

HUNTINGTON HERALD

Volume 15, Issue 4

August 2005

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS HUNTINGTON



Special Points of Interest

- *Gene Volcik gets you primed and ready for the Washington, D.C. reunion. See his letter on this page.*
- *Several interesting letters are in Mail Call on page two. We need to hear from you also.*
- *The story of an earlier Huntington is on pages two and three.*
- *Did you "cross the line" while in the Navy? If so, you'll enjoy the story on pages 3 & 4 even more than others.*
- *Rising costs for reunions are the subject of an article on page 4. This may help you choose your next reunion site.*

GET READY FOR WASHINGTON, D.C.

Hi Folks,

It's that special time of year because we're going to the U. S. Capital for our annual reunion. Washington, D.C. is very lucky because they are going to be blessed with the company of the crew and wives of the USS Huntington. A great agenda is planned for us—we're going to see

some special military sights. This is one reunion you will definitely not want to miss because this may be the only opportunity for all of us to see these memorials dedicated to the service people. Here you will be able to feel the pride of having served in the U.S. Navy—some of these sights will without

doubt produce "goosebumps" because of their significance.

We all need to send in our reservations so we can be sure to get rooms and tours scheduled for us.

PLAN ON BEING WITH US. YOU'LL COME. YOU HEAR ME.

Gene Volcik

2005 USS HUNTINGTON REUNION

SEPT. 29—OCT. 2 / WASHINGTON, D.C.

CRYSTAL CITY COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT

If you have not received a registration packet, contact ML&RS, Inc. immediately.



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 and that you will become an active in the association.

Wesley Burt
1301 Titania Ln
McLean, VA 22102



TAPS

The Herald 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.

John Jednacz
Died January 24, 2001

Mario S. Ortolani (1946) RD
Died August 31, 2004

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.

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Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc
PO Drawer 11399
Hickory, NC 28603-6402
828-256-6008 (voice)
828-256-6559 (Fax)

DINAMLRs@charterinternet.com
KARENMLRS@charterinternet.com
WWW.MLRSINC.COM (Web site)

Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To.



MAIL CALL

Editor's Note: In the last issue you were asked to let us know which was your favorite reunion of all of the thirteen so far. Sadly, we got only this one response, but we deeply appreciate Josephine Simcisko for writing!

I'm the wife of Michael J. Simcisko, BMC (Ret), who was in the 2nd Div (1947-48).

The only reunion we attended was 2002 in Norfolk, VA. We had a wonderful time. Everything was so well planned and the dinner was delicious!

I would so much like to attend the D.C. reunion, but because of Mike's health problems, it's not likely.

Your newsletter is so well put together—makes for enjoyable and informative reading, along with Mail Call.

For those of us without computers, we'd miss out if you went via the internet. However, we'd understand if you did. God bless you all for the hard work you do in uniting the *Huntington* shipmates, their wives and widows.

Have a great reunion this year!

Sincerely,
Jo Simcisko

Huntington Herald,

The originator of the enclosed letter, R. Jortberg, was my division officer (F Div) of the *CL-107* commissioning crew. He inspired me to make a Naval career and I retired as LCDR shortly before he retired as stated in his letter. I think he died in 1995.

I am now 80 years old and cannot make the reunions due to health.

Robert Blatchley

Here is Mr. Jortberg's letter:

Jan 3, 1993

Dear Bob,

Thanks for the card. I have been a strong support for a *Huntington* reunion—but it came six months too late for me. I now have lung cancer and am just holding on—no travel or such.

I remember you well—glad you stayed the course. I left *Huntington* to go to submarines and spent the rest of my career to June 1973 in the underwater business. I commanded *Jallao* (SS 368); a diesel boat—there built and commanded our early nuclear attack—*Tullibee* (SSN 597) followed by command of the Navy's nuc power school—then building and commanding a *Polaris* boat, *USS Henry L. Stimson* (SSB N 655). Then I finished up by deep submergence specialty.

I am retired here in Florida and loving it—great weather, great water and a nice life.

Hope you keep good health—say hello for me at the next reunion if you make it. Great to hear from you.

Sincerely,
R. E. Jortberg

STORY OF USS HUNTINGTON

This *USS Huntington* was built and placed in commission at Newport News, VA, at a completion cost of \$6,839,000. Her keel was laid down in April 1903. She was 502 feet long with a beam of 69 1/2 feet and a displacement of 13,680 tons, horse power 26,135 and a speed of 22.15 kts. Her complement was 878 officers and crew. Her original main battery consisted of four 8 inch rifles in two turrets, one forward and one aft, fourteen 6 inch rapid fire guns, and eighteen 3 inch rapid fire guns, and two 18 inch submerged torpedo tubes.

When launched and placed in full

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commission on 25 February 1905 she was christened *USS West Virginia*. Her name was changed to *Huntington* at Salina Cruz, Mexico on December 1, 1916, where she had participated in patrol duty during earlier Mexican-American problems.

Huntington was a coal burner. Her coaling apparatus enabled her to fill her bunker at 1000 tons per hour.

Huntington spent WW1 primarily on Atlantic convoy of troops and steamed 71,391.1 miles consuming 6,455,445 tons of coal. She fired 809 service charges in anger.

(Reference: "Fighting the Hun" by H.W. Winn, Copyright 1919. From a copy in my military book library. I was a CL-107 commissioning sailor.)

Robert Blatchley

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance after 05/05 **\$558.56**

Funds received since 05/05 **\$110.00**

Funds available for 05/05 **\$668.56**

Funds expended 08/05 **\$253.80**

Ending Balance for 11/05 **\$414.76**

Contributors since 05/05:

Michael Sincisko	\$10.00
Louis Arcangeli	\$25.00
Lyle Back	\$25.00
Willard Winkley	\$25.00
Grady Veasey	\$25.00
Total:	\$110.00

Contributions for the newsletter should be sent to ML&RS, Inc. at the address on page two.

CROSSING THE LINE

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 Angles, Saxons and Normans from the Vikings.

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, Neptune 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 Neptune 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, Neptune Rex, stating at what time he wants the ship heve 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: Neptune Rex
To: Commanding Officer
Subj: Royal High Court of the Raging Main

It having been brought to the attention of His Royal Highness, Neptune Rex, through his Trusty Shellbacks, that this good ship 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, numb-

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skulls, 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 this good ship on the 14th day of March 1945 between Latitude 000 degrees Longitude 163 degrees 16' East (for example).

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.

FURTHER, 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

PLEASE LET US HEAR FROM ANY OF YOU WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH THIS CEREMONY.

Rising Reunion Costs

Larry H Eckard, President, ML & RS, Inc

Anyone paying attention to the reunion costs have seen a sharp rise in past two years, and you're probably concerned about them. We are just as concerned as you are because it does no good to plan a wonderful reunion and price it so high that people can't afford to attend.

First let me make it very clear that we (ML&RS, Inc) have not increased our fees. The rising costs are 100% due to the increased cost of hotels, food & beverage, tours, entertainment, etc. We cannot control those costs, but we still get the best possible rates –better than you can get for your self – and pass them on to you.

Although prices have increased all

across the country, some areas are still more expensive than others. Our on site representative has a ton of information about potential reunion sites so take advantage of it; let our representative answer questions about locations in your meeting when it's time to discuss reunion sites.

Also, in every hospitality room you will find a blue three-ring binder notebook full of information about potential reunion sites. The book gives you suggestions for tours and/or activities, information about at least one hotel, an itinerary and cost sheet from a recent reunion if one has been held in that city. Look over that book.

Here is some other information that you may find helpful. Option A (arriving on Thursday and departing on Sunday) for a couple is used as the standard for the prices that are cited below. There are of course some exceptions to the prices, depending upon the time of year and the other activities going on in the city at the same time.

In any of the following cities (and this is not a complete list) you can expect to pay a minimum of \$740.00 and as much as \$800.00: Baltimore/Washington, DC; Charleston, SC; Savannah, GA; Boston, MA; Newport, RI; Charleston, SC; San Antonio, TX; San Francisco or San Diego, CA; Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; Chicago, IL; New York, NY; Dallas, TX; Nashville, TN; Minneapolis/St Paul, MN.

If you choose a city like one of these, you're going to pay top dollar, expect it and don't be surprised when it happens. Room rates are going to be near \$100.00 plus tax.

In the following cities you can expect to pay a minimum of \$665.00 upward to \$725.00: Myrtle Beach, SC; Norfolk, VA; St Louis, Mo; Tucson, AZ; Albuquerque, NM; Colorado Springs, CO; Milwaukee, WI; Harrisburg/Lancaster, PA; New Orleans, LA; Pensacola, FL; Reno, NV; Branson, MO; Columbus OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Omaha, NE; Cincinnati, OH/Northern KY; Buffalo, NY; Corpus Christi, TX.

Room rates will range between \$75.00-90.00 plus tax.

In the following cities you can expect to pay a minimum of \$625.00 upward to \$675.00: Biloxi, MS; Asheville, NC; Fargo, ND.

Room rates will probably be below \$75.00 plus tax.

For the past several years, Jacksonville, FL is the least expensive reunion city in the country with room rates in the \$60's and total package around \$600.00. If you haven't been there and cost is a concern, you should give Jacksonville strong consideration.

In any city no downtown hotels ever have complimentary airport shuttle service, and many have daily parking fees of \$12.00 and more. Hotels nearer the airport usually do not have parking fees and generally have complimentary airport shuttle service.

Here are some other points you may wish to consider. There are hundreds of military reunions held every year. The vast majority are held in April and May or September or October. *They don't have to be!* Passover, Palm Sunday, and Easter usually (but not always) fall in April; Mother's Day and Memorial Day weekends are in May. So with these holidays, the reunions are crammed into the remaining available weeks – and do you think for an instant that hotels don't know this and price accordingly? Labor Day weekend, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are in September or October and it's the same thing. You can move your reunion forward to mid-late March (depending upon the location) and you'll get a better deal; the same with early November. Also, some groups ask for specific dates, without ever knowing what else is going on at the same time in your city of choice. We can help you best when there is a two or three week window to work in.

If you take this information into account when you make the decision on where to hold your next reunion, you won't be nearly as surprised when you see the prices.