



USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association

NEWSLETTER

1st Issue 30th Year

March 2022

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From the President:

Here it is, time for another newsletter article; this is a lengthy one.

Joy and I are preparing for a short cruise with some of our shipmates and their spouses. We have been cooped up too long and need a getaway. What better way to travel than to sit on the deck of a ship and watch the water go by; did I mention there are no watches to stand, and they have better mid-rats!

This newsletter includes the reunion registration form. I hope all of you who read this have the urge to break out of your homes and return with us to Columbus, Georgia. Ron and Sally have put together another great reunion with some interesting places to go, a picnic, and a nice buffet for our Saturday dinner. So sign up! Hopefully Covid will be in the past. Speaking of Covid, some of the selected venues may change because of the number of guests they will permit. But do not worry—a Plan B is in place.

The State of the Association

This has been on the board's mind for quite a while now; we have been exchanging emails and phone calls about the number of dues paying members and dwindling attendance at our reunions. Currently, we have 37 paid members, down from more than 200 members only a few years ago. Yes, we have had members pass, we are all getting older, and travel is an issue for some.

When we plan reunions, we must guarantee a certain number of room nights to get better room rates and a minimum number of guests to get better food rates and free use of the hospitality suite and banquet room. We have been averaging between 60 and 70 guests. Last reunion we had about 25 guests, but that was understandable because of Covid. We do not yet have a reunion planned for 2023 but

George Kaiser is looking at Wilmington NC. It can be done with one year's planning.

We will discuss the association's future at this year's business meeting. We hope attendance will turn around. I love being together with everyone and the thought of not doing it any more is not a good feeling.

This is food for thought. Feel free to email or call me with questions.

Jim Dunno, President

Vice President's Words of Wisdom:

I'm hoping everyone is well. Our membership drive is underway. As of now, we have 37 paid members. Please send in your dues if you have not done so. In the last newsletter, I asked people to send me pictures of the last reunion. One person has responded, but I need more pictures to make a reunion page on the web site.

Tom Stachelski, Vice President

Secretary's Report:

Year 2022 has arrived. What kind of things can we look forward to? I think we will be living with the pandemic like the flu once a year. I hope our association members and families are doing well. You have to take it one day at a time. These are also rough times for our children going to school, so please be there for your family members and friends.

I am looking forward to the next reunion if everything pans out with transportation and health. Since 2019 I've had two surgeries, one a little more difficult than the other.

Start thinking about the election for association board members that will be coming up in September. Please send nominations to me.

Please take care and smooth sailing.

Joseph Rios, Secretary

This edition of the newsletter is being sent to an expanded distribution list that includes all shipmates who served aboard the Great Sitkin from 1964 to decommissioning. As President Dunno's column indicates, without sufficient interest in people paying dues and attending reunions, it is likely that the association will need to change significantly or to dissolve within a year or two. If you value the memories of your time aboard ship, we encourage you to pay dues and consider joining us this year for the reunion in Columbus, Georgia. Details are inside.

Greetings From Repair 3:

Greetings from Repair 3. It's been kind of quiet back here, just swinging in my hammock, listening to the beat of the screw in the water. I know, it's 50 years since I last experienced that, so it makes me look forward even more to our Great Sitkin Crew Cruise in May. While Adventure of The Seas is a far cry from the Great Sitkin, we will be leaving from virtually the same berth in Bayonne and sailing out through the same route as if we were heading to Newport RI. Anchors Aweigh!

Ok, now to some news. As mentioned elsewhere in the letter, our 2022 reunion will be a return to Columbus, Georgia. This newsletter is going out to the entire shipmate mailing list, which makes it a much larger audience than just the dues paying members. If you're a shipmate who has never been to a Great Sitkin reunion, why not consider going this year? BT1 Jim Dunno and his wife Joy, are the reunion hosts, and they are planning a great time. Truth be told, the association is at a crossroads as far as annual reunions are considered. For a variety of reasons, recent attendance has been way down. We will be discussing various options for the association going forward, and a large turnout will give us good discussion and many ideas.

Going beyond 2022, Mary and I will be looking at Wilmington, NC this summer as a possible location for the 2023 reunion. Wilmington is where the North Carolina Ship-

building Co built Great Sitkin in 1944. The shipbuilding facility is long gone, but the North Carolina Maritime Museum is located on the same site. Wilmington is also the home of USS North Carolina (BB 55). We will have more details on this in the fall newsletter.

About the newsletter, HM2 Mike "Doc" Kleinbeck is our new editor. While most of our content comes from the executive board, Doc is hard on the trail of Sea Stories from the crew. You'll notice Supply Officer Alex Paszly is a constant contributor and his stories are always entertaining!

We still have a good supply of Great Sitkin shirts and hats available. We also have some 3x5, custom made Great Sitkin flags available. \$50 each.

Use this link to get to the Ship Store on our website: <https://www.greatsitkin.org/shipstore.html>

So, welcome back to a lot of our shipmates. Should you want any more info, or would just like to talk Navy, send me an email.

George Kaiser, Treasurer

The Chaplain's Corner:

"Good Day" to all of you this New Year. What a marvelous time of the year.

What lies ahead beyond the horizon? What new adventures will we encounter? I was thinking of a scripture in Joshua 3:4

when the children of Israel were getting ready to cross over the Jordan river into Canaan. God gave them instructions not to follow the ark to closely. He then said, "for ye have not passed this way heretofore". We have been sailing into "Uncharted Waters" for the last couple of years—a road we have not traveled before. None of us can predict the future but we can know who holds the future. Let us keep our hand in God's hand and let him lead us this year.

I am ready for some warm weather They are predicting more sleet and freezing rain tomorrow afternoon and into Friday. I think we will just stay in and be safe. I am glad I don't have to drive in this stuff anymore.

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.

Mark Rucker, Chaplain

Honor Roll Update

Edward Fredrick Unterseher
Gary L Schwartz



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, website hosting, domain name, administrative and other expenses. The membership year is 1 January through 31 December. Membership cards issued to all crew members paying dues 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:

USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association, c/o George Kaiser, 311 W. Oak Lane, Glenolden, PA 19036

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

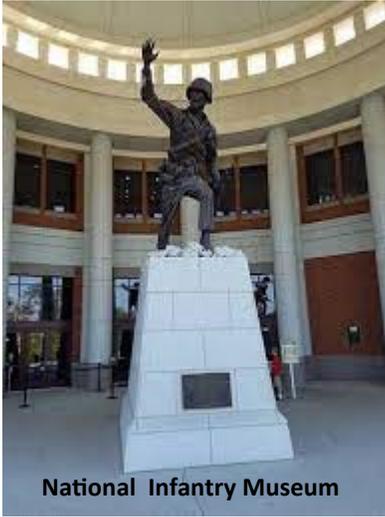
Dates Served Aboard: _____ Application Date: _____ [] New [] Renewal

Amount Submitted: \$ _____ [] 2022 YR (\$20.00) [] 2023 YR (\$20.00) [] 2024 YR (\$20.00)

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

Comments: _____

Signature: _____



National Infantry Museum



Hilton Garden Inn



Bulloch's Restaurant



FDR's Little White House



**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association
2022 Reunion Registration - Columbus, Georgia
September 14th thru 18th, 2022**

Crew Member's Name and Age at Reunion Date
Sitkin

Years Served Aboard the

Home Address

Home Phone and Cell Number (for reunion)

E-mail Address

Name(s) of Guests Attending Reunion

"Reunion Package"

Wednesday; Welcome reception, 6:00 pm

***Thursday: Fort Benning, National Infantry Museum, Vietnam Wall, Memorial Service
Lunch on your own at the mess hall or offsite buffet***

***Friday: Tour FDR Little White House
Lunch on your own at Bulloch House***

Saturday: Annual Business Meeting, Free Time and Evening Banquet

_____ Number of attendees @ \$190 per person. Amount Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association and mail registration form and payment to:
Jim Dunno
318 Bottecchia Blvd
Johnstown, OH 43031

Do not include membership dues payment in with your reunion payment.

(Mis)Adventures of a Wayward Ensign, Part 1 In Which Our Intrepid Novice Discovers that Engine Rooms Are Hot

There is something about reflecting on your Navy experience that makes you want to tell your story. Looking back, I do not know how I survived my first tour. I was green, unprepared, naïve, and so dumb that it was quickly recognized by everyone the minute I stepped aboard ship. I was like the Sailor in a cartoon I once saw. This brand new Sailor stepped aboard his ship for the first time, looked around and said, "Gee, this is really nice, everything is so clean. I wonder who keeps this ship so clean?"

I arrived in Yokosuka, Japan several days before the USS Midway (CV-41) was due in for the Christmas holidays. When the ship arrived, I met with the Executive Officer (XO), was given a berthing assignment, and told to report back to him the morning we got underway. Since I was not assigned to any division, I was not in a duty section. I was free to roam the ship and go ashore every day, which I did. Had a ball! The ship was overrun with Ensigns. I ran into a friend from school who quickly showed me the ropes ashore. I had so much fun I had to get special pay halfway through the in-port period.

After the ship got underway, I met with the XO and reality set in. The XO told me there were two openings: one in Gunnery and one in Engineering. He asked me which one I preferred. So, I asked him, "What do you do with retired Gunnery Officers?" He replied, "**All right wiseass, you are going to Boiler Division in Engineering.**"

I thought I knew about Boilers. After all, I studied them at OCS. Little did I know the men in the Boiler Division were some of the toughest, if not the toughest, men aboard ship. Perhaps the flight deck crews that launched and recovered aircraft were tougher. I don't know, but they sure had their way with me.

Initially, I was assigned as the "Training Officer" for "B" Division. B Division consisted of more than 120 men who operated 12 Boilers. The Division was run by a LT Division Officer, Ensign Training Officer (me) and a Warrant Officer. Each Boiler was assigned one CPO, one 1st Class, and 8 or 9 Boiler Tenders (BTs).

I started "my" training the second day. One 1st Class BT was assigned to take me around to meet the crew and start learning about the operation and maintenance of our boilers. To visit each boiler compartment, you had to go down three decks on typical steep ladders. As you neared the boiler compartment, the hand rails got hotter and hotter so you could not grab them tightly, only hold on loosely. I asked the petty officer, "Why are the hand rails so hot?" Without missing a beat, he explained, "The circulating pump for the cooling water to the hand rails is out of commission." It made sense to me, so I accepted the explanation.

The next day, I was given my first training assignment: "**Trace the system providing cooling water to the hand rails.**" I went below to one of the boiler rooms and stumbled around for a couple of hours trying to find the circulating pump that was out of commission and trying to figure out why there were no water lines connected to the hand rails. After hearing all the giggling, I finally realized I'd been had.

Alexander K. Paszly, Ensign Extraordinaire

Next issue: In the continuing adventures of a wayward ensign, we explore the bowels of the ship and discover the value of checklists.

