

GURKE NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 3

November 2007

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE USS GURKE (DD-783)



Special Points of Interest

- *What started out as an awesome sight, became a nightmare. Byron Lott continues with his tale of the sea in the cover story.*
- *Only one new name for Welcome Mat. Let's see if we can find more shipmates.*
- *Frank Hickam sent a letter from the destroyer museum thanking the association for their contribution. The letter is on pages 3 & 4.*
- *Pages 4—7 contain the responses to "How did the Navy benefit your life?" It's great reading!*
- *See Phil Millholton's photos on page 8. Can you identify any of the guys?*

A TALE OF THE SEA (CONT.)

By Byron Lott, FT3 (1960-61)

"Now hear this, now hear this, all hands secure from refueling detail. Set the sixteen hundred to eighteen hundred watch. Mess deck will open at seventeen thirty." The loud speaker barked out its news to the crew and I knew that with the setting of the new watch I was about to be relieved from my lookout post on the bridge.

"Roadhouse, Roadhouse," the radio crackled, "my speed is two five knots, course three, three, five degrees." The carrier we were escorting was giving the Gurke, call sign - Roadhouse, its present speed and direction. While we had been busy refueling, the carrier had been conducting air operations consisting of landings and launchings of aircraft. Now that we were finished with the refueling the carrier wanted us to take up a "plane guard" station behind her in order to retrieve

any unfortunate pilot who might have to ditch into the sea. I smiled to myself thinking, if she is doing 25 knots and moving away from us we were going to have to really move to catch her. This could prove to be interesting.

I scanned the horizon with my binoculars for any sign of the carrier but was met with a scene of breaking swells on a beautiful blue Pacific ocean. At the horizon, the sea was welded to an equally beautiful blue south Pacific sky. Late afternoon at sea, the ship, rolling slowly from side to side, a warm breeze rushing past me, and the sun beginning its downward journey toward a very brief dusk to be followed by a quick drop into a jet black night.

"Stay awake there sailor!" I emerged from my doze to find myself looking into the face of the Officer of the Deck. "Don't let the bosun catch you napping out here or you'll find yourself on report."

"Aye, Aye, Sir," I quickly responded, embarrassed at having fallen asleep and also a bit scared for having violated a cardinal sin of the Navy – sleeping on duty. I had been warned by the "salts," "Don't fall asleep on watch or they will hang you! The Navy don't take kindly to its lookouts 'resting their eyes.'"

I heard a small chuckle as the OD stepped around the corner of the bridge speaking to the Conning Officer. "I could take a nap also," he quipped as he continued to the other side of the bridge.

"Aye, Aye, Captain." What had been up to this time simply muffled sounds of conversation were now becoming distinct. I looked into the pilot house just in time to see one of the world's few remaining Gods, a Navy captain, slide from his seat - the only seat

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on the bridge. "I'll be in my sea cabin. Call me when we take up our position."

"Aye, aye, Sir. Captain's off the bridge. I have the con. Helm, come right to 360."

"Come right to 360, aye, aye, Sir"

"Engine room, give me turns for 2 – 7 knots."

"Turns for 2 – 7 knots, aye, aye, Sir."

Suddenly the bridge came alive, shrugging off its lazy lethargy and springing into action. The helmsman grabbed his wheel and began spinning it to the new course reading; the engine order telegraph knobs were turned with their click, click, click showing the number of turns the propeller needed to make in order to drive the ship at 27 knots. This action was, in turn, answered by an engineer deep in the ship's bowels with a r-i-n-g, ring. The Gurke had come alive and was showing herself to be that greyhound that always brings a wry smile to every tin-can sailor's face.

The captain quietly left the bridge and a business-like atmosphere settled in. Slowly scanning the horizon, my mind drifted to the subject of our captain. He was a full commander in rank, a senior commander at that. He and I shared a small bond, although I am sure he never knew of it. He had only taken command shortly before I had reported aboard, thus, we were both new to the Gurke and she to us. Rumors had spread throughout the crew that he had spent most of his naval career in the submarine service and had arrived at a point where he should have been given command of his own boat. But the submarine service was changing. A new admiral by the name of Rickover was transforming the silent service into what would become the most feared and deadly war machine ever devised by man – the nuclear powered Polaris submarine. There was no longer room for grey beards. What was wanted now were spit and polish officers who knew the workings of nuclear power, who knew how to deal with the psychology involved in extended weeks or months of run-

ning submerged, who knew how to deal with the tensions of the underwater cat and mouse game called "The Cold War." No, our captain was being put out to pasture after years of good and faithful service by being given command of a two decade old destroyer. "Serve out your time with the surface fleet and then draw your pension," they had told him. No mention was made of his fetish for snakes, nor that under stress he could sometimes become confused. No place for this man in the modern submarine force. Ship him to the surface and let him ride out his remaining days harmlessly commanding an aging "tin can." So here were the opposites, me just beginning my Navy experience, with all of the enthusiasm and innocence that implies, and the Captain, tried and tested, and perhaps a bit disgruntled, waiting to end his.

Whoosh! My reverie was broken by a smack in the face of stinging salt spray thrown up by the bow. Whereas before, refueling, we had been running nearly parallel with the swells...now our galloping steed was racing headlong into them with spray and foam flung into the air by the bow. The ship would slice into an oncoming swell and then lift huge amounts of water as she rose breaking the surface and tossing it into the air. What a sight! This was John Wayne stuff, hell you couldn't even find it in John Wayne movies, this was great! Why was it I never had my camera for these great moments? What an awesome sight! Drenched by the incessant spray, I laughed with joy at my luck to be standing here taking in this phenomenal scene. I turned away to rub my eyes and was just resuming my scan of the sea when, whoosh, I was smacked square in the face by more wind driven spray and salt water. I hunkered down behind the bridge bulwark to avoid the bite of the salt spray that was now beginning to feel like the cuts from a hundred lashes. Every time I tried to look over the bulwark of the bridge I was greeted with hard driving spray and sea water. My eyes were burning and I was spitting and gagging on salt water. I

was quickly losing my previous elation. Crouching behind my wall was not going to be tolerated for long. I had to find a way to stand up and face forward so as to at least appear to be scanning the horizon. "Lookouts are supposed to be searching the sea for possible danger regardless of the weather," the bosun had instructed me in no uncertain terms. Pulling my watch cap low onto my forehead, and placing the binoculars on the top of the bulwark, I slipped up behind them and crossed my arms over their top. My face, now somewhat protected, would give the impression of looking ahead for the carrier. Now, thoroughly chilled and soaking wet, "Where the hell is my relief?" I mumbled to myself. The thought of dry clothes, a warm bunk and a hot meal rapidly replaced the few moments or elation that I had experienced seeing the ship pounding her way through increasing mountains of water.

The Gurke had a very green crew many of whom, like myself, had never been to sea before. I reasoned that my relief either did not know he was to relieve me or that he had gone to supper thinking that he had until eight o'clock before taking my place. Whoosh, whoosh, heavy spray and salt water, the OD, shielding his face comes around the bridge and spots me. "Why haven't you been relieved?" he barks above the increasing din of wind and spray.

"Don't know sir," I reply, not changing my newly acquired position. Whoosh, damn, square in the face. He turns back to the pilot house and orders a messenger to find my relief. I dive back behind my folded arms as more spray and salt water rush toward me. I am really having mixed emotions about this. On the one hand I do want to be relieved and go below, but on the other what a sight I am witnessing. On the horizon I could occasionally see the carrier, a dot against a dark, blue background. Whoosh, whoosh, damn it, where's my relief?? The binoculars were becoming encrusted with salt and I tasted it after every smack of the spray.

To Be Continued in the next issue.



WELCOME MAT

The USS GURKE takes great pleasure in announcing that the following shipmate has been located since the last newsletter. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion and that you will become active in the association.

Michale Houle
1759 St Hwy 32
Wabeno, WI 54566
715-473-5732
mnwho@ez-net.com



TAPS

The Gurke Newsletter was informed of the deaths of the following former crewmembers since the last newsletter. The entire crew extends our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the deceased.

Odis Chancellor
(1960-61) ET O Div
Date of death not reported

William Isaac (1958-59)
Date of death not reported

John Titchenal
(1965-68) E-4 OC Div
Died September 24, 2007

Roderic Moore
(1950-51) 1st Div
Died May 28, 2007

Phillip Spencer
(1952-53) BT1 B Div
Died November 21, 2005

Russell Hammerand (1951-55) FT3
Date of death not reported

Anyone learning of the death of a former crewmember please notify the newsletter so their passing can be acknowledged in TAPS and on the Honor Roll at the reunion memorial service.



MAIL CALL

Karen,

Enclosed is a copy of the letter from the Tin Can Sailors that I received from our recent donation to the destroyer museum fund. Thought this would look good in a future issue.

I might add an note to all members regarding their dues. We cannot continue to put together a newsletter, maintain records, and expect "someone else to carry the load." The **lifetime payment of \$50.00** certainly is a bargain and it makes for easier bookkeeping etc. Hey, guys, get your due's checks in the mail.

Also, I want to "set the facts straight" regarding Carroll Brigg's story about Casimir Mesh RM2's purported ability to copy "George Fox" at 70 wpm. This could not have happened. Let me explain...

I was stationed on Guam 1952-54 at the Radio Station (NPN) where "George Fox" was transmitted from. This station served the fleet in the Western Pacific and operated the (Fox broadcast); running CW, (Morse code at 22 to 24 wpm). Anything faster attempted immediately prompted Washington to scold the station for "exceeding Fleet standards." We usually keyed the Boehme keyers at 24 wpm. Not 70 wpm. Maybe it was 70 characters a minute which would equate to 14 wpm. A word had 5 characters, and everything was coded in 5 letter groups. Back in those days, the only way for handling messages to the fleet was by Morse Code (CW). Later, the fleet received teletype equipment onboard the larger ships, i.e. carriers, cruisers, and battle wagons. This allowed messages to be transmitted faster at machine speeds, 60 wpm on the Teletype equipment, and later up to 100 wpm.

Anyway, I thought I'd set the record straight.

When I reported aboard the USS Gurke in Yokosuka, Japan after being sent by sea plane from Yokosuka down to Sasebo, where the ship was supposed to be, but only to find that it had "just sailed," leaving me to RON (remain overnight) and catch the plane back to Yokosuka the next day. What a thrill that was! Taking off and landing on the water felt like concrete. Lots of noise and flying with "white knuckles" for sure.

I reported aboard as I said, then on our way to sea, leaving the harbor, but what did we all hear? "Man overboard, man overboard, this is NO drill!" It was Petty Officer Peyton Spear who fell overboard.

Makes you wonder just what kind of ship the Gurke was. I found out, having come straight from Radioman "A" school in San Diego, reporting aboard as RM3. Placed in charge of the ship's communications after the "old salts" got off in San Diego. Stayed aboard, making RM2, and RM1 prior to my own discharge.

I later re-appeared in Pearl Harbor to meet the Gurke and DesDiv 51 on their return to West-Pac...That's enough for now.

Frank Hickam
RMC, USN (Ret)
Treasurer, USS Gurke DD-783 Reunion Assn., Inc

The following letter is the one Mr. Hickam referred to at the beginning of his letter.

June 22, 2007

Dear Mr. Hickam:

Thank you for your letter and the generous \$200.00 check from the USS Gurke (DD-783) Reunion Association. This contribution will be added to the Thomas J Peltin Destroyer Museum Grant Program.

The cost of operating and maintaining a destroyer as a museum/memorial ship is far greater than most people realize. Paint, metal,

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insurance, utilities, etc; they all add up to far more than ticket sales can ever be expected to cover. The support of ship associations is vital to the survival of these ships that served as memorials to all destroyers and those who served aboard them.

On behalf of the seven ships support, I thank the USS Gurke (DD-783) Reunion Association for their generosity. Their support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
James V Jones, President

ML&RS, Inc.,

I look forward to receiving the Gurke Pepco Newspaper in the mail. It's a joy to read and brings back memories.

I found out in February that I have cancer of the esophagus. Have had 25 radiation treatments. Taking chemo now. Have had four sessions. Doing fair.

Looking forward to the next newsletter.

Sincerely,
John Payne

Published by:

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Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To.

Financial Report: The cost of this issue is \$240.00, mailed to 100 members without e-mail addresses.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM THE STAFF AT
ML&RS, INC**

HOW THE NAVY BENEFITED MY LIFE

Editor's Note: ML&RS, Inc sent out an e-mail asking everyone to answer the following question: "How did the Navy benefit your life?" We got an overwhelming response, which are printed below. A huge thanks to all who responded! If you do not have e-mail, please send in your answer to be published in the next issue. ML&RS, Inc address is at the bottom left of this page.

Bob Peterik:

I gained patience, a great work ethic, respect for others, respect for this great country, and had a great time.

Eugene Tortone:

The Navy gave me the opportunity to see a lot of the world, Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic and meet and serve with many outstanding individuals. While in the Navy's classification school, prior to reporting to Gurke, met my wife to be, a young second class petty officer like myself. Over the years we raised five children. The Navy also presented great opportunity for training and advancement. Promoted to Chief Petty Officer while serving in Gurke. When I retired as a Master Chief Petty Officer after 22 years and joined the civilian sector, my navy background led me into continued employment as a navy civil servant for another 15 years. Additionally, have been with that young second class petty officer for the past 47 years.

Roger Berg:

The great U.S. Navy benefits were learning to pay attention to detail, doing your best at what you're supposed to do, humility, and "hurry up and wait" (being on time and patient in civilian life). As a 22 year old Ensign, fresh out of college and 90 day wonder OCS in Newport, Rhode Island, I was lucky to be placed under the tutorage of LT "Red" Smith, the Gurke's engineering officer in 1968, and 2 wonderful chiefs—MMCS John Roszell of M division

and BTCS Ekleberry of B division. The Navy gave me some good engineering schooling, but those 3 men were instrumental in giving me a first class education on the "practical factors" of life in the Navy on board the Gurke with all that wonderful propulsion equipment. I was also provided a lifetime of sea stories in Southeast Asia with the crew on the Gurke, skipping a Nasty class PT boat, and providing small boat "taxi service" to the SEALs in south Vietnam. I have a lifetime of great friendships, built on serving in the Navy together, that are far stronger than anything created through civilian life. I believe that serving in the Navy gave me the confidence and work ethic to be successful in my personal life and career on Hawaiian plantations, an export manager, and managing industrial plastics technical sales.

John Logie (Ops Dept, 1962-64):

I became eligible for the draft in 1961 when I finished college. Not wanting to spend two years as a buck private, I traded my college degree for the chance to go to OCS, and to become an "Officer and a Gentleman," just like Richard Gere did in the 1982 movie. After that I spent three years on Gurke and her sister ship USS Hollister DD-788 (while Gurke was in FRAM). During that time I served in one important (to me) collateral duty—as Ship's Legal Officer. All it took was one week of training in the UCMJ, and practice. I got to try both Summary and Special Courts Martial. After finishing two more years on active duty teaching Surface Tactics to the senior Midshipmen at Annapolis, I went back to the University of Michigan to go to Law School and graduated in 28 months. I then joined this firm and am now approaching 40 years with Warner Norcross & Judd, having also doubled up with 12 years as Mayor of Grand Rapids. I am still trying cases, mostly because it is still fun. I didn't have a

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clue about a career when I left college. The NAVY gave me the time to think about it, helped me find my beautiful wife of 43 years (the lady who designed our ship's seal –Ad Mare Paratus), and led to both careers. Thank you NAVY, hardly seems enough.

Jim Lively:

I left a somewhat sheltered life and learned to get along with other people. I got to see, in person, a large part of the world first-hand. Places that most people cannot afford to go see. I would do it again.

M. "Gunner" Gross:

In a nutshell, my answer is—The Navy in general and the Gurke in particular, influenced and shaped my then young life. After "the experiences of my Navy days," I feel I was better prepared to get through the rest of what remains of that life.

One thing for certain...you can take a Sailor out of the Navy, but...you'll never take the Navy out of that Sailor! Once a Sailor-Always and Forever a Sailor!

Jesse McCormack:

After 20 years, I receive a nice paycheck every month since December 1973.

LT Sam W. Reusser:

The Navy was a life changing experience and pathway for me. I came from a low income family and grew up in a core city environment during the 40's and 50's. Had I not been coerced to join the Navy in 1959, as a high school dropout and making minimum wage plus constant exposure to alcohol and drugs, my life could have taken some horrible turns and results.

Although sent to sea immediately after Boot Camp because I was a high school dropout, the Gurke enlisted management, specifically FT1 Womack and BM1 Shipp, allowed me after one year in the deck force to transfer to an electronics rating as a striker. So, from January 1961 till present day, I have either serviced, repaired, re-engineered,

designed, or sold electronic equipment, both military and civilian.

After four years USN (44 mos, 26 days, 3 hrs & 10 min aboard Gurke—but who was counting?) I returned to civilian life, but stayed in the Reserves. Still mostly uneducated electronically, and no GI Bill for me, I returned to the Navy for a guaranteed Avionics school. Then the GI Bill came through for those of us between Korea and Vietnam. I completed a very successful second four years of active duty, made AT1, and once more returned to civilian life because the detailer wouldn't give me a set of available orders I qualified for nor gave me a reason why.

I now had the experience and trade schools to continue a successful electronics career. I also now had funding to pursue an Electrical Engineering degree. I worked for Martin Marietta Aerospace, Semiconductor Manufacturers and Test Equipment Manufacturers over the following 35 years.

I remained in the Active Drilling Reserves until I retired in 1989 and upward mobility through AT Chief (E-7) WO1-CWO3 (Avionics) and LT LDO (Avionics). In 2000, at age 60, I started drawing \$1550/mo retirement pay. With my Social Security pay and almost depleted IRA's I am still only middle class, but somewhat secure financially, and far, far better off than possible alternatives.

So with all certainty I can say that my lifelong friend who coerced me into joining the Navy and the Navy itself, has resulted in a successful career and a mostly happy life.

Jerrold Semmons:

I was very young and gained an experience that was beyond a doubt "priceless." It also allowed me through the G.I. Bill to gain a college education. I do feel badly that I didn't keep in touch with a lot of old friends.

Gordon Reynolds:

I went in when I was 17 so I did a lot of growing up. It was an experience of my life; it was a time I would not sell for anything. But, on the other hand, when it came time to re-up, not a chance.

1957 we went to Pago Pago and Sydney. We left Sydney for Yokosuka, then the work began. Cdr. Norton took over as skipper and we left Yokosuka for the Formosa Patrol, we were on patrol and were ordered to Hong Kong — DAMN the luck. When we arrived, we relieved USS Orca as station ship and spent the month of December in Hong Kong on port and starboard liberty. Christmas we had a bunch of orphan kids on board for dinner, to visit with Santa and a movie. It really was the highlight of our time there.

We left for Subic Bay first of January, 1958. It was so hot we slept on deck. It was unbearable below deck. After that we chased carriers and subs a lot of 4 boiler ops with 4 on 4 off watches. (FUN) Yeah, that Norton liked to sail.

That was my first year. I had 2 more and got out January 1960.

Russell Anderson:

I joined the Navy when I was 18 years old. I enjoyed shipboard life. I visited many countries that I never would have if not in the Navy. I enjoy learning about other cultures and sightseeing in their countries. I learned a good trade that I followed after retirement from the Navy. I was witness to several Atomic Bomb explosions in the Bikini Atoll. I met many very good friends and we still keep in touch even though we live far apart. Shipmates and families looked after each other. I also enjoy the retirement benefits and medical for life. I retired as a Senior Chief. My shipmates called me Andy.

Jerry Hays:

Being in the Navy for twenty-five years allowed me to grow up and mature. I was able to be married to a wonderful lady and have two wonderful sons. I was able to travel and see various parts of the world. I made some life long friends from the shipmates that I served with on active duty. It allowed me to understand many different cultures and diversity

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throughout the world. It allowed me to serve the great nation and to be proud to be called a veteran.

Dave Fischer:

I was a young man from the Midwest facing the draft and with no direction. The Navy recruiter did a wonderful job of filling me in on the adventures of the Navy. His best selling point was—"Do you want to sleep on the ground and camp out for four years, or have 3 meals a day and some clean sheets to crawl into at night?" Sold me and the rest is history. I believe that the work ethics I have today has been from the 4 years in the Navy. You are thrown in with all classes of people, race, religion, etc. The years were '66-'68 on the Gurke, and '68-'70 on the USS OKC G1C5.

Ron Highburger:

It kept me out of the coal mines of Pennsylvania and gave me a wonderful career and a way to raise a family. At that time in my life, it was the best move I could have made. I would not change a thing.

Dewey Robinson:

Attached is an excerpt from my book entitled "SEA STORIES AND FACTS ABOUT THE USS GURKE."

In answer to your inquiry as to the benefits of the time I served in the Navy, I believe the epilogue speaks my thoughts as to the benefits of the training in boot camp and later serving on the USS Gurke. Additionally, there is a great benefit through the VA where I have received many medical benefits at the York VA hospital here in Murfreesboro, TN.

"Collecting these stories and facts has been a most delightful work for me. I have learned from those reporting that we are all a kindred spirit. For they have viewed life from the same decks where I once stood.

Although my departure from the Gurke came more than fifty years ago, I have never forgotten the sense of security I had while living among the members of the Gurke family.

I always appreciated the opportunity to leave the ship and visit each new port of call. But when the sight-

seeing grew weary, it was such a comfort to know that home was just beyond the water's edge.

Like the old home-place that is always there, standing ready to welcome us back among the memories we made while growing up, the Gurke holds all the memories of thousands of boys who, over the years, grew into manhood among her crew.

On many occasions through the years, I have concluded that only my family and the church have done as much to strengthen my purpose in life and give me as much for which to be thankful as did the months I lived among the men of the USS Gurke.

For me it was the first and foremost stabilizing event in my pre-adult years and it has its effect to this day."

Larry Elliott:

Being in the Navy taught me to be responsible for my own well being and to respect authority. It helped me become a good citizen and gave me a sense of patriotism. Serving with others gave me an understanding of people from all parts of the country.

Richard Bruno, EM3 1955-57:

Being in the Navy benefited me in many ways. When I signed up I was a teenager, didn't know what I wanted to do with my life; had a job that paid \$1/hour and no particular career path in mind. The Navy taught me discipline, and with the technical skills that I planned to apply in civilian life. The biggest benefit though, was that I met a young lady who later became my wife. We were married shortly after I was discharged and we have been married for over 48 years, raised a family and now we are retired and enjoying life with our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Mel Tynan, Gurke 1960-62:

The Navy has touched almost every segment of my life. It gave me my profession as a Electronics Tech. After leaving the Navy in 1966, I relocated to Medford, OR,

where I got into radio, both on air and as the technician. After that I moved into TV engineering and became Chief Engineer KTVL—Channel 10. It became my life and later a good retirement also.

While stationed in Charleston, OR, I met and married my wife of 44 years, in 1963. Patricia and I have four children. Our oldest son joined the Navy. When that happened I was encouraged to join the Navy reserves and happily did so. From that point on we were all about the military. All together I spent 26½ years in the Navy. I met many wonderful people along the way, traveled many places, and got paid to do it.

We had hard times like everyone else along the way. We grew up fast and learned so much as well. All of it centered around the values learned in the military and work ethic it instilled. It has had such a profound effect on our whole family.

Today we are, as of Dec 2000, living a happy, retired life. I retired as a ETC-USNRR. I receive a nice monthly income from the Navy and good insurance benefits as well. It has been an interesting whirlwind of a life. Would I have it any other way? Absolutely not. God Bless America and those who continue to serve this country and people.

Joe Hughes:

Being in the U.S. Navy benefited my life by allowing me to proudly serve in our military. It taught me responsibility, teamwork, respect for authority and good habits that are with me today. My only regret is that I didn't stay in and make a career of the Navy. I often tell this to our young men and women who serve to give them something to think about and maybe consider staying in and making it a career. Our Nation's military has a lot to offer. I have made a career out of a Paramilitary Organization for the past 23 years. I am in Law Enforcement in my local community and proudly serve my Parish, State and Country in this capacity by being on the frontlines of our Homeland

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Jim Reis:

I joined the Navy in 1960 and served aboard USS Gurke January '61 to May '63. I was only 19 at the time and the first cruise we went on lasted a long time. I learned a lot while onboard and went from the deck force to being a Radioman. I think my experiences on Gurke had a lot to do with me choosing a career in the Navy. I retired in 1989 and a RMCM (SW) (E9). I can truthfully say, I have never been stationed at a bad command and have enjoyed my entire career. When it was time for me to retire, the things I learned enabled me to get a fantastic civilian contractor job, working for the Navy. I am still a contractor, teaching Navy personnel how to use the DMS communications system on-line.

Ron Hoyez:

First there is the travel. I was able to see most of the world while serving. Second and important, being able to apply the skills that I learned in the service. Also I should point out that now that I have attended college, I can say the service gave me the determination to do well in school. (I have a 3.5 to 3.7 GPA). And last, the retirement that I receive has made life comfortable and the added health care benefit by being retired is great. What more is there is ask for? Now that I can reflect on the places I have been, it is remarkable and a dream for most. I can now enjoy more of the simple things in life.

Bryce Arnold, BT2:

The life on the Gurke and being in the Navy has had something to do with my entire life. From the fact that being a fellow shipmate introduced me to my wife of 37 years, to my early retirement because they taught me a profession that I followed up on when I got out.

I first went in hating the job and then finally grew up to the fact that ya got to do some things in this world ya just don't want to do. As I said, a fellow boiler technician introduced me to my wife and I have four grand-kids today that live close by.

At first I did not like the people

over me in the fire room and I really did not like the boiler work, but I learned it anyway.

When I got out of the Navy I went after a job at the Calvary Lutheran Hospital in L.A. operating and maintenance of all kinds of things, but mostly operating boilers.

I then left there and went to work for L.A. Department of Water and Power and worked there for 25 years on repairing everything having to do with power stations from the boilers and turbines to the toilets.

The Navy made me grow up and taught me a profession and I am forever grateful for what I have gotten from that beginning. I only knew breaking horses and milking cows when I got to the Navy with no money to buy a horse ranch or a dairy and that was not going to work.

I was able to retire from the Dept of Water and Power at the age of 48 and I have been riding motorcycles and fixing the house up and just doing what I want.

David Cargill, 1964-65:

I was an eighteen year old high school graduate when I enlisted in the Navy. I had no marketable skills. The Navy sent me to Electronics school and gave me a skill and for the last forty something years I have been earning a living as an Electronic Technician. The Navy also gave me a sense of responsibility and discipline that I don't believe I would have if I had never enlisted.

Kevin Mcauffie:

Being aboard the USS Gurke afforded me the opportunity to meet some great guys and see exotic places and things. Most importantly, however, I now have all those people, time and places to remember in my senior years. What greater benefit can one have than that which lasts a lifetime.

Billy Simmers, FC3:

I joined the Navy as a seventeen year old kid and I came out as a man. In the Navy I became interested in electronics. I worked for the telephone company for forty-five years as an electronic tech.

Ted Szenborn:

In more positive ways than I can ever describe.

Phil Millhollon:

I've attached a couple of old pictures from my days on the Gurke. One of them was from a pie eating contest we had at one point as we were steaming around the Pacific...looking for something to pass the time. (See pictures on page 8.)

Now to answer your question. Well, I think that one of the most important things that I took home with me was how such a diverse group of sailors from all walks of life and parts of the country were able to pull together as a team under the most adverse conditions. Maybe it was the adverse conditions that brought us together as a "team"...but I think that it was the repeated training that the Navy gave us—the drills and more drills to make sure that we reacted to a variety of situations as professionals, and as a team. I believe that this is probably one of the things that I was able to use throughout my life.

Larry Fancher:

As a 1952 17 yr old high school dropout, the Navy provided me with discipline and stability. I wound up with a pension instead of prison.

**2008 USS GURKE
REUNION**

APRIL 3—6

**SAN DIEGO,
CA
HANDLERY HOTEL**



Local vendors come aboard to sell their products in Hong Kong.

From left to right:
MR-3 Smith,
HM-3 McHose
FN Dan Hays



FN Perry is on right. Other two are not known.

Pie eating contest.
Can anyone identify these guys?



All pictures submitted by Phil Millhollon

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Gurke Newsletter is the official publication of the *USS GURKE* Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in February, May, August and November, *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 *GURKE*. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter. In the event there is insufficient funding for a regularly scheduled issue, all funds received will accumulate until the next regularly scheduled quarterly issue. Out of sequence issues will not be published merely to "catch-up."

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.

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

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

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

NOTE EXPIRATION DATE ON ADDRESS LABEL

Please check the address label on your envelope or the top of your e-mail for your dues expiration date. If it is past, this is the last issue of the newsletter you will receive until dues are paid again. **Send dues to Frank Hickam, 25 Harlech Dr, Wilmington, DE 19807. Make checks to USS Gurke DD-783 Reunion Assoc., Inc. Dues are \$10 for 1 yr or \$50 lifetime.**