shared the same aura of our tin can and her crews. Each ship, including the RICH, had its own characteristics but lots of things across all the "small boys" were similar; that piece of damnable laundry equipment that never worked or the close berthing, living, messing, accommodations in the RICH that were probably pretty much the same as those of our DESRON Thirty-six companions in BASILONE, HOLDER, NEW or WILSON or for that matter any other fleet can. It's up to you what you send in; it's wide open. So...please send your materials to "The 820 Newsletter" c/o Bob Baldwin, 432 Irvin Ave., State College, PA 16801 (Phone: 814-238-8686)

## CONTACT! – USS RICH DE-695

Several crew members of the "original" RICH, DE-695, as well as children of the original crew and a PT boat crewman who assisted in pulling survivors of the ship from the waters off the Omaha beach head where she was sunk during the Normandy invasion on June 8, 1944 attended our reunion in Norfolk (NORVA) in 1994. All those of our "820" were very interested in their accounts of the history of the first RICH, her crew and the ship's tragic loss during that

invasion some fifty years ago. The "695" has an organized group that holds a yearly survivor's reunion during the period 6-8 June yearly in commemoration of their lost shipmates: 62 missing and 27 killed. The RICH had gone to the assistance of the USS GLENNON (DD-840), which had been mined earlier, when she fell victim to three mines. We have made contact with "695" group and both their newsletter editor, Dan Schmoker of Myrtle Beach, SC and reunion organizer for "95, "M.H." Green of Raleigh, NC. Both newsletter editors have agreed to share information about our respective RICHs.

#### **THE SHIP'S NAME**

Our ship was named for Ralph McMaster Rich who was born on January 22, 1916, in Denmark, NC. He enlisted in the USNR in 1939 and was designated as a Naval Aviator on July 12, 1940. On August 16, he was commissioned as an Ensign and assigned to the USS Enterprise, CV-6, on November 28. During the battle of Midway, May 4-6, 1942, he led a section of F4F fighters covering the American bombers which sunk or heavily damaged the Japanese carriers Akagi, Kaga, Hiryu and Soryu. He was subsequently killed in an airplane crash on June 18, 1942. LTJG Rich was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for providing the leadership, which enabled his attack group to maintain continuous fighter cover over the enemy naval units thereby assuring our dive bombers of an unmolested approach.

#### **NOW HEAR THIS!**

##### **1995 Reunion Planned for Monck's Corner, South Carolina**

Where the heck is Monck's Corner?? Get out your trusty maps (oops sailors use charts not maps) or use the planning chart to the right to get some idea of where will hold the 1995 gathering.

Date: April 20, 21, 22, 1995  
Location: Berkley Motel, Monck's Corner, SC  
Highway 52 S 17-A, 29461  
Phone: 803 761-8400  
Activities: Hospitality Room, Golfing, shopping for the ladies, a bar-b-que for all hands at the "Short Stay" Naval Recreation Area on Lake Moultrie. Boat trips on the lake and the Cooper River. A visit to the Naval Museum at Patriot's Point and a Banquet-dining event With dancing to the music of the "50s and "60ss.  
For Sale: Ball caps, T-shirts, and Bumper stickers.  
Reservations: E.R. "Hoot" Gibson, P.O. Box 506, Pinopolis, SC 29469,  
Phone: 803 899-7194

Additional Information: Hoot informs us that he has secured 12 spaces nearby for RVs but he needs an early response if you plan to bring your RV. He already has 31 shipmates signed up to come to the reunion. For those of you who golf, the First Annual RICH open will be held April 21 at Monck's Corners. If you want to enter the tournament reply to the organizer Howard C. Shaw, 1 St. Mary's Place, Denville, JR 07834, Phone 201 627-4900, for more information.

Reunion Request: Hoot also asks that all who plan to attend bring a small item (or a large) representative of your home state or your stay on the RICH for a Raffle. A raffle is a great way to raise some cash and help us defray the costs of our reunions.

### TIN CAN SAILORS

There is a national organization "The Tin Can Sailors", now with some 15,000 members organized specifically for all those who served on destroyers. The organization published a very informative newspaper of about 25 pages four times a year with photos and stories of destroyer men and their tin can homes. The organization spans the time from the first DDs up to present date. Regional gatherings of tin can sailors called "Bull Sessions" are held regionally and are extensively advertised in the paper. Maybe there is one year you. The organization has donated money to support the preservation and upkeep of destroyers, which now serve as museums around the country.. Membership is \$15 per year. The address is Tin Can Sailors, P.O. Box 100, Somerset, MA 02726. Give them your name, the name(s) of the ship(s) on which you served with dates and your rate or rank. Indicate that you learned of the Tin Can Sailors in The 820 Newsletter.

### ON THE MAIN DECK

The Rich's bronze commissioning plaque, which was mounted on the quarterdeck adjacent to the amidships passageway, survives! For all of you who attended the Norfolk reunion this note is old stuff but for those of you who didn't the plaque was on the speaker's table at the banquet. We have Chuck Weber (LCDR, SC,USN (Retired)) to thank for the rescue. He was able to obtain the plaque, as he explained during his talk on the last days of the RICH, before she went to the ship breakers. The facsimile below, if life size, would be about 15" long by 11" high with a one-half inch raised border around the side. Mack Hughes (SCR,SC,USN (Retired)) who was the ship's supply officer in the mid 1950s also rescued a carved walnut plaque which hung in the wardroom when the ship went into the shipyard in 1957. The logo from that plaque, the rearing destroyer, is represented on the 820 Newsletter masthead.

<b>U.S.S. RICH</b>			
<b>DESTROYER</b>			
<b>NAMED FOR</b>			
<b>LTJG RALPH McMASTER RICH USNR</b>			
<b>BUILT BY CONSOLIDATED STEEL CORPORATION</b>			
<b>ORANGE, TEX.</b>			
<b>KEEL LAID</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>16,</b>	<b>1945</b>
<b>LAUNCHED</b>	<b>OCT.</b>	<b>3,</b>	<b>1945</b>
<b>COMMISSIONED</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>3,</b>	<b>1945</b>