

# The 820 Newsletter

World Wide Web Edition



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## Ships Office

**820 Newsletter Editor:** This Editor's tour of duty ends 1 May 2000. Now would be a good time to step up and serve your association and demonstrate your journalistic skill. It's not a difficult job but other commitments prohibit me from continuing but I'll be ready to [electronically] assist.

**On The Mend:** If response seems a bit slow coming from this office it's because I'm recuperating from Sick Call. On January 13th I underwent open heart surgery for an Aortic Valve replacement. While this was not totally unexpected, (the faulty valve has been being tracked for nearly five years) I didn't anticipate surgery until later this year. But alas, God is very much in control. The procedure was without complication. I was blessed with a hand-picked medical team courtesy of my sister-in-law who is OR Coordinator at the hospital and further blessed to be married to my Medical Officer and Night Nurse who is making sure I do all the right things. Meanwhile, I don't expect to ring up full turns until the beginning of March.

## Reunion 2000

Everything is good to go for the very best RICH Reunion so far this millennium! And... it's being held in Paradise! Based at the Ramada/South (Osprey, Florida) shipmates should make their lodging arrangements directly with the Ramada. The national reservations telephone is 1-888-298-2054 but it is recommended you make your reservation directly with the Ramada at 941-966-2121 or by fax at 941-966-1124. Be sure to ask for and tell them you are with the USS Rich when making your reservations.

The Ramada is an excellent facility and shipmates have a guaranteed nightly Rich Reunion rate of \$52/person/night. We will send out Rich Reunion 2000 Registration forms in the next 3-4 weeks.

Sarasota is known the world-over as a wonderful place to visit. In addition to our planned reunion activities, you will have ample time for doing an extensive variety of activities which will meet every budget. (If Mickey is a must, it's 128 miles) Otherwise, we're looking at deep-sea fishing, golf, tennis, museums, the beach listed as one of the 10 best in the world, opera, theater, professional baseball, Busch Gardens (45 miles), and the world-famous St. Armand's Key shopping, Yup, we're gonna keep you busy. And, you're gonna have a great time!

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## Deceased Shipmates

We're certain we do not have a complete list of deceased shipmates. Here is who we have: (Name/Rate/Tour)

**Ater**, Donald N. (...54-56) **Copeland**, William (...50-53) **Cuttingham** (FTCS,00-00) **Doyle**, Oattie (HMC,46-46) **DuBois**, Ronald C (SO1,60-62) **Gordon**, Louis (TM2,58-60) **Hughes**, Horald M (LTjg, 57-58) **Insley**, Jim M (RM3,48-52) **Irving**, Robert (Ens,48-50) **Klag**, Louis (ARM2,46-46) **Lape**, Wayne (FC1,46-48) **Livingston**, Morris (...00-00) **Lodestro**, John (...00-00) **Morrison**, Charles (...65-66) **Nelson**, Byron (RDSN,52-52) **Oberdoester**, Donald F (CS3,49-53) **Owens**, Bobbie Frank (BT2,55-58) **Patton**, Richard W (SO3,48-51) **Rice**, Grantland G (GM2,00-00) **Russ**, Fletcher W (YN3,66-66) **Shaw**, William (ST1,69-72) **Smarts** (RDC,00-00) **Stefano**, Mike (...00-00) **Stefencavage**, George (CDR,77-77) **Teezel**, Alan N (IC3,68-70) **Thigpen** (SMC ,00-00)

We would very much appreciate your helped in bringing this list up to date and corrected. If, by chance, you have obituaries, it would be an honor and privilege to post is on the Rich website.

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## RICH Crewman Ron Tucker Remembers...

In March of '68, the Rich left Norfolk again. She was headed for duty with the Seventh Fleet in the waters of the South China Sea, off the coast of North and South Vietnam. She steamed toward Yankee Station in the Gulf of Tonkin.

In route to Yankee Station, the Rich crossed the Isthmus of Panama. It was a pleasure to see this important place that had such a rich history. I remember getting an embossed commemorative card that I still have today. It reads:

### **"Order of the Lock, Panama Canal**

**Know Ye that Ron Tucker on the 31st day of March, 1968, aboard the U.S.S. Rich, crossed the Isthmus of Panama by Her Servant Panama Hattie, Daughter of the Isthmus"**

Commander Edward C. Whelan, Captain of Rich, signed the card. Commander Whelan was among the Navy's finest.

On May 7, 1968, forty-two days after departure from Norfolk, VA, and 12,000 nautical miles later, the Rich arrived at Subic Bay in the Republic of the Philippines. Liberty was granted in the City of Olongapo. Other ports of call included Koishung, Taiwan.

The Rich then steamed to Yankee Station. From May 13, through July 20, 1968 the Rich provided escort and plane guard services for four successive attack aircraft carriers: USS Bon Homme Richard, USS Enterprise, USS Constellation, and the USS Ticonderoga in the Tonkin Gulf.

What impressed me most about this tour was getting the opportunity to see these fine ships and their attack aircraft in action. It was a long way from the plastic models that I tinkered with as a child.

I made the following notation in my diary: What a workout Vietnam was. A basic workday in Vietnam aboard the Rich

consisted of an eight hours on and eight hours off. During the eight hours off, time was spent performing ship maintenance, highlining food and stores, refueling, or taking on ammunitions and mail (God Bless the mail.) In essence, the workday was sixteen hours a day, seven days a week. During the eight remaining hours of the day, time was spent eating, showering, and sleeping (sometimes showering was skipped in favor of sleep). And of course, sleep was often interrupted by more refueling and highlining.

On July 30, 1968, the Rich arrived at Danang, South Vietnam to join a search and rescue group consisting of the USS Sterett, USS Hanson, USS Wainwright, and the USS England. These were guided missile frigates and destroyers that were dispersed at three stations along the North Vietnam coast from which they controlled aircraft and conducted rescue operations for pilots unable to return to their parent carriers.

It was during this period, in the middle of night, that the Rich manned its battle stations; the result of North Vietnamese helicopters delivering rocket fire at the England and Hanson. My heart was pounding like a jackhammer. No casualties were reported and damages were slight. But, it was scary for us first-timers.

I remember one morning looking out to shore and seeing a rainsquall unloading over the Vietnam landscape. I was thinking of home and recalled sitting in my high school government class back in 1965. The teacher asked the class if any of us could find Vietnam on the World map. Not one of us could. The teacher said: "You guys better find out. You're are going to be fighting there in a year or two!

And he was right. I was in a war that my friends back home were protesting. I remember being confused about what we were supposed to doing in Vietnam. I remember standing watch on the Asroc Deck one evening, looking out toward the Vietnam shoreline. The weather was warm and comfortable. The ship was about twenty miles from the mainland and the sun was moving fast behind the Vietnam landscape. After sunset, the hills of Vietnam become nothing but dark masses to the eye - almost lost in the darkness. The nights were generally silent, giving a false sense of peace, tranquility, and safety. The ship was too far from shore to hear the artillery fire and explosions taking place on the mainland, but the yellow flash of artillery fire and vast explosions repeatedly silhouetted the landscape. I could see the flames sprouting out from the rear of naval jets. It was like watching a great silent apocalypse. I was watching a war in remote silence. The silence was so serene that one could almost forget that it was a war zone and that villages were being destroyed, that men, women, and children were being killed on the mainland.

A visit to Hong Kong was followed by ten days as a task unit on the gunline in the I Corp Tactical Zone in the northern sector of South Vietnam. From Sept 21, to October 1, 1968 the Rich provided naval gunfire support for the First Division, Army of Republic of South Vietnam, and the 26th Marines, Third Division. The nights were no longer silent. It was a relentless ten days of gunfire. I can still hear the relentless "Boom . Boom . Boom. The percussion of sound would hit your body so hard it would numb your chest. There was the constant spray of burning cork and the smell of gunpowder in your nostrils.

In October of 1968 the Rich was relieved of duty by the Battleship USS New Jersey (BB-62). I regret that I did not get a closer look at the New Jersey. The reputation of her 16" guns was legendary. I could see her along the horizon on the starboard side (about five miles away) and could hear her guns firing. That was as close as I got to her.

The Rich was reunited with Destroyer Division Twenty-One on return to the United States. The Rich arrived in Norfolk, VA on November 5, 1968. Brutal winter temperatures, high winds, freezing ice, and rough seas marked the return.

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## Tom Hegele's Log

Tom's personal account of *RICH's* activities during the early sixties continues. While not all of us were aboard at this time, in reading the log, each of us can related to entries which reflect events during our own tour.

Friday, 24 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Routine working day. Did Welfare & Rec. audit and DASH training records.

Saturday, 25 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Duty Weekend. Stood 16-2000 JOOD

Sunday, 26 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Duty Weekend. Stood 08-1200 JOOD

Monday, 27 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Day spent working on Welfare & Recreation. Worked on 3rd Division training records.

Tuesday, 28 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Routine working day.

Wednesday, 29 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Shifted berths to Pier 20, Berth 201, starboard side to USS WARRINGTON (DD-844)

Thursday, 30 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Breasted out, then breasted in to Pier 20. Duty day, stood 08-1200 JOOD. Assigned to crypto board. Turned up 1122 for 3 minutes.

Friday, 31 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Tracked, torqued & P.C. 1122 P.C. 1126, but it is still not right. Worked to 12:30 (0030) Sat, and was unable to call on the Captain... again.

Saturday, 01 August 1964 - In port NORVA. Worked five (5) hours getting spare blades for birds.

Sunday, 02 July 1964 - In port NORVA. Last day before Med Cruise at home.

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## Membership

Good news is, if you're a current member, your dues are paid all the way until May 7, 2000. Bad news is, if you're not a member, **this may be your last newsletter**. Of the many things we do in life, becoming an association member is one of the most painless. We very much want you to join ranks with us. Here's how: Fill out a check for \$15.00. Send it to:

USS RICH DD/DDE-820 ASSOCIATION  
Walter Becker, Treasurer  
1102 Wedgewood Lake Road  
Stroudsburg PA 18360-8733

Be sure to include your Name, Mailing Address, Rate, and Tour Dates aboard *RICH*. Please note we do not make our master database available to anyone for any reason. We do, however, provide addresses to other shipmates who may be looking for you.

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## Shipmate To Shipmate

I served on the Rich **73-74** in after fireroom as a BT .I would like to hear from my shipmates. Edward C. Archuleta (Archie@Lds.net)

Would like to hear from anyone that was assigned to the After Engine Room from **July 63 to July 67**. Mike Aeschlimann (mike\_ae@ix.netcom).com

Would like to find R L Pulver BT3 who served from **68 to 72**. Dennis Rice (wdrice@popost.micron.net)

I would like for any one serving on board **1948-1951** that has information on James A Slagle or Carlton J Spears to contact me. Both worked in the supply office (disbursing & storekeeping). Hoyt Hicks (claws@shelby.net)

Looking for any info regarding the BMs during the period **1966-68**. Names I can remember are: Marvin Foote, BM3 - Russell Oliver, BM3. Rusty Curl (rustyc@aol.com)

I would like to locate a Charles Saprion (circa **1946-48**). He was my father's very close friend.  
Lucia Lodestro (daughter of John Lodestro)

[Mailing addresses upon request]

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