

PAWCATUCK PILOT

Volume 16 Issue 2

March 2009

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS PAWCATUCK AO-108



Points of Special Interest

- *Dave Willis gives you a brief history of the USS Pawcatuck and a short look at some of the agenda for the 2009 reunion in his Coordinator's Column.*
- *Only two names for Welcome Mat on page three this time. If you learn of a someone who isn't on our roster, be sure to let us know.*
- *Under "Deck Force" on page three are letters about two deceased members, Harry Fox and Robert Keays. There is also a letter from former LCDR William Knapp.*
- *Thomas Blood's "Memoirs of a Snipe..." continue on page four.*
- *Nicholas Lee has submitted a document he had saved from 1961. See page four.*

COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

Otherwise known as Willis's Words of Wisdom

Shipmates and Pawcatuck family members,

The time has come to muster again in Baltimore, Md. on the 23rd of April for the 17th annual reunion of the USS Pawcatuck AO-108. This reunion will be very special as we are dedicating a plaque at the Navy Memorial. This will be done on Friday the 24th at 11:00.

We expect a good crowd so please send your reservation in early. Yes, the cost is more than past reunions as this is a four day event.

The ship started back on March 22nd, 1945 when the keel was laid. The ship was launched on Feb.

19th, 1946. She was commissioned on May 10th, 1946 and decommissioned July 15th, 1975. The ship was then turned over to the Military Sealift Command and remained in service until Sept. 21st, 1991, when it was stricken from the records. The ship was with the ghost fleet off of Fort Eustis, VA. until Oct 19th, 2005 when it was towed to "Bay Bridge Enterprise" scrap yard at Chesapeake, Va. She was no longer considered a ship on Oct. 7th, 2006. A long history of one of many fleet oilers who served the fleet of the US Navy. I am proud to say I served on the ship as I am sure the

rest of you feel the same way. So come and join us for the reunion.

We have a lot planned this time and let's all hope the weather will be in our favor so we can have the memorial service out side at the Navy Memorial. They furnish the color guard and other sailors to make it a time to remember. Bring you cameras and video cameras.

We have gained 14 new shipmates since our last reunion. We have eight who have passed away. These figures are as of this date Feb 3rd, 2009.

So until we see you all in Baltimore, Md. on the

(Continued on page 2)

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23rd of April have a good day.

Yours,

David Willis reunion coordinator for the USS PAWCATUCK AO-108
15807 W. Cimarron Dr.
Surprise, Arizona 85374-6153
623-214-9835 home
623-628-7662 cell

MCPHERSON'S MESSAGE

THE SMILING INDIAN'S 17TH

Ahoy, Shipmates and Family Members;

As I sit here and write this, the weather has changed and it is reminding us, we who live in the Great Lake areas, that our winter is not over yet. Snow showers and colder air with wind chill in the teens have returned. But the good news from this is that Spring is about 20 days away. With the dawning of Spring time comes new growth, flowers are in bloom, trees begin to bud and some even sprout flower that will turn into fruits.

This is also the time of year when families begin to chart plans for vacations, short trips, viewing historical sites and renewing friendship that might have been laid away during the winter season.

This is also the time of year when we the Shipmates of the USS PAWCATUCK and their families look forward to each year; our annual reunion is just around the corner. As we all know this year's reunion will be a special one, with our ship being honored at the Navy Memorial.

I am hopeful that we will have a huge turn out for this very special reunion. I understand that we are all suffering from the strain of the economy and funds are tight. I am sure that this is having a real effect on us all. But even if you are unable to attend all of the reunion, it

would be great to have a big turn out for the Memorial Ceremony on Friday. My wife and I will be unable to attend the entire reunion, as I have to return home on Sunday.

If you have never been in the Washington DC area during the Spring time, you will be in for a real treat. The Cherry trees will be in full bloom, hopefully, and their snowy white and pink flowers just add to the beauty of the area.

Shirley and I look forward to seeing you at The Holiday Inn, Linthicum, Maryland, April 23rd, and spending a few days with all our shipmates and family members.

As a final reminder, host the colors to get underway, draw in the mooring lines, weigh anchor and head to our 17th USS PAWCATUCK REUNION 23 APR through 27 APR.

Mark McPherson
Assistant Reunion Coordinator
USS PAWCATUCK AO – 108
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Financial Statement

Balance after 12/08 issue
\$1082.73
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Funds available for 03/09
\$1217.73
Funds used for 03/09 issue
\$117.40
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\$1100.33

From now on the Pilot will be mailed **only to those who have returned the coupon to receive it by postal mail.** Those with e-mail may access the newsletter on the internet at www.mlrsinc.com/pawcatuck. Please continue to contribute \$5.00 for the publication of the newsletter. Send contributions to ML&RS, Inc at PO Drawer 11399, Hickory, NC 28603

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The PAWCAUCK PILOT is the official publication of the USS PAWCATUCK AO-108 Association. It will be published quarterly in March, June, September, and December, *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 PAWCATUCK. 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.

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.

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



WELCOME MAT

The following shipmates have been located recently. Welcome aboard. We hope to see you at the reunion and that you will take an active part in the association. We welcome:

Don Fern
(1949-50) SN
W 1599 Golfbrew
Nibtello, WI 53949
608-297-2865

John Doughtie
(1969-71) HM3
4431 Rockingham Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-933-0101



TAPS

The Pawcatuck Pilot has learned of the following deaths since the last newsletter. Our deepest sympathy goes to the widows, families and friends of the deceased. Anyone who knows or learns of a shipmate's death, you are requested to notify the newsletter so that person can be listed in TAPS and also on the Honor Roll at the next reunion.

David Senovich
Died February 18, 2002

Paul Zerbe
(1951-52) GMM2 F Div
Died July 12, 2008

Harry Fox
(1945-47) EM1
Died in 2009



DECK FORCE

Pawcatuck Family,

Today I received some very sad news. **Harry Fox**, one of the original Plank Owners of the Pawcatuck, passed away recently at age 91. His son sent us a letter with the news, and tribute to his dad. We do not know exactly when Harry passed away, but after his wife Coila died a few months ago, Harry's health had been steadily declining. The last time we visited them, Harry had developed Alzheimer's disease and we knew from Coila's letters that it was just a matter of time. The attachment shows one of the ships he was on, but the one I remember him from was the Pawcatuck. Harry was one of those men the Navy chose to assign to new construction and I had the very good fortune of working for him before he was reassigned to the Coral Sea.



On a personal note; I had come aboard the Pawcatuck as an apprentice fireman assigned to the A Division as the detailers in DC had a slot they needed to fill. My heart and interest was really in the electrical field and when Harry found out he gave me the opportunity to join E Division for which I will be forever grateful to him.

I do not know of any but a couple who were on the pre-commissioning crew or in fact commissioned her, but perhaps this e-mail will find its way to those who knew Harry Fox and wish him a "Calm Sea and Safe Harbor," Till We Meet Again and drop the hook the last time.

Tom Blood
Former Shipmate USS Pawcatuck
(AO 108)

If anyone wishes to send Harry's son a letter of condolence, the address is

below:
Rem & Karman Fox
2301 Idaho Ave
Caldwell, ID 83605

Dear Sir/Madam:

As widow of **Robert E. Keays**, Pawcatuck AO-108, '52—'56, I was so happy to receive the Pawcatuck Pilot. I read it in one sitting and enjoy looking for names of some of the friends Bob always talked about. I am sending a donation in order that I might continue to receive the Pawcatuck Pilot and keep up with the news of all who served on her.

Thank you again and I must tell you how very much Bob loved receiving the news about his shipmates and how much he enjoyed reconnecting with some of his old friends and buddies.

Hope everyone has a great time at the upcoming reunion. Thanks again.

Sincerely,
Anne L. Keays

Pawcatuck Pilot,

I just received the Dec 2008 issue of the Pawcatuck Pilot and began reminiscing about my cruise on her in 1952. In the history of officers aboard then it mentioned that I had 13 years of service, had served on several ships and was a Chief Warrant Boatswain. A little updating: I ended up serving from 1939 to 1970 aboard 13 ships and 7 shore stations; 1 BB, 1CA, 3 DDs, a PC and 7 Auxiliaries. Shore duties included Washington, DC; San Diego; San Francisco and Port Hueneme, CA. I did 8 years as enlisted, 6 as Warrant and 17 as a commissioned officer. I served in all ranks and ratings up through LTCDR. As an officer I was an XO on 1 ship and CO on 2 ships. My last duty was as Port Services Officer at Port Hueneme, which is 10 miles from our home in Ventura and that is why we settled and remain here.

After retiring from the Navy I did 10 years with a local Meals on Wheels program and 17 years at a local hospital as a volunteer.

I am now 90 years old in fairly good

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health but don't get around much anymore and will not attend the reunion this year. Please give my regards and best wishes to all the Pawcatuck personnel.

Sincerely yours,
William R. Knapp, LCDR, USN, Ret

MEMOIRS OF A SNIPE ABOARD USS PAWCATUCK AO-108 1945-1950

BY THOMAS M. BLOOD, USN,
PLANKOWNER
USS PAWCATUCK

MEMORIES AND OTHER PORTS

There were many ports with many, many good memories, and as far as I can search back I can't think of any bad ones. Bermuda was interesting. Aruba, which is a tourist Mecca now and primarily a refinery, was one of the places we stopped to load up. Every time we stopped there I managed to get a cinder in my eye which kind of ruined it for sightseeing. Gitmo was another frequent stop. We off-loaded there at the Base and always had a few days for R&R. Some of the crew would go over to the exchange and tank up on the local beer, the bottles had a profile of an Indian on the label. About 12 bottles of that stuff in the hot Cuban sun and they would become invincible. Their next stop was for them to rent burros from the recreational department and head up the hills. All went pretty well going up when those that were "3 sheets to the wind" could lean forward and their trusty mounts were in "compound," but it was a burro of a different color going downhill. The mounts were in a hurry to return to a nice cool stable, wishing to rid themselves of the noisy burden, and in their present state, I'm sure the burros showed a great deal more sense, so they wasted no time heading down hill. The upshot was some pretty banged up, scathed

and bruised seamen. I think the crew would repeat this performance every time we came in. Those who had performed this ritual would keep mum and watch as their uninitiated shipmates would go through the gauntlet. One thing that always fascinated me was the PBY's taking of with JATO, in GITMO Bay (Guantanamo Bay, Cuba). Those babies were quite loaded (what with I don't know) and it was the only way they could rotate (take off). Keep in mind that was the Fort Apache of the American outpost, and still is, with love-hate relationships of the highest diplomatic order.

To be continued in future issues

SOME PAWCATUCK HISTORY

Submitted by Nicholas Lee

U.S.S. PAWCATUCK AO-108
Care of Fleet Post Office
New York, New York
9 September 1961

U.S.S. PAWCATUCK AO-108 EN-
GINEERING INST 3501

From: Chief Engineer
To: Electrical Officer and Petty
Officers assigned to "E" division

Subj: Requirement checks for
main cargo pump motors

1. Purpose: To set forth minimum requirements in checking and testing the cargo pump motors to ensure trouble free operation.
2. The following insulation ground test will be conducted and recorded on each of the three cargo pump motors:
 - A. Once daily
 - B. Immediately after shut down while the motor is still hot.
 - C. After shut down when the motor has cooled to ambient temperature

3. The cargo pumps will be run weekly for one-half hour each. The running test shall be conducted on Friday of the week if the motor had not been run during the previous seven days.

4. The cargo pump motor heating element shall be used at all times to ensure that the motors do not reach the ambient temperature of the engine room.

5. This instruction becomes effective immediately and will remain in effect until otherwise directed by the Engineering Officer of the U.S.S. PAWCATUCK AO-108 or higher authority.

Authenticated:
J.N. JACKSON, LTJG, USN
Engineering Officer

USS PAWCATUCK REUNION APRIL 23-27, 2009 (Please note this is Thurs-Mon) WASHINGTON, DC AREA

BWI HOLIDAY INN HOTEL
LINTHICUM, MD

VETERANS' SALUTES DURING NATIONAL ANTHEM

Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to recent changes in federal law.

Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's official head-gear. The most recent change authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed on Oct. 14.