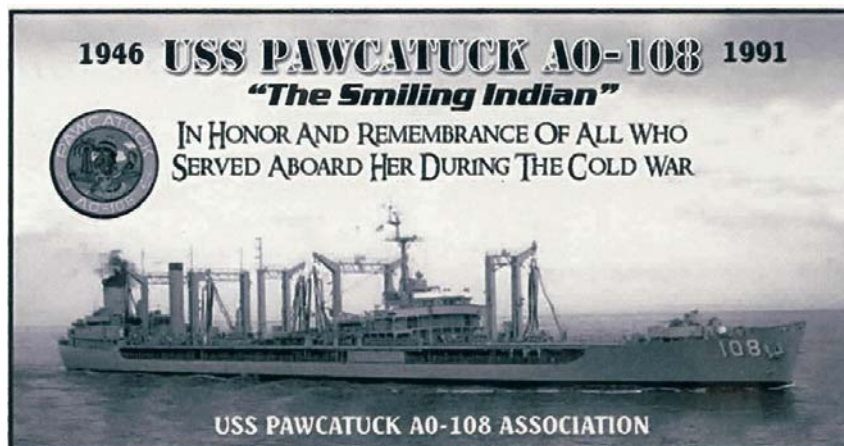


# PAWCATUCK PILOT

Volume 16 Issue 3

June 2009

## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS PAWCATUCK AO-108



### Points of Special Interest

- *David Willis tells you about the reunion in his Coordinator's Column in the cover article.*
- *On page two, Mark McPherson reflects on what the reunion sites meant to him.*
- *If you want to see who came to the reunion, check out the list on page three.*
- *Thomas Blood continues his story of being a Snipe on the USS Pawcatuck. See page four.*
- *Photos of USS Pawcatuck sent in by Nicholas Lee are on page five.*
- *A preview of attractions in San Antonio are on page six. Be sure to return the survey so you have a say in what is on the 2010 agenda.*

### COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

Shipmates family members and friends,

It is that time again to report on this year's reunion. This was one of the best we have had since the first one back in 1993. This year sixty-one showed up. Some came to the dedication of the plaque at the Navy Memorial on Friday the 24th of April.

I arrived on Wednesday the 22nd of April, coming from Phoenix, AZ, where on Tuesday the temperature was 101. When I stepped outside at Baltimore airport it was 49. So to say the least to me that was cool.

Thursday the 23rd the temperature started to warm up and the rest of the weekend was just about right.

On Thursday at 1600

we started our reunion with a big welcome to everybody, and following the welcome we held our annual meeting. I gave a report to those in attendance. We had 14 pass away and we gained 14 new shipmates. At 1400 I met with the committee and they picked three cities to vote on for 2010. They were as follows: Colorado Springs, CO, Albuquerque, NM and San Antonio, TX. Those who came voted for San Antonio for next year's reunion. So you all come on down to Texas next year and enjoy the sights of San Antonio. We hope to see you there.

On Friday the 24th on the way down to dedicate our plaque at the Navy Memorial, we stopped by the Air Force Memorial. It sits

up on a hill and to the east you can see the Pentagon and in the distance the Washington Monument. To the north you can see part of Arlington National Cemetery. A nice sight. Then we started to the heart of DC and got off just in front of the Navy Memorial. A little after 1100 we held the dedication and a memorial service. Then out side and pictures were taken by the Loan Sailor. After lunch off to the Korean Memorial and the Vietnam Wall. Time ran out and did not get to stop at the WW2 memorial. We saw part of it from the bus as we drove by.

Then Saturday the 25th off to the Naval Academy. If you have not been to the academy, try and go see

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

this wonderful place. A lot of history. This was one of the best tours since I have been coming to reunions since 1997. We all had a great time and many pictures were taken. The tour of the Chapel was really nice. Again a place to see if you go to the area.

Sunday the 26th a visit to Fort McHenry. There again history of the battle and the writing of our National Anthem by Francis Scott Key.

Sunday evening at the banquet we were honored by a shipmate that I served with back in 1957. Richard Hastings was a LTJG when we served back 52 years ago. He told some good stories of our Captain Morton who came on board in December 1956. He became a orthopedic surgeon after leaving the Navy.

That friends is the story of our

reunion. As you can see on the front page of our newsletter, there is a copy of the plaque which now gives our ship a place along with many other ships at our Navy Memorial. Please join the Navy Memorial and add your name to the roll of shipmates who have served our Navy.

My records show we have 608 on our muster list. Deceased at last count is 156 that we know off. We have had 188 attend our reunions since the first one back in 1993. Of those, 29 are deceased. Since my first one back in 1997 I now know all except about 20 of those 188. Yes, we all served at different times, but we are all shipmates of the best oiler in the fleet. So next year I hope all you shipmates from Texas will come and join us for our 18th annual reunion.

I would like to thank the shipmates who are on our committee.

Shipmate Ralph Jordan, Jim Fortune, Wayne Reed, Ted VanDyke, Ed Bernier, Paul Houston and of course my assistant coordinator Mark McPherson who also is our Chaplin and does an outstanding job doing our memorial service each year. This year a big thank you goes out to our ladies who raised over \$1000.00.

Until our next news letter I hope all of you have a great summer. Take care and I say again thanks to all who came to this year's reunion. It was nice to see all of you and see you next time.

Yours,  
David Willis  
Reunion coordinator for the USS PAWCATUCK AO-108  
15807 W. Cimarron Dr.  
Surprise, Az. 85374-6153  
623-214-9835 Home  
623-628-7662 Cell

## MCPHERSON'S MESSAGE

### Images of Recent Reunion

My Fellow Shipmates and Family members, of the USS PAWCATUCK AO – 108,

Another excellent reunion was held and enjoyed by all those in attendance. It was such an honor and awe inspiring time that we had in the Washington, D C area.

While returning to our home, I had time to reflect on what our eyes beheld, our hearts felt, and the importance of the purpose of our time there.

We were able to see first hand, the importance of the memorials that are surrounding the grounds of our Nation's Capital. We saw several WWII Vets, Korean Vets, Vietnam Vets, school children, not just from the surrounding area, but across the United States, that were there visiting or taking part in an educational experience. Their faces showed memories of fallen buddies; family relations; friends; even times, were reflected on the faces of those Vets, as they were reliving the hard

times that they went through.

While we were partaking our mess at the Old Post Office, two young ladies from California, who were there on an educational debate team, questioned my wife and me about the hat I was wearing, what kind of ship it was, and if we had a group there. All of which I answered their questions, and then they both said thank you for your service and keeping our country safe. What a wonderful image of our reunion will I hold fast too.

I also reflected on the dedication of our Plaque at the Navy Memorial. It was an honor to have Rear Admiral Rick Buchanan (RET), along side us, helping us with the plaque enshrinement on the Commemorative Plaque Wall. (Our Plaque location is 51H.) How fitting it is that our ship will always be in the forefront of those who visit our Navy Memorial. It will always be a beacon there, just as it was for those ships that pulled along side us.

For those of us who toured the Naval Academy, it was an honor to walk the grounds where some of our great leaders, not only those in the U. S. Navy, but our country's leaders, walked, went to church, studied, learned life experiences. It was a

great day and our tour guides, who happened to be retired officers, gave us a great overview of the campus and surrounding area.

Now our course has been set for 2010, as we will muster in San Antonio, Texas. So shipmates and family members, dust off your cowboy boots, get your Stetson hats, pack your saddle bags, bring you Cowgirl with you, and set your sites on this great city. There are quite a few things to do, so rest up. Let's make our Texas reunion a Big Um! Y'all be there, ya hear!

I would like to express my sincere THANKS, to the Ladies of the USS PAWCATUCK, for the outstanding job that they did during this year's reunion. I am sure that part of our reunion's success, was due in part their hard work. Job well done ladies!

See you in Texas,  
Mark McPherson  
Assistant Reunion Coordinator  
2029 Musser Road  
Baltimore, OH 43105-9733  
[lambmac@hotmail.com](mailto:lambmac@hotmail.com)  
Ph: (740) 438-1387 or  
(740) 468-3190

## 2009 REUNION ATTENDEES

Calvin & Angelina Alden & Gloria Nicastro  
 Al & Joyce Alexander  
 Tom Altieri  
 John & Susan Arsenault  
 Edmond & Christine Bernier  
 George Casey  
 Mike Culbertson  
 Kenneth Duncan & Joseph Joyce, Jr.  
 Jim & Joy Fortune  
 Richard & Jill Hastings  
 John "Randy" Hernandez & Kate Campain  
 David Hilton  
 Paul & Loretta Houston  
 Ralph & Elizabeth Jordan  
 Robert Klinefelter  
 John & Jean Kritschgau  
 Mark & Shirley McPherson  
 William Mellon  
 John & Carol Mitchell  
 Roger Narkie  
 Herman Payne  
 Dan & Tanya Phelps  
 Ralph & Janet Powell  
 Donald Prant  
 Gerard Prant  
 Howard & Margaret Reed  
 Travis Robertson  
 Jimmy & Shelia Roden  
 Anthony & Carol Romano  
 James & Margaret Roskoph  
 Jane Strickland  
 Robert Tomlin & Karen Marlowe  
 Ted & Ruby Van Dyke  
 Thomas & Joan Webb  
 David Willis  
 Donald Wilson

**Total Members: 36**  
**Guests: 22**  
**GRAND TOTAL: 58**

*The Pawcatuck Pilot is Published by:*  
 Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc  
 PO Drawer 11399  
 Hickory, NC 28603

828-256-6008 (voice)  
 828-256-6559 (fax)

**Dina@mlrsinc.com**  
**karen@mlrsinc.com**  
 www.mlrsinc.com/pawcatuck

"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:

**John Welborn (1960-62) QM3**  
 10 Joseph Francis Blvd  
 Sag Harbor, NY 11963  
 631-725-2815

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

**Harry Buckley (1956-59) EM2 Eng**  
 340 Asbury Station Rd  
 Sweetsboro, NJ 08085  
 856-467-2794  
 hbuck1215@hotmail.com

**Barry Rudd (1964-68) SN**  
 1600 Well Dr  
 Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

**Correction from 12/08**  
**William Mellon's e-mail address**  
**should be mellons@grm.net**

## Financial Statement

Balance after 03/09	<b>\$1100.33</b>
Received since 03/09	<b>\$205.00</b>
Available for 06/09	<b>\$1305.33</b>
Cost of wreath for 2009 reunion	
	<b>-\$150.00</b>
Funds used for 06/09 issue	
	<b>-\$159.57</b>
Balance remaining for 12/09 issue	
	<b>\$995.76</b>

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](http://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



## TAPS

The Pawcatuck Pilot has learned of the following death since the last newsletter. Our deepest sympathy goes to the family 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.

**CDR Elivi M. Norvik (1946)**  
 Died January 23, 2009

**Captain Eiliv M. Norvik** died peacefully at Heron Point in Chestertown, MD on Friday, January 23, 2009.

He was born in Bergen, Norway on October 21, 1911, the son of the late Gunhild Elizabeth and Lauritz Norvik. At the age of 16 he came to the United States. He attended Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn, NY and St. John's University in Queens, NY.

Eiliv started his career as an Ordinary Seaman in the Merchant Marine in 1935, and then sat for his Third Officer's license in 1937. In 1938 he was commissioned an Ensign in the US Naval Reserve. As a Ships Master in the US Military Sea Lift Command and a Commander in the US Navy, Captain Norvik served our country skillfully and bravely in WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War. He was awarded many decorations for his many years of Military Service.

He is predeceased by his beloved wife of 52 years, Margaret Gunning Norvik and survived by their two daughters, Anne (Edward) Alteri and Susan (John) Baldwin; four grandsons and ten great grandchildren. He was also predeceased by his second wife, Janet Pullman Norvik and her children and their families.

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

BY THOMAS M. BLOOD, USN, PLANKOWNER  
USS PAWCATUCK

### This must be the hubs of hell.

One thing about being an electrician and standing watch on the generator flats, the 108 being steam driven, had lots of nice, warm, asbestos lagged steam lines running to the turbines, past the hand rails, and one could sit on the rail with his back against them to keep warm. Facing the main board you could dream of the next land fall. No fear of falling asleep, for if you did, the fall of 3 levels below would kill you and if that didn't do the job, the Chief Engineer would.

During hot weather one could keep cool by standing about the center of the board and let the 2 engine room blowers cool you off. You were close to the evaporator flats and therefore life giving coffee.

On our trips up the Red Sea I used to sleep behind the switch gear on the generator flats (main board). There were also outlets for the blowers at that location and you were centered above the keel, also closer to the center of gravity. With the reassuring hum of the turbines I would get a restful night's sleep under the worst of conditions.

One night when it was as hot as it can get in the Red Sea, I was sleeping behind the main board until

called for my watch. I could tell by the engines that we were just making headway, and could hear the fog horn going all night. When the watch woke me to relieve him I noticed a little pile of sand in front of my nose. Still groggy with sleep, I went up to wash and looked out the hatch at what appeared to be fog. It turned out we were a good 50 miles from shore and in the middle of a sand storm. I think they called it a sand storm at sea, (Chemal?) this stuff was as fine as talcum powder and as far as I know, we never did get it out of all the nooks and crannies.

The next day while the ship was working its way up with just enough headway to maintain steerage, I was sitting in my favorite spot outside the engineering berthing on the spar hook. I looked over the side and saw what looked like pretty colored eels swimming near the surface. Looked like coral snakes. Now, I'm familiar with coral snakes, but these critters are as much alike as cobras are to domestic rabbits. Sea Snake? And without the over indulgence of demon rum? About that time I took that area of the world off my list of places to retire. I would later have reason to reinforce and strengthen my resolve.

### What is life like at sea?

We had plenty to keep us occupied aboard ship. There's always preventative maintenance, routine maintenance, drills, watch standing and of course inspections; of both crew and equipment. It was the general consensus of the crew that the latter was primarily designed to keep the officers busy, educate them, and give them something to put down on the many reports. That way, those who never went to sea, except when it was unavoidable, would have some inkling of what was going on in the real world. We would get these "shave tails" aboard and they literally didn't know the bitter end from the bite on a piece of line. While cleaning the lens on a 24" search light located on the starboard wing of the bridge, I had a young "butter bar" come up and ask me where the starboard wing of the bridge was. He was serious, seems the Captain was holding mast and was behind the gun tub, which was his only available clue. Good thing they still don't use "starboard and larboard."

*To be continued in future issues.*



David Willis, front center, poses with his family at the Great Lakes RTC on June 12, 2009. Pictured with Dave are his daughter and son-in-law, and his grandson and granddaughter.

PHOTOS OF USS PAWCATUCK SUBMITTED BY NICHOLAS LEE



**ENGINEER'S LAMENT**

What may you ask is life at sea?  
 Speak to a seaman and not to me.

A dial, a gauge and nothing more,  
 Except the engines roar.

No sunset turning the ocean red,  
 Just bed to watch and watch to bed.

No deep and rolling ocean smell,  
 Just a foul and dirty oily smell.

No watching the low set ocean boil,  
 Just temperature, pressure, vacuum and oil.

No thought how neat and trim your craft,  
 Just count your turns and check your shaft.

No fresh air to salt your blood,  
 Just a cigarette and a cup of mud.

If you must go to sea,  
 Lend me your ear.

Don't let them make you an ENGINEER!!

Author Unknown (Submitted by Thomas Blood)

**2010 USS PAWCATUCK REUNION**

**MAY 3—6**

**SAN ANTONIO, TX**

**EL TROPICANO HOTEL**

## COME TO SAN ANTONIO, TX IN 2010

San Antonio, the Jewel of Texas, is home to world famous hospitality, attractions, and visitor facilities. It is a tourist's dream. The city is rich in history, having been settled by Spanish missionaries in the early 1700s. San Antonio is the tenth-largest city in the United States, with just over one million residents. Mild winter weather reinforces San Antonio's reputation as a premier destination for travelers. The downtown area is one of the nation's top choices for reunions. San Antonio's diverse cultures provide a unique Tex-Mex flavor. The city is known for its huge celebrations and party atmosphere, but it is also known for being very laid back and relaxing. There are several military bases in the area, and as a result, many military retirees choose San Antonio as their permanent home.

One of the most popular attractions in San Antonio is the **River Walk**, a two-and-a-half mile, scenic pathway bordering the San Antonio River as it meanders through the heart of the city. It's *the* social hub for visitors and locals, the best place in town for strolling, and a mecca for restaurants, bars, night-clubs, and shops for browsing or buying. Brightly-colored river taxis cruise by on their way to take you to the next port of call.

Of course, San Antonio is known for its Spanish missions also. The missions are known for their architectural design and are a physical reminder of the Spanish Empire's past hold on this area. The most famous of these missions is the **Alamo**. Today a shrine and museum, it was the site of a fierce battle in 1836 between 189 Texan volunteers and 4,000 Mexican soldiers. The volunteers lost the battle, but "Remember the Alamo!" became the rallying cry of the Texan Revolution, which ended in a victory for the Texans and independence from Mexican rule.

Both the **Majestic and Empire Theaters** offer first-class Broadway entertainment to the city of San Antonio. Musicals and other theater productions are booked every week at the two venues, so there is al-

ways a good choice of nighttime entertainment at either of the theaters.

One lesser known visitors' site that has been enjoyed by reunion groups is the **San Antonio Shoe Factory**. It is much more than just a shoe store—at the **1910 General Store**, Coca Cola is still ten cents a bottle, popcorn is a nickel a bag and all the candy of any kind that you can stuff into a bag is only \$1.50. And shoes, and shoes and shoes! Emelda Marcos' heaven!

In the city of **Fredericksburg, TX** is the **Admiral Nimitz Museum**. The Nimitz Park has three parts, the Nimitz Steamboat Hotel and Museum (boyhood home of the Admiral), the Japanese Peace Garden, and the History Walk of the Pacific War. In all, there are nine acres of outstanding displays from WWII. This museum rivals any military museum in the country and is a must for every veteran's group in the San Antonio area. Fredericksburg's main street (where the museum is located) has a wonderful collection of stores, shops, beer gardens and restaurants—many of them serving traditional German cuisine.

Also available is a **guided tour of the city of San Antonio** where you will learn of its history and also see the modern, thriving city that it is today. You'll visit the **Mexican Market "El Mercado" area**, with 32 shops full of bargains and good food. Tour **Fort Sam Houston** with its military museums and visit San Antonio's famous **sunken gardens**.

As an alternative to a "bus" tour, you may wish to ride the "river taxi" (or walk) down the Riverwalk from the hotel to some of the Riverwalk attractions. The Alamo is just an easy few blocks from the Riverwalk, so you can even visit the Alamo on your own. Also, for anyone afraid of water, there is a trolley stop by the hotel which can take you to the Alamo and the Central Riverwalk area. The trolley does cover most of the city so you could have a "trolley tour" on your own. This maybe a great first day afternoon activity, however, remember you will not have the commentary of a guide to provide information about the areas

you visit. You cannot visit the missions south of the city, the Mexican Market, or Ft. Sam Houston from the trolley tour.

San Antonio is destined to be one of our favorite cities. You'll probably want to return for a longer visit in the future.

### 2010 PAWCATUCK SURVEY

Please complete the survey below and return to:

**Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc.**  
P.O. Drawer 11399  
Hickory, NC 28603-6402

OR FAX:  
828-256-6559

OR ON LINE AT:  
[www.mlrsinc.com/pawcatuck](http://www.mlrsinc.com/pawcatuck)

#### Reunion format:

Do you prefer breakfast all three mornings as a group? \_\_\_\_\_  
or just a farewell breakfast on Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want entertainment after the Saturday night banquet?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate which activities you would like to see on your reunion agenda:**

River Walk \_\_\_\_\_

The Alamo \_\_\_\_\_

Majestic or Empire Theater Production \_\_\_\_\_

San Antonio Shoe Factory \_\_\_\_\_

Admiral Nimitz Museum \_\_\_\_\_

City Tour \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN SURVEYS BY  
August 17, 2010**

**REGISTRATION PACKETS WILL  
BE MAILED OUT APPROXIMATELY 90  
DAYS PRIOR TO THE REUNION.**