



USS GREAT SITKIN (AE-17) ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May - June 2021



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From the President

Yes this has been a long time coming but when you're dealing with Ohio's rules for Covid and corporate headquarters of Crowne Plaza things get complicated. With that being said CLEVELAND HAS BEEN CANCELLED. Their rules were everyone had to be seated, masks were not required if you were vaccinated, no buffet, no dancing and social distancing had to be maintained. There are more rules but the point is mute; and yes all the venues planned were wide open.

George and I have been talking quite a bit and NORFOLK, VA has made a strong effort to make room for us, so we are going! This isn't going to be a full blown reunion due to the amount of time we have to put this together but after a year off it might be nice just to visit with old friends again.

On another note if you made room reservations for Cleveland I have had them cancel them for you. So without throwing out a lot of useless info I will let George fill you in on all the details coming up in Norfolk.

One last thing we are still collecting dues and we appreciate all of you who have been sending them in. THANK YOU.

Jim Dunno, President

Vice President's Report

Good day all, Current Membership stands at 42 members. Which is down quite a bit, a lot of this could be due to the covid which is understandable. If you haven't sent your dues in for 2021 please do its almost time for 2022.

Thanks for for support,

Tom Stachelski, Vice President

REPAIR 3 REPORT

Greetings Shipmates! As I hope you've figured by now, the 2021 Cleveland Reunion has been cancelled due to Covid restrictions still in place. The E Board has approved changing the reunion location to Norfolk, Virginia. Same dates,

September 15th to 19th. Because of the late notice, we've made some departures from the "normal." Mary and I will be your reunion hosts. This reunion will be a restart of mostly what we had planned for last September, with a few exceptions.

Plans are as follows:

September 15th, Welcome reception 7pm. This will be light snacks and beverages.

September 16th. All day. We will be going by bus to The Mariners' Museum and Park in Newport News. On the way, we will be taking a bus tour of Naval Operating Base Norfolk. We will have our memorial service at the Mariners Museum. This is an awesome, totally nautical place with lots to see, including much of the restored USS Monitor.

September 17th. This is where we will be using the new normal format. Norfolk Waterside is "down the road" from our hotel. As such, it will be a drive yourself event. There is plenty of parking, shipmates coming in by plane or train can carpool with other shipmates. The USS Wisconsin is there, as well as the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. Plenty of food venues. That will be an all day event.

September 18. Morning will be our business meeting, then free time until the evening dinner.

Shipmate cost will be \$130 each. As of right now, prices for things are still being worked out, so we are holding the costs to this amount.

We will be using the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach/Norfolk, 5655 Greenwich Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23462 (757) 499-4400. Room rates are \$124 a night. Because of the late start in planning and the need to get numbers to the hotel and bus company, the go/no go date for everyone has to be August 7th.

Now, a word about the hotel. They are bending over backwards to give us more perks than we deserve at this late date. If you've planned a reunion, you know about attrition, hospitality room, and all the other caveats included in a hotel reunion contract. They have waived everything. PLEASE, don't go on any reservation service to find a cheaper rate at this hotel. Doing that will be a tremendous disservice to those using the hotel reservation system. Breakfast will be on your own, the hotel has an excellent restaurant at reasonable prices. Before you groan about "no free breakfast" remember this hotel furloughed about 75% of the housekeeping and customer service people during the worst days of the pandemic.

George Kaiser, Treasurer

Secretary's Report

Sharing an update from California, we are going through a drought not enough rain or snow this year. So far a season to start it everybody has to be careful to protect their property and protect others. My heart goes out to the firefighters what are you doing this work 24 seven. Should we go to keep them in our prayers.

Keeping active with the community to make sure people are getting their vaccinations, we're not gonna climb out of this hole without cooperation from everybody. So shipmates take care of yourselves your family and your community.

Nominees for board members. Nominations for the executive board position will be coming up for re-election soon. Only active members who have annual dues are eligible to serve. All nominations for

Office must received by the Association Secretary (me) ,no late than August 2021.

If you any questions concerns please contact me.

Joe Rios, Secretary

The Chaplin's Corner Spring 2021

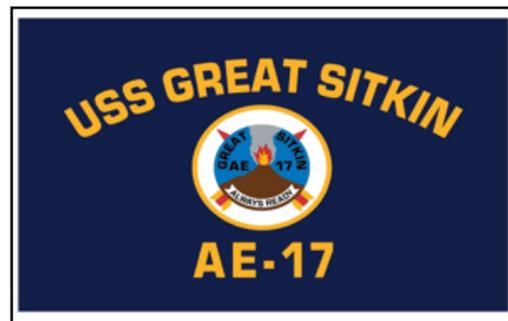
Only thing I have to report is the names of two shipmates that have passed.

Honor Roll Update

Eugene E. McNeill

James L. Tait

Mark Rucker, Chaplin



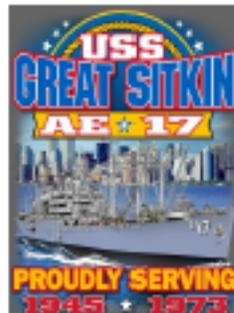
SHOW YOUR GREAT SITKIN PRIDE BY FLYING THE COLORS!

We have 30 of these flags being made.
2FT x 3FT Nylon
Single reverse construction, digitally printed one side,
white canvas header and 2 brass grommets.
\$50.00 and FREE shipping.



Polo Shirts: Men's and Ladies, Navy Blue,
Grey and Pink \$15 ea

All Ship's Store purchases, make check payable to USS Great Sitkin Association. Mail payment to: USS Great Sitkin Association, 311 W Oak Lane, Glenolden, PA 19036



Ship's Picture Shirts:
T-Shirts - \$10

"Thank You For Your Service"

by Alex Paszly

In recent years when I present my military ID card for a military discount at local stores, the cashiers frequently say to me, "*Thank you for your service*". I never know quite how to react or what to say. Moreover, I wonder if they even have a clue as to what career service members give up to serve their country.

When I entered the Navy in 1959, we still had the draft. Federal conscription was still used to fill the ranks of our armed forces. Over time, after the final days of the Vietnam War, our Government opted to switch to an all-volunteer military rather than forced conscription. As of now, approximately 1.3 million active-duty personnel (less than one-half of 1 percent of the US population) make up our active duty population. Consequently, the rest of the US population has little understanding as to what service members do, and what they and their families give up in the service of their country. I have frequently tried to articulate my thoughts on this subject and have failed miserably.

Currently, I'm reading a book written by James Webb, entitled "I HEARD MY COUNTRY CALLING" in which he addresses my very thoughts in a way I can't. So, if you ever find yourself at a loss for words and need to express your feelings on what you sacrificed while serving your country, you can refer them to the following from James Webb:

"It is difficult for many Americans to fully comprehend the impact of what it means to take the oath to defend our country and then put on a military uniform. From the moment you enter the military until the day you leave it, every aspect of your life is under the control of others. You can argue, hope, and try to persuade, but every decision about your military career is subject to what the higher-ups of leadership call "the good of the service." During the time you are serving in uniform your individual needs and desires are not only subordinated to the good of the service, but they are irrelevant if the service decides it needs you elsewhere. You can sign up for a particular occupational speciality, but there is no firm guarantee you will be chosen for it if the good of the service intervenes. Even if you are given the occupational speciality of your choice you cannot decide what your actual job will be or, in most cases, even ask to interview for a specific job. You cannot decide to quit if you don't like your job. You cannot look for another place to work if you don't like your boss. And here is the biggest rub: if your boss does not like you, you may be totally screwed, not only for the moment but for your longer career. Several times a year this boss will evaluate your "proficiency and conduct" which, whether fair or not, has the potential to affect your reputation and your potential for any future assignment."

"You cannot decide where you will be stationed or for how long. You cannot tell your commanding officer that thanks very much, but you really don't want to be deployed overseas right now, much less to a combat zone. In an operating environment you might be required to carry far more gear than you need or than your body can absorb, in the process permanently wearing down your orthopedic structure at an early age. It could become normal to operate for long months in the scorching heat or under torrents of rain, with little sleep, bad food, and only sporadic news from home. You might be billeted near hateful menacing neighbors or downwind from health hazards such as toxic burn pits. And all the while you will be legally obligated to carry out the orders of those in charge of you, whether or not you agree with the wisdom of those orders. This includes the distinct possibility that even against your own better judgment you might be placed in a situation in which you will get injured, blown up, or shot. "

"Not incidentally, if you are in the operating forces of any of the military services you will probably spend a lot of time away from your family----a lot of time."

The only thing that I could add to the above, when people asked me what's it like to be in the Service, was to say, "*It's living in genteel poverty.*"

[James Webb is a former US Senator from Virginia, a highly decorated combat Marine, a committee counsel in Congress, an Assistant Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy, an Emmy Award winning journalist, a filmmaker and the author of ten books.]