

The 820 Newsletter

World Wide Web Edition



Volume 4, Number 3

August 1997

SHIP'S OFFICE

Association Business

As you might recall from the last newsletter, or if you attended the annual RICH meeting in Nashville in April, the dues for the Association were set at \$15.00 per year. It was also decided at the meeting that those shipmates not paying their dues would be removed from the 820 Newsletter mailing list. The list which then stood at a high of 279 has now been reduced by one-half to 139 paying members of the Association. Of course we would like to see the membership once again grow but not at the expense of those willing to support their Association.

1998 Reunion Planning

Hoot Gibson, our Association's President, has again agreed to host the annual reunion. We will return to Monck's Corners, SC located just outside of Charleston for the shindig April 22nd through 25th, 1998. The gathering will be held at the Berkley Motel where we had such a great time in 1995. The very reasonable room cost will be approximately \$35 per day and you may make advance reservation in Monck's Corners by calling the motel at 803-761-8400. As planning progresses we will keep you informed. We had 56 shipmates attend the '97 reunion in Nashville; lets see if we can top that in 1998. Hoot also informs us that the 50/50 tickets have been forward to the Treasurer, Ed Coale for mailing. [Top](#)

Locator File

The Newsletter has been asked to post a "Location Notice." A correspondent would like to located Norman Norris, TM3, who was on the RICH from 1953-57. If you have an address for Norris please contact the editor.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

No doubt some of you radioman/telemen/and ET types remember the days of the 60 word per minute TTY, TBLs, RBOs, TED/REDS, RAK/RAL, TCS and the "greasy-27." The receipt, production, and routing of "flimsy" carbon copies of messages received over the fleet broadcast (FOX) by radiomen who could copy a circuit, drink a Coke, smoke cigarettes and read the latest "skin book" was always astonishing to the editor. That was the order of the day then. Not any more... the Navy's command, control and communications systems are completely computerized. Some of it is "WEBed" also There is a tremendous amount of information available to those of you who have computers and access to the Internet. Your friends may have computers, if you don't own one, that would allow you access to these sources. Also many public libraries now have computers available for their patrons at no cost. The Naval Reserve Association's newsletter made available a long list of "sites" on which Navy information could be obtained. Others below are from the editor's sources. A few Internet-Web Sites are listed for your information: [Top](#)

Defense Finance and Accounting(for military retiree's).
Bureau of Naval Personnel Home Site.
Office of Sec. Defense Health Affairs (TRICARE News).
Navy On-line Home Page (access to USN in general).
Navy News Service.
Fleet Reserve Association's Navy News.
Navy Calendar.
Navy Internet News (NIK Homepage).
Navy Memorial Log (Washington, DC)

<http://www.dfas.mil>
<http://www.navy.mil/homepages/bupers/>
<http://www.ha.osd.mil/>
<http://www.navy.mil>
<http://ncts.navy.mil/navpalib/news/navnews/www/navnews.html>
<http://www.fra.org/fra/navalaff.html>
<http://www.navy.mil/navpalib/chinfo/comrel/calendar.txt>
<http://www.nosc.mil/nik/>
<http://www.lonesailor.org>

SUMMER CRUISING

Where were you the summer of '49? The following short article appeared in the June 1949 issue of ALL HANDS. "Ten ships, headed by the battleship USS Missouri (BB 63), will comprise this year's midshipmen's practice squadron. The ships will make one cruise to England and another to France this summer. Besides Missouri, the following ships will take part in the cruises: USS New (DD 818), USS Holder (DD 819), USS Rich (DD 820), USS Robert L. Wilson (DD 847), and USS Damato (DD 871), and the light mine layers USS Thomas E. Fraser (DM 24), USS Shannon (DM 25), USS Harry F. Bauer (DM 26) and USS Shea (DM 30)."

The cruise was organized as Task Force Sixty-one and was under the command of Allan E. Smith RADM, USN. Eight universities and colleges were represented among the midshipmen. The byword of the cruise was "Learning by Doing." RICH was in DESRON 8 at the time commanded by CAPT. John Sylvester, in DESDIV 81 and the ship's Captain H.E. Baker, USN. The DMs were from MINDIV 2. The DM designation represented a group of destroyers that had been converted to minelayers. All the DMs listed above were Allen M. Sumner Class minelayer conversions. In the DM configuration Sumner Class DDs had two tracks for handling the mines arranged down both sides of the ship aft of the midships passageway. Mines could be shifted from the port to starboard sides either at that passageway or aft of Mount 53. The tracks delivered the mines over the stern of the ship. These vessels carried 120 mines but also could handle depth charges. Their torpedo tubes were removed and some of the anti-aircraft guns (20 mm) were relocated to adjust for the weight of the mines. All of these DMs were stricken from the Navy list in the early 1970s. There was also a group of High Speed Minesweepers designated the DMS Class. Most of these ships were converted flush-deck, four-stack WWI era destroyers. Some, however, were Benson-Livermore class converts. [Top](#)

SHIP'S LOG

We conclude the log kept by Chief Best from 1946-1948...a real "old timer." Thanks to the Chief for sharing his record with us.

SEPTEMBER 1948

7 Fire in #1 Fireroom
9 Arrived 1430 in Bermuda
11 In port, no water, evaporator out of commission
12 1300 Underway, storm coming in
13 Underway in storm, eye winds 125 mph.

SEPTEMBER 1948

23 1030 Arrived Brooklyn Naval Shipyard

OCTOBER 1948

3 In port, Newport, RI.
18 0001 Underway
19 0330 Sub hit us and we stayed out until 0800.

Wow! What logs don't say;. A fire in a fireroom, a hurricane and hit by a submarine! Can anyone elaborate on any of these events? Never a dull moment. Don Oberlander, RM2, was in the ship from 1946-1948 and has supplied the Newsletter with his log. In many ways it will fill in the breaks in Chief Best" log and so we will run it in serial parts over the next few newsletter issues.

OCTOBER 1947

13-30 Guantanamo Bay, Cuba Refresher Training

NOVEMBER 1947

1 Completed training, Departed Guantanamo Bay for Key West, Florida
3 Arrived Key West, Florida
8-30 Operations in and out of Key West with submarines testing new equipment.

DECEMBER 1947

1-9 Continued Ops in Key West
9 Departed Key West enroute Boston
13 Arrived Boston Naval Shipyard

JANUARY 1948

3 Departed shipyard for South Boston
4 Loading ammunition in South Boston
5 Departed Boston for Key West
9 Arrived Charleston Naval Shipyard for repairs caused by engine trouble enroute.
10 Departed Charleston for Key West
12 Arrived Key West

FEBRUARY 1948

13 Some members of the crew were lucky enough to board SS-480, USS MEDREGAL for a weekend in Havana, Cuba. This was the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the battleship MAINE.

14 Returned to Key West aboard the MEDREGAL submarine.

MARCH 1948

19 Departed Key West for Newport, RI.
22 Arrived Newport and docked next to USS YOSEMITE (AD19)

APRIL 1948

15 Departed Newport for Key West
18 Arrived Key West
20 Began Phase 2 operation in Key West area with USS , NINDORO (CVE-120), 5 destroyers including RICH, two destroyers escorts and a two submarines.

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DESRON THIRTY-SIX AND THE RICH

The RICH was a part of DESRON 8 when she made the summer of '49 European cruise. A black eight ball painted on the ships forward stack was the squadron's logo. For a number of years she was also a member of DESRON 36. Now the forward stack was painted with a new circular logo showing North and South America, the Atlantic, Western Europe and Africa, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea as our area of operations. The

continents were represented in bright yellow and the ocean and sea areas appeared in dark blue. Two red and yellow lightning bolts crossed in the middle of the logo, in mid-Atlantic, over a submarine shown in dark silhouette. The work DESRON and below it the numerals 36 in black appeared in what would be the Arctic Ocean near the top of the logo. This was a very colorful logo. It may still be available on a coffee cup from Military Art China, 8 Park Drive, P. O. Box 406, Westford, MA 01886-0406, Telephone 508-3920-0751.

The editor has a partial history of DESRON Three-Six, obtained from an old cruise book, and will run it in serial parts in several newsletters. Our first installment: "Destroyer Squadron Thirty-Six was established 1 July 1956. It included the USS NEEW (DDE-818) Flagship, USS HOLDER (DDE-819), USS RICH (DDE-820), USS R.L. WILSON (DDE-847), USS BASILONE (DDE-824) and USS DAMATO (DDE-871)."

"During the summer of 1956 the Squadron participated in a summer training cruise for midshipmen. In October 1956 the Squadron sailed for a tour of NATO countries and the conduct of advanced ASW exercises. In November 1956 the Squadron was diverted from its tour and proceeded to the Mediterranean to operate with the U.S. Sixth Fleet during the Suez crisis. The Squadron returned to Norfolk in mid-December 1956. The first portion of 1957 was devoted to local ASW operations and training. During the summer of 1957 DESDIV 361 participated in the International Naval Review in Norfolk and conducted local operations in the Virginia Capes area. DESDIV 362 participated in a Midshipmen Cruise, stopping in Brazil and Puerto Rico. During this period USS H. J. ELLISON (DD-864) and USS MULLINEX (DD-944) joined DESRON 36." [Top](#)

INTERNATIONAL NAVAL REVIEW - 1957

And speaking of the Naval Review of 1957: The ship's Supply Officer at the time was H. "Mack" Hughes, LTJG SC USN. You may remember one of Mack's reminiscences in the May 1996 issue of the Newsletter. Well here's another at the time of the Naval Review: "The International Naval Review week in Norfolk found the RICH right in the middle of the celebration. RICH was host ship for the Danish destroyer HOLGER DANSKE. I took her Supply Officer with me to the Supply Center and other support places in Norfolk. There were social events which all of the officers not on watch were expected to attend. We were at the D&S piers in June 1957 and as a department head I had to be at the "O" Club by 4 p.m. It was hot that day. I had hurriedly dressed in my "choker" white dress uniform, and rushed to the quarterdeck to leave the ship. I stepped on to the brow and the PO-of-the-Watch said...SIRRRRRR. Junior officers well know that sound and that it really means: "I've Gotcha!" I paused and looked at him - not too kindly I am sure since I was late already. He smiled and said "Aren't you supposed to wear shoulder boards with the uniform sir? Thank you PO-of-the-Watch."

Mack taught your editor how to light and really enjoy a good cigar. This habit, I hasten to add, I gave up long ago. He had a ritual of lighting a cigar (never a stogie) after the evening meal. To enjoy the best from a fine cigar you first had to warm it with your lighter, then you briefly ignited it (without drawing on it) and finally you lighted it with a full draft. Aaaaah, what a pleasure when complemented by wardroom coffee. Mack Hughes passed away this last January... TAPS at the end of the Newsletter. [Top](#)

THE U.S. NAVY TODAY

"Today's Navy is 435,000 active duty men and women, 270,000 reservists, an active fleet of 374 ships and more than 5,000 aircraft. Operational forces are part of the Seventh Fleet in the Far East, Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, Fifth in the Middle East, Second Fleet in our East Coast waters and First Fleet on the West Coast. In addition, the Navy carries out these tasks: designs missiles, ships boat and aircraft, operates 29 naval air stations and 171 naval shore stations throughout the U.S., conducts an integrated science and technology program, operates the Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps programs at 58 colleges and universities, a postgraduate school, a professional war college and a medical school, annually manages repair and replacement parts valued at \$20 billion and purchases goods and services worth over \$6 billion, provides health care to nearly 13 million patients in 30 hospitals, 200+ medical clinics and also at 236 dental centers in the U.S. and overseas." (Source: "The Lone Sailor" summer 1997. Published by the U.S. Navy Memorial, Washington, DC) By way of contrast: In 1939, the Navy had 126,000 officers and men on its rosters and by V-J day over 3,400,000 men and women had served. The fleet at the end of WWII, counting only the combatants (carriers to submarines) numbered over 1060 vessels of which some 367 were destroyers. This figure does not include amphibians, the service force, small craft, yard vessels etc. There were also some 8400 aircraft in the 1946 fleet. [Top](#)

FROM THE GALLEY

The mess cooks keep agitating (did they ever stop?) to put information on the galley and chow in the Newsletter. Well OK! This is a bit on the "you never had it so good side" but: How about food in the old, really old, Navy? Wouldn't it be great to watch the reaction of a Revolutionary War or War of 1812 sailor to the chow available in today's galley. If you stepped back into time, say to 1800, and mess call on a sailing frigate the noon meal you received would probably consist of: plumduff (a mixture of flour, molasses and raisins boiled in a kettle until it became rubbery) and salt horse. This was a salt-packed stringy meat (usually rancid) that could be eaten only if first soaked long enough in water. The only meats available were salt horse, pork and beef. The evening ration would have probably consisted of cracker-hash, hardtack (a jawbreaking bread that was used up through the Civil War and probably then it was War of 1812 surplus, molasses and pails of tea. Sailors ate in "messes" or groups of 10-20 individuals that was often self-selecting. For each 100 men of that era there was an allowance of nine gallons of molasses, three pounds of candles and 24 pounds of soft or eight pounds of hard soap - non consumable I presume. A rum ration was common as was beer or cider. The mess cooks were the caterers for the messes. Men were paid for their food but that money was "commuted" over to the cooks and often the men never saw it. Thus the system was ripe for corruption. By 1842 a new law was passed changing the day-to-day fare of food. Now raisins, dried apples, pickles, cranberries, fresh vegetables,

sauerkraut and soft bread were available. (Information from ALL HANDS magazine, May 1948). [Top](#)

TAPS

We regret to inform our shipmates that Horal "Mack" Hughes, 74, of Norfolk, VA died in January. Mack, then a LTJG, was the ship's Supply Officer from 1957-59. He was a retired Commander with 30 years service in the Navy. Mack enlisted at the beginning of WWII and was a member of the magazine crew on the USS WASHINGTON when she sunk the Japanese battleship KIRISHIMA off Guadalcanal in 1942. He as a native of New Bern, NC and was a veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. After retiring from the Navy he worked as materials manager for the city of Norfolk, VA. He also had his own business - Security Accountant Associates. Survivors include his wife, two daughters, four sisters, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He was buried in Norfolk with military honors

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USS RICH · DD-820 · DDE-820



Transcription courtesy of Pamela Compher