



*They Came
In Peace...*



1st Quarter
2009

"Rest well, yet sleep lightly and hear the call, if again sounded, to provide firepower for freedom..."

THE JERSEYMAN

7 Years - Nr. 61

R 222246Z OCT 08
FM SECNAV WASHINGTON DC
TO ALNAV
BT

UNCLAS ALNAV 075/08

MSGID/GENADMIN/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC/-/OCT//
SUBJ/SECNAV MESSAGE TO THE FLEET// RMKS/

1. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO TODAY, AT APPROXIMATELY 0620 LOCAL TIME IN BEIRUT, SUICIDE BOMBERS ATTACKED AMERICAN PEACEKEEPERS IN THEIR BARRACKS AT BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. 241 AMERICAN SERVICEMEN WERE KILLED IN THE ATTACK, INCLUDING 220 MARINES. TODAY WE PAUSE TO REMEMBER THE SERVICE OF THOSE TAKEN FROM US ON 23 OCTOBER 1983, AND HONOR THE SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO STOOD IN HARMS WAY.
2. AFTER THE ATTACK ON OUR BRAVE MARINES, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE MOURNED THE LOSS OF OUR HEROES, BUT WE DID NOT LOSE OUR RESOLVE. ON THIS SOLEMN DAY OF REMEMBRANCE, LET US PAY TRIBUTE TO THE BRAVE MARINES WHO LOST THEIR LIVES ON THAT TRAGIC DAY, THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED SINCE, AND IN PARTICULAR, ALL THOSE WHO SERVE IN HARMS WAY TODAY - IN IRAQ, IN AFGHANISTAN, AND IN HOT SPOTS AROUND THE WORLD. LET THE SPIRIT OF OUR MARINES DEFINE OUR RESOLVE AS WE MEET THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US - SEMPER FI.
3. RELEASED BY THE HONORABLE DONALD C. WINTER, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.//

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ETC (SW) Michael W. Gorchinski...

While serving as a crewman aboard USS *New Jersey* (BB-62), ETC (SW) Michael W. Gorchinski, volunteered to assist the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit with a radar installation problem they were having at the Marine Barracks in Beirut.

On the morning of 23 October 1983 he was among the 240 Marines, sailors and soldiers killed by a suicide truck bomber. On that day, Chief Gorchinski left his wife Judy, and their 3 children, Christina JoAnn, 6 years old, Kevin Michael, 3 years old, and Valerie Marie, 10 months old.

According to Judy Gorchinski... "When Mike died, he was 3 months away from 17 years on active duty in the navy. He had arrived at the Marine barracks on the morning of October 22nd, worked all day and late into the afternoon, and missed the last helo back to the ship..."

I have come to know many of the families over the years, meeting them at Memorials, through email on the internet, and at other events. We do not gather to remember the Beirut bombing, but rather to remember and celebrate the lives that were cut short on 10/23/83.

We come together to share stories of our loved ones, to touch the wall, and to confront our loss. We share tears, and laughter too. It is a time to remember and to celebrate the lives of our loved ones together. We have a bond unlike any other. The 25th Memorial Services this year did our sailors, soldiers and Marines proud. It was a fitting tribute not only by the military, but also the city of Jacksonville."

In documents provided to *The Jerseyman* by Judy Gorchinski, there were comments sent by Captain David Scheu, USN (Ret.), and who was then Head of the New Jersey's Operations Department. Chief Gorchinski, ("Chief Ski"), was a member of the Operations Department aboard *New Jersey*, and was with the ship's advance recommissioning crew in 1981. He served with the electronics division (OE), charged with overseeing the ship's installation of new search radars and display equipment.



The equipment was all new, and state-of-the-art, with *New Jersey* as the first of the four Iowa-Class battleships being brought back into service. Mike Gorchinski was breaking new

ground that would be used for outfitting the other three battleships, and what they had learned would soon be shared with these other ships.

On top of the Marine Barracks, was equipment that the Marines used to detect and backtrack mortar and artillery rounds fired from the heights above Beirut. Colonel Geraghty, CO of the Marine Barracks, radioed to the ship that they were having a problem with this equipment, and that they lacked two pieces of test equipment to complete the repairs. USS *New Jersey* had the needed equipment, and as Captain Scheu related: "It was Chief Gorchinski's gear, he knew how to operate it, and it wasn't going anywhere without him. He knew that he could provide this service to the Marines."

Among the distinguished guests attending the memorial ceremony at Camp LeJeune, was Marine Corps Commandant, Gen. James T. Conway, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps. Gen. Conway was greeted by those attending with a standing ovation, and his remarks came right to the point... "You can bloody our uniforms, you can fill our hearts with sorrow, but you can't stop us. We will replenish those units, and we will come after you with a terrible resolve..." A 21-gun salute honored those who gave their lives for peace.

In the words of Abbe Godwin, sculptor of the Marine guard bronze statue at the Beirut Memorial... "The names etched on this wall represent unique, extraordinary, irreplaceable human beings."



Beirut Memorial Observance photographs from North Carolina were provided to *The Jerseyman* courtesy of MSgt. Mark A. Schallow, USMC, (Retired.)

Battleship *New Jersey* Beirut Memorial Observance photos were provided to *The Jerseyman* courtesy of Stephanie Walsh, Director, Curatorial Affairs and Bob Walters.

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25 Years Later: We Came In Peace...

by Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, USMC, (Retired)

On Sunday morning, 23 October, I awoke as usual at dawn, dressed, and went below to the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit's Combat Operations Center to check the overnight communications traffic.

I roamed outside my headquarters at Beirut International Airport to view the dawn, struck by the quiet of the morning. I saw Marines going about their duties and greeted others preparing for a workout. Being Sunday, we were on a modified routine that pushed reveille back an hour to 0630, with Sunday brunch served between 0800 and 1000.

I returned to my office, which I shared with my executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Slacum, to review the daily schedule. Little did we know that this morning would be anything but quiet and routine.

At 0622, a massive explosion rocked our headquarters, followed by enormous shock waves. Shards of glass from the blown out windows, equipment, manuals, and papers flew across the room. The office entry door, located on the far side away from the explosion, was blown off its hinges, the frame bent and the reinforced concrete foundation of the building cracked.

I ran outside to find myself engulfed in a dense, gray fog of ash, with debris still raining down. I felt sickened as I stumbled around to the rear of my headquarters, thinking we had taken a direct hit from a Scud missile or heavy artillery. As the acrid fog began lifting, my logistics officer, Major Bob Melton, gasped, "My God, the BLT building is gone!" A knot tightened in my gut.

After an instant of disbelief, I quickly realized we had suffered heavy casualties. I later learned that a suicide driver penetrated our southern perimeter and rammed a 19-ton truck bomb into the lobby of the Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) building and detonated it. Forensics and intelligence later estimated the compressed-gas enhanced device to have an explosive equivalent in excess of 20,000 pounds of TNT. Minutes later, a similar truck bomb struck the French paratrooper headquarters at Ramlet-El-Baida, bringing down a nine-story building and killing 58 French peacekeepers.

This started the longest and most miserable day of my life. The death toll eventually reached 241 Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers, the highest loss of life in a single



day since D-Day on Iwo Jima in 1945. The coordinated dual suicide attacks, supported, planned, organized, and financed by Iran and Syria using Shiite proxies, achieved their strategic goal: the withdrawal of the multinational force from Lebanon and a dramatic change in U.S. national policy. The synchronized attacks that morning killed 299 U.S. and French peacekeepers and wounded scores more. The cost to the Iranian/Syrian-supported operation was two suicide bombers dead.

Remembrance and Justice

At dawn this 23 October, a solemn candlelight vigil will begin the day at the foot of the Beirut Memorial, nestled in the pines of North Carolina. Families, veterans, and friends will gather to pay tribute to those who "Came in Peace" on this, the 25th anniversary. Each name etched on the marble wall of the memorial will be read aloud by a family member or friend. Later, a more formal ceremony will include military music, pageantry, and speeches commemorating the legacy of the peacekeepers who paid the ultimate sacrifice. A wreath will be laid at the foot of the statue of the lone Marine standing perpetual guard at the memorial.

The quiet strength and dignity displayed by the families of those lost is a continual source of inspiration to me. There are numerous stories about how they picked up the pieces of shattered lives, helped one another, and carried on to raise their families. There is no finer tribute to honor the memories of these fallen.

In the Iranian Behesht-E-Zahra cemetery in southern Tehran, there will also be a ceremony at a monument erected in 2004 to commemorate the Beirut suicide bombers. In attendance will likely be some dressed as suicide bombers, chanting the standard "death to America" and "death to Israel."

One individual who will be absent this year is Imad Fayeze Mugniyah, one of the world's most wanted and notorious terrorists. He was a key operative in the suicide bombings that Sunday morning in Beirut and has been linked with many major operations including the 1984 kidnapping and murder of the CIA station chief in Beirut, William Buckley. Mugniyah was also directly in charge of the 1988 kidnapping and execution of Marine Corps Colonel Rich Higgins, who was serving with the United Nations peacekeeping mission. And he was indicted in absentia by the U.S. government for his role in the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in 1985, which led to the savage beating and execution of U.S. Navy diver Robert Stetham.

Long overdue justice was finally served on 12 February 2008. In an ironic twist, Mugniyah was assassinated in a quiet, upscale neighborhood of Damascus

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by a car bomb, one of his weapons of choice. His greatest notoriety was pioneering the widespread use of suicide bombers, which has evolved to become the favored tactic of Islamic extremists.

Osama bin Laden took inspiration from Mugnyah's 1983 bombings and used that model for al Qaeda's first successful dual suicide bombings against the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 7 August 1998. Before a meeting between bin Laden and Mugnyah in Sudan in 1996, al Qaeda did not have this expertise. But it later expanded the simultaneous, coordinated suicide bombing model for the four commercial airline hijackings and attacks on 11 September 2001.

The events that Sunday morning in Beirut exposed a deep-seated fanaticism fanned by Islamic jihadists without sectarian divisions. Recent history has made us more familiar with this phenomenon. The 18 April bombing of the U.S. embassy and the Marine barracks' bombings in Beirut are considered to be seminal events in the war against terrorism. It was the first time Islamic suicide bombers had attacked significant American targets. This Iranian- and Syrian-instigated act of war was pure terrorism. Our timidity to respond created an aura of impunity that the Islamic extremists sensed and pursued all the way to the 9/11 attacks, which finally awakened America.

Suicide Attacks

The introduction of suicide truck bombs as a tactic in Beirut in 1983 proved to be an effective if heinous tool. The bottom line is that they worked, and recent history has confirmed their cruel efficiency and huge cost in innocent lives. These attacks were cynically planned to ensure success for the terrorists and cause massive casualties.

The post-bombing investigation conducted by FBI Special Agent Danny Deffenbaugh revealed computations and technical assessment of the device (bomb) and the high explosive used-pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN). Deffenbaugh also identified canisters of compressed butane gas contained in the bed of the truck with the PETN. This enhancement of the explosive, also found at the earlier U.S. embassy attack, indicated the Iranians were trying to create a fuel-air explosive. This creates a shocking effect with a propagation wave that produces additional heat and takes away the oxygen twice as fast. An explosives expert stated that this effect verified the anti-personnel purpose of the attack. It also explained the reason why so many dead and wounded suffered severe burns.

In describing the destructive strength of the bomb, Deffenbaugh verified publicly what was briefed to us privately by the FBI and others-that the immensity of the

bomb precluded the necessity of the truck bomb reaching the building. I was informed that the truck did not even have to leave the airport access road adjacent to the western side of the BLT building to have comparable devastation and casualties. The suicide bomb that killed the French paratroopers did not reach their headquarters before it detonated but still caused the collapse of the nine-story structure.

More telling was the successful suicide attack on Israeli headquarters in Tyre, Lebanon, on 4 November 1983, just ten days after the attack on U.S. and French peacekeepers. Even though the Israelis had none of the restrictions of a presence mission and nothing that would hinder their extensive intelligence capabilities, they were struck with a carbon-copy attack ten days after our attack. It should be noted that the Israelis had many of the defenses the Marines were criticized for not having at Beirut International Airport. Still, the terrorist attack was successfully carried out-killing 60 and injuring 30 more-even though the suicide truck was halted well short of the target.

Members of the intelligence community compiled an all-sources damage assessment after the Marine barracks bombing. In it, they studied signals, overhead, and human intelligence and concluded the evidence was overpowering that Iran had been behind it. An intelligence expert close to the final assessment stated he did not know anyone who studied the information and drew any other conclusion.

Beyond carnage, suicide bombings provide grand theater by way of international press coverage. Since their genesis in Beirut, such attacks have grown to becoming a weapon of choice for Shia and Sunni alike. This tactic carries a profound psychological message of fear and intimidation. I believe reasonable observers agree that such attacks are very difficult to deter, and their increased usage and success reflect the terrorists' desire for the spectacular hysteria and chaos created by such attacks.

Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah

The Multinational Peacekeeping Force presence in Lebanon in 1982-83 undoubtedly contributed to the stability of the government of Lebanon and saved lives. Our successes, albeit limited, were obviously worrisome enough to the primary powerbrokers in Tehran and Damascus to compel them to launch the suicide truck bombing operations against us. The timing, locations, and targets of the bombings were no more coincidental than were the sophisticated planning, magnitude, and execution of the attacks.

The choice of 23 October was significant because National Reconciliation Talks among all key

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factions within the government of Lebanon were scheduled to be held in Geneva, beginning on the 31st. Preliminary talks were set to begin on the 24th at Beirut International Airport, where the U.S. Multi-National Peacekeeping Force had been located for more than a year.

The airport site was supposed to be one of the most secure areas in Lebanon. The Marine and the French headquarters were targeted primarily because of who we were and what we represented. The passive nature of the peacekeeping mission provided attractive targets that Iran and Syria were not about to pass up. It is noteworthy that the United States provided direct naval gunfire support—which I strongly opposed for a week—to the Lebanese Army at a mountain village called Suq-al-Garb on 19 September and that the French conducted an air strike on 23 September in the Bekaa Valley. American support removed any lingering doubts of our neutrality, and I stated to my staff at the time that we were going to pay in blood for this decision.

Unknown to us at the time, the National Security Agency had made a diplomatic communications intercept on 26 September (the same date as the cease-fire ending the September War) in which the Iranian Intelligence Service provided explicit instructions to the Iranian ambassador in Damascus (a known terrorist) to attack the Marines at Beirut International Airport. The suicide attackers struck us 28 days later, with word of the intercept stuck in the intelligence pipeline until days after the attack.

Iran's Motivation

Looking back today, it is easier to comprehend why Iran moved a contingent of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps into the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley during the height of the Iraq-Iran War in 1982-83. Following the 1982 Israeli invasion, and with Syrian complicity, Iran established a base of operations to carry out its strategic goals. This corps founded, financed, trained, and equipped Hezbollah to operate as a proxy army, a force expanded today to challenge the freely elected government of Lebanon, which cannot control, much less disarm, Hezbollah.

Using Lebanon as a base, the force conducted border raids and rained rocket and missile attacks on Israel. Iranian persistence and determination has paid off handsomely in terms of regional influence, political power, and military prowess, and they have suffered no consequences. It is clear that their brashness and the carnage they inflict continue to expand.

The recent revelations that Iranian weapons are killing U.S. Marines and Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan should surprise no one. Conclusive evidence has disclosed that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force has transported roadside bombs and armor-piercing

- "explosively formed penetrators" (EFPs) from Iran into Iraq. Other advanced Iranian weapons found in Iraq include the RPG-29 rocket-propelled grenade, 240-mm rockets, and perhaps the most ominous, the Misagh 1, a portable surface-to-air missile that uses an infrared guidance system.

This influx of sophisticated weaponry has been accompanied by intelligence revealing Iranian facilitation of travel and training inside Iran for Iraqi insurgents. U.S. intelligence officials have stated that Iranian complicity could not take place without approval at the highest levels of the Iranian government.

Among the terrorist groups that Iran supports are al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Three of them are Sunni groups and are supported, among other reasons, to undercut the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Shiite Iran's support and its strategic relationship with the Sunni Wahhabi al Qaeda are especially telling.

The relationship between Iran and al Qaeda was confirmed by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission. Its report highlighted Iranian involvement in the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, training for al Qaeda operations against Israel and the United States, and safe-transport and safe-haven for those operations.

War Against the United States

What continues to unfold is the debunking of the theory that an ideological separation between the Sunnis and Shiites would prevent any mutual cooperation in operations against a common enemy, i.e., the United States and its allies. Evidence confirms the old adage that my enemy's enemy is my friend.

In reality, Iran has been waging war against the United States for more than a quarter-century, from the 1979 hostage crisis and the Marine barracks bombing in 1983 to providing sophisticated weaponry to Sunni and Shia insurgents in Iraq. Iranian mullahs have chosen to wage a radically aggressive campaign to create and accelerate instability throughout the region by using their proxies, many of whom are non-Shia. Some examples include:

- Support for Hamas to launch rockets and attacks into Israeli villages across the Gaza Strip borders
- Continued building of heavily armed Hezbollah in Lebanon to not only challenge the legitimacy of the duly-elected government of Lebanon, but also to prepare for the inevitable next war with Israel

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- Supporting Syria, their lone Arab client, in their incessant efforts to further destabilize Lebanon and Iraq. (At last count, eight anti-Syrian Lebanese leaders, journalists, and members of parliament have been assassinated by Syrian operatives.)
- Supporting Sunni Taliban in Afghanistan against NATO forces

Using the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force to facilitate training, equipping, and financing Shiite and Sunni extremist militias in Iraq against U.S., Iraqi Army, and coalition forces.

A recent development revealed that Hezbollah instructors trained Shiite militiamen in remote camps inside southern Iraq and planned some of the most brazen attacks against U.S.-led forces.

Iran has evolved as a major player in the Middle East with growing influence. Its proxy war with Israel, which many fail to see as only one front in a larger war, increases Iranian popularity throughout the Arab world. The Iranian capability to cause trouble on three fronts, on their schedule, does not augur well for the peace process. Add to this Quds Force links to the Taliban and Iranian weapons and sophisticated munitions being smuggled into Iraq and Afghanistan, and Iran has positioned itself to wreak havoc and cause diversions through proxies while avoiding retribution for their continuing bloodshed.

Connecting the Dots

In August 2005, Mustafa Mohammad-Najjar was named the new defense minister of Iran. This position takes on new importance considering the brazen, complex campaign Iran is waging to destabilize the region. Keep in mind that these diversions draw attention from their primary objective of attaining a nuclear capability.

Najjar's previous assignment as senior commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps earned him a reputation of ruthlessness and ideological loyalty. In 1983, he commanded the 1,500-man expeditionary force sent to Lebanon's Baaka Valley.

This Iranian unit provided security, planning, training, and operational support for the dual suicide truck bombings on 23 October 1983. Najjar's successes in these attacks, which are still celebrated in Tehran today, led to the withdrawal of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force.

The withdrawal after the bombings, with no retribution from the United States, became a turning point in the unbounded use of terrorism by radical Islamic fanatics worldwide. Under his command, Najjar's corps played a key role in the formation of the Party of God (Hezbollah) and the education and training of Mugniyah, who reportedly lived and operated out of Iran. I often wonder whether Najjar was among those troops involved in the

fighting at Suq-al-Garb during the September War in 1983. The 24th Marine Amphibious Unit's 2d Radio Detachment was intercepting, among others, significant Farsi communications during the multi-Muslim militia's assault on the Lebanese armed forces. The multi-confessional Lebanese army held together and successfully defended its position which, in my opinion, led the decision makers in Tehran and Damascus to change their tactics from conventional attacks to the shadows of terrorism. Whether or not he was present at Suq-al-Garb, Najjar's position as commander of the Revolutionary Guard detachment supports the notion that he would have wanted to be there. My guess is that he was.

As the Iranian defense minister, he is most certainly involved in global terrorist attacks and the acquisition of nuclear weaponry. It is more probable than possible that Iran will use its favorite proxy, Hezbollah, to carry out future attacks against the West, including the United States. Najjar's long association with the now-deceased terrorist mastermind Mugniyah lends credence to this. We could well find ourselves, in our own country, the recipient of a weapon of mass destruction in an attack planned and executed by some of the same players who carried out the 1983 suicide attacks in Beirut. Some of these dots could very well connect.

Another dot emerged shortly after the announcement of Najjar's ascendency to defense minister. A close confidant and fellow alumnus of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Lebanon contingent was appointed by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to lead the corps' ground forces. Brigadier General Ahmad Kazemi, whose previous assignment was commander of the Republican Guard's air force, was responsible for the development of solid-fuel technology. He was also responsible for research and production of Shahab missiles, including the Shahab-4, with a projected range of 3,000 kilometers and capable of carrying a nuclear warhead that could reach the heart of Europe.

The Story Continues

Today, Lebanon is again being used as a battlefield for foreign forces to settle their disagreements. The state-within-a-state that the Palestine Liberation Organization created in the late 1970s has been replaced. The Iranian model, establishing Hezbollah as a proxy, has proved to be more successful. Hezbollah's development and growth suggest that in 1983, Iran and Syria had a long-range strategy to increase their influence in the region and the world. The operational and training base established by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard that year remains an active hub of activity a quarter-century later.

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This 23 October, when families and friends gather for this year's remembrance, will again remind us of those dedicated peacekeepers who never came home. They were denied the joy of raising a family, pursuing their dreams, and enjoying the blessings of America. Amid the renewals of friendship, hugs, and tears, there always lingers an undercurrent of deep sorrow and anguish that hasn't lessened 25 years later. The peacekeepers' valor and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Colonel Geraghty served over 25 years in the Marine Corps and seven years in the Special Operations Group of the Central Intelligence Agency. He commanded the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit in Beirut, Lebanon, during the suicide truck bombings on 23 October 1983. He currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona.

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Attending the Beirut Memorial wreath are Bob Walters, retired Archives and Collections Manager, and Dennis Levitt, Member Of The Home Port Alliance Board, and Chair Of The Curatorial & Collections Committee.



Father Matt Hillyard of The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Camden, New Jersey, offers a prayer for Chief Michael Gorchinki, and 240 others who lost their lives at the 24th MAU Barracks Beirut, Lebanon - 23 October 1983.

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USS NEW JERSEY VETERAN'S REUNION...

If you served in USS *New Jersey* during World War II, and would like a free DVD of the ship's 65th birthday ceremony held on 23 May 2008, please let your New Jersey Veteran's Association Officers know. The DVD's are available on request...

During the USS *New Jersey* veteran's reunion held on Friday, September 21, 2008, an estimated 27 crewmen of World War II, 68 crewmen of the Korean war, 46 from the Vietnam era, and 4 from the Lebanon crisis, visited their ship again and also had a chance to visit their "old" work and bunk areas.

World War II crewmen taking time for photos in the wardroom, all received a DVD of the 65th Anniversary of USS *New Jersey*, featuring naval historian **Paul Stillwell** as keynote speaker. Mr. Stillwell, who wrote the book "*Battleship New Jersey: An Illustrated History*", published by the US Naval Institute, told interesting stories of the ship's launching on December 7, 1942, and her commissioning on 23 May 1943. If you were aboard on that commissioning day in 1943, this DVD should be of great interest...

Although we fell short of taking all the crewman photos we had hoped for *The Jerseyman*, we managed to take a few. We also asked the crewmen for a short bio to go with their photos, and if they could recall one particular event from their service aboard USS *New Jersey* so many years ago...

**Bill Lynch, Ens/Lt(jg),
USS New Jersey 1953-1956
Weatogue, Connecticut
GQ: Crypto Room
C, Q and EX Divisions**



"We had completed almost eight hours of firing in Korea. After GQ secured, one of my roommates in Gunnery (then Ensign Harold Harmon), suggested that I go topside and view the scene.

The sun was shining, the skies around the ship were heavy with gun smoke, and the sun had created various colors mixed in with all the smoke. I looked down towards the Admiral's area, and there was Vice Admiral "Jocko" Clark, bare-headed, and in shirt sleeves, sitting in a chair out on the deck, taking in the same scene..."

**Elliot Cates, Lt(jg)
USS New Jersey 1952-1955
Somers, New York
GQ: Sky 1, and later Sky 4
4th Division Officer**



"We came under fire in Wonsan Harbor and I was in Sky 1. Some air bursts and water spouts were seen starboard. We returned fire with 5" battery. I looked back once, saw water spout and smoke from our guns drifting up, and dress colors snapping at the yard-arm. I'll never forget the sight."

**Charles Smith, Machinist Mate 3/c
USS New Jersey 1953-1956
Manchester, New Jersey
GQ: Mt., 9, Right Gun, Powderman
Fifth Division "Mike"**



"Full astern bell while standing throttle watch in #4 engine room."

**Frank Hanba, Pharmacist Mate 3/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1945
Grand Rapids, Michigan
GQ: Sickbay
K and H Divisions**



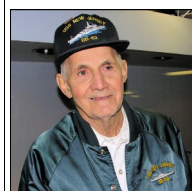
"I remember Jap prisoner duty. They didn't know what to do with a fork, and put their celery stalks in a glass of water..."

**Frank Ragone, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1952-1953
Williamstown, New Jersey
GQ: Mount #7 5"/38
Fifth Division**



"I remember when Hank Buckley and me threw a timed round overboard!"

**George Whitlock, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Buffalo, New York
GQ: Mount #2 5"/38
Fourth Division**



"I was lucky."

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Harry Pierce, Storekeeper 2/c
USS New Jersey 1942-1944
West Warwick, Rhode Island
GQ: 5" Mount and 40mm
Fifth Division



Marvin Zimmel, Gunners Mate
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Hatboro, Pennsylvania
GQ: Quad 17, 40mm
Seventh Division



“When one of our 20mm shot down a Jap Betty at night. Many, many more...”

Harry Sonntag, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1953-1954
Petersburg, New Jersey
GQ:
Sixth Division



Frank Edwards, Gunners Mate 2/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Bridgewater, Massachusetts
GQ: Turret # 1
First Division



Henry “Hank” Siewers Lt(jg)
USS New Jersey 1954-1957
Cocoa Beach, Florida
GQ: Turret #2 Officer
Second Division



“In 1955, we were sealed in Turret #2 when the breech was locked in the open position during a firing exercise. We had to wait an eternity for the breech to cool before we were allowed to open the hatch and leave the station!”

Michael Pazienza, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1945
Floral Park, New York
GQ” Turret #3
Third Division

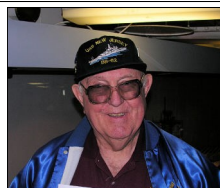


Peter Ubertaccio, Gunners Mate 3/c
USS New Jersey 1943 - 1945
Barto, Pennsylvania
GQ: Turret #3
Third Division



“The typhoon we went through before the invasion of Okinawa.”

Norris Olney, Jr., Yeoman 3/c
USS New Jersey 1951-1953
Marathon, Iowa
GQ: Captain’s Telephone Talker
First Division, EX Division, Flag

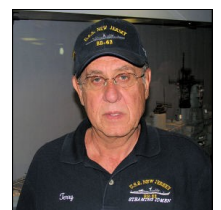


Norm Allman, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1954-1957
Mineral Wells, West Virginia
GQ: Turret #1
First Division

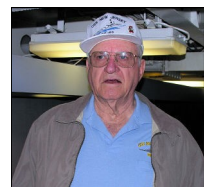


“It was a good life...”

Terry Esler,
Interior Comms Electrician 3/c
USS New Jersey 1968-1969
Holt, Michigan
GQ: Forward IC
Echo Division



Edwin Aken, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1945
Granbury, Texas
GQ: 20mm guns
Eighth Division



“The suicide planes...”

Robert Ross, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Ringoes, New Jersey
GQ: 40 mm
Seventh Division



“Shooting down a Betty at night...”

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Charlie Westphal, Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Blairsville, Georgia
GQ: Turret #2 Center gun,
Cradleman/Rammer
Second Division



“Going through the Panama Canal on January 1st 1944. Holystoning the deck portside of Turret #2. Learning of Japan’s surrender.”

Charles Gaines, Chief Yeoman
USS New Jersey 1967-1969
Milford, Ohio
GQ: Captain’s Talker
“X” Division



“I was the only Ham aboard ship...(WA4DZX)”

Bob LaVine,
Electrician’s Mate 3/c (Gyro)
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Warren, New Jersey
GQ: Aft IC
“E” Division



Danny Fielder,
Machinist Mate 3/c
USS New Jersey 1982-1984
Crystal Springs, Mississippi
GQ: #4 Engine Room - throttles
“M” Division



“When the Marine barracks were bombed. ‘

John Samolowicz, Shipfitter 3/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Washington Township, New Jersey
GQ: Aft
“R” Division



“When the ship was hit by friendly fire back aft on the starboard side (December 1944), I was showering just one deck below the mess deck. I went above to view the damage. One sailor was sitting injured on the deck, and there was a hole through the main deck. The sky was visible through the overhead looking up from the mess hall.

I also remember a quiet night while patrolling the main deck on the starboard side about midships. Suddenly I saw gun tracers being aimed at a now visible Japanese plane. The plane was immediately hit and went in the water well ahead of the ship’s bow. To avoid an almost direct collision with the downed and flaming plane, our ship made a slight turn to port. On passing the close and burning plane I turned and could see my shadow on the bulkhead. I understand the gunner received a promotion. God knows we might have had a direct hit had the gunner not been alert.”

Fred Adams, Jr., Seaman 1/c
USS New Jersey 1943-1946
Fishers, Indiana
GQ: Mount 8, 5”/38
Fourth Division



*“In Memory of RADM J. Edward Snyder, Jr.
 Oct 23, 1924 - Nov 4, 2007
 Commanding Officer USS New Jersey BB-62
 Vietnam 1967-1969”*

THE JERSEYMAN

PHOTOS OF AREAS "WHERE I ONCE SERVED" IN USS NEW JERSEY...

Editor's Notes: This page is in response to photo requests from crewmen that once served in USS *New Jersey*. We are often asked if we can provide a photo of where a crewman once stood watch in a specific engine room, or in a particular turret, or of the bridge area, in sickbay etc... **If crewmen will drop a line on a specific area you would like to see from your "battleship days", we'll try to have a photo in a future issue of *The Jerseyman*.** - TH



Scuttle loader control above each scuttle station. Found on the bulkheads of the lower powder handling rooms of the three Main battery (16") turrets - 5 decks below.



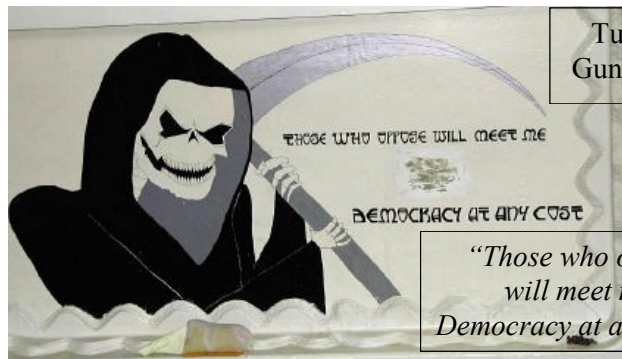
Powder magazine tray used to roll the 110 pound powder bags into the Scuttle loaders.



Projectile flat - found three decks below in each of the three Main battery (16") turrets. Stored projectiles, chained and secured along the turret sides, would be manually maneuvered over to the projectile hoist seen at top right.



Right Control Station in Turret #1.



Turret #1 Gun house...

"Those who oppose will meet me. Democracy at any cost."

THE JERSEYMAN

Remembering Vietnam... I was in 1st Division, Main battery, and very proud to have once served in a 16 inch gun turret. I even got to crawl all the way through the gun barrel back when we were decommissioning the "Big J," in Bremerton. They wanted the rifling in all 9 guns to be coated with grade #2 oil. It was "interesting" going through an area where 1900 lb. projectiles had been fired.

My GQ station though, was as the Center Gun Powder Hoist Operator of Turret #1. I brought up the powder bags (they were very **fast** hoists) to the gun room level, and we dumped it out to the Gun Captain on his order. Not a good place to be assigned if you are claustrophobic. Very confined and just enough room for you to sit on a very hard and uncomfortable brass seat with holes.



Left/Center Powder Hoist Op. positions
5 decks below...

I sat there for hours at a time, and I am a small, light-weight guy, no padding, so my butt really ached on that seat. (My small size (see photo inset) was also the main reason I was selected to crawl through the gun barrel).

In case of an emergency, we had ropes tied to our ankles in case we passed out or needed any help getting out. We also wrapped rags around our knee joints and elbows to protect them from getting bruised or cut up by the sharp rifling. We had drop lights with us, and with all cords and lines being stretched out the muzzles of the guns. Guys outside the barrels would take up the slack as we backed out of the guns, and each time we had to call out to them to take up the slack, when to stop etc... I had a coffee can filled with grade two oil with me, and a four inch paintbrush. It was of course very close work, and we worked right into the rifling. Along with the glare from the drop light it was not easy work. You had to dip the brush into the coffee can, brush the rifling, and keep on going.

I remember that we arched our back a bit and shoved back with elbows and knees to move you along. These barrels are big, so a small guy like me could maneuver in there fairly well and I did exactly that. I did do this gun two separate times, however, since the chief shined his light in there to inspect and saw "holidays", so he ordered a repeat performance. The three of us, had to do this job again, in each gun. By this time though, the oil had kind of dried, so it was not as dirty a job the second time around.

I can recall all the while that I was in there, thinking about how many 1900 Lb. projectiles had fired through there... but how many people have ever done that? Well, I know of nine guys, including myself from the Viet Nam Era, and it was during the decommissioning of USS *New*

Jersey in the final months of 1969.



boring sitting in that powder hoist operator's station.

I got my third Class Crow aboard my second ship, USS *Buchanan*, (DDG-14) out of San Diego. She now sits somewhere at the bottom of the ocean - the Navy used her for target practice, and I don't like to even think about it. I feel badly that my ship was sunk like that, and very sad that she is now gone.

I wanted to mention too, that I followed in my Uncle Anthony's US Navy footsteps. He was a sailor during WWII, and one of the 721 men killed in action aboard USS *Franklin* (CVA-13). The *Franklin* made history after this heavy Japanese attack, for its excellent use of damage control. Even after all the carnage, she managed to limp back to Pearl Harbor under her own power. I was not only named exactly after him, but I also share his very same birthday/month-August 15th...

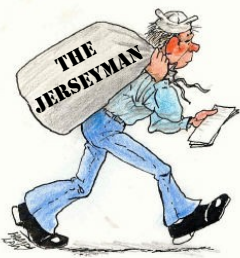
Anthony S. Leanza, Gunners Mate 3/c
USS *New Jersey* 1968-1969
Wildomar, California

USS *New Jersey*'s LOGO...

Effective with this issue, a new and enhanced version of the ship's LOGO was created for us by **James A. Flood, Maritime Artist, and Vietnam-era crewman**. The new logo will be featured in all future issues. Many thanks Jim!



THE JERSEYMAN



The Jerseyman 2008-4Q...

I particularly enjoyed the article about Hank Braverman. Although I didn't know him personally, I can definitely relate to his move to PNSY because several of the men I worked with in Shop 51 also transferred from Brooklyn and settled in Willingboro. For

some it was their first home, so many of them having lived in apartments in the New York area all of their lives .

Also, I had been detailed to work on USS *Austin* (LPD-6) during her final outfitting at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in the winter of 1965 - 66 because so many of the Shop 51 personnel left the yard after the closing was announced. Three of us from the Test Gang commuted to Brooklyn early every Monday morning and returned home every Friday evening. That time really stands out because New York experienced a transit strike during the Christmas season while I was there. Getting around anywhere was a true lesson in patience and perseverance.

Taking *Austin* out for sea trials was a neat payoff experience however, because we passed the Statue of Liberty very early in the morning with the lights shining on her. I still remember that scene well.

Ed Worff
Arnold, Maryland

Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

Recently, on a Saturday afternoon, I was Watch Officer on the aft quarterdeck of Battleship New Jersey during a special event, when **Mark Brigger**, a newly certified docent, related to me how he had just completed his first tour. He said he did what he had been trained to do and thought it went well. Nothing unusual about that. Except that his tour group was made up of all German nationals who spoke no English. I guess there was nothing very unusual about that either, except for the fact that Mark Brigger is fluent in German, and so he conducted his very first tour, aboard America's most decorated battleship, in German! I think Mark has now expanded our definition of a "premium tour product."

In addition to volunteering, Mark Brigger is serving in our United States Air Force, and is a crew member on a flying tanker. I would like to ask that Mark be recognized in *The Jerseyman* with our thanks for his military service to our country, and for his very unique volunteer service to our ship.

Frank Chiacchio
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

The Jerseyman 2008-4Q...

Tom - so many items struck home. Such as Martin Hoopes' comment about Remember Pearl Harbor. I was already in the army as of April 4, 1941, and had many experiences after our 8th Division deployed along the beaches of Florida from Pensacola, down the Keys, and up to North Carolina.

With permission, I would like to place Martin's Pearl Harbor comment in our 301st Infantry newsletter.

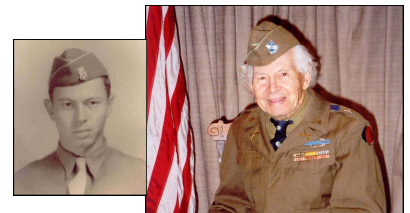
Our visit to the Missouri Battleship Memorial made in 1985 was so impressive. I will never forget it.

The Battleship Deck Planking article was also a recall for me of when I was volunteering and helped clean out rotting teak plugs on BB-62. I saved some of the better plugs and they are now in my WWII cabinet along with memorabilia I sent home from Hitler's Nazi Germany.

Bob Cassel
Sewell, New Jersey

Editor's Note:

In the April 2005 issue of *The Jerseyman*, Bob Cassel, a ship's volunteer with many years of service, told the story of crossing the Atlantic aboard HMT *Queen Elizabeth* during WWII. Bob's entire 94th Infantry Division of 16,000 men made the Atlantic crossing on August 6, 1944 sailing without escort, and anchored at the Firth of Clyde, Gourock, Scotland five days later... August 11, 1944.



HMT Queen Elizabeth photo used with permission.
Courtesy of ©The Mariner's Museum,
Newport News, Va.

THE JERSEYMAN

Arlington Honors Review...

Tom - I'm on my 3rd deployment to Iraq, and the 5th overall since 9/11. On this tour, I deployed December 7, 2007 and we are scheduled to leave some time in February, 2009. I first came over as an Infantry Platoon Sergeant with 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. Currently though, I'm on a Iraqi Military Transition Team stationed in Taji, Iraq. I'm sending this to you for the Jerseyman, in hopes that you might be able to interest veterans and readers that feel the same as I do on the subject of Full Honors and Standard Honors that are currently rendered at Arlington National Cemetery. I also have an online petition in process that I hope others will sign and help correct what I consider to be an injustice. (Link is found below.)



While serving in The Army Honor Guard (The Old Guard) at Ft. Myer, Virginia as a Full Honor Casket Team Squad Leader, I was responsible for carrying the remains of deceased Army Officers on a regular basis, which also included former President Ronald Reagan. After I was promoted, I then served as a "Casket Platoon", Platoon Sergeant, responsible for 3 Standard Honor and 1 Full Honor Casket Teams (about 35 Soldiers). While there, I wondered why only Officers received Full Honor Funerals in Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), regardless of what they did or didn't do in their careers. Because the difference between a Full and Standard Honor Funeral is so dramatic, and unless you have served there, you would never know the difference. So I began to research the tradition and the policies. As just one example of the differences, the only way an Enlisted Service Member can receive a Full Honor Funeral is as a Medal of Honor Recipient, usually awarded well after burial, meaning that an Enlisted Medal of Honor Recipient would not receive Full Honors at time of burial.

Basically, Full Honors at Arlington consists of a Horse Drawn Caisson transfer from Chapel to gravesite, 8 pallbearers, Army Band, 1-2 escort marching Platoons, Cannon Salutes for General Officers, "Cap Rider-less Horse(0-6 and above), firing party, bugler and a Chaplain. A Standard Honors Funeral consists of a hearse transfer, 6 pallbearers, firing party, bugler, and a Chaplain. Another misconception is that E-9's receive Full Honors as stated in Army Regulation 600-25, however, they don't. In addition to the Standard Honors rendered above, they do get the Caisson, 1 escort marching platoon, and a drummer,

but it contradicts what Army Regulation 600-25 states, in that they will also receive the band.

I might add, the above Special Officer Honors rendered at Arlington, are not offered at any other National Cemetery in the United States, nor are the priorities for Full Honors, the number one priority for Full Honors at all other National Cemeteries is service members KIA.

For the last year, I have addressed this issue with the President, multiple Congressmen and Senators, multiple Veteran Organizations of which I am a member, and Army Offices in Washington D.C., but have received little, to no response. The ANC Superintendent did send me a response stating that he agreed with my position, however, he believed any changes would be difficult to implement. I have talked to numerous Senior Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers as well who support this Honors review and they are addressing this in their own direction.

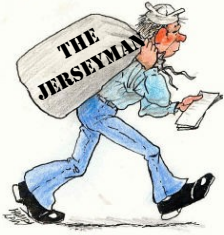
The bottom line is this - a 2nd Lieutenant can die in a car accident 2 days after graduating from Officer Candidate School and receive a Full Honors Funeral, while a Master Sergeant in the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Navy with 22 years of Service can die in Combat in Afghanistan or Iraq, receive a Silver Star for Valor, and is only entitled to a Standard Honors Funeral. This is flat out disgraceful. In a place our Nation considers the most hallowed ground in America, a place that demands our respect, I think this issue deserves to be reviewed at a high level. Honors rendered should be equal, based on actions, and not based only on rank. A panel should decide the official criteria for Honors rendered based on individual careers, and circumstances of death, not just by rank. I think the Funerals offered should be like the Tombstones in Arlington, all the same. At a minimum, all Active Duty Soldiers' killed in Combat should receive a Full Honors Funeral.

I am asking that anyone wishing to assist our effort to please visit the link for the online petition, which I plan to formally submit to the applicable offices in Washington D.C., upon the completion of my tour.

The only way this injustice will be corrected is through legislation, and we the people, Veterans, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, must all press our Representatives to achieve it.
**SFC (P) Robert Allen Durbin, (Union City, Indiana)
 Taji, Iraq**

www.gopetition.com/online/19121.html
 (Also see Military Times article - March 2008)
www.militarytimes.com/news/2008/03/marine_burialdisparity_032508/

THE JERSEYMAN



Proposed Statue honoring LtGen Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, USMC...

Master Chief:

My name is Jim Barnett , and I am a retired Marine First Sergeant. I have formed a committee of former Marines through the Seagoing Marine Association, and have been authorized by LtGen Ron Christmas of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, to honor LtGen "Chesty" Puller with a statue. I know that you are Navy, but thought that you might have readers that would be interested in helping with our project, and hoped you would mention this request for assistance in *"The Jerseyman"*. After all, from 1935-1937, and again

from 1939-1941, "Chesty" Puller served tours of duty as the CO of the Marine Detachment aboard the Asiatic Fleet Cruiser USS *Augusta* (CL-31/CA-31).

This will be the first statue ever built to honor this great Marine, and we feel that it is now long past due. It will be placed at a special site at the National Marine Corps Museum at Quantico. We would greatly appreciate it if you would join our team and help disseminate this notice to any and all that you feel might be able to help us in this worthwhile effort. If every one reading this request would then also send it on to all of their friends, that would be fantastic. An article about our effort is currently appearing in the November 2008 issue of *Leatherneck* magazine. All the above can also be verified at the Seagoing Marines Website: www.seagoingmarines.com.

If we can help you in getting this word out, in any way you can suggest, please let us know. We are hoping to see that this statue gets built, and very soon, to honor this great Marine warrior. All members of the committee are volunteers, and 100% of \$260,000 required in donations, will go to building the statue (see inset). For tax purposes, we are 501(C)19, Seagoing Marine Association. Tax-deductible checks or money orders may be sent to:

"CHESTY" PULLER STATUE FUND
CANYON COMMUNITY BANK
CATALINA BRANCH
PO BOX 37170
TUCSON, AZ 85740

Semper Fi , & "Goodnight "Chesty", Wherever You Are"
First Sergeant Jim Barnett, USMC (Retired - 1970)
Roseburg, Oregon
(Marine Detachments USS *Shangri-La* (CV-38) 1954-1955,
and USS *Rochester* (CA-124) 1955-1956)

General Puller's awards will be engraved on the reverse of the statue and include: Navy Cross with four Gold Stars in lieu of additional awards; the Army Distinguished Service Cross; the Army Silver Star Medal; the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and Gold Star in lieu of a second award; the Bronze Star Medal; the Air Medal with Gold Stars in lieu of second and third awards; and the Purple Heart Medal. His other medals and decorations include the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with four bronze stars; the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal with one bronze star; the World War I Victory Medal with West Indies clasp; the Haitian Campaign Medal; the Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal; the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal with one bronze star; the China Service Medal; the American Defense Service Medal with Base clasp; the American Area Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal with four bronze stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal; the Korean Service Medal with one silver star in lieu of five bronze stars; the United Nations Service Medal; the Haitian Medaille Militaire; the Nicaraguan Presidential Medal of Merit with Diploma; the Nicaraguan Cross of Valor with Diploma; the Republic of Korea's Ulchi Medal with Gold Star; and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation with Oak Leaf Cluster.



THE JERSEYMAN

SHIP'S BELLS...



USS North Carolina (ACR-12)
Class - Tennessee Class Armored Cruiser
(later renamed USS Charlotte (CA-12))
Laid down 21 March 1905 by
Newport News Shipbuilding
Commissioned 7 May 1908
Displacement 14,700 Tons
Length 504' 6"
Beam 72' 10"

USS North Carolina (ACR-12), was the ship assigned to bring home the crew remains of USS *Maine*, for their final interment in Arlington National Cemetery.

On 5 November 1915, *North Carolina* became the first ship ever to launch an aircraft by catapult while under way. This experimental work led to the use of catapults on battleships and cruisers throughout World War II, and to the steam catapults found on present-day aircraft carriers.

When the United States entered World War I, *North Carolina* sailed north to escort troop transports plying between Norfolk and New York. Between December 1918 and July 1919, she brought men of the AEF home from Europe. Renamed *Charlotte* on 7 June 1920, so that her original name might be assigned to a new battleship, she decommissioned at Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Wash., 18 February 1921. Her name was struck from the Navy List 15 July 1930, and she was sold for scrapping 29 September 1930.

Photo courtesy of: Shipmate Fred Velletri, Johnston, Rhode Island and Bill Lee, Monroe, North Carolina

USS Saint Paul (CA-73)

Class - Baltimore
Laid down 3 February 1943 by Bethlehem Steel Co., Quincy, Mass.
Displacement 13,600 Tons, Length 673' 5", Beam 70' 10"
Stricken on 31 July 1978
Sold for scrap January 1980



USS *Saint Paul* earned one battle star for World War II service, eight battle stars for Korean service, and eight battle stars for Vietnam service.

The ship's bell from USS *Saint Paul* is located outside the Mayor's Office in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Photos provided by:
Channing M. Zucker, Archivist and Historian,
USS Saint Paul Association
Virginia Beach, Virginia



THE JERSEYMAN

SHIP'S BELLS...



“Not a ship's bell, but a bell that saves ships!
Another bit of maritime history for *The Jerseyman*...”

Semper Fidelis,
Joseph Madagan
Former Editor, "The Seahorse"
Wesley Chapel, Florida



USS *New Jersey* (BB-16)
Photo courtesy of
VADM Douglas J. Katz, USN (Retired)
Annapolis, Maryland

THE JERSEYMAN - 2008

A set of *The Jerseyman* for 2008, is available on CD from the Naval Historical Center, Operational Archives.

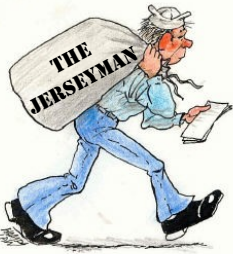
CD's may be ordered by sending a \$10 check to cover reproduction and shipping, and made out to:

“*Department of the Navy.*”

Other annual CD's of *The Jerseyman* are available from 2002 through 2007. A separate \$10 check is required for each year.

Please send CD requests to:
Ms. Kathy Lloyd
Head, Operational Archives Branch
Naval Historical Center
805 Kidder Breese Street, S.E.
Washington Navy Yard, DC
20374-5060

THE JERSEYMAN



“Mouse” Hefferman...

by Hamp Law, USS *Tennessee*

Now, at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and during the Japanese attack, Hefferman, Gunners Mate 2/c, was trapped inside his ship, the sinking USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37). As he tried and failed to get up a ladder clogged

by crewmen in panic, he removed all of his clothes and assisted by the slick oil floating on the water around him, he squeezed himself out through a porthole. He then swam over and climbed aboard USS *Tennessee* (BB-43), NAKED AS A JAYBIRD, and there he stayed... thus his nickname “Mouse”.

When I came aboard the *Tennessee* in 1943, and was assigned to the First Deck Division that manned the Main Battery Turret #1, my battle station was located in the Lower Powder Handling room, where “Mouse” was the Petty Officer in Charge. To me, he was somewhat of a “loner,” and was usually found sitting on his two-step galvanized metal stepstool. He just didn’t look like he wanted to talk, and would just rather be left alone.

As time went by, my battle station moved on up in the turret, and I didn’t see “Mouse” very much. But then, at last, Turret Chief “Hump” Tebruggee heeded my pleas, and I was transferred to the Turret crew. This meant that I had to give up my First Division sleeping quarters bunk, and sleep on a folding cot in the lower handling room, which was also the bunkroom for “Mouse”.

Again, I found him to be a “loner”, and I remember that he used an old dungaree pant leg attached to a fresh air vent to blow a stream of “cool air” across his cot as he slept! Of the 5 or so of us that shared these “sleeping quarters”, none dared to question his actions!

During those World War II days aboard USS *Tennessee*, my “studio” that I used for trying to draw cartoons, was a few sheets of paper, and a couple of old “bookkeeping record” hard back books that somebody had found. I tore out the used pages and would draw on top of all the printed lines. All of this I stored beneath

my rolled up mattress in the “flash proof” storage bag. I also had a thin piece of plywood that I would place on my knees as I sat on my cot, and used it as my drawing table. This was also about the only time I got to do any drawing, maybe for an hour or two, if I could get to take my shower fast enough.

Soon though, I began to notice that “Mouse” started walking by and glancing at what I was drawing. I guess “Mouse” also noticed that I was having some

difficulty balancing the plywood, ink bottle, and stuff on my knee. Because one night, as I was unpacking my “cartooning studio,” he came over carrying his stepstool seat, which he then set down by me, turned and walked back, and crawled into his bunk without saying a word.

Now I had a place to lean my drawing board, and set my India ink bottle, and things got even better for me, thanks to “Mouse”. You see, that old pant leg that diverted a stream of cool air over his bunk had a nice hole worn in one knee, and one night I found that he had turned that “knee hole” so that it directed some air across me in that old hot bunk of mine, and still, he



said nothing.

A short time later, old “Mouse” just seemed to vanish and he left without fanfare. I don’t remember his leaving, or his saying a good-bye to anybody.

I still think of “Mouse” Hefferman quite often, although I really didn’t know anything about him. Did he have a wife and children? Did he have anyone that loved and waited for him to return from that terrible World War? Did he even survive, have some happiness, and did he live life as I remembered him, a loner?

I DO hope that “Mouse” found a later happy life, and I shall always recall the things that he did to make time in the US Navy just a little easier for me from January 19, 1943 to December 12, 1945. Thanks “Mouse”.

S/1c Hamp Law
USS *Tennessee* (BB-43)
West Monroe, Louisiana

THE JERSEYMAN

Taps... 2008



Tom Jaskel
Langhorne, Pennsylvania
...on June 25, 2008

Tom Jaskel was the Director of the Encampment Program aboard the Battleship New Jersey. He first began as a volunteer, then trained as a docent, and finally as watch officer in the Ship's Encampment Program.

Tom officially took over as Director of the Encampments program about five years ago, and it grew from 7000 encampment visitors a year, to more than 16,000 encampment visitors a year... just prior to Tom's passing. This enormous program's popularity and growth, has made it the premier ship sleepover program in the country, and in no small measure it was gained because of the strong guidance and caring of Director Tom Jaskel.

One of Tom's favorite, and often heard quotes was... "let's move on, it's not about me... it's the gang, they make it happen. It's all about the kids". Tom is greatly missed by all who knew him, and especially by those of us privileged to work with him. -- Joe "Buff" Moran, Program Director, Battleship New Jersey Encampments.

Harry Schafer
Turnersville, New Jersey
...on August 20, 2008

Shipmate Harry Schafer was a volunteer aboard BB62 for more than 7 years when he suddenly left us. At the top of our honorable ranks of volunteers, Harry was well liked by all hands, and absolutely considered one of our best. Sadly, I can remember in recent months when we would walk to the ship from the Marina, and he would have to stop walking 2 or 3 times to catch his breath before proceeding aboard. He never complained though, and would just say, "I'll be alright, just give me a minute". A caring and kind shipmate, he often brought donuts for his shipmates to enjoy with their morning coffee, and never asked anything in return.

A former Bosn's Mate Third Class aboard USS *Navasota* (AO-106), Harry would proudly say... "She wasn't much to look at, but she was *my* ship...". Harry was our expert with knot tying, and I know that as we see his fancy knot work wrapped around so many stanchions throughout this proud ship, our thoughts and smiles will return in remembrance of our friend.

I know that I speak for all volunteers when I say that we were blessed to have Harry as our shipmate. May God bless you, and Rest in Peace. -- Harry Ruhle, Restoration Volunteer Manager.



Kurt Cheesman
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
...on October 17, 2008



Kurt had many interests: railroads, tanks, and ships. Shortly after the Battleship New Jersey was towed to Camden, Kurt ventured over to the wilds of Morgan Boulevard in Camden and became one of the earliest members of the volunteer crew. He became friends with many of the ships volunteers and warmly greeted and explained to many guests, the projects and the methods by which the Brass Team would restore and preserve the many areas and objects on the ship. Kurt will be missed by the Brass Team, the volunteer staff, and staff of the ship. He felt it was not only an honor, but a privilege to preserve and maintain the former USS *New Jersey* for all of its past crewmembers and for all Veterans that have so unselfishly served this country. We wish Kurt's family peace and comfort during this difficult time. Bruce M. Frey, former Brass Team member -- John's Island, South Carolina.

THE JERSEYMAN

BATTLESHIP DAYS... BY HAMP LAW



Logo courtesy of Maritime Artist and former USS NEW JERSEY crewman,
James A. Flood

Disclaimer:

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Tom Helvig, CTCRM, USN (Retired - 1975)
Volunteer Writer/Editor *The Jerseyman*
68 Boothby Drive
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
email: Thehelig@aol.com
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