



NEWSLETTER

1st Issue 23rd Year

01 November 2014



Association Officers

President

Ron Zimmerman Sr.
474 SW Prater Ave
Port St. Lucie, FL 34953
(772) 621-4016
ae17assn@bellsouth.net

Vice President

Jim Dunno
272 Stone Hedge Row
Johnstown, OH 43031
(740) 817-2177
mgdjim60@gmail.com

Secretary

Jim Perko
PO Box 675
Barnegat Light, NJ
08006
(609) 361-9456
perk1shore@yahoo.com

Treasurer

George Kaiser
311 W. Oak Lane
Glenolden, PA 19036
(610) 237-1652
dcckaiser@juno.com

Chaplain

Mark Rucker
241 Larchmont Ave.
Springfield, OH 45503
(937) 322-1327
ruckerml1@att.net

Editor (Non-officer)

Dorothy Hodnichak
25850 Lake Shore Blvd.
Euclid, OH 44132-1107
(216) 731-5289
dhodnichak@aol.com

Association's Web Site:
www.greatsitkin.org

From Our President:

Please see page 3 for the President's Report.

Web Site Update: No update yet.
New finds: None to report.

Ron Zimmerman
President

A word from the Vice President: Well, there's another reunion in the books! Gene: Congratulations on another great reunion!

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am not looking forward to this winter. Guess this feeling comes as we get older, so all you older folks watch out!

The Dunno's have been busy since we returned from Nashville. Two grandchildren are playing volleyball, two more grandchildren are running cross-country, a granddaughter is cheerleading, and the last grandchild is too young to do anything! In addition, they all are going in opposite directions! With all this going on, Joy is going to retire on the 31st of October. Halloween! Go figure!

Now for the membership update. As of this point in time, we have 47 paid members. A lot of you paid at the reunion and a lot of you forgot.....so here is your reminder. Send in your membership dues for 2015 or this will be your last newsletter. Also, please keep me updated with new addresses, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses. Hope to see you again in 2015 in Tampa, Florida!

Jim Dunno
Vice President & Membership Chairman

Secretary Report: We would like to thank Eugene and Nora McNeill for all their time and effort put into making our 2014 reunion in Nashville a success.

The officers elected by membership for 2014 - 2015:

President: Ron Zimmerman
Vice President: Jim Dunno
Secretary: Jim Perko
Treasurer: George Kaiser
Chaplain: Mark Rucker (appointed)
Newsletter: Dorothy Hodnichak (appointed)

We need your help to increase our membership. New members are essential for the life of our Association to continue. If you know of any former shipmate that you wish to contact, but do not have his last known address, please feel free to contact VP Jim Dunno (Membership Chairman) or any other officer for help in finding him.

In closing, Gerry and I wish you and your families a very Happy Thanksgiving, Blessed Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Remember: **EACH ONE REACH ONE!**

Jim Perko
Secretary

Repair 3: The Association "E Board" members have a task to write an article for each newsletter. It is not always easy and most often morphs into a rehash of the reunion events or maybe a push to get the shipmates to attend next year's reunion. Well, not wanting to disappoint, let me just say that this year's reunion was awesome! At first when Gene made the pitch for Nashville, it was like, "What's in Nashville?" The thing about any Great Sitkin reunion is that wherever the reunions are held, the best part of that reunion are the Sailors that sailed on the USS Great Sitkin!

I have written before, maybe quite a bit, about what it means to have been a Sailor in the United States Navy. Being a Sailor has gone far beyond our 2-year, 4-year or maybe a career long enlistment. As Treasurer, I see the dues checks as they come to me for deposit. A vast majority of them have the US Navy insignia as part of their address. Members have Navy decals on their cars. We sell merchandise from the Ship Ship's Store that displays the name of an

old ship that was scrapped 40+ years ago. A member asked me at the reunion, "Did you ever wonder why we got assigned to a freighter in Bayonne for our hitch?" Yeah, a cruiser bristling with big guns would have been more glamorous, but the stuff the Great Sitkin carried in her bowels was what kept those big gun ships in business. We were an important cog in the wheels of defense, and we were Sailors in the greatest Navy in the world. I've come to realize that traveling to some place in the U.S. each year to gather again with friends, serves to reinforce that service.

Speaking of the Ship's Store, please note that we again have a fully stocked store just in time for Christmas! Drop a hint to a family member! Shipping deadline for Christmas mailing is December 15.

A homework assignment for the next newsletter: Get online or into the news and see where our 21st century Navy is going these days. Did you know that the new USS America LHA-6 was just placed into commission? It is the newest class of amphibious assault ship. Imagine how it must feel for former crews of the USS America, CV-66, to see the name reused. I doubt we will ever see another USS Great Sitkin. Uniforms are also undergoing big changes. Look to the Navy Times Website for the story. We have all seen the blue digital uniforms that have re-

placed the dungarees of our days. The Navy finally authorized the wearing of command ball caps with "digies." Might interest you to know that the Great Sitkin ball cap we sell fits into the official uniform requirements. So get those "digies" and match up a Great Sitkin cap. You will be ready for the fleet!

Wishing you smooth sailing through the Holidays and the rest of the winter.

George Kaiser
Treasurer

The Chaplain's Corner: We certainly had a great reunion this year! Many thanks to Gene & Nora McNeill for their hard work. Nashville was great with so many things to see. The Nashville Nightlife Dinner Theatre and show was the highlight for me. It's great to have folks in our Association willing to host reunions to bring these things together.

As I sit and ponder events that are affecting us: Ebola scare, our 401(k), savings, retirement accounts, etc. I'm reminded of what Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:28 (KJV) "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" It's hard sometimes to keep in mind that God is still in control of all things, but he is. Let us keep our hearts focused in these dark days and our faith in Him who still has the reigns in his

hands and be ever so thankful. We still live in the greatest nation upon the earth.

I would like to encourage more of our shipmates that served on board during the late 60's and 70's to plan on coming to Tampa next year. I would like to see more shipmates at our reunions!

We lost three shipmates recently. We need to keep their families in our prayers. It's time to say goodbye for now.

Honor Roll Update:

John F. Bishop LTJG '62
Anthony S. Fusco MM2 '50
Henry D. Hoff, Jr. RDSN '55

Mark Rucker
Chaplain

Comments from the Editor: Thank you, Gene and Nora McNeill, for putting on an "outstanding" reunion! The show at the Nightlife Theatre was the best! During our tour of the city, it was fun "walking" on a huge map of Tennessee while viewing the Tennessee World War II Memorial. The Country Music Hall of Fame with all the exciting exhibits, films, costumes and instruments was memorable. Our tour ended with a visit to The Lane Motor Museum. Dancing to the Moonlighter Big Band at our annual banquet was terrific!

Dorothy Hodnichak

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: \$ _____ [] 2015 YR (\$20.00) [] 2016 YR (\$20.00) [] 2017 YR (\$20.00)

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

Comments: _____

From our President:

Shipmates: I am departing from my usual article this time to present the following topic that was discussed at our Annual Business Meeting this year with a motion to table a vote until the 2015 Annual Business Meeting to give other Active Members a chance to attend and have their voice/vote heard. It is being published in the November 2014 newsletter to inform all Active Members of the discussion and to inform all Active Members that it will be discussed at the 2015 Annual Business Meeting and a vote taken at that time to: Change the way we conduct reunions; continue as we presently are knowing costs will continue to increase; to dissolve the Association; or any other option brought to the floor by members in attendance. The choice belongs to the Active Members. Attend the 2015 Reunion and have your voice and vote heard!

Is it time to dissolve the Association??? This is a question that we all knew would someday be coming when we incorporated in January 2003 and ratified our Constitution and By-Laws in September of that year. We grew a lot after the 2000 Reunion, going from roughly 40 dues-paying members to over 200 at the peak. We started our own Website and added a Ship's Store offering all members and anyone else, merchandise specifically for *our ship*. Our reunions changed also, adding a couple of days and group events like Tours, BBQs, Banquets and the Farewell Breakfast. We moved the Annual Business Meeting out of the Banquet and made the Banquet a time for all to relax and enjoy conversations with both old shipmates and new. We have had a lot of fun over the past years, renewing old friendships and making a lot of new ones. For me, each reunion was an experience and adventure that will live with me for the rest of my days. I hope it is the same for the many people that attend our annual get-togethers.

Why such a long-winded dissertation? Because as a unique organization, we need to remember why we came together as a group of Service Fleet sailors and why we chose to strike out on our own rather than become just another Hull Number in an association of same-type ships. I don't know if there is any one answer to that last statement. I'm sure each of us has our own reason for joining the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association and for attending the Annual Reunions.

But being unique is also a double-edged sword. Our membership is limited to just those that served aboard the ship. With no other ship being name Great Sitkin, we have no younger Sailors to contact to join us, thus, having no way to realistically grow our active membership. With almost 900 of the 4300+ shipmates that served aboard the Great Sitkin located and on our "Found Crew List" and very few "new finds" the last couple of years, we cannot expect those who have been found and decided not to participate will ever change their minds and become active members and attend the Annual Reunions.

This last statement brings me to why I asked the "*Is it time to dissolve the Association*" question at the start of this article. During the past few years the number of shipmates (and their wives, girlfriends, friends, children and grandchildren) that are attending the Annual Reunions or paying dues is shrinking. Some of this is due to the passing of shipmates that have attended the events on a regular basis; or to their illness or the illness of their beloved; economic hardships due to the economy; or a change in lifestyles. For whatever reason they have for not attending the Annual Reunion or paying their Annual Membership dues, the reality is: Our numbers are shrinking.

Why are the numbers of Active Membership and numbers of people attending the reunion so important? The answer is simple: Economics, shipmates! The annual dues goes to support the organization financially so we have the money to have a newsletter three times a year and to reimburse officers and the newsletter editor for their out-of-pocket expenses for things like printer ink, stamps for mailing stuff, etc. **And "NO" Officers do not receive any compensation** – they and the newsletter editor donate all their time to the benefit of the Association. **The number of people attending reunions determines how much we can negotiate with the hotel for room costs, food costs, meeting room space and anything else we can get from them that we don't have to pay for. The number of attendees also has an impact on cost of bus transportation and events we do as a group.**

So what can we do? In my *opinion* we have several options...

1). We can look at changing the way we do reunions, going back to just a 2 or 3-day event with just an Annual Dinner Banquet and the rest of the time we do things on our own. The problem I see with this is that our negotiating power with the hotel suffers greatly and both room and food prices will likely go up because of the number of "room nights" being reduced.

2). We can keep going as we are and just deal with lower numbers attending, knowing that prices for the room and events will more than likely go up because of reduced numbers attending.

3). Dissolve the Association using the actions required by our Constitution and By-Laws.

Article XI: Dissolution of Association, Section 1: Events Triggering Dissolution: The following events shall trigger a dissolution of the ASSOCIATION: Bankruptcy or insolvency. Or A two thirds majority vote of the ACTIVE members present at the Annual Business Meeting.

IF it is decided to dissolve the Association, what happens to the funds left in the bank accounts? Our Constitution on By-Laws sets forth what it to be done as follows:

Article XI: Dissolution of Association, Section 2: Disbursement of Assets: Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the date of Dissolution of the ASSOCIATION, the Executive Board shall ensure that:

All assets of the ASSOCIATION are liquidated. Assets of a material nature shall be liquidated by offering the items for sale to any member who wishes to purchase them. If no member purchases the items, then items may be sold to any individual or company who does wish to purchase them. All property in the possession of the ASSOCIATION and belonging to others, or that is on loan to the ASSOCIATION, shall be returned to the proper owner. If the proper owner can no longer be determined or no longer wants those items, then those items also shall be liquidated in the same manner as ASSOCIATION property.

All bank accounts are reconciled and closed.

All funds resulting from the liquidation of all assets of every kind is disbursed through donation to the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Gulfport, Mississippi, formerly known as the US Navy Home. These funds shall be used for support of recreational activities for the inhabitants of the center. If this organization no longer exists, then the funds shall be distributed to a charity determined by the Executive Board.

Just to make things perfectly clear, it is neither my desire to, nor am I pushing for, dissolution!

Ron Zimmerman Sr., President

2014 USS Great Sitkin Reunion

Welcome Reception - Nashville, Tennessee



P. Norton, S. Whitford, R. Zimmerman, N. McNeill, Kelly's



Fred & Marie Gallagher



Michele & Fred Kiesel



The Rucker's The Kaiser's

Nashville Nightlife Theatre



Brenda Best



Tim Watson "Comedian & fiddle virtuoso"



Jim Connallon



Sharon & Fred Applegate



Jim & Joy Dunno

Nashville Tour



Pat Norton



Doug & Kathy Hauser



Wayne Agee, Jay Bryant, Ed O'Brien



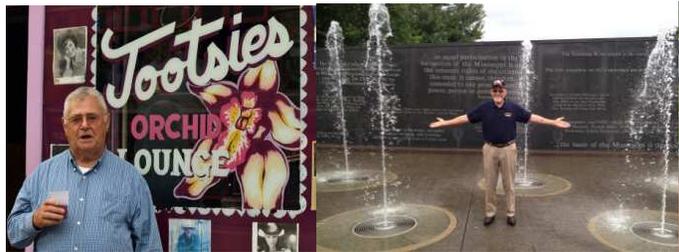
Ron & Sally Zimmerman



Jim Perko, Joe Rios, Ken Carlson, Jim Connallon, Rucker's



Fred & Michele Kiesel, Barb & Philip Tines, Dorothy Hodnichak



John Kelly

"Agee" - Remember Chattanooga?



George Mitchell, Ed Herbst, Joyce & Alex Paszly



Walter Carlson



Joe Rios, Gene McNeill - "We got the whole world in our hands!"



Visiting the Tennessee World War II Memorial

Country Music Hall of Fame



Catherine Huzinec



Joe Rios, Fred Gallagher, L. Agee, Huzinec's, S. Whitford



God Bless the USA!



Lee Greenwood



Ron Berg John Kelly



Philip & Barbara Tinnes

Lane Motor Museum



Ed Herbst



Rosanne, Joe Theisen



Ed O'Brien

2014 Banquet



Moonlighter Big Band



Kaiser's, P. Rucker



Wayne & Lucy Agee



Sharon & Fred Applegate



Ron Berg



Linda & David Blansett



Jay Bryant



Nancy & Ken Carlson



Elenore & Walter Carlson



Jim Carlson



Jim & Mary Connallon



Joy & Jim Dunno



Marie & Fred Gallagher



Mary & John Glenn



Kathy & Doug Hauser



Ed Herbst



Dorothy Hodnichak



Nick & Catherine Huzinec



Mary & George Kaiser



Betsy & John Kelly



Michele & Fred Kiesel



Bill Manning



Eugene & Nora McNeill



George Jr., George Mitchell Sr.



Ed O'Brien



Alex & Joyce Paszly



Carl & Diane Peck



Jim & Gerry Perko



Joseph Rios



Dennis & Karen Ripple



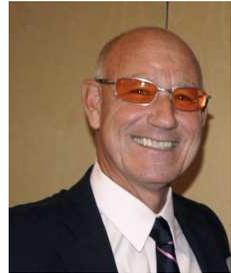
Mark & Patsy Rucker



1970 USS Great Sitkin Sailors



Kenny & Kim Sooy



William Swiecicki



Joseph Theisen



Roseanne Theisen



Barbara & Philip Tinnis



Ray, Kenney Walden



Sharon, Brett Whitford



Sally & Ron Zimmeman



David & Linda Blansett

Sunday - Farewell Breakfast

"I'll be seein you!"

Tampa, Florida - Sept. 2015!



Hauser's and Kiesel's



Connallon's and Peck's



William Swiecicki, Bill Manning



Nick & Catherine Huzinec

USS Constitution Takes One Last Trip Around Boston Harbor Before 3-Year Restoration



The Washington Post reports that the USS Constitution, the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat, was pushed along by a tugboat, its sails already taken down as it prepares to enter dry-dock for the repairs, which the Navy says could take about three years.

The three-mast warship, which earned its nickname after winning battles during the War of 1812 against Great Britain, gave a traditional 21-gun salute to Fort Independence on Castle Island, one of the oldest fortified sites in the country. It didn't stop there. It also gave a 17-gun salute at the Coast Guard's Boston base.

The base's active-duty Navy crew laid a wreath in the harbor to honor the armed forces branch which turned 239-years-old this week during the salute.

Built in Boston and launched in October 1797, the USS Constitution was among the first warships of the new nation. It was commissioned by the US Navy following the Revolutionary War in order to protect American merchant ships off the northern coast of Africa. For the most part, the USS Constitution still will be open for public tours until it officially enters dry dock in March 2015.

The repair will entail a variety of projects, from replacing worn riggings to re-coppering the ship's full hull. They plan to change out old planks on the gun and berth decks and will make general repairs to the stern, bow, and captain's cabin. The cost of such extensive repairs are not cheap. Dave Werner, spokesman for the Naval History and Heritage Command, which is overseeing the project, said the ship repairs will cost about \$12 million to \$15 million and be paid for by the U.S. Navy.

Boston, the news publication, reports that the last time the Constitution was dry docked for major repairs was 1995, in preparation for its bicentennial. Some repairs were done while the ship was still in the harbor from about 2007 to 2010. The ship is expected to be back in the water by 2017. By spring or summer 2018, it should return to its familiar spot at the Navy Yard pier, where it has been a major tourist destination, with more than 500,000 visitors a year. *Newsire 10/18/14*

Little Known Tidbit of Naval History and Old Ironsides

The USS Constitution (Old Ironsides), as a combat vessel, carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators (i.e. fresh water distillers).

However, let it be noted that according to her ship's log, "On July 27, 1798, the USS Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum."

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping."

Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and **68,300 gallons of rum**.

Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and **64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine**.

On 18 November, she set sail for England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchant ships, **salvaging only the rum** aboard each.

By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred **40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch** aboard by dawn. Then she headed home.

The USS Constitution arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whisky, and **38,600 gallons of water**.

GO NAVY!!!

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 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**

All orders should be sent to:

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

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

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

Deadline for Christmas mailing: December 15, 2014

Ship's Store



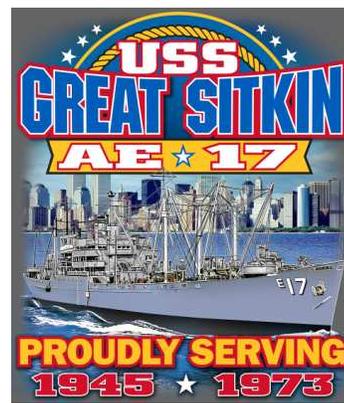
Ship's Ball Caps \$15.00 each



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



Polo Shirts

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

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association

23rd Annual Reunion Itinerary - September 9th - 13, 2015 Tampa, Florida

Headquarters:

Marriott Tampa Westshore
1001 N. Westshore Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33607



Reservations: 813-282-5812 Mention "USS Great Sitkin Reunion"

(Special room rate will apply 3 days before & 3 days after) Check in: 4:00 p.m. Check out: Noon

Room Rates: \$125.00 per night (special rate) which includes breakfast for two (each day) and all taxes.

You will only be charged \$125 per night. Last day to book special rate is 8/12/15.

20% discount in hotel restaurant. Two large malls and many restaurants near the hotel.

Tampa International Airport (TPA) - Courtesy shuttle from & to the airport. Call shuttle @813-287-2555
Hotel courtesy shuttle - daily within 2-mile radius; (\$5 charge per person if going outside the 2-mile limit)

Reunion Package: Information forthcoming in the March 2015 Newsletter.

City Tour:

Board the coach and enjoy Tampa sights: Bayshore Boulevard, 4.5 miles without a break overlooking elegant and historic homes, as well as the Jose Gaspar Pirate Ship, and the H.B. Plant Museum built in 1891, a National Historic Landmark. Ybor City - National Landmark neighborhood with a special mix of architecture in wrought iron balconies, vibrant Spanish tile, classical facades, historic cigar factories, charming "Shot-gun" style cottages, and the Ybor City State Museum. Learn the history of the cigar industries. Time will be allotted to explore shops, enjoy lunch, or buy a hand-rolled cigar souvenir.

We will also tour the American Victory Ship - One of only 4 fully-operational WWII ships in the country. The ship is a national treasure and true American icon. Board the ship and witness the entire ship, including cavernous three-level cargo holds, radio and gyro rooms, hospital, galley, weaponry, steering stations, flying bridge, signaling equipment, wheelhouse, mess halls, crew cabins, lifeboats, the Captain's quarters, cargo equipment and the engine. Also to be seen are rare artifacts, exhibits, uniforms, medals, documents and photographs. The outer deck will be a perfect location for the Memorial Service.

Note: Since Ron Zimmerman and I need to finalize reunion details, the entire reunion activities and cost will be highlighted in the March Newsletter. Ron, Michele and I are very excited to be hosting the Tampa reunion and hope you are too! Shown below are some attractions within the area.

Fred Kiesel, Reunion Chairman, Phone: 772-770-6339



Bayshore Boulevard



Tampa Skyline



Henry B. Plant Museum at the University of Tampa



Florida Aquarium in Tampa



Big Cat Rescue Sanctuary



Lowry Park Zoo



World War II American Victory Ship



Busch Gardens - Theme and Amusement Park



Walter B. Carlson, DC3

Date Entered Service: October 1951 - Date Discharged: October 1955

At the beginning of 1952, I was aboard the USS Great Sitkin, along with Richard Weaver. We headed for our first Mediterranean Cruise on August 26th. We arrived in Gourock, Scotland on September 10th. We stopped in three other countries, then arrived on October 2nd in Gibraltar and anchored out. We were to meet the rest of the fleet for Operation Long Step.

The Captain wanted the ship painted while we were anchored in Gibraltar. All divisions had to send a few men to help out. As we were new on the ship, Weaver and I were chosen.

We were sent over side amid ship to paint. We were sitting on a gang plank with paint buckets and brushes. As we were painting, my side of the scaffolds came loose and down I went into the water. I had an old life jacket on, however, I was afraid I would go under the ship.

Fortunately, this didn't happen. When I got to the surface, I thought about sharks. Weaver was still hanging on to his side of the scaffold. He said he couldn't hold on much longer. I told him to drop down by me in the water which he did. We were covered in paint! Lucky for us, one of our motor launches happened to see us. They came over to pick us up and to this day, I don't know how I got on the motor launch so fast!

When we came aboard ship, we had to go down in the engine room and take our clothes off and wash our bodies with diesel fuel before we could take a shower. There wasn't an inch of us that wasn't covered in paint. Our Chief went up to the Captain with his hands full of repair orders that we had completed. The Captain said we didn't have to paint anymore. That was some experience for two new Sailors!



ENS John E. Snyder (Graduate of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD)

Date Entered Service: July 17, 1943 - **Captain, USN (RET) 1986**



I reported aboard the USS Great Sitkin early in 1948. The Commanding Officer was Captain Joseph A. E. Hindman, USN. The ship was engaged in hauling overage ammunition from Vieques, PR to NAD Earle, NJ.

We participated in Fleet Exercises shortly before Thanksgiving in the Davis Straits, between Labrador and Greenland in support of the Navy's evaluation of the ability to operate in northern waters. Rolling more than thirty degrees most of the time for ten days, no material problem, but all hands were very tired from the need to brace oneself 24 hours a day.

Captain Hindman was relieved by Captain Vilhelm K. Busck in June, 1948. We then underwent Refresher Training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, including a real main throttle valve casualty. Our new skipper, on probation in the minds of all Officers and crew, makes a spectacular one bell landing at the pier. Then back to the Vieques to Earle routine again, with a trip to Argentia, Newfoundland in there someplace. I detached in June, 1949.

The Panama Canal (1948 - 1949)

Photo shows the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17), with ENS John E. Snyder on-board, entering the Panama Canal.

The geographic location of Panama, the Isthmus of Panama, has always been coveted as a way of making the oceans meet.

With the building of the Panama Canal, the realization of a dream became an expression of the power, the strength, the might of a growing nation. It's been called one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World - a manmade waterway, 50 miles long - that forever altered the face of the earth.

