

HUNTINGTON HERALD

Volume 12, Issue 3

May 2002

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS HUNTINGTON



Special Points of Interest

- *The speech by Senator McCain will fill you with Patriotism all over again! See the cover story.*
- *Gene Volcik has a word of encouragement for the reunion. Read his article on page two.*
- *MAIL CALL on page three has a request for a list of ports visited by the USS Huntington. Can you be of help?*
- *Do you feel the same as the author of "I Am an American Sailor" on page four?*
- *Ever wonder why sailors used to wear bell bottom pants? Find out on page four.*

SPEECH BY SENATOR JOHN S. McCAIN

Let me tell you what I think about our Pledge of Allegiance, our flag, and our country. I want to tell you a story about when I was a prisoner of war. I spent 5 ½ years in the Hanoi Hilton. In the early years of our imprisonment, the North Vietnamese kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell.

In 1971, the North Vietnamese moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 men to a room. This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change. And was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans, led by people like Nancy and Ronald Reagan, on

behalf of a few hundred POWs, 10,000 miles from home.

One of the men moved into my cell was Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was thirteen years old. At seventeen, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He later earned a commission. He became a Naval flying officer, and was shot down and captured in 1967. Mike had a keen and deep appreciation for the opportunities this country - and our military - provide for people who want to work and want to succeed.

The uniforms we wore in prison consisted of a

blue short-sleeved shirt, trousers that looked like pajama trousers and rubber sandals that were made out of automobile tires. I recommend them highly; one pair lasted my entire stay.

As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some prisoners to receive packages from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing. Mike got himself a piece of white cloth and a piece of red cloth and fashioned himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he sewed the

(Continued on page 2)

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American flag on the inside of his shirt.

Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of our cell, and say the Pledge of Allegiance. I know that saying the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important or meaningful part of our day now, but I can assure you that – for those men in that stark prison cell – it was indeed the most important and meaningful event of our day.

One day, the Vietnamese searched our cell and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it. That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, called for Mike Christian to come out, closed the door of the cell, and for the benefit of all of us, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours.

Then they opened the door of the cell and threw him back inside. He was not in good shape. We tried to comfort and take care of him as well as we could. The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs in each corner of the room.

After things quieted down, I went to lie down to go to sleep. As I did, I happened to look in the corner of the room. Sitting there beneath that dim light bulb, with a piece of white cloth, a piece of red cloth, another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. Sitting there, with his eyes almost shut from his beating, making another American flag. He was not making the flag because it made Mike Christian feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was for us to be able to pledge our allegiance to our flag and country.

Duty, Honor, Country. We must never forget those thousands of Americans who, with their courage, with their sacrifice, and with their lives, made those words live for all of us.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Herald is the official publication of the USS HUNTINGTON 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 HUNTINGTON. 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.

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

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

**NORFOLK, VIRGINIA—THAT'S THE PLACE!!
SEPTEMBER 19-22, 2002—THAT'S THE DATES!!
"WHERE AND WHEN OF WHAT?"**

Just a great group of humanity getting together for celebration and fun—the crew, wives, and friends of the USS Huntington.

Norfolk was a great selection for our next reunion because it is rich in naval history and has lots of other historical sites. It should be another great reunion even if you have been to Norfolk before, come anyway because you may see something different—and besides, don't miss seeing your shipmates and friends.

We are still trying to locate shipmates who do not know about the reunions so we must keep trying to find them. Also, if you would try to call, e-mail, or write to someone who has not been to a reunion lately. Let them know that they are missed.

Come join us—so you can forget about your aches and pains, and just have some good ole' fashioned fun.

From: Gene Volcik
Reunion Coordinator

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Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To.

WELCOME MAT



The USS HUNTINGTON takes great pleasure in announcing that the following shipmate has recently been located. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion in Norfolk and that you will become an active member of the association.

Paul Walton (1948-decomm)
 38 Shepherd Ln
 Orange, CT 06477
 203-799-2944

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance on hand after 02/02 issue
\$596.81

Funds received since 02/02 issue
\$80.00

Funds available for 05/02 issue
\$676.81

Funds expended 05/02 issue
\$177.79

Ending Balance For 08/02
\$499.02

CONTRIBUTORS SINCE LAST ISSUE

John Alpine	\$10.00
George Gyorek	\$20.00
Jack G. Kelty	\$10.00
Robert E. Opferkuch	\$20.00
Harry Season	\$20.00

TOTAL \$80.00

Battleships are always named after states; submarines after fish; cruisers after cities; and destroyers after naval heroes.

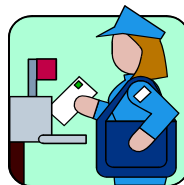


TAPS

The Herald was informed of the death of the following former crew-member since the last newsletter. The entire crew extends our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the deceased.

Richard Northrup
 Date of death unknown

Anyone learning of the death of a former crewmember is requested to notify the Herald so their passing can be acknowledged in TAPS and also on the Honor Roll at the reunion memorial service.



MAIL CALL

Sirs,

A while back you had printed a list of ports that the USS Fargo (CL-106) had visited from 16 March 1946 through February 1948. I have reproduced that list several times now for other members that wanted it, but now I am hoping that you have the same type of list for the USS Huntington, roughly the same time period— as both ships were on the same Goodwill Tour but taking different ports.

I was transferred to the Fargo from the Huntington on the 15th of Nov. 1946 and do not have any of the ports that the Huntington had visited until that date, other than knowing what ports, but not the dates visited. If you have a list, I would appreciate it very much if you could send me a copy and I

will gladly send a copy to each of the Huntington Marines!

And yes, I did see the article on the Initiation of The Villa Emma Marines. Thank you and keep up the great work. My wife and I are planning to attend the reunion (Fargo) in Newport, RI in September and are now waiting for the registration packages. I know of several other Marines also planning to attend.

It is very difficult to make all the reunions when you have been on several ships, but I am going to try to make as many as I can anyhow!

Very sincerely,
 Robert (Bob) Ruble
 33224 E Lake Holm Dr. SE
 Auburn, WA 98092-5959
 253-939-7857

Editor's note: If any of you have a list of the ports, please contact Mr. Ruble.

PATTY LABELLE'S PEARLS OF WISDOM

- The only time you run out of chances is when you stop taking them.
- Making a living is not the same thing as making a life.
- Every exit is an entrance to someplace else.
- Your self-worth is more important than your net worth.
- Anger is like the blade of a butcher knife—very difficult to hold on to for long without harming yourself.
- You can't smooth out the surf, but you can learn to ride the waves.
- Look at life through the windshield, not the rearview mirror.
- Don't try to change the wind—change the sails.

Taken from Family Circle 11/20/01

I AM THE AMERICAN SAILOR

Hear my voice, America! Though I speak through the mist of 200 years, my shout for freedom will echo through liberty's halls for many centuries to come. Hear me speak, for my words are of truth justice, and the rights of man. For those ideals I have spilled my blood upon the world's troubled waters. Listen well, for my time is eternal-yours but a moment. I am the spirit of heroes past and future.

I am the American Sailor. I was born upon the icy shores at Plymouth, rocked upon the waves of the Atlantic, and nursed in the wilderness of Virginia. I cut my teeth on New England codfish, and I was clothed in southern cotton. I built muscle at the halyards of New Bedford whalers, and I gained my sea legs high atop mizzen of yankee clipper ships.

Yes, I am the American Sailor, one of the greatest seamen the world has ever known. The sea is my home and my words are tempered by the sound of paddle wheels on the Mississippi and the song of whales off Greenland's barren shore. My eyes have grown dim from the glare of sunshine on blue water, and my heart is full of star-strewn nights under the Southern Cross. My hands are raw from winter storms while sailing down round the Horn, and they are blistered from the heat of cannon broadside while defending our nation. I am the American Sailor, and I have seen the sunset of a thousand distant, lonely lands.

I am the American Sailor. It was I who stood tall beside John Paul Jones as he shouted, "I have not yet begun to fight!" I fought upon Lake Erie with Perry, and I rode with Stephen Decatur into Tripoli harbor to burn Philadelphia. I met Guerriere aboard Constitution, and I was

lashed to the mast with Admiral Farragut at Mobile Bay. I have heard the clang of Confederate shot against the sides of Monitor. I have suffered the cold with Peary at the North Pole, and I responded when Dewey said, "You may fire when ready Gridley," at Manila Bay. It was I who transported supplies through submarine infested waters when our soldiers were called "over there." I was there as Admiral Byrd crossed the South Pole. It was I who went down with the Arizona at Pearl Harbor, who supported our troops at Inchon, and patrolled dark, deadly waters of the Mekong Delta.

I am the American Sailor, and I wear many faces. I am a pilot soaring across God's blue canopy, and I am a Seabee atop a dusty bulldozer in the South Pacific. I am a corpsman nursing the wounded in the jungle, and I am a torpedoman in the Nautilus deep beneath the North Pole. I am hard, and I am strong. But it was my eyes that filled with tears when my brother went down with the Thresher, and it was my heart that rejoiced when Commander Shepherd rocketed into orbit above the earth. It was I who languished in a Viet Cong prison camp, and it was I who walked upon the moon. It was I who saved the Stark and the Samuel B. Roberts in the mine invested waters of the Persian Gulf. It was I who pulled my brothers from the smoke filled compartment of the Bonefish and wept when my shipmates died on the Iowa and White Plains. When called again, I was there, on the tip of the spear for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

I am the American Sailor. I am woman, I am man, I am white and black, yellow, red and brown. I am Jew, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist. I am Irish, Filipino, African, French, Chinese, and Indian. And my standard is the outstretched hand of Liberty. Today, I serve around the world; on land, in air, on and under the sea. I serve proudly, at peace once again, but with the fervent prayer that I need not be called again.

Tell your children of me. Tell them

of my sacrifice, and how my spirit soars above their country. I have spread the mantle of my nation over the ocean, and I will guard her forever. I am her heritage and yours.

I AM THE AMERICAN SAILOR.

Taken from: "Navy Club of the United States of America", Spring 2001

NAVY BLUE

Blue has not always been "navy blue." In fact, it wasn't until 1745 that the expression navy blue meant anything at all.

In that year, several British officers petitioned the Admiralty for adoption of new uniforms for its officers. The first lord requested several officers to model various uniforms under consideration so he could select the best. He then selected several uniforms of various styles and colors to present to George II for the final decision.

King George, unable to decide on either style or color, finally chose a blue and white uniform because they were the favorite color combinations of the first lord's wife, Duchess of Bedford.

BELL BOTTOM TROUSERS

These wide-legged pants went out with the jaunty white hats worn by sailors in the US Navy until 1975. They were cut with a flare in the legs for several reasons. They were easier to roll up, as when a man was swabbing decks; but primarily the flare permitted sailors to remove the trousers quickly without removing their shoes first. This was a safety feature in case their ship sank or they were knocked overboard. In such instances, sailors were taught to tie a knot in each pant leg, force air into the trousers through the top, thus making a natural air pocket...life preserver.