



USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association

NEWSLETTER

3rd Issue 30th Year

November 2022



Association Officers

President

Jim Dunno
318 Bottecchia Blvd.
Johnstown, OH 43031
(740) 817-2177

Vice President, Membership Chairman & Webmaster

Tom Stachelski
213 Challedron Drive
Summerville, SC 29485
(910) 484-7629

Secretary

Joe Rios
507 Hemlock Court
Vacaville, CA 95688
(707) 328-1481

Treasurer

George Kaiser
311 W. Oak Lane
Glenolden, PA 19036
(484) 614-4897

Chaplain (Non-officer)

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

Photographer (Non-officer)

Pat Pasquarella

Newsletter Editor

(Non-officer)
Mike Kleinbeck
14404 Paddington Ct.
Solomons MD 20688
(301) 904-4122
mike.kleinbeck@gmail.com

Association's Website:

www.greatsitkin.org

Facebook Page:

[www.facebook.com/
groups/127536520612775](https://www.facebook.com/groups/127536520612775)

From the President:

According to Doc Kleinbeck, it's time for another report, so here it is. We had another fantastic reunion this year. Total attendance was up one from last year's 25! Woo-Hoo! Hopefully the rest of you will say, "what the heck" and start coming back. The Zimmermans set up an excellent time for us. The National infantry Museum, the Little White House, lunch in Warm Springs and a BBQ dinner at the hotel were all thoroughly enjoyable. Thank you, Ron and Sally. George Kaiser is already working on Wilmington, NC, where our ship was built. This may be subject to change due to availability of hotel rooms.

As far as the possible disbandment of the association, the group has decided to keep it going until there is nobody left to run it. With that being said, plan on coming to the reunions. Speaking of reunions, we are always looking for places to go and people to host a reunion. There are always plenty of people to offer assistance if you would like to host one. If you have any ideas of places to go, please let me know.

Doc has set up another sail away for next year. The cruise in May was a success even with only 4 couples going: it was a good time. So, think about

it; this is just something extra for the group. It does not take the place of the reunion. Doc will fill in more details in his report. Again, dues are still being accepted for the small sum of \$20 per year, so send them to George and Tom Stachelski will get a card to you. More information on 2023 reunion is coming in the next newsletter.

Stay Safe and Healthy,

Jim Dunno, President

Secretary's Report:

Hello again to all shipmates from the West Coast in California. We had a wonderful Reunion in Columbus Georgia.

Now for some official business. The officers elected by the association membership for 2022-2023 are:

- President :Jim Dunno
- Vice President: Tom Stachelski
- Secretary: Joseph A Rios
- Treasurer: George Kasier
- Chaplin: Mark Rucker (appointed)
- Newsletter: Mike Kleinbeck (appointed)

Joseph Rios, Secretary

Preserving a Legacy



Our Association and annual reunions are ways to memorialize USS Great Sitkin (AE-17). These are two items that will ensure her memory outlasts all of us. Above is the plaque the association paid for and had installed at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, DC. The plaque was installed during our Baltimore, MD reunion.

The plaque on the left represents one of the last acts Ron Zimmerman performed on behalf of the Association. It is installed at the National Infantry Museum and was placed there by the Columbus, GA Convention Bureau.

Greetings From Repair 3:

Our Great Sitkin Association founder, Glenn Frankenbach, used to make lengthy travel reports of his vacation trips in the newsletter, and we always wondered why. Now that Mary and I are semi retired, we find ourselves with more time to get on the road. I'm not going to provide you all with detailed descriptions, but lets just say this past September was quite a time. We were in Columbus for our reunion, which was a week well spent with Shipmates. Low turnout, only 26 of us, but you don't need a crowd to have fun.

From Columbus, Mary and I went south to Rotonda West, Florida to spend some time with her brother and sister-in-law, part of which was a week in the Florida Keys. Well, we also had the bonus of riding out Hurricane Ian back in Rotonda. Quite the action-packed time, to say the least.

Our newsletter editor Mike has been asking *all* of us to write some good short stories of Great Sitkin life. I've always been able to put together a memory, and this issue is no exception.

By now, those of us who went on the 2022 "Sail Away Cruise" out of Bayonne have told our stories. Mike has put together another awesome, well priced package for

May 2023. Mary and I are going again, and in anticipation of the sailing in SEVEN MONTHS it got me to thinking "why?"

I received my orders to Great Sitkin in November 1969, but didn't have to report aboard until December 19. Because Bayonne was only 90 minutes from home, I decided to drive up and see just what I was getting into. I still recall vividly driving through MOTBY and catching the view of Great Sitkin at the pier. I didn't go aboard then, just sat in my car drinking in the spectacle of a 25-year-old ammunition ship. It wasn't until December 19, 1969 that I actually walked up the brow, with orders and records in hand, and got a feel for what shipboard life would be like. I requested permission to come aboard, in my best boot camp learned fashion, from EMCS Kerfien, and while the POOW was checking my papers, Captain Herman came up to talk to Senior Chief Kerfien, who addressed the Captain as "Skipper!" My introduction the real Navy!

That being said, last May, when we were driving through what is now Cape Liberty in Bayonne and first saw what has to be the epic majesty of a cruise ship, it appeared that I was hooked much in the same fashion as I was 53 years earlier in the same spot!

May 27, five days to Bermuda aboard Liberty of the Seas. It's going to be less ex-

pensive than the four days in Columbus were. "Wanna go for a cruise?"

Beyond the May cruise, plans are still in the works for our annual reunion in September. We are still trying to put a decent, well-priced package, for Wilmington, North Carolina. As soon as details are available, they will be out.

Oh yeah, treasurer report stuff. The association account continues to be in good shape, even with our dwindling membership numbers. Our only real expenses are the website, newsletter, and member maintenance. We still have Great Sitkin flags available, \$50 each. I know they are cheaper and bigger on Amazon, but we had these made up special 2 years ago, so buy yours from us.

That's it for now. Enjoy your Holidays, and hope to see you in Bayonne in May!

PS: We still have a good supply of Great Sitkin shirts and hats available. Use this link to get to the Ship Store on our website: <https://www.greatsitkin.org/shipstore.html>

George Kaiser, Treasurer

Honor Roll Update

Donald D. Carlson, EMFN

Great Sitkin Bermuda Sail Away for 2023

Time to Book Is Now!

Rates Will Go Up After November 5

After four shipmates and spouses enjoyed this year's Sail Away to Maine and Halifax, Nova Scotia, we arranged for a 2023 Sail Away for shipmates, families, and friends. Next year's trip is a 5-night cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean Liberty of the Seas starting May 27, 2023 (Memorial Day weekend). The association's executive committee has endorsed this cruise, but this is *not* an official reunion.

We need at least eight cabins to qualify as a group, which provides a group credit we can use for a reception, shore excursion or other activity. Eight balcony, 5 oceanview, and 5 interior cabins are on hold through **November 5**. Although you can still book after that date, Royal Caribbean has announced that rates have gone up, especially for balcony cabins. and we will lose a \$50 onboard credit for each cabin. As of October 27, we have 3 cabins booked.

This cruise has group rates. *If cheaper military rates or additional discounts are established later, we will be eligible for those.* Per person rates with double occupancy are \$578.50 for an interior cabin; oceanview is \$702.50; and balconies are \$771.50. Prices *include* taxes and port charges, but not gratuities, which are \$72.50 per person for the cruise. Some cabins accommodate a third or fourth person at a reduced rate. A deposit of \$500 per cabin is required for this rate. **The deposit is fully refundable until final payment is due February 26, 2023.**

The Itinerary

Saturday, May 27, Depart Bayonne at 1500

Sunday, May 28, At sea

Monday/Tuesday, May 29/30, Royal Navy Dockyard, Bermuda

Wednesday, May 31, At sea

Thursday, June 1, Arrive at Bayonne, 0700

Booking Reservations

Call 800-465-3595 Option 4, M-Friday 9am-7pm EST and Saturday, 9 am-6 pm EST. Best time to call is right at 9 am. Any agent can assist in booking, changes and payments.

Our group number is 7452228. You will need a credit card for your deposit and names as they appear on your passport or birth certificate, citizenship, age, gender, mailing & email addresses, and telephone number.

If you have questions, contact Mike Kleinbeck at mike.kleinbeck@gmail.com or 301.904.4122. Mike can help any single shipmates who would like to share a cabin. At least one person has indicated their willingness to share a cabin.

Things to consider:

-  Family and friends are more than welcome to join in one or more cabins
-  If you can't make a final decision yet, you can book now and cancel for a *full refund* until February 26, 2023.
-  If you fly in, you can purchase transfers to & from the airport and ship.



Royal Navy Dockyard, Bermuda

From Da Nang to Bayonne in One Easy Trip

By Frank C. Peralta

I went through boot camp at Naval Training Center San Diego, Company 193 from March through June 1965. My first orders were to Sasebo, Japan; but, as I was in transit in Subic Bay, Philippines, my orders were changed to Naval Support Activity, Da Nang, Vietnam.

As a rookie in the Navy, I was assigned night fire watch in the transit barracks. During formation one morning, I was told to get my sea bag and report to Naval Air Station Cubi Point. The next thing I knew, I was on a C-12, a two-engine prop airplane, to Da Dang. After a long night's flight, we arrived at Da Nang Air Base. It was August 11, 1965, the same day of the Watts riots in Los Angeles.

After a week in the transit barracks at camp Tien Sha, I reported to the YW-101, a water barge with a small crew. We took on water from a free waterfall at Monkey Mountain. We supplied water to all the small watercraft on the Han river, including LSTs and LCUs, and water buffalos. I spent a year in Da Nang, from 1965 to 1966 and was really impressed with navy life and the high camaraderie we had as a crew. It was a rookie's dream. Rate and rank were never a problem because everyone worked together to accomplish our mission.



Last night in Vietnam and ready to see New York City!

I went to take the 3rd class test at Camp Tein Sha and was told I was already a 3rd class pipefitter. Wow!

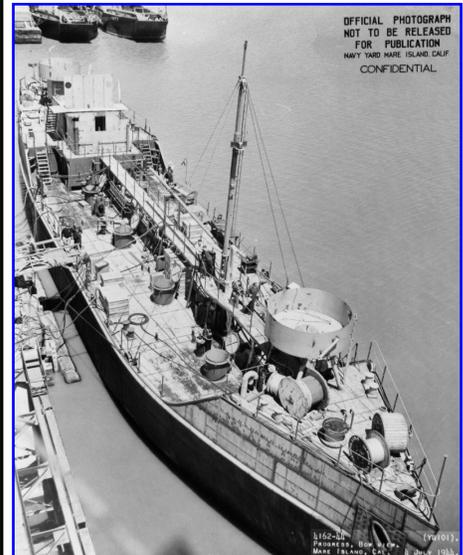
My time in Vietnam was almost up, and it was time to see the personnel officer and find out my next duty station. The night before, I had been reading a Playboy magazine (for the articles!), and they had a big write-up about New York City, where the drinking age was 18. The article had pictures of beautiful women and Joey's Peppermint Lounge on 45th Street. New York was wild and the place to go back in the day.

The personnel officer told me he could send me to Barcelona, Spain on a tender for a couple of years. I told him, "No thank you, I want to go to New York City!" He kept pushing the Barcelona duty, but I kept rejecting him. He finally gave up and told me there was an ammunition ship, USS Great Sitkin (AE 17) in the shipyard for repairs in Hoboken New Jersey, about 30 minutes from New York City from the Lincoln Tunnel. I told him, "I'll take it!" When I was leaving his office, he asked me why I didn't want to go to Spain. I told him without missing a beat, "I have been to Tijuana and that was enough for me." He almost threw me out of his office.

I reported aboard Great Sitkin for duty, and it was the best decision I made during my navy career. I was welcomed by all the ship's crew and found a home.

After my discharge, I spent 30 years with the San Diego Sheriff's Department, including 18 years working narcotics in a special unit. My time on the Great Sitkin will always be one of the best times of my life and military career.

God Bless the U.S. Navy! Go Navy!



YW-101, YW-83 Class Self-propelled Water Barge:

- Laid down, 11 February 1944, at Navy Yard Mare Island, Vallejo, CA.
- Launched, 31 May 1944
- Placed in service as **YW-101**, 6 December 1944
- **YW-101** was assigned to service in Japan, date unknown
- During the Vietnam War **YW-101** was assigned to the Naval Support Activity Danang



Unfinished FDR Portrait



National Infantry Museum



Tank Museum



Southern Comfort Food



John Shade & Penny Reeve



Missing Man Table Honoring Ron Zimmerman



George & Mary Kaiser

Wayne & Lucy Agee



Nick & Greg Huzinec
Joe Theisen & Stacy Weyant
Mark & Patsy Rucker
Fred & Marie Gallagher
Mike & Cathy Kleinbeck

Paul & Kathie Marsan
Jim & Mary Connallon
Joe Sr & Joe Jr Rios
Jim & Joy Dunno

Richard & Pam Berge



Reunion 2022!
Columbus, Georgia
A small crowd, but a fun time!

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: \$ _____ [] 2023 YR (\$20.00) [] 2024 YR (\$20.00) [] 2025 YR (\$20.00)

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

Comments: _____

Signature: _____