NEWSLETTER

3rd Issue 22nd Year

01 June 2014

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Association's Web Site:
www.greatsitkin.org

From Our President:

Nothing really going on except this year's reunion. Gene and his lovely bride have done a great job getting everything ready. They only need your registration form and a check to help make it a success!

Web Site Update:

Believe it or not, I finally posted the 2013 Reunion pictures. There is also a new picture of the ship in the AE-17 Photos book. With many thanks to Alvah Ryerson, we have added to the ship's history for the '50 & '51 cruises. From the information we received from his personal diary, we were able to add 14 new ship photos with 38 dates of ship's UNREPed in October & November '51.

That's all for now. See you in Nashville!

New finds: Robert Clark, M14

Welcome aboard, Shipmate!

Ron Zimmerman
President

Note from Editor: Many of you have asked about Ron's health. Good news! Recent medical results for Ron show "no signs of the lymphoma!" Ron will still do the maintenance chemo treatment in July, then more tests to make sure the lymphoma stays in remission.

A word from the Vice President:

I heard that "spring has sprung." Well, that's not really the case here in Ohio! Wind blowing, raining, and cooler than normal…….hmmm. Come to think of it, that's everywhere except where Ron lives. It's always sunny and around 80 degrees in Florida. I think we all need to get together and send a certain groundhog in Pennsylvania to a retirement center!

Disney World was a blast with the grandkids! I think Joy had more fun than they did! We couldn't keep her off Thunder Mountain! The weather was similar to where Ron and Sally live. Our amazing daughter, Kim, had everything planned out so Joy and I just followed along with her. We made wonderful memories with our family.

Now for the membership status: We have 88 paid members at this point with 2 new finds so far this year.

A reminder as usual: If anything changes in the way of addresses, phone numbers or E-mail addresses, please let me know so we can keep the Newsletter coming to you.

Another reminder: Send your checks to Gene McNeill for the Nashville reunion. Gene and Nora have spent a lot of time making it "special" for all of us.

That's all I have so far. Work on those tans! We'll see you in Nashville!

Jim Dunno
Vice President & Membership Chairman

"Just thought you'd like to see this. It's not too often the Dunno family are all in one spot."

Jim & Joy Dunno Family

Secretary's Report:

Winter is finally behind us and spring has arrived. Let's begin looking forward to connecting again in Nashville, Tennessee, for our 22nd USS Great Sitkin reunion.

The dates of the reunion are September 10, 2014 through September 14, 2014. Eugene and Nora McNeill have many activities planned for those who will be attending. I hope to see you there!

Nominations for Officers: Nominations for the Executive Board positions are now open. All positions are up for reelection every year. Present officers may be reelected. Only active members who have annual dues current are eligible to serve. All nominations for office must be received by the Association's Secretary, no later than August 25, 2014.

Nominations must be in writing and sent by either postal service or E-mail. Nominees will be contacted by the Secretary to insure their acceptance of the nomination and their willingness to serve. If you have any questions concerning nominations or serving, please feel free to contact me.

Jim Perko
Secretary

Repair 3:

"Ok, here we are - right on top of summer." I'm writing this report on Saturday before Memorial Day, America's most solemn holiday. On Memorial Day, we remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation. Brave men and women have been doing this since the American Revolution. They continue serving to this very day.

Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day. It was initiated to honor the solders in the Union and Confederate armies who died during the American Civil War. After World War I, it was extended to include all men and women who died in any war or military action. In 1971, Memorial Day became a federal holiday.

On this day, the U.S. flag is raised to the top of the staff, and then lowered to the half-staff position where it remains until noon. At noon, the flag is raised to full staff again in honor of the fallen soldiers. The memories of these soldiers determine their sacrifice will not be in vain, but we shall rise up, carry on and continue the fight for liberty and justice for all.

In the last Newsletter, I mentioned that on 7 March, Mary and I would be going to Parris Island, SC to see a newly minted Marine graduate from basic training. This was a truly memorable experience; similar to what we saw at Great Lakes, Illinois, in 2010.

It was good to be a Sailor in the middle of a sea of green. But unlike my "Tun Tavern" days at the Philadelphia Navy Base, there was no dissention in the ranks. It never gets old to hear the gate sentry say "Welcome aboard, Chief!"

That wraps it for this time. I trust that by now, you all have made plans to come to Nashville for the 2014 reunion. I am really looking forward to visiting the Antique Archeology store in Nashville, home of the guys on the History Channel's *American Pickers*.

See y'all in Nashville!

George Kaiser
Treasurer

The Chaplain's Corner:

"Good Day to all of you!"

Spring has arrived and summer is fast approaching. It certainly was a long, hard, cold winter and wet spring. I have been cutting grass and getting ready to plant our small vegetable garden.

Patsy and I took a short vacation down to Nassau in the Bahamas in April. It was 50 degrees; cold and raining when we left Columbus, Ohio. When we arrived in Nassau, the sun was shining and it was warm. Unfortunately, I got sick the second day I was there with an upper respiratory infection and a fever. The sunshine and warm temperature sure made me feel a lot better.

It makes me think about another Sun that's always shining when things are not going our way. Even when the storm clouds are all we can see; that's God's son, Jesus. The Psalmists wrote **"The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth."** (Ps. 145:18)

It's time to say good bye for now. Let's keep those families in our prayers that have lost a loved one who sailed aboard the Great Sitkin.

May the Lord Bless and Keep You.

Honor Roll Update:
Alvah W. Ryerson DK1

Spouse Honor Roll: None to report

Mark Rucker
Chaplain

Comments from the Editor: The officer bios in the March issue were a big hit! Many comments were made on how interesting the stories were. We would like to include more bios in future issues, and we would also like to hear from the ladies! Please send me stories on what it was like when your boyfriend, fiancé or husband was in the Navy while you waited and worried at home.

Sitkin People - "Did You Know" is a new item for the Newsletter. I'm always amazed at what Sitkin people do in their spare time when they are not working on a career, volunteering, enjoying retirement or attending a Sitkin Reunion. It's remarkable how active and involved you all are!

Please send me your photos, news items and comments on your various activities. Share your stories with the rest of us!

Note: All photos will be scanned in my PC and promptly returned to you in the same condition received.

Dorothy Hodnichak
Editor

Douglas D. Hauser BM3 Retired VP & Reunion Chairman of the USS Great Sitkin Association
Date Entered Service: August 1952 - Date Discharged: August 1956

I did Boot Camp at Great Lakes, Illinois, graduating in October, 1952. I then went home on leave. While waiting for orders, my Father passed away. My orders came and then they were cancelled. I was supposed to go on the USS Coral Sea as an Aircraft Machinist Mate. New orders came through for the USS Great Sitkin (AE 17). I found out it was an ammo ship. I replied that I was supposed to be an Aircraft Machinist Mate. The officer told me: "God had my soul, but the Navy had my ass."

In February 1953, I left for New York Pier 26, my home port for a year. Then I picked up the ship in Norfolk when it returned from its Med Cruise. After that, I was transferred to the Brooklyn Navy Yard; our home port for the next three years. In the fall of 1953, I went on my first Med Cruise and came back six months later. I believe this was when the ship was breaking up. We had men welding block topside while some of us were firing watch in #3 hole. We went straight to dry docks for major repairs. We were there for four months. We made several trips to Cuba before Castro took over. Cuba was a beautiful place then.

On our next Med Cruise, we were operating with the fleet, traveling as if in war conditions. No lights were visible. We were watching a movie, and we had a call to stand by for collision at frame 50. We were backing down and the ship was vibrating. I ran up on deck to see what was happening. What I saw was an oil tanker coming at us full speed. Just in time, it turned away from us, but it was a very close call. We lost our radar and then the engine broke down. The officer was trying to make up time. He said there was a turn scheduled and that's what happened. All was peaceful for the rest of the cruise.

The next incident was on the following Med cruise. While riding out a storm, the boom on hatch #2 broke out of the cradle as we were getting off our watch. We had lifelines out due to the roughness of the storm. It took six of us four hours to catch and secure it back in the cradle. The rest of the cruise was fine.

My last cruise ended when I got off the ship in Norfolk, Virginia. This was where I boarded the ship in 1953.

In 2002, I took office as Vice President of the USS Great Sitkin Association and held that office for six years. As a member of the Association, I hosted a total of seven reunions. We hold memorial services at each reunion. There were two services that really stood out from the rest. The memorial service on board the USS Kidd in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was memorable. Each shipmate was given special recognition by asking permission to board ship. This was a very touching ceremony as most of the wives had tears in their eyes. The other memorial service that stood out in my mind was the one held at the Naval Station in Great Lakes, Illinois. All of our memorial services have been a great success with Mark Rucker as our Chaplain.

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17)
Narragansett Bay, Newport, Rhode Island - August 9, 1955

We Are Too Old

We were Sailors, who sailed the mighty sea,
We were Sailors nothing else would be.
We were young and swore to defend this land of ours,
Rest assured, we would always be there in her darkest hours.

Now, they say we are too old,
This is what the Government says,
Too old to defend or fight in a war.
We are too old to fight to help keep us free.
We are too old, just old men, for our freedoms
Others cannot see.

Young men and women they fight every day
In distant lands so far away
So freedom will spread and a new dawn
Will awaken,
And those oppressed will see the
Light of day.

We are those who have served in a time gone past,
We are those who served so freedom for others
Would always last.
But it seems at least to me,
That in order to defend our way of life,
You must be young and strong, having never
Endured times when there was worldwide strife.

We swore allegiance to this land of ours,
To defend her in the darkest of hours,
To give our all - even if it meant our life.
This was our oath before God, to defend our
Shores and the American way of life.

Now, in her darkest hours we find we cannot serve,
We are too old; they say our rest is well-deserved.
But we say, and say out loud, this is **Our America,** the land of the free,
Our home, there must be something we can do to insure that
America will always be.

There must be duty where we can lend a hand,
Something behind the scenes, no glory, no grandstand.
It's our love of Country, the American way of life,
And freedom from oppression,
This. . . . . ., is our sole obsession
Give us a chance to show we still have what it takes
To make a stand.
For young and old together for freedom to fight hand in hand,
God Bless America
And her Armed Forces Everywhere.

by: James "Jaybird" Bryant
June 2014

Sitkin People - Did you know?

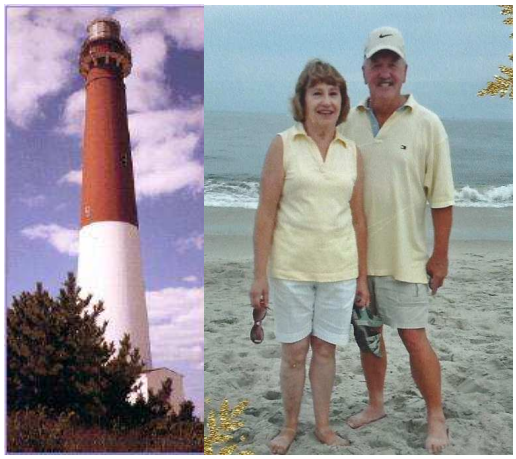
Wayne Agee SH3

Wayne Agee can still fit in his Navy uniform! He attends the Sitkin Banquet each year in his Navy duds! Wayne participated in the 2013 Memorial Day Parade to dedicate the new Veteran's Memorial Park in Kannapolis, North Carolina.

Kenneth L. Carlson LT

Ken & Nancy Carlson vacationed last year in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

James M. Perko BM3



Gerry & Jim Perko live on Long Beach Island. They work at the Barnegat Lighthouse (Old Barney) welcoming visitors & sharing the area's history.

Mrs. John Norton SK3

Fearless **Pat Norton** (Jack) has more energy than most! Here she is in Saint Kitts in the West Indies - **zip lining** (no less).

Edward O'Brien LTJG

Ed O'Brien: "Skiing is my life's passion! One of my most enjoyable memories of serving aboard the USS Great Sitkin was the ability to ski the Alps on leave from the Sitkin during Med cruises in '65 - '66."

Donald R. McClane CW02

Don & Patti McClane have done very well showing three Jaguars. All three are National (JCNA) Jaguar Clubs of North America champions.

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association Active Membership: Active Member status in the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association is open to all crew members. Dues are $20.00 per year and are used to cover the cost of the newsletters, web site hosting, domain name, administrative and other expenses. The membership year is 1 January through 31 December. Membership cards will be issued to all crew members paying dues and will identify the individual by name, expiration date and number of years of Active Membership.

Payment of dues is not required to participate in any official function of the association but is required for being an Active Member. Notices pertaining to dues will be posted on the Website and in the newsletters. Active Members must have their dues paid prior to the annual meeting each year in order to retain their status and eligibility to vote.

To become an Active Member of the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association, please complete the application form below and send it along with a check made payable to the:

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association, c/o Jim Dunno, 272 Stone Hedge Dr., Johnstown, OH 43031

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association Active Member Application & Renewal Form

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Dates Served Aboard: _____ Application Date: _____ [ ] New [ ] Renewal

Amount Submitted: $_____ [ ] 2014 YR ($20.00) [ ] 2015 YR ($20.00) [ ] 2016 YR ($20.00)

[ ] Please send me a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws.

Comments:_____

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association - Ship's Store Order Form

Name: _____ **Phone:**_____

Address: _____ **City, State, Zip:** _____

Ball Caps: Note: Where sizes are indicated, please circle the size/sizes you want.

USS Great Sitkin Ball Caps	(solid back)	$15.00 ea.	Blue	Quantity: _____
USS Great Sitkin AE17 Ball Caps	(solid back)	$15.00 ea.	Blue	Quantity: _____
USS Great Sitkin AE17 Ball Caps	(solid back)	$15.00 ea.	Digital Camouflage	Quantity: _____
USS Ship Name & Silhouette Caps	(mesh back only)	$15.00 ea.	Blue	Quantity: _____

Shirts: **Sizes**

USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Blue	$25.00 ea.	M L XL XXL	Quantity: _____
USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Gray	$25.00 ea.	M L XL XXL	Quantity: _____
USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Pink	$25.00 ea.	S M L XL	Quantity: _____
USS Great Sitkin Ship's Picture T-Shirt	$18.00 ea.	S M L XL XXL	Quantity: _____
USS Great Sitkin Ship's Picture Sweatshirt	$25.00 ea.	L XL XXL	Quantity: _____

Jacket/Hoodie:

USS Great Sitkin All Weather Hooded Zip-Front Jacket - Blue (Note: Jackets are on special order)	$45.00 ea.	M L XL XXL	Quantity: _____
Aluminum water bottles:	$10.00 ea.		Quantity: _____

All prices include postage.
Please make check or money order out to **USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association**

Note: ***DO NOT*** include your "Dues" payment in with your Ship Store Order
They need to be separate checks or money orders.

Questions about Ship's Store items can be E-mailed to: ae17dc3@verizon.net

All orders should be sent to:

USS Great Sitkin Association
c/o George Kaiser
311 Oak Lane
Glenolden, PA 19036

Ship's Store

Ship's Ball Caps $15.00 each
Blue Solid Back, Blue or Camo Mesh Back

Polo Shirts
Men's and Ladies, Dark blue, Grey, Pink **$25.00 each**
(Dark blue not shown)

Aluminum Water Bottle $10 each

All Weather Jacket Blue, $45 each
(Jackets are Special Order)

Ship's Picture Shirts
T-Shirts $18 ea
Sweat Shirts $25.00 ea
Back of shirt has picture,
Front has Ship's patch design

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association

22nd Annual Reunion Itinerary - September 10 - 14, 2014

Nashville, Tennessee

Headquarters:

Holiday Inn Opryland/Airport Hotel (Briley Parkway)
2200 Elm Hill Pike
Nashville, TN 37214

Reservations: 615-883-9770 Mention "USS Great Sitkin Reunion" (Special room rate applies 3 days before & 3 days after)

Room Rates: $99.00 per night (Includes breakfast for two - each day) (Sept.10 - 14) Free parking at Holiday Inn. Complimentary shuttle to and from the Nashville International Airport from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. running every 20 minutes daily. Airport is two miles from the hotel.

Reunion Package: (1 Person - $204.00) (2 People - $408.00) (3 People - $612.00) See registration form

Wednesday: 9/10 Main Registration Day in the Hospitality Room (2nd floor) 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. A welcome reception with food will be held in the hotel atrium.

Thursday: 9/11 Free time until bus transportation to the Nashville Night Life Theatre w/buffet beginning at 5:30 p.m. and show time beginning at 6:30 p.m. For activities during the day, a visit to the nearby Gaylord Opryland Resort is strongly suggested.

Friday: 9/12 Free time for visiting the nearby Gaylord Opryland Resort with their botanical gardens & restaurants. Downtown is the Nashville entertainment district referred to as "The District On Second Avenue and Broadway." This would also be a good day to individually drive to the Jack Daniel's Distillery in Lynchburg TN. The nightspots of special interest in downtown Nashville include Printer's Alley, Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, and the Wildhorse Saloon. The Grand Ole Opry has a newer venue near our hotel, but reservations must be made ahead of time and entertainment changes frequently.

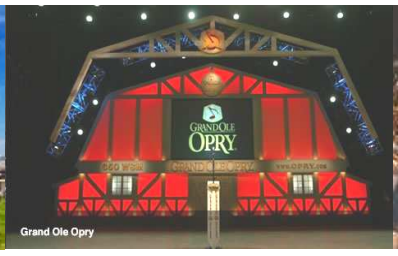
Saturday: 9/13 Nashville City Tour by motor coach with visits to the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Lane Motor Museum. The USS Great Sitkin Association business meeting will follow the motor tour excursion. It will be held in the Hospitality Room.

Our annual banquet will be held at the hotel with a buffet dinner beginning at 6:00 p.m. Music provided by the Moonlighter Big Band from 7:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m.

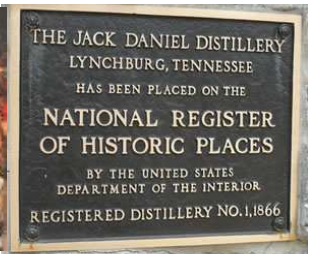
Sunday: 9/14 Farewell Breakfast in the Atrium area of the hotel.

Eugene McNeill, Reunion Chairman, Phone: 423-472-0274

Nashville, Tennessee



Grand Ole Opry (Tuesday, Friday & Saturday Shows Only)



Jack Daniel's Distillery

Gaylord Opryland Resort

Historic Ryman Auditorium

Fontanel Mansion - Former home of Barbara Mandrell

Country Music Hall of Fame

Top 10 crummy "reasons" for not attending our reunion!

1. **"It's too far to go."**
   Some people have come to our reunions from New Zealand, Mexico, and the Philippines.

2. **"It costs too much."**
   The Association attempts to make no money from the registration fees which are only enough to cover anticipated expenses based on the number of estimated attendees. However, since the reunions are planned two years in advance, there are times we do make a profit because of higher than anticipated attendance. ALL funds received by the Association go for the benefit and operating expenses of the Association.

3. **"I'm not sure my schedule / commitments / job / family / (you name it) will allow me to come."**
   Unless you are absolutely positive there's no way you will be able to come – register! Once you've made the commitment to come, it's amazing how the rest of your life can be arranged to make it possible.

4. **"I can't be there for the whole thing."**
   Why not? (See reason #3.) If this is really a problem, don't make that an excuse not to come at all. The events covered by the registration fee run from Wednesday evening through Sunday morning. If you really can't be there the entire time, talk to me. I can help you. A partial registration is better than nothing. In the past, anyone who has been there for only part of a reunion has wished they were here for the whole thing.

5. **"There not much to do in that city."**
   That's not true – but even it if were, it wouldn't matter. The main attraction of our reunions is the people! We could have a great reunion in the middle of nowhere! Just as: Life is what you make it – so is a party!

6. **"I don't want to come without my spouse / significant other / friend / relative, and I don't think they'll have any fun."**
   If our past experience is any guide, this is a non-issue. Most spouses, significant others, friends, and children, quickly become involved with our group and have a great time!

7. **"I know what reunions are like – just a bunch of boring people standing around bragging about their marriages, their trips, their kids, their grandkids, etc."**
   Yes, that's the stereotype of what many reunions are like, but ours are not like that at all. It doesn't take long to realize the "special bond" we have! It's like getting in touch with your roots – or coming back home. There's nothing else like it!

8. **"I won't know anyone there. Or – They won't remember me. Or – They will remember me for the wrong reasons."**
   It doesn't matter. We'll treat you like one of the family anyway. Many newcomers and old timers who have been to several reunions have made more "NEW" friends with shipmates from other years. It's really about the common experiences we shared in the Navy.

9. **"The people I know won't be attending."**
   Come anyway – you'll add to your list of people you'll want to see next time! And if there are some people you <u>really</u> want to make sure are there, it's not too late to track them down. Call one of the Association Officers and they will help you with contact information. Then call your friends and tell them you want them to be there!

10. **"I've gained weight, I'm not successful enough, "I'm divorced, etc. and I'm concerned about what people will think of me."**
    No matter how real or how strong these feelings may be before you arrive, you'll soon find out that none of this stuff really matters.

The plain truth is: WE WANT TO SEE YOU!

On top of all the options to fill your day before or after the reunion, you'll highlight it all with the days of the reunion itself; something you will be talking about for months after the event is over. Begin making your plans now – we want to see you there. Join in the fun, frolic, and festivities of Nashville!

Eugene McNeill, Reunion Chairman **Phone: 412-472-0274**
E-mail: mcneille@bellsouth.net

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association
2014 Nashville, Tennessee Reunion Registration
September 10th thru 14th, 2014

_____ _____
Crew Member's Name Years Served Aboard the Sitkin

_____
Home Address

_____ _____
Phone and/or Cell Number E-mail Address

_____
Name(s) of Others Attending

"Reunion Package"

Reception, Nashville Night Life Theatre w/Buffet & Show
Nashville City Tour w/Visits to the Country Music Hall of Fame & Lane Motor Museum
Annual Banquet w/Music by the Moonlighter Big Band

_____ 1 Person $204.00 _____ 2 People $408.00 _____ 3 People $612.00

Total Amount Enclosed: _____ Signature: _____

Make checks payable to: USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association

Mail Registration form and payment to:

Eugene McNeill
2075 Joy St. NE
Cleveland, TN 37311-1422

Questions: Please call Eugene McNeill at: 423-472-0274

Please do not include membership dues payment in with your reunion payment. Thank you!

Deadline for submission: Wednesday, August 27, 2014

Please note: The tours and events are booked and paid a month in advance.

Any cancellations before the deadline will be refunded.