

The 820 Newsletter

World Wide Web Edition



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May 1997

SHIP'S OFFICE

1997 Reunion. Nashville, Tennessee at the Shoney's Inn across from Opryland was the 1997 site of the USS RICH DD/DDE-820 Association's annual reunion. Fifty-six crew members and their guests enjoyed the festivities. Included in the roster were 7 Plank Owners as well as Ed Black a survivor of the "original" USS RICH DE-695. The breakdown "by era" of attendees was: 1940s 13, 1950s 26, 1960s 15 and 1970s 2. There were over 100 persons, shipmates, wives and guests at the Association's Banquet. A "Bravo Zulu" was hoisted at the yard for all those who worked so hard to make the '97 reunion a special one. Accolades to the Reunion Chairman and organizer, Gary Wilson (1960-62) who carried it off. Thanks Gary from all of us for a wonderful time. Here is what went on in Nashville:

Registration began on Thursday, April 24 at Shoney's and continued throughout the 3-day reunion. The registration table was staffed (we can't say manned anymore) by many willing volunteer members and their wives or significant others. The Hospitality Suite was opened and lots of Bull-Session "do-you-remember-the-time-when" tall tale telling began. The tales got better especially after the sun was over the yardarm. The suite remained open throughout the entire reunion; many times into the midwatch hours. A "donation" bar was open and there were tables of memorabilia laid out around the room with cruise books, photo albums, PODs and other souvenirs of our member's cruises throughout the world in evidence. Lunch and dinner was on your own but if you wished we had a delightful dinner cruise on the stern-wheel driven General Jackson on the Cumberland River through downtown Nashville. The food and entertainment, a musical review, were both great.

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Friday, April 24 began with a continental breakfast in the Inn and those who were interested in Golf were off to the annual tournament. There were several bus tours of Nashville that shipmates could sign up for or you could do the town on your own. Dinner was on your own and the bus departed from the Inn for those who had signed up for the Grand Old Opry where we were entertained by country and western music show for over three hours. Yes, Grandpa Jones and all the Opry Cast is as you have seen them on TV. But where was Reba? Many adjourned to the hospitality suite for socialization and comradeship following the Opry excursion.

The day **Saturday, April 25** began again with the opportunity for a continental breakfast but this writer determined that there must have been a heap of late sleeper chits signed by the division officers after the previous evening's revelry. The Association's formal meeting began at 0900 and was presided over by our president E.R. "Hoot" Gibson (1957-60). A report of that meeting appears later in the Newsletter. As a work-up to the evening banquet a cocktail hour began first in the hospitality suite with dinner being served at 1900. The after-dinner speaker was Captain Dennis L. Witzenburg USN (Retired) who had commanded the USS SKIPJACK SSN-585, the USS SEAWOLF SSN-575 and the USS TENNESSEE SSBN-743. A short memorial to all our shipmates who have died was held with members present speaking the names of our absent shipmates who have passed on. Those names your editor was able to record were: Charles Durn, H. Mack Hughes, Robert Irving, Red Morrison, A. Moyer, Don Naglor, Obie Oberdoester, J.J. Pilch, Charles Sprail and Tom Swinson. Hoot, on behalf of the Association, thanked all those shipmates and their wives and significant others who had donated raffle gifts for the evenings events and who volunteered their services to help in organizing and carrying out the great reunion plans. The hospitality suite was again opened after the banquet.

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Sunday, April 26 was reserved for farewells until Reunion 1998 in Monck's Corners, South Carolina. All hands who attended agreed that the '97 reunion was a memorable one and many have already begun to plan their trips for next spring's event.

List of Shipmates and Wives Attending the 1997 Reunion

Baldwin, Robert 57-59
Becker, Walter & Louise 55-60
Beeman, L.E. 55-59
Billings, Bill & Kit 51-55
Black, Ed 43-45
Bulson, Robert & Sylvia 55-57
Calloway, Gene 60-62
Coale, Edward 50-54

Owen, BobbyF. & Jean 55-58
Ozart, Frankie & Rose 58-64
Parks, Whit & Peggy 55-59
Parsons, Raymond & Vicki 68-69
Ray, David & Lousie 64-65
Reilly, Bryan & Joan 46-47
Rich, Richard & May 60-62
Robbins, Dale & Christine 46-47

Cole, Harold 66-69
Companion, Ronald & Charlotte 50-51
Dabay, David & Ruby 50-54
Dillow, Howard & Ethel 47-49
Dunnigan, Jerry & Ded 65-67
Franchetta, Joe, & Jenny 55-59
Gardner, Jerry 49-51
Gibson, E.R. "Hoot" 57-60
Hake, Don & Maureen 59-62
Harris, B.D. 64-66
Hogg, Don & Bonnie 62-64
House, Don & Joann 55-57
Hutchins, Francis & Marie 48-55
Johnson, Robert 49-52
Jones, Gary & Judy 55-57
Kilmer, George & Linda 65-66
Lohse, Skip 65-66
Moyer, Dennis & Elvira 63-67
Oberlander, Don & Jean 46-48
Ortiz, Lenny 63-65

Roggenbuck, Ed & Bess 46-47
Sanders, Gordon 63-66
Sanow, Clarence & Ellen 46-47
Sanders, Joe & Ellen 55-59
Shaw, Howard & Jean 53-55
Schrader, Paul & Dreanna 59-60
Skillen, Johnny & Kay 64-66
Stanfield, Jimmy & Fran 71-74
Stefano, Michael & Margaret 55-57
Stryjewski, Steve & Carol 46-47
Watkins, Don & Dot 46-50
Weber, Check 76-77
Welker, James & Vera 52-55
Wentway, Charles & Pat 53-57
Wheeler, Jim 50-53
Wilbur, Jim & Marge 53-56
Wilson, Gary & Cathy 60-62
Wilson, Henry & Sue 50-53
Yessak, Larry & Peggy 58-60
Zimmerman, Roy & Ruth 49-53

The attendees list above taken from the sign-up sheet at the registration desk. One name we could not decipher and we hope we have the correct spelling for the remainder. The editor assumes responsibility for spelling goofs here. [Top](#)

Report of the 1997 Meeting of the Association

The following notes summarize the business conducted and items discussed at the meeting that was called to order by President Hoot Gibson at 0900, Saturday, April 26, 1997.

The President welcomed all those attending the 1997 reunion and recognized, for special merit, Gary Wilson who organized the reunion.

The Treasurer Ed Coale indicated that the treasury currently held a balance of \$4,289.74 before paying off this year's reunion expenses. Gibson emphasized that all funds coming into the Association must go through the Treasurer. Ed Coale was elected to the office of Treasurer for one year with his term expiring at the next reunion.

The need for a reunion registration fee was discussed and it was determined that a fee was indeed needed and that the amount would be set by the yearly requirements of the location at which the reunion was to be held. Dues for the Association were set at \$15 per year payable. The 820 Newsletter will carry a notice of this amount and will inform those members in arrears that if the Association does not receive their dues they will be dropped from the mailing list.

Gary Wilson was elected to the Association Board to replace Wendall Calloway whose term had expired. A discussion was held as to how to manage and finance the purchase of "memorabilia" (hats, T-shirts, coffee mugs, ship's patches,) and the mechanism was not resolved. If anyone would like to volunteer to take on the assignment, please contact Hoot Gibson. A related issue concerned the use of one or more of the destinations DD/DD-820, DD-820, or DDE-820 on individual pieces of memorabilia since the ship was designated as both a DD and DDE at one time. If feasible, such items should be available and marked for either DD0820 or DDE-820. The combined designation DD/DDE may have to be used to cover both cases when the production or both would be too expensive. You may have noticed that the silhouette of the ship appearing at the bottom of the cover page of 820 Newsletter represents the RICH in one of her three major configurations. In each issue the silhouette changes in rotation: May issue, Original Configuration as launched, August issue, Mid 1950s image with torpedo tubes and 5"/38 Mt. 52 removed. November issue in her FRAM I and last conversion appearance. The February issue begins the rotation again.

The President of the Association indicated that a permanent case display (approximately 4' x 6') for our Association could be had, by purchase, aboard the USS LAFFEY DD-724. This venerable and famous tin can serves as a destroyer memorial at Patriot's Point in Charleston, SC. You may remember that LAFFEY took three bombs, two near misses and five kamikaze plane hits off Okinawa but survived to fight again off Korea. The case would cost the Association about \$1500 but would be a permanent remembrance of our ship and her crew. Hoot is continuing to investigate the issue.

The president recognized the presence of plank owners Robbins, Reilly, Stryjewski, Roggenbeck, Sanow, Oberlander and Watkins at the reunion. In addition Ed Black, a surviving crew member from the destroyer escort USS RICH DE-695 sunk off Normandy, was also recognized.

The next reunion will be held in Monck's Corners, SC with the dates to be set in the future. There was some discussion as to the best dates on which to hold the reunion. There was no real consensus as to an ideal date. If you would be willing to host the 1999 reunion please contact Hoot Gibson, P. O. Box 506, Pinopolis, SC 29469 (803-899-7194)

The meeting as adjourned by President Gibson at 1150. [Top](#)

SHIP'S LOG

The newsletter concludes our printing of the "official" Navy department history of the RICH as it appears in the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. After a five-month Med cruise in 1971 "She returned to the east coast 23 July and continued normal operations and exercises out of Norfolk until November. RICH departed from Norfolk 17 October and arrived Subic Bay, Philippine Islands, a month and a day later. Just over three months later, she was on her way back to Norfolk arriving 23 March 1973. Since that time, RICH has continued normal operations along the Atlantic coast, home ported at Norfolk, VA. RICH was awarded three battle stars for service off Vietnam."

Those shipmates who can write a short "history" of their experience on the ship after 1973 are urged to do so and send it in to the Editor of the 820 Newsletter. The Navy has not up-dated the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships to reflect our ship's history post-1973. We will put your accounts together and finish the story up to the point of her removal from the Navy's ships in commission list.

Chief Best's log of the ship's early travels continued:

APRIL 1948

14 0835 Underway from Newport, RI for Mellville, RI to go to Key West, Fla

17 Arrived in Key West, Fla In April in and out of Key West.

MAY 1948

3 0840 Underway from KWF

13 1430 Arrived at New Orleans, LA

17 0930 Underway from New Orleans

20 Arrived at KWF

21 16 Underway from KWF

JUNE 1948

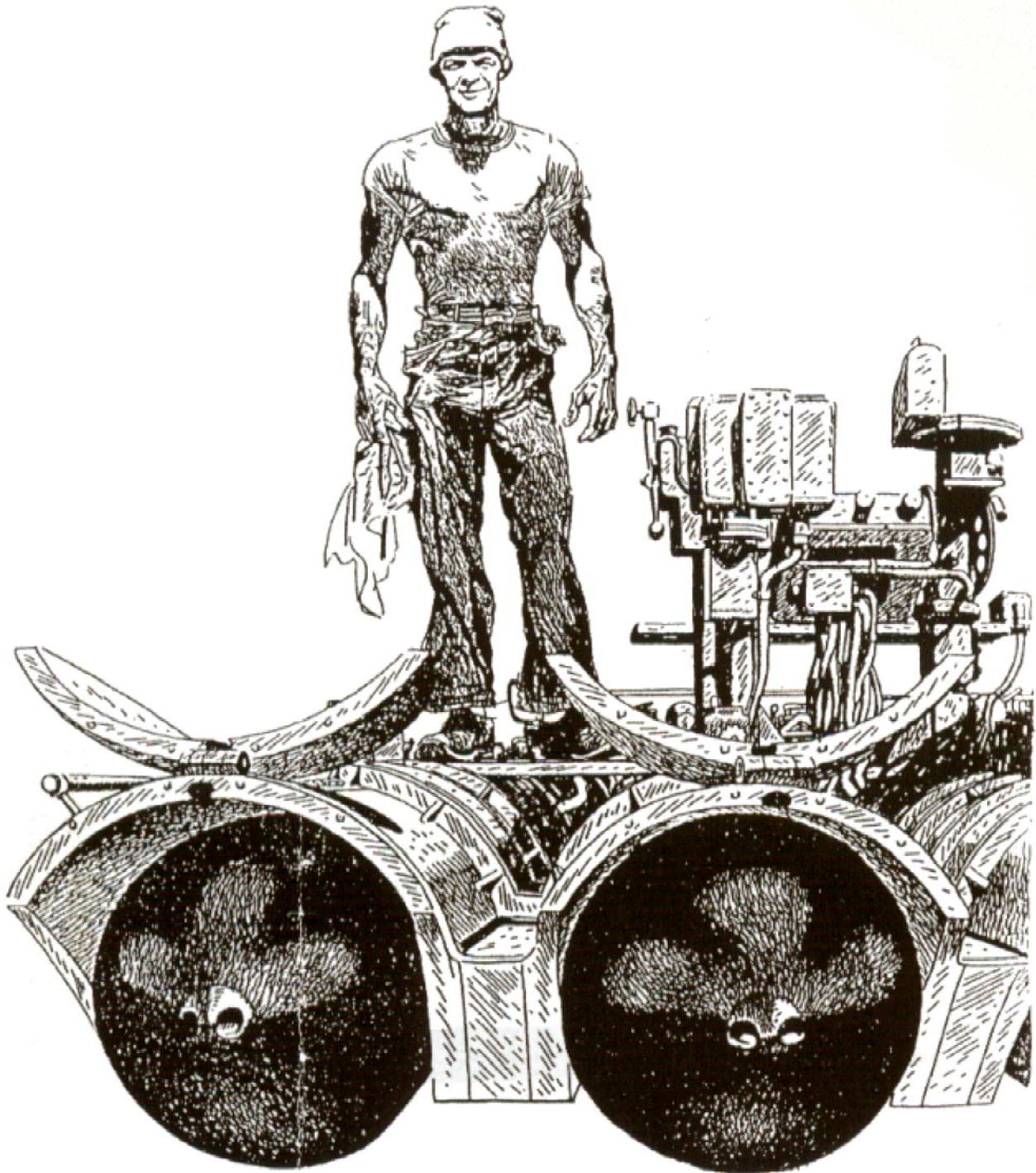
21 In port Newport, RI

23 In port Bristol, RI

Underway to Newport, RI Rest of month in and out to sea.

AUGUST 1948

In port Newport, RI and underway all month. XXX



The torpedoman drawing is by LCDR Fred Freeman, USNR and is taken from "United States Destroyer Operations in World War II" by Theodore Roscoe. Published by the US Naval Institute, Annapolis, MD, 1953

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USS RICH · DD-820 · DDE-820



Transcription courtesy of Pamela Compher