

GRIGGS-GRUNDY NEWS

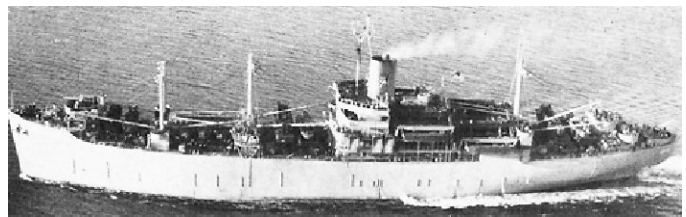
VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2

September 2009

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS GRIGGS AND USS GRUNDY



USS GRUNDY



USS GRIGGS

Special Points of Interest

- *The 2009 reunion in Albuquerque was a big hit with everyone. Read about it in the cover story. We hope more of you will choose to attend next year's reunion.*
- *Mail Call on page three has a letter from Shirley Thom, widow of Art. See what she has been doing to keep busy.*
- *Charles Forshee shares three of his stories from his Navy days with you on page three. We hope others will do the same for the next issue.*
- *Two items of interest for all Veterans are discussed on page four. Read about "Aid & Attendance Benefit" and aid for "Atomic Vets."*

2009 REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

The joint reunion of the USS Huntington (CL-107), the USS Rowe (DD-564) and the USS Griggs (APA-110) took place on September 17-20, 2009, at the Best Western Rio Grande in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thirteen members and twelve guests attended from the USS Rowe, eleven members and eight guests from the USS Huntington, and one member and one guest from the USS Griggs for a total attendance of forty-six.

The reunion began on Thursday with registration and the opening of the hospitality room, both happening around noon. The hospitality room became the "go to" place for what reunions are meant to be—good fellowship, good stories and good memories. Since the Huntington and Rowe had not met together before, the hospitality room was especially important as a meeting place to get acquainted with the guys from the "other" ship. It was soon evident that the two ships shared a lot in common and friendships quickly developed between the two ships' attendees. Only Charles Forshee attended from the USS Griggs, but he had been at last year's reunion with the USS Huntington, so he was not a new-comer to that part of

the group. The Welcome Reception on Thursday evening was the first official meeting of the group. Gene Volcik from the Huntington welcomed everyone to the reunion. Bob Wood, coordinator of the USS Rowe, was unable to attend the reception due to his wife's sudden illness and hospitalization right before the reception. Thoughts and prayers were with her all during the reunion. Hors d'oeuvres were served and everyone enjoyed getting acquainted and making introductions. Dinner was on one's own, so many stayed at the hotel for dinner while others went into town for dinner at one of Albuquerque's many fine restaurants.

On Friday morning after breakfast at the hotel, the tour to Santa Fe left the hotel. The first stop on the tour was the Turquoise Museum, which included a 20-minute seminar on the true colors of turquoise. This museum was a big hit with all who attended the tour. Then, after a driving orientation tour, the group de-coached for a visit to Loretto Chapel Museum and its miraculous staircase, followed by a preview of the Plaza Restaurants, shops and museums. The rest of the tour left every-

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one on their own for lunch and exploring the Plaza area. The tour returned to the hotel in the afternoon in time for relaxing and having some refreshments in the hospitality room before the evening's "Mexican Fiesta" dinner. The social hour began at 6:00 pm, followed at 7:00 pm by the fiesta dinner. After dinner entertainment was provided by an authentic Mexican duet using a Marimba from Chiapas, Mexico! Audience participation made it an especially entertaining experience.

Saturday morning again began with a hotel breakfast and loading up the motor coach for another tour of the area. This time it was the "Indians to Atoms" tour. First on the agenda was the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History, which is the nation's only congressionally chartered museum in its field. It is an intriguing place to learn the story of the Atomic Age, from early research of nuclear development through today's peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Originally known as the National Atomic Museum, it was established in 1969 on Kirtland Air Force Base before moving to Old Town, Albuquerque. After the museum trip, the tour proceeded to Old Town Plaza for some free time for lunch and shopping. The next stop on the agenda was the Pueblo Cultural Center where Indian dancers performed ancient movements, beautifully choreographed, complete with colorful costumes. A real sight to behold! After returning to the hotel, the annual business meeting was held to decide on the next year's reunion location and leadership. Bob Wood was again chosen to lead the USS Rowe and Gene Volcik to continue his leadership of the USS Huntington. Philadelphia, PA was selected as the 2010 reunion site. After the meeting there was a little spare time to get ready for the big event of the reunion—the USS Huntington/Rowe/Griggs banquet. The pre-dinner cocktail hour and photo session began at 6:30 pm and was followed at 8:00 pm by the banquet. Festivities began with the playing of

the national anthem, "Anchors Aweigh," and recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Welcoming remarks were by Bob Wood of the USS Rowe and Gene Volcik of the USS Huntington. During the banquet the group got to help Bill Latchford celebrate his birthday, complete with birthday cake for all! After dinner entertainment was by the "Rowemen," a singing group consisting of shipmates from the USS Rowe, with help from the Huntington sailors. The Memorial Service in remembrance of all the shipmates who have passed away, especially those deceased or whose deaths were learned of since the last reunion, was held. Gene Volcik and Bob Wood led the service, assisted by Charles Forshee (USS Griggs) and Jim Nelson (USS Huntington). Those remembered are as follows: USS Huntington—Joseph Gibney; USS Griggs—Charles Conti, Malcolm Lequex and Augustine Mallon; USS Grundy—Clyde Pigott and Henry Currie. No deaths were reported from the USS Rowe. The evening ended with some good byes since many were leaving early on Sunday. Others waited for good byes until breakfast on Sunday morning, but no matter when good byes were said, it was a sad occasion. Friendships were rekindled, new ones were made and everyone is looking forward to being together again next year in Philadelphia. See you there!

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"Our Reunions Work, So You Don't Have To."



TAPS

The deaths of the following shipmates have been learned of since the last newsletter. The entire crew extends our sympathy to families and friends. If anyone knows of a deceased shipmate, please inform the NEWS so he can be recognized in TAPS and also be listed on the honor roll at the next reunion memorial service.

USS GRIGGS

Charles Conti

Died August 30, 2008

Malcolm Lequex

(1944-45) Lt

Died June 5, 2009

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

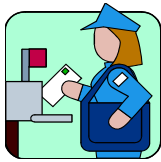
Balance after 06/09 issue	\$812.33
Received since 06/09	\$75.00
Funds available for 09/09	\$887.33
Funds expended for 09/09	\$187.24
Ending Balance	\$700.09

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MLRS ON FACEBOOK

ML&RS, Inc is now on Facebook! Find us using the e-mail address dina@mlrsinc.com.

A guy took his girlfriend to her first football game. Afterward he asked her how she liked it. "I liked it, but I couldn't understand why they were killing each other for 25 cents," she said. "What do you mean?" he asked. "Well, everyone kept yelling, 'Get the quarterback!'"



MAIL CALL

Dear Friends,

Although my dear husband, Art, passed away three years ago on May 11, 2009, I still am interested in the USS Griggs and all the nice folks from all the ships that we met.

I will not be able to attend the reunion in Albuquerque. Any travel time is now spent with my 101 year old sister who lives in Travelers Rest, SC.

Hopefully, I may be able to attend a reunion in the future and renew some friendships.

I miss my guy but do keep busy working with my oldest son at Art's office two days a week, taking care of my house and garden and just completed a book about Art and me for the family. Writing it brought back many memories of past reunions.

Have a wonderful 2009 reunion in Albuquerque!

Shirley Thom

STORIES FROM THE NAVY

By Charles Forshee

This is from the first ship I was on and I thought it was funny when it happened. Our ship was entering the entrance to New York Harbor when the shore sent a recognition message to our ship. When I sent the signal that was given to me back, the next signal received was, "HALT." We did so, and the Communications Officer checked the code he had given me and it was the wrong one and post haste issued another. When it was sent we got underway and continued to Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Another time on the USS Griggs, when we started into New Orleans at the entrance of the Mississippi, we got a message from the beach to change course because we were heading for the reefs and would be grounded and stranded. They gave us directions in detail. The Navigator of the ship had laid out the wrong course and as a result, he was no longer the Navigator of the ship. Never did know what became of him, but he was replaced. Incidentally, the Signalmen (as one of them) were assigned to correcting charts and laying out courses for entry to many ports of call using markers and buoys to layout these courses that were already on the charts also taking into account perhaps a ship that had been sunk so as not to hit it.

Life aboard the USS Baker DE 190 could get very interesting at times such as when the captain was transferred and another took over. The captain that replaced the former captain was a gungho type of guy at 33 years of age. While leaving the pier in Bayonne, NJ, he ordered 1/3 ahead before all the lines were let go, thus we pulled a part of the pier away with us.

While pulling into Newport, RI, due to dock space being limited, we were told to tie up along side another DE. While we coasted in to position, all engines were stopped and as a result when the order all engine astern full, we banged into the DE we were to up against. The captains got into a shouting match with the threat of fisticuffs by the other captain.

Another episode was a boarding exercise that was to be carried out at 1/3 speed. During this time a whale boat with thirty-eight men and their paraphernalia was slowly lowered with stern hitting the water first as lowering is continued. Our captain ordered 2/3 speed without informing those in the whale boat. Thirty-eight men and paraphernalia were dumped into the ocean. It took most of the day to retrieve all of the men. All the life belts did not work, CO2 tanks were empty, the "Mae West"

did a fine job. The whale boat was the last to be retrieved and it had drifted about 3 miles from the location. On top of that some recruits had not been taught to swim. This is not all that happened with this captain.

USS Baker was stationed about 3 miles on the port side of the aircraft carrier USS Card CVE 11. I went up to the bridge to the wheel house and took the helm and was steering the ship for something to do as I did not have duty. I got tired of this and turned it back over to the regular helmsman and at this time contact was made by sonar of a submarine at 7:05 pm 5th of July, 1944. General Quarters sounded before I could get out the door and depth charges began rolling off the ship. In the end, 31 Germans were captured. The captain of the sub Oberleutnant, Hans Stein, died the next day from shrapnel wounds. (I hope it was not from a 45 caliber machine gun bullets that was what I was firing.)

There are some things that most people wanted to keep under cover, such as someone that kept setting some trash on fire in the passageways of the stairs.

Two people found out where we were going on the next final port and went AWOL. They were eventually caught and were sent to prison as a result.

There were some people of the "don't tell" persuasion (gay) and they were meeting in the Chaplain's office but were eventually caught. All were transferred or discharged. This ended the problem of the fires being set in the stairwells. Do not really know who the fire bug was, but I believe the reason for some of the happenings was that they did not want to go to Okinawa. We had a new Chaplain as a result of the meeting place. Another incident occurred when someone managed to break into the Brig and get some beer stored there. This was never solved to my knowledge and they still had beer parties on some of the islands along the way to Okinawa.

AID & ATTENDANCE BENEFIT

“The Veteran’s Administration offers a Special Pension with Aid and Attendance (A &A) benefit that is largely unknown. This Special Pension allows for Veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing, undressing or taking care of the needs of nature to receive additional monetary benefits. It also includes individuals who are blind or a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity. Assisted care in an assisted living facility also qualifies.

This important benefit is overlooked by many families with Veterans or surviving spouses who need additional monies to help care for ailing parents or loved ones.

This is a “pension benefit” and is not dependent upon service-related injuries for compensation. Most veterans who are in need of assistance qualify for this pension.

Aid and Attendance can help pay for care in the home, nursing home or assisted living facility. A Veteran is eligible for up to \$1,519 per month, while a surviving spouse is eligible for up to \$976 per month. A couple eligible for up to \$1,801 per month.

ELIGIBILITY

Any War Time Veteran, with 90 days of active duty, 1 day beginning or ending during a period of War, is eligible to apply for the Aid and Assistance Special Pension. A surviving spouse (marriage must have ended due to death of veteran) of a War-Time Veteran may also apply. The individual applying must qualify both medically and financially.”

For more information, and to download the forms needed to file for the Aid and Assistance program, please visit www.veteranaid.org.

AID SOUGHT FOR ‘ATOMIC VETS’

Between 1945 and 1962, half a million U.S. troops participated in more than 250 atmospheric and underwater atomic bomb tests, most in the Pacific and Nevada. Many of these veterans have since suffered a panoply of illnesses commonly associated with radiation exposure, but many have had trouble getting the care they need.

Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii, has introduced legislation that would streamline the process and add transparency. The treatment process is run through the Department of Veterans Affairs using data from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Typically, the process entails a veteran approaching the VA with a claim. At that point, the agency sends the information to the DTRA, which decides whether the veteran’s service record indicates past exposure to high doses of radiation. This process, known as “dose reconstruction,” can take months and occurs behind closed doors, critics say. It can be cumbersome and mysterious, especially for someone already dealing with a life-threatening illness.

The DTRA and the VA recognize 22 types of cancer that qualify as caused by radiation exposure. Some cancers must occur within a particular time frame, such as 20 years from exposure, to qualify. More than 90 percent of the veterans who apply for benefits outside the parameters are denied.

Abercrombie’s legislation, the Atomic Veterans Relief Act, would add transparency by opening up DTRA’s analysis methods.

While watching a movie at the theater recently, I couldn’t hear the dialogue over the chatter of the two women sitting in front of me. Unable to bear it any longer, I tapped one of them on the shoulder. “Excuse me,” I said, “I can’t hear.”

“I should hope not,” she replied. “This is a private conversation.”

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The *GRIGGS-GRUDY NEWS* is the official publication of the *USS GRIGGS-GRUDY* Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in March, June, Sept., and Dec. *subject to receiving sufficient funding.* The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the NEWS. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article’s writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer’s name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted for publication. It would be an monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the author to research each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.