

GRIGGS-GRUNDY NEWS

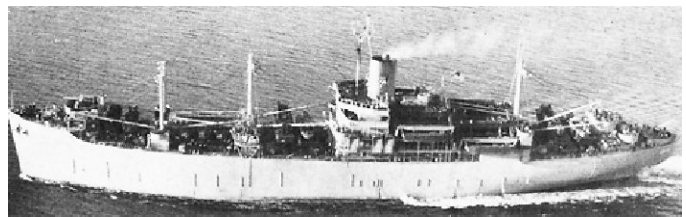
VOLUME 8 ISSUE 4

December 2007

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS GRIGGS AND USS GRUNDY



USS GRUNDY



USS GRIGGS

Special Points of Interest

- *Two great responses for the question "How did the Navy benefit your life?" See them on the first two pages.*
- *Charles Forshee has some news in his President's Message on page three.*
- *Mail Call on page three has two letters from sons of former Griggs/Grundy crewmembers.*
- *Did you participate in a "Crossing the Line" ceremony? A story on pages three and four relates some details on the event. We'd love to hear about your experience.*
- *Don't forget about the 2008 reunion in Lancaster. It's set for September 18-21 at the Holiday Inn at the Visitor's Center in Lancaster, PA.*

HOW THE NAVY BENEFITED MY LIFE

Editor's Note: An e-mail was sent out asking for an answer to the question, "How did the Navy benefit your life?" The following responses were received.

Charles Forshee:

When I enlisted for the Navy the army or the draft board was about to get me and I did not like the food that the army fed ("C" or "K" rations) although I didn't believe I could drink up all the water in the ocean either. When I went in I could not swim, but after Boot Camp I was sent to the University of Illinois for training to become a signalman. At this camp they taught us to swim and make a buoy out of our pant legs by tying knots in the legs and wetting them so air would not escape readily. As a signalman, one of the requirements was to know Morse code and be able to send it by light and also receive it. The Boot Camp was in Great Lakes, Illinois, which was near Chicago, a major city even in 1943. I got to go to the library in that city. In all probability, I would never have been able to see that area as a civilian. Also when at the University of Illinois I would not have gotten two diplomas for

completing the course and getting a 3rd Class Petty Officer rating as quickly as I did. When graduation was over, I was assigned to DE 190 (Destroyer Escort) for sea duty guarding convoys from the States going to Africa. Again I would not have been able to see this as a civilian and would not have had the responsibility of telling the captain how to steer the ship when going through the Straits of Gibraltar at night because the eye sight of the captain was not as good as mine. Incidentally, there was supposed to be 100 ships going through at night with no lights of any kind. One of these trips we were sent down the coast of Africa to Dakar and off loaded all the depth charges. There were three ships, all DEs, and orders were full speed to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. If a sub was detected, drop what depth charges were on the deck and keep going for Brooklyn. Of course in the process we visited New York City on several occasions. Then we were assigned to a squadron operating with a baby flat top carrier to hunt submarines in the North Atlantic. Finally they sent DEs out on the perimeter about 20 miles on each side of the carrier and not having duty, I went up on

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the bridge out of boredom. I took the helm from the helmsman and was steering the ship till I got tired and turned it over to the regular helmsman. I walked about 6 feet and started out a door and general quarters sounded. Depth charges started rolling off the fantail. One more pass over the sub and he surfaced and was fired on by 3 inch guns and 20 mm and 40 mm guns. Then we got close enough that I was handed a 45 caliber hand held machine gun to rake the deck to keep them from getting to their gun deck. Then they started abandoning the vessel, and a pick up started of the crew. Thirty prisoners were captured out of a crew of about 66. Another one of the ships steamed to where we were and proceeded to ram the sub and push it under, tearing a 14-foot hole in the side of that ship. We then had to go into Boston for that ship to be repaired. On the way we ran over a whale and tore the sound gear off and had to go in dry dock for it to be repaired. Some time after that I took the test for 2nd Class Signalman and made a higher grade than another man, but they gave him the rate. After thinking about it, I put in for a transfer off the ship and put down the difference in the grades that were made. They gave me the transfer off the ship and at the same time gave me the 2nd Class Signalman rate. I was sent to Newport, RI, to go on an APA and lucked out to get on the Griggs. I was sent to Pascagoula, Mississippi where all the crew christened the ship and put it in commission and took it on shakedown and to New Orleans for some other preparedness, then on to Galveston, TX, then back we went to Newport to train crews for APAs. Next was Norfolk, VA, and then to Panama with some marines for Hawaii, back to the States to San Francisco and then to Oxnard, CA where Seabees were picked up for Okinawa. We visited every island before we got there. We went to the Philippines on various islands after the war ended (which I was fortunate enough to raise our flags signifying "cease present exercises design WAR"). Then we took

troops to Japan for occupation duty and brought some from below the equator back to the States. To cap it off, we got a real geography lesson and were well educated as to how the rest of the world lived. I would not give up what I have learned by being in the Navy for anything.

Shirley Thom:

My husband, Art Thom, and I were very young when we were married after his commission at Columbia University, and he was sent to the Fort Pierce Amphibious Base in Florida. At nineteen years of age, I had never been out of the state of Minnesota, so it was very exciting for me to take the train all by myself with my wedding dress packed in a big box and head for Florida. Arriving in Fort Pierce, Art and I began making wedding plans for the following week, which included our parents and his sister who would come by train.

This for me was the beginning of learning responsibility, for while Art was busy at the base, I had to arrange accommodations for our family, contact a photographer and order a wedding cake. Cousins who were also stationed there, volunteered their apartment for a little reception. One night, Art and I went to the courthouse to secure a marriage license, but because I was only nineteen, we had to call home from the judge's office to obtain my parent's permission. The following night, we went to the church and arranged with the minister for our wedding service.

Eventually we were settled in a two story house with six other Navy couples. Here I learned about sharing, for three couples shared one bathroom and kitchen and I learned about friendships that last long after Art's Navy service ended. As I had so much time on my hands, I volunteered as a Nurse's Aide at the Fort Pierce Hospital. Because of the war, there was a shortage of nurses and the hospital was very appreciative of the Navy women's volunteer help. My work was mainly on the maternity floor and it was a wonderful feeling

for me to help those new mothers and babies.

Time evolved and when Art's ship, the USS Griggs, would sail to a new port, I would follow by train so we could be together as often as possible and for me, it was an opportunity to see more of the United States. Now that my Art is gone, (he died May 11, 2006), I cherish all those wonderful Navy memories.

As the wife of a Navy man, my life was enriched by learning responsibility, learning to share and learning how volunteering to help others can add a special worthwhile meaning to one's life. But probably the most important thing was that I learned to "grow up" and cut the home "apron strings" while still keeping a loving relationship with my family.

Editor's Note: If you didn't receive the request by e-mail for your answer to the question, "How did the Navy benefit your life?" or if you didn't respond at the time, please send in your answer for the next issue. Send it to ML&RS, Inc at our address at the bottom of this page.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 09/07 issue	\$657.24
Received since 09/07	\$85.00
Funds available for 12/07	\$742.24
Funds expended for 12/07	\$178.08

Ending Balance **\$564.16**

Send contributions to ML&RS, Inc at the address below.

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

FROM THE DESK OF CHARLES FORSHEE

Well, another reunion has passed and was enjoyed by all but my wife who was having a hard time walking before we left to go to the reunion. Now we are looking forward to another reunion in PA where in the past the Griggs and Grundy has had a better turnout. I have had several people that were relatives of members of the crew of both ships wanting to know more about their members and what they did on both ships. Some of our attendees have passed away before the last reunion on both ships—Milton Roecker, Cloyd Knepp, Jr. and Joseph Locke. In all probability their wives will not attend, but are welcome to come. Milton Roecker's brother and his wife are welcome to come also since he always drove Milton to the reunions.

I have an appointment at the VA in Asheville, NC 12/5 in preparation for some surgery to open a carotid artery on my right side and hope it doesn't cause a stroke and cause me to miss one of the reunions. They might want to do open heart surgery or put in stints. I don't know yet.

Some of the folks inquiring about relatives talked like they would be interested in coming to the next reunion. They were told to get in touch with ML&RS for the information about Grundy crew members. I do have only a limited amount of Grundy information and since Mr. Watts has had many problems, I could not send them to him for information.

I hear from Mr. Kingsburg, Mr. Murray and Mr. Morton and Mr. or Mrs. Quarella on a regular basis by e-mail and always enjoy the mail. I would also like to thank Mrs. Wanda Logan for the two books she sent and for the money for the newsletter.



MAIL CALL

Dear ML&RS,

As the son of Ens. Ted Holmes of the Grundy, I am always interested in the stories from her service that I did not hear from my dad.

An issue or two ago I remember a Grundy sailor wrote that the USS Indianapolis steamed by Grundy a day or so before she was lost to enemy action.

I wondered if the USS Grundy crew remembers this event?

Is it possible that the Grundy was the last naval ship to see the Indy before she was lost?

I own the original Captain's night order log book from the ship and I seem to remember that there was a report of a possible sonar contact of a sub from about the same time.

If any Grundy sailor remembers more about this, I would love to hear from them.

My address is:
Don Holmes
66 Magnolia St
Bergenfield, NJ 07621
E-mail: chile912@msn.com

Thanks,
Don Holmes

Crewmembers,

My dad, Joe Commisto, Sr, was a crew member during the war and we would have loved to attend a reunion, but was unaware of the existence. Dad passed away July 19, 2004, but told me many memorable stories of his days aboard the Griggs. I believe he was on the Griggs from its initial shakedown until 1946, but he was there during the later years in the war all the way through the occupation of Japan. He was a Quartermaster 3rd Class "N" Division, which I believe stood for Navigation.

Regards,
Joe Commisto



TAPS

The death of the following shipmate has been learned of since the last newsletter. The entire crew extends our sympathy to family 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.

Joseph Commisto, Sr.
USS Griggs
(Shakedown—1946) QM3 N Div
Died July 19, 2004

CROSSING THE LINE

Taken from the publication of the USS Yancey "Court of the Raging Main, Being the Good Ship Yancey's First Voyage Across the Line, dated 14 March 1945. "

The boisterous ceremonies of "crossing the line" are of such ancient vintage that their derivation is lost. It is well known that ceremonies took place long ago when the ship crossed the thirtieth parallel, and also when going through the Straits of Gibraltar. These early ceremonies were of the roughest sort and were, to a great extent, supposed to try the crew to determine whether or not the novices on their first cruise could endure the hardships of a life at sea. Then, as is the custom at the present time, it was primarily a crew's "party." The Vikings were reported at an early date to carry out these ceremonies on crossing certain parallels. It is highly probable that the present day ceremony was passed on to the Anglos, Saxons and Normans from the Vikings.

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At an earlier date, ceremonies of propitiation were carried on. Neptune, the mythological god of the seas, was appeased by the seamen, and marks of respect were paid those of his underwater domain. It is plausible that a part of the ceremony grew out of the traditions of other days, even though sailors had come to doubt the existence of Neptune. Nevertheless, Neptunus Rex is today the majesty who rules in the ceremonies.

Usually the ceremonies of the modern Navy are picturesque, and with the exception of the discomfort of a good wetting in the "tank," a slight shock of electricity from the "Devil", and the shaving ceremony, the initiation cannot be called extremely rough. Officers of the United States Navy could at one time "buy off" by giving the Neptune party so many bottles of beer. Unless the ceremonies are very crude, it is a tradition that younger officers in particular undergo the initiation.

The eldest and most dignified member of the crew is usually selected as Neptunus Rex; his first assistant is Davy Jones. Her Highness Amphitrite is usually a good looking young seaman who will appear well in garb of seaweed and rope yarns. The Court in general consists of the Royal Scribe, the Royal Doctor, the Royal Dentist, the Devil and other names that suit the fancy of the party. The Bears have the difficult task of rounding up the uninitiated, and also standing "dousing" watches in the canvas water tank.

The night before the ship crossed the line, it is the custom that Davy Jones shall appear on board with a message to the Captain from His Majesty, Neptunus Rex, stating at what time he wants the ship heave to for the reception of the Royal Party, and with particular summons for certain men to appear before him. This reception of Davy Jones usually takes place at night and may be made most impressive. The ship is stopped and, amid a glare of lights and a whirl of water, Davy Jones emerges from the hawse or is hoisted in over the bow to deliver his

message. He is usually received by the Captain and Officer of the Deck on the bridge.

REGION OF THE SOUTH SEAS DOMAIN OF NEPTUNUS REX

From: Neptunus Rex
To: Commanding Officer, USS Yancey
Subj: Royal High Court of the Raging Main.

It having been brought to the attention of His Royal Highness, Neptunus Rex, through his Trusty Shellbacks, that the good ship USS Yancey is about to enter these waters manned by a crew who have not acknowledged the sovereignty of the Ruler of the Deep, have transgressed on his domain and thereby incurred His Royal displeasure, and

WHEREAS, the aforesaid ship carries a large and slimy cargo of landlubbers, beach-combers, gutterrats, sea-lawyers, lounge lizards, chit signers, four-flushers, plow deserters, chicken chasers, numbskulls, skunks, rug-store cowboys, Panamanian Commandoes, and other foul creatures of the land, falsely masquerading as seamen and mariners of the HIGH SEAS, having never appeared before us, and

WHEREAS, The Royal High Court of the Raging Main will be convened on board the good ship USS Yancey on the 14th day of March 1945 between Latitude 000 degrees Longitude 163 degrees 16' East

Now, let it be known, that we hereby summon and request your permission that all screaming and wiggling Pollywogs be initiated on the foregoing date.

FUTHER, that at the appropriate time set by Davy Jones, the ship will be stopped for boarding of the Royal Court and his staff, at which time the Jolly Ranger will be hoisted to the yardarm.

Signed,
Neptunus Rex

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.

**USS GRIGGS/USS
GRUDY REUNION
SEPT. 18-21, 2008
LANCASTER, PA
HOLIDAY INN AT THE VISITOR'S
CENTER**

*We would like to hear about your experience in "crossing the line."
Send your stories to ML&RS, address on page two.*