

THE MESSENGER

Volume 10 Issue 3

January 2003



Special Points of Interest

- **Discover Jacksonville in our cover story. Get your registration in now so you won't miss out on a great time!**
- **Jack Gibbs has a word of encouragement for his fellow shipmates of the USS Nantahala on page two.**
- **WELCOME MAT on page three has a long list of newly located shipmates. You will be sure to see a familiar name.**
- **MAIL CALL on page four and five has a message you will appreciate. Share it with your younger family members.**
- **Please contribute to the newsletter fund and encourage others to do so. The newsletter is the only link some have with their shipmates.**

EXPERIENCE JACKSONVILLE, FL

Jacksonville is a city blessed with natural beauty, coupled with a glorious place in the sun, on the northeast tip of Florida. Tucked in and around boundless acres of water, this is Florida's First Coast. The region is known as the First Coast because this is where America was discovered, and still remains the longest continually settled area of our country. And it is here that an immense outdoor playground, courtesy of Mother Nature, offers fishing, boating, sailing and swimming, not to mention golf, tennis or any outside activity. Once upon a time Jacksonville was thought of as a blue collar town with little to offer newcomers. Times

have changed and Jacksonville is now known as a sophisticated business city with a penchant for culture, sports and exceptional quality of life. And tourists are discovering the quiet sensibilities of a visit to this undiscovered part of Florida. This is not the land of theme parks or glitzy attractions, but a vacationland for sophisticated guests who value golf, tennis, upscale resorts and countless opportunities for nature-based getaways.

Jacksonville is a gracious southern lady who has been around long enough to know the finer things in life. When it comes to nightlife people flock to the beaches, due in no small part to serious

infrastructure upgrades in the past decade. Atlantic Beach and Jacksonville Beach are as busy after the sun goes down as during the day. Ragtime, Manatee Rays and First Street Grille are just a few of the favorite places where casually clad diners enjoy upscale dining.

With the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Intracoastal Waterway on the other, it goes without saying that seafood is king in these parts. There's no lack of places to peel shrimp, pick blue crab and slurp oysters, while enjoying cold pitchers of beer.

A visit to Jacksonville without a side trip to Fernandina Beach or St.

(Continued on page 2)

Augustine is well ... unthinkable. St. Augustine has been continuously occupied longer than any other American city and has held well to its treasures. A day in the ancient city can lead you in and out of the nation's oldest house, schoolhouse and drug store.

Nearby Fort Clinch is yet another stellar state park in a region filled with them. Here the rangers put on a soldiers garrison once a month and wide, empty beaches beckon you to come and play for the day.

Jacksonville Landing has long been the place to go for dining and entertainment, featuring free entertainment most weekends, and is the focal spot for every downtown special event.

On the Southbank of the St. Johns River you'll find Friendship Fountain and the Museum of Science and History, where kids can learn about Jacksonville's rich history and visit the spectacular Jacksonville Jaguar exhibit. A stroll on the Riverwalk takes you past the Jacksonville Maritime Museum and the Jacksonville Historical Center, both of which offer free admission. Finally, there's the Jacksonville Zoological Park -- don't miss the Plains of East Africa and Great Apes of the World exhibit where you can get up close and personal with the animals.

Got time for an extra day or two? Lucky you, y'all can visit some of the mysterious, sophisticated and just plain fun areas located nearby metropolitan Jacksonville. You can take a canoe trip down the Okefenokee Swamp, where gators and cypress knees abound at every turn. Or how about a cold tube ride down the spring fed waters of the Ichetucknee River just outside of Lake City. Georgia's Golden Isles are only an hour north and the choices are exquisite. From the small town charm of St. Mary's just across the river, to Cumberland Island (where star-crossed John Kennedy, Jr. and Carolyn Besette were secretly married), to the resort destinations of Jekyll Island and St. Simons Island. There's so much to do in Jacksonville, you just may wish you lived here. Be part of

the Jacksonville Experience—attend the reunion of the MCAAN Group on **May 1-4, 2003**. It will be an unforgettable experience if you have never attended a reunion. And, if you have attended one, you know that it will be another great time with old friends. Reservations are already coming in, so make your plans now to attend. The Jacksonville Experience awaits you!

USS NANTAHALA COORDINATOR'S NEWS

We have entered 2003 eager to meet in Jacksonville. The activity list was interesting. There is something for everyone.

My first Nantahala reunion was in Charlotte, NC with sixteen Nantahala shipmates. Eight of us were aboard at the same time—1952-56. I was surprised that we quickly recognized each other as we were Gunners, Bosns, Machinist, and Barbers. Sea stories were retold. Jacksonville will be my ninth reunion.

To me the opportunity to spend time with shipmates is the highlight and where, does not really matter. I will try to go where the shipmates go. Our mailing list, dated August 21, 2002, has 419 names. I have met many of them, in person at reunions, by letter, by telephone and by e-mail. I would like to meet everyone of you.

This is my invitation to each of you to join me May 1-4, 2003 in Jacksonville.

Until then, Fair weather and following seas,

Jack Gibbs

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day became a national holiday through a bill signed on November 2, 1983, by President Ronald Reagan. It was first celebrated on January 20, 1986. The holiday is always on the third Monday in January.

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

MCAAN REUNION

**MAY 1-4, 2003
JACKSONVILLE, FL**

**HOLIDAY INN
AIRPORT**



WELCOME MAT

The MCAAN Group proudly welcomes these recently located shipmates. Due to the large number of new names, space will not allow us to print the address of each individual. However, if you see the name of an old buddy and you would like to have his address, just let ML&RS know by phone, mail or e-mail and we will be glad to give you the address. (Our address is on page two.)

If you are receiving the MCAAN Messenger for the first time, welcome aboard. We hope you enjoy your first issue and will contribute not only financially, but also with your stories and anecdotes about life aboard your ship.

USS AMPHION

Eugene Michels (1956-60) DC2
 Richard Miller (1956-60)
 Larry Burleigh (1957-60) OMC
 Al Ransey (1955-59) MM1
 Guy Banta (1966-67) HC3
 Lynn Zimmerman (1959-63) EM3
 Robert Moore (1951-54) MM3
 William Creed (1955-59) MM2
 George McLeer (1966-68) ET3
 Ray McIntire (1952-54) SK3
 John Stapko (1966-68) MR3
 Mike Cossick (1965-67) MR3
 Andrew Klein (1950) BT2
 Harold Fritchman (1946-47) SN2
 Herbert Carpender (1970-71) SFM2
 Robert Clark (1949)
 Lawrence Morris (1959) SF1
 Robert Snyder
 Eugene Sereno (1956-58) BM1
 Ron Rhodes (1959-63) MR2
 Edward Formo (1950-51) SN
 Lindon Watkins (1956-60) BT3
 Joseph Kiessinger BT3
 Arthur Gillespie BT3
 William Metzger BT3
 Jim Sinclair (1951-52) EN3
 Robert Woodyard (1952-56) EN2
 Jimmie Fast (1960-62) IM2
 R. D. Fast

USS ARCADIA

John Serpa (1958-60)
 Otis Smith
 Albert Kerzy (1960-62)
 Dom Grant
 William Buckley (1955-56) HMCM
 Carl Buckley (1955-56) SH3
 Frank McGahan (1965-67)
 John Mayer (Early 50s)
 James Nix (1956-57) EM3
 Bill Harrigan (1952-54)
 Harry Kemp (1945-46) MML1
 Rex Wadkins (1961-64) TM1
 Ted Norelius, Jr. (1964-65)

USS CADMUS

Neil Breslow (1966-67)
 Robert Taylor (1960s)
 Paul Scheerer, Jr.
 Donald Coggins (1959-60)
 Charles Killinger (1952-54)
 Don Wesley (1955-56)
 Robert Young (1962-66)
 Steve Corcoran (1965)
 Vince Van Horn
 Louis Kleis
 Robert Hammond (1949-52)
 Robert Leon (1952-53) EM3
 Larry Luecke (1966-67)
 James Rousey (1955-58)
 Richard Griffin (1967-69)

USS MARIAS

James Bond (1951-55) MM1
 Robert Snyder
 Connie Coalson (1951-54) MM1/c
 Ronald Darnell (1953-56)
 Robert Vetter
 Pete Stephens
 Barry Strasser (1963-66) RD2

USS NANTAHALA

Harold Jaillette, Jr. (1952-53)
 Randy Trantham (1967-70)
 Raymond Kellner (1945)

The first conscientious objector awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor was Private First Class Desmond T. Ross of Lynchburg, Virginia. He received the award in 1945 for outstanding bravery as a medical corpsman in the Pacific theater during World War II.



TAPS

The Messenger learned of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter. The deaths may not have been recent, but we just learned of them. Every member of the Association sends his heartfelt sympathy to the widows, families, and friends of the deceased. If we missed anyone, please accept our apology. Let us know and it will be published in the next issue.

Fred Fritz
 USS Amphion (1966-68)
 Died August 21, 2002

George McCormick USS Amphion
 (1951-54) FT1 Gunnery
 Died November 1, 2002

Carl Builder
 USS Amphion (1952-53)
 Died May 1999

Thomas Seaman
 USS Amphion (1950)
 Date of death not known

Gary Morris
 USS Nantahala
 Died July 23, 2002

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance from 10/02 **\$216.05**
 Funds received since 10/02 issue
\$60.00
 Funds available for 01/03 issue
\$276.05
 Funds expended for 01/03 issue
\$43.00
 Balance remaining for 04/03 issue
\$254.05

Insufficient funds resulted in the Messenger being available only on line. The cost of mailing the newsletter to all members is over \$1300 per issue. Your support is vital. Please contribute and encourage others to do so as well.

MESSENGER AVAILABLE ONLY ON LINE

Again, this January issue will be available only on line due to insufficient funds in the newsletter account. Please take a look at the Financial Report for details. Please send contributions to MLRS at the address on page two. Be sure to state that it is for the MCAAN Messenger. If you know someone who cannot receive this newsletter by e-mail, please let him know why he did not receive it in the mail. Encourage him to contribute.



MAIL CALL

The following article was sent in by e-mail, so we cannot verify its original source. However, it has a thought-provoking message that merits being shared.

FROM A MILITARY DOCTOR

I am a doctor specializing in Emergency Medicine in the Emergency Departments of the only two military Level-One-trauma centers. They are both in San Antonio, TX, and they care for civilian emergencies as well as military personnel.

San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here because of the location of these two large military medical centers.

As a military doctor, in training for my specialty, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work. Most often the victim is from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a per-

son of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient. Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, prior to medical school, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees.

I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age group represented. I saw "Saving Private Ryan." I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage in the first 30 minutes, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Department and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless.

Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without inquiry. I have been privileged to an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in the Emergency Dept. encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needle sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a "hard stick." As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said, "Auschwitz." Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in

his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

Also, there was this long retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, his head cut in a fall at home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi to take him home, then he realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country, and the least we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret is that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night MSgt. Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Dept. for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick, he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

The gentleman who served with Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101-year old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic—now with non-operable liver cancer, the former Viet Nam Corps Commander. I remember these citizens. I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women. I am angered at the cut backs, implemented and proposed, that will continue to decay their meager retirement benefits. I see the

(Continued on page 5)

President and Congress who would turn their back on these individuals, who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties, won with such sacrifice. It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Dept. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation. My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must "Earn this."

Written by CPT. Stephen R. Ellison, MD

MANAGEMENT LESSON

The boy rode on the donkey and the old man walked. As they went along, they passed some people who remarked, "It was a shame the old man was walking and the boy was riding." The man and boy thought maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions.

Later, they passed some people that remarked, "What a shame, he makes the little boy walk." They decided they both would walk!

Soon they passed some more people who thought they were stupid to walk when they had a decent donkey to ride. So they both rode the donkey!

Now they passed some people that shamed them by saying, "How awful to put such a load on a poor donkey." The boy and man said they were probably right so they decided to carry the donkey. As they crossed the bridge, they lost their grip on the animal and he fell into the river and drowned.

MANAGEMENT LESSON:
If you try to please everyone, you will eventually lose your ass.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The Messenger is the official publication of the MCAAN Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, October, *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 Messenger*. 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 you stories and suggestions.

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON LINE

The Newsletter for the MCAAN group is available to download from the Military Locator & Reunion Service Inc web site.

If you are able to visit our web site and download the Newsletter, and therefore do not need a paper copy mailed to you, please let us know.

Please visit our web site at WWW.MLRSINC.COM, then follow the link labeled Reunions, then scroll down until you see the listing for the MCAAN. Click on the button labeled Newsletters, and in a few minutes the newsletter should appear on your screen. (As a side note - it took about 4 minutes on my computer). This will only work if you have Adobe Reader 4.0 or higher. You can also download this viewer for free from our web site.

If this works for you and you would like to receive all future mailings from us in this method, please send me an e-mail requesting to subscribe to the MCAAN E-mail Roster. Each time something new is available, we will send you an e-mail informing you something new is available on the web site. Please let us know if your e-mail address changes so you don't miss any important information.

To subscribe to the MCAAN E-mail Roster please send an e-mail to SubscribeMLRS@aol.com, put the phrase **SUBSCRIBE MCAAN** in the Subject line and type your name and e-mail address in the body of your e-mail. You will be placed in the e-mail roster.

Your name and postal mailing address will remain in our computers and will appear on all mailing lists, etc distributed to other members of your group.

Dina Coffey

I NEVER SAID THAT!

In the movie "Casablanca," Humphrey Bogart never said, "Play it again, Sam."

Sherlock Holmes never said, "Elementary, my dear Watson."