



1st Quarter
2010

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

THE JERSEYMAN

8 Years - Nr. 65



The Chapel of Four Chaplains

is pleased to present

The Legion of Honor Award

To

All Volunteers Battleship New Jersey

on

November 2, 2009

in recognition of your service to all people regardless of race or faith.

This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time
the unity of this Nation, founded upon the Fatherhood of One God.

Unity Without Uniformity



Dante Mattioni, Esq.

Dante Mattioni, Esq.
Chairman of the Board

THE JERSEYMAN

Battleship New Jersey Volunteers Awarded Four Chaplains Legion of Honor...

On November 2, 2009, 45 volunteers, along with Home Port Alliance staff members of Battleship New Jersey, gathered at the Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia to receive the Four Chaplain's award. The Legion of Honor Award is presented "in recognition of your service to all people regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this Nation, founded upon the Fatherhood of One God."



Along with Battleship New Jersey volunteers, also honored was Master Chief Scott Ruhle, USN, son of Harry Ruhle, Supervisor of Battleship New Jersey Maintenance and restoration volunteers.

Master Chief Ruhle is currently in his twenty-sixth year of active service in the US Navy. When he is on shore, he often volunteers in service to youth and seniors in the community, and he has also volunteered aboard the Battleship New Jersey. Scott recently returned from his sixth deployment aboard his ship, USS *Preble* (DDG-88).



THE JERSEYMAN

PRESENTATION OF THE LEGION OF HONOR AWARD

No tradition of American society is more precious to, or characteristic of, our culture than that of voluntary reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and our religious heritage.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national non-profit organization, is founded upon one shining manifestation of our heritage - that of four Army Chaplains who, after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the USAT DORCHESTER, after it was torpedoed on February 3, 1943.

This historical event began at Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested, icy water of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January 23, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, left New York Harbor bound for Greenland. The DORCHESTER was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters. Two patrolled the flanks, the third, the TAMPA, was 3,000 yards out front.

Most of the men were seasick and green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold with gale-force winds, Ice began building up on the decks, slowing the DORCHESTER to ten knots.

Moving among them were four Army Chaplains: George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling, and John P. Washington. The Chaplains talked with and listened to the men—soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes. By their concern and their comradeship with the men and on another, they brought solace.

On February 2, 1943, the TAMPA's sonar detected the presence of a submarine, she dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy, but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening, the TAMPA returned to the patrol areas up front, and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing, with lifejackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland, With daylight, there would be air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight on February 3, 1943. An enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the DORCHESTER's flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly; some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized; rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark, churning water far below.

The testimony of survivors tells us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the Four Chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened a storage locker and distributed lifejackets. Then they coaxed men, frozen with fear, over the side. Soon the supply of lifejackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the Four Chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own lifejackets.

These four men of God had given away their only means of saving themselves in order to save others. The chaplains gathered together, and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. And just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the DORCHESTER, but it was especially significant because of the identity of these four young men: two Protestants, a Catholic, and a Jew.

Today, as it has these many years, The Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men, and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of the country.

To recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood, and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the Chapel established the Legion of Honor Program. **The Legion of Honor Award** is given in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual which contributes to the well-being of his or her community, and to a spirit of interfaith cooperation.



George L. Fox



Alexander D. Goode



Clark V. Poling



John P. Washington

THE JERSEYMAN



HISTORIC NAVAL SHIPS ASSOCIATION
CITATION
SHIP
MAINTENANCE, PRESERVATION, EXHIBITION
AWARD
TO
THE BRASS TEAM



It is a distinct honor and pleasure on behalf of the membership of the Historic Naval Ships Association to present the Ship Maintenance, Preservation, Exhibition Award to the Brass Team, Battleship NEW JERSEY, Camden, NJ. The Team was established when the battleship opened as a museum in 2001. They have proved that “spit and polish” of the U.S. Navy can still astound people. Members of the team travel long distances to participate in sending their weekends polishing fixtures throughout the entire ship. Over the past year, in addition to their routine duties, the Brass Team took on two additional projects.

The Team expertly restored a sixty year old compensating binnacle which had arrived in very poor condition. Four months of intensive labor by the volunteer Brass Team made the binnacle and its compass fully functional and a dramatic object to be seen. They rescued compass parts for a ship destined for scrapping and contacted and involved the original manufacturer, Baker, Lyman and Company of New Orleans that supplied needed parts at no cost. The binnacle is now a premium museum object for all to study and to learn about for generations to come.

Secondly, the Brass Team of battleship NEW JERSEY provided an example of inter-museum ship cooperation. Ten members cross the Delaware River to assist the Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, in restoring the brass rails on the bridge deck and pilot house of USS OLYMPIA, a charter member of HNSA. Staff and volunteers of OLYMPIA had restored the pilot house area. They needed help in completing the bright work prior to opening it on the anniversary of the Battle of Manila Bay. With an invitation extended by OLYMPIA’s manager, Jesse Lebovics, a past HNSA award winner himself, the NEW JERSEY Brass Team accepted the challenge to help the neighboring historic naval ship. The Team made those railings shine for the grand dedication ceremony. The effort perfectly illustrates that all of those in the ship preservation field, even if working a different ship, are in the same boat and capable of helping one another when the need arises.

It is an honor to salute the Brass Team of Battleship NEW JERSEY. They definitely set a “shining” example for all of us.


William N. Tunnell, Jr., President

THE JERSEYMAN

HNSA Award for the Battleship New Jersey Brass Team...|

Those attending the HNSA Award ceremony, and seen in attendance on the facing page, are volunteers Nan LaCorte, Ed Hamilton, Frank O'Keefe, Rich Valenzuela, and Tom Kowszun. We also thank Tom Kowszun for providing photos from the HNSA presentation, and volunteer Rich Thrash for the photos seen on these pages of *The Jerseyman*.

Those volunteer Brass Team members that were unable to attend the award ceremony were Rich Thrash, Vera Tierno, Charlie Spinneta, Dave Ratcliffe, Sue Ratcliffe, Bruce Frey, Lew Murchison, Mike Cauto, Matt Cummings, and Mark Herman. In remembrance, we fondly include our wonderful shipmate, and Brass Team member, Kurt Cheesman, who left us in 2008.



Helping restore brass aboard *USS Olympia*...

Article and photos courtesy of
Volunteer Richard Thrash
March 28, 2009 —

Today the Brass Team crossed the Delaware to the Cruiser Olympia and to do "a little polishing". The team had volunteered to go aboard and polish up brass railings and other items in and around the ship's new, and beautifully reconstructed Pilot House. The photos here show our team results at what we do best - polishing brass!



The USS Olympia's restoration team did a great job of restoring the Pilot House area, and it was opened to the public on May 1st, a date marking the 111th Anniversary of the Battle of Manila Bay - where USS *Olympia* served as Admiral Dewey's flagship.

We worked hard to make sure her brass would be bright, and to proudly display 111 years of American naval history in USS *Olympia*.



THE JERSEYMAN



HISTORIC NAVAL SHIPS ASSOCIATION CITATION

HENRY A. VADNAIS AWARD TO THOMAS HELVIG



It is a distinct honor and pleasure on behalf of the membership of the Historic Naval Ships Association to present the Henry A. Vadnais Award to Thomas Helvig, Battleship NEW JERSEY, Camden, NJ. Tom has proved that getting the message out to the veterans of a historic naval ship can create a first class museum collection for us in telling the whole story of the ship. He has been a great asset in developing the museum collection.

In the beginnings of the battleship museum, Tom worked as an able bodied seaman in preparing and maintaining the ship for public exhibition. To foster better communications among the hundreds of volunteers Tom decided at his own cost to resurrect and publish *The Jerseyman* which had been the ship's newspaper during the four commissions of USS NEW JERSEY. The name of the volunteer newsletter immediately rekindled the adoration of former shipmates for their old battlewagon.

The Jerseyman not only served as a medium to relate the work needed done and the accomplishments of the maintenance volunteers, it quickly generated the donation of numerous artifacts and some financial contributions too. The artifacts benefited the development of a true museum operation. Among those collected were some 3,000 photographs alone from one of the former commanding officers. Tom is a godsend to the curatorial department.

As progress continued, Tom noticed that many of the volunteers and donors represented naval ships that had not survived. He began requesting photographs of ship's bells for Navy and Coast Guard vessels on which these people had served. He has created a unique memorial collection that extends and preserves the history of those ships that veterans have been unable to save.

In addition, Tom has developed and preserved a record of all the hundreds of volunteers who have devoted their time and effort to making battleship NEW JERSEY a positive experience and premier exhibit. *The Jerseyman* has now extended to the internet. It is also being kept in the Operational Archives of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Tom Helvig's selfless dedication and contributions are tremendous, and in particular to the development of the curatorial department of the battleship. Thank you Tom for your services.


 William N. Tunnell, Jr., President

Editor's Note: My grateful thanks are owed to hundreds of contributors that helped bring about this HSNA Henry A. Vadnais, Jr., Award. *Thanks* to all of you. - Tom Helvig

THE JERSEYMAN

Former Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman, Jr., visits Battleship New Jersey...



Battleship New Jersey -Released -

FORMER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, JOHN LEHMAN, VISITS THE BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY TO ATTEND THE USS LCS REUNION ON OCT. 2. THE FORMER SECRETARY, WHO SERVED IN THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION FROM 1981 – 1987 AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RE-COMMISSIONING OF THE USS NEW JERSEY IN THE 1980'S, IS SHOWN IN FRONT OF THE SEASPRITE HELICOPTER ABOARD THE SHIP WITH JASON HALL, VP OF CURATORIAL AFFAIRS, AND CAPTAIN WALT URBAN, USN (RET.) MILITARY LIAISON FOR THE BATTLESHIP.

THE JERSEYMAN

USS Iowa - A look back, and a look forward...

by RADM Gerald E. Gneckow, USN (Retired)

In 1983, during my third year in command of USS Richmond K. Turner (CG-20) I received notification from the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Tom Hayward, that I had been selected to be Prospective Commanding Officer, USS Iowa (BB-61). Although excited by the news, I was also aware of the awesome responsibility that this assignment would include. One Battleship, USS New Jersey (BB-62) was already in commission and serving off the coast of Lebanon. Two others, Missouri (BB-63) and Wisconsin (BB-64) were also scheduled for reactivation.



My only previous association with the Battleship occurred in 1956 when I sailed aboard USS Wisconsin as a midshipman 3/c, so there was plenty to learn and not very many places to learn it. I had seen pictures of USS Iowa sitting in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard where she underwent exterior sandblasting and painting, but I did not actually set foot aboard until the ship was in dry dock in New Orleans. That visit was a real eye-opener. The ship had been in mothballs since 1958 and had never received any updates during the successive 25 years. All machinery, electronics, and messing and berthing spaces were World War II vintage. In addition, many of the systems and associated equipment had been cannibalized, vandalized, or stolen over the years. I envisioned a daunting task ahead.

Although the budget to reactive Iowa was huge, it did not include a significant upgrade or replacement of the vital propulsion equipment, nor of the messing and berthing spaces and facilities. The primary investment would be in new electronics, and weapons systems, including Tomahawk, Harpoon, and Close-In Weapon Systems (CIWS). A reactivation philosophy of "If it works, leave it alone" was adopted by the Navy. If it did not work, the reactivation facility (Ingalls Shipyard, Pascagoula) did what was necessary to repair. Only if repair was impossible was replacement considered. In many cases replacement came from sources of equal or older vintage (ex-USS Alabama).

While there was a skeleton crew of prospective Iowa crewmen in residence in Pascagoula during 1983, we had no actual role in the decision making process of the reactivation. Our role was to observe and learn.

The Superintendent of Shipbuilding and Repair, Pascagoula and Naval Ships Command made the decisions about repair and expenditures. The majority of our ship's force remained in Norfolk, VA where they were undergoing various types of training in preparation for acceptance of the ship in late 1984.

In early 1984 with USS New Jersey having been deployed for almost six months, a Presidential decision was made to keep a BB on station near Lebanon. Therefore, an effort was made to expedite the reactivation of USS Iowa in order to bring her on line as relief for New Jersey. At this point, it became obvious that an all out effort would be required of the shipyard and ship's company if the ship was to be completed in time for an early commissioning. In an unusual agreement between the civilian shipyard and the Navy our crew was allowed to begin work on all spaces and compartments not included in the reactivation funding plan.

The remainder of our crew was transferred from Norfolk to Pascagoula earlier than originally planned so that ship's force could tackle the task of cleaning and painting messing and berthing facilities and dozens and dozens of other spaces not included in the reactivation package. This mammoth effort kept the majority of our personnel engaged for about 14 hours per day for a period of almost six months. At the same time, civilian shipyard personnel were working around the clock in an attempt to deliver the ship about six months early.

USS Iowa (BB-61) was recommissioned by Vice President George Bush on April 28, 1984 in Pascagoula, MS before a crowd of 15,000.

Many of those present were members of the Veterans Association of the USS Iowa, including many men who had served aboard the ship during WWII and the Korean Conflict. Also present were Secretary of the Navy John Lehmann, Senator Trent Lott, several admirals, and other dignitaries. When VP Bush officially declared the ship to be in commission, the crew raced aboard to take their places manning the rail. Equipment came to life, radar antennas turned, alarms sounded, guns and directors trained and elevated. The 16-inch guns trained 90 degrees to port and faced the crowd. At that point VP Bush turned to me and asked, "They are not going to fire are they?" They did not.



THE JERSEYMAN

Several years later it was alleged by various writers and investigators that those responsible for reactivation of USS Iowa had cut corners or had somehow failed in their duties to ensure that the ship met the specifications required of a newly commissioned ship. The Board of Inspection and Survey (InSurv) in particular was critical of the Navy decision to combine Builders Trials and Final Acceptance Trials into a single event. Such criticism failed to take into account the urgency placed upon getting USS Iowa to sea as relief for USS New Jersey, nor the limited funding available. In fairness to the InSurv Board, it should be pointed out that the ship did not do well during the InSurv Inspection and there were many long-standing discrepancies that had not yet been corrected. The majority of those discrepancies were in areas not covered by the reactivation funding package.

On April 29, 1984 newly commissioned USS Iowa got underway and headed into the Gulf of Mexico to rendezvous with an ammunition ship (AE). Our task, while underway headed out of the Gulf at 15 knots, was to on-load our entire wartime allowance of ammunition at sea. To the best of my knowledge no ship had ever done this before. None has done it since. One day after commissioning we went alongside an AE and stayed there twenty-four hours while transferring thousands of rounds of 16 inch and 5 inch ammo as well as tons of CIWS and small arms ordnance. This effort, so soon after commissioning can only be labeled as “extraordinary”, and was made possible only by the thorough and very complete advance planning/training/practice conducted by our outstanding officers and senior enlisted men aboard USS Iowa.

After exiting the Gulf of Mexico, Iowa headed directly for Vieques Island, Puerto Rico to test fire the 16 inch guns. After successfully completing that task, the ship headed for an abbreviated training period at Guantanamo, Cuba. Before that training was completed, the requirement to relieve New Jersey was cancelled. Events in Lebanon, including the bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks, brought about significant changes to U.S. policy in that region. Therefore, the schedule for USS Iowa underwent considerable revision. Our next important role would be showing the flag in Central America.



Prior to our transit to Central America we made a short stop in our homeport Norfolk, VA, and brief port calls in Ft. Lauderdale and New York City. While in Norfolk I had a chance to meet the very first Commanding Officer of USS Iowa, Captain John L. McCrea who took command when the ship was first commissioned in 1942. Captain McCrea was 96 years old when we met and he was very spry and youthful. He took a tour of the ship and pronounced her to be ship shape and ready for duty. He also provided me with some sage advice. “Always check the depth of water before entering any harbor. The powers that be will try to send you places that are of insufficient depth for Iowa.” That advice turned out to be true. On several occasions we were directed to places that could not accommodate Iowa’s 38 foot draft.

In late 1984 USS Iowa headed for Central America and her first of several transits through the Panama Canal. Preparations for transit of the Panama Canal are lengthy and require full understanding of how ships are moved through this waterway. The locks of the canal are only 110 feet wide and USS Iowa is 108 feet wide at the beam. This obviously leaves only one foot to spare on either side of the ship as it passes through the lock. All the equipment that protrudes or hangs over the side must be removed (e.g. boat booms and ladders). In most cases this means cutting with a torch and then re-welding when the transit is complete.

The Panama Canal is the only waterway where a U.S. ship captain must surrender absolute control over to the pilot. The pilot and ultimately the Panama Canal Commission become liable for any damage incurred. This is a novel concept for an officer is accustomed to being responsible for everything that happens on/to his ship. I still have a vivid recollection of our entry into the first lock when the pilot ordered “all ahead full” even though we could see the closed gate at the other end. I was certain that we were in for a major collision. But, as the pilot explained, it takes tremendous force to propel a giant ship into such a small space. The force exerted is what causes the water to flow out so that the ship can take its place. By the time we had transited the canal three or four times, we were beginning to get the hang of it.



THE JERSEYMAN

Once through the Panama Canal USS Iowa became a “force for peace”, stopping in every country in Central America except Nicaragua. In each country we hosted the President and leaders, got underway to conduct a “firepower demonstration”, and then returned to port for a day of “open house” so that citizens could stroll the decks of the ship and see for themselves the awesome power of the United States Navy. We always complemented this demonstration of power with “good neighbor” projects (repairing schools, hospitals, and public facilities) that showed the friendship and generosity of Americans. American sailors are ideally suited for such service because they all seem to get a thrill out of helping others and sharing their stories. By the same token, it was good for our young sailors to see for themselves how others live, so that we will not take our own good fortune for granted.

In August 1985 USS Iowa was awarded the coveted Battenburg Cup, presented annually to the “best all around ship in the Atlantic Fleet”. This was made possible by the outstanding officers and crew of Iowa. They made USS Iowa the great ship that she was.

My tour of command concluded in 1986 while we were making preparations to receive President Ronald Reagan for the Liberty Weekend International Naval Review in New York City. I can honestly say that commanding USS Iowa was the highlight of my naval career. I loved every minute of it.

RADM Gerald E. Gneckow, USN (Retired)

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What is the Future for USS Iowa?

In 1983 while I was doing a public relations tour of the State of Iowa, I first became aware of the organization called “The Veterans Association of the USS Iowa”. This organization was formed in 1977 and consisted of many of the crewmen of USS Iowa who had served aboard during WWII and the Korean Conflict. I was able to join members of this group for a luncheon and learned that their purpose was to meet and enjoy the companionship of their fellow shipmates at an annual reunion and to support USS Iowa in any way possible. Their ultimate goal was to see USS Iowa enter into a museum status where she would become a living memorial to the United States Navy and the men who served aboard. Over the next decade I was able to attend a number of the reunions of the Veterans Association of the USS Iowa and to meet many of my shipmates from years past.

When the ship was finally decommissioned in 1990, a serious effort was begun to bring USS Iowa into memorial status. The first application requesting donation was submitted in 1998 by an organization called Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square (HSMPS). HSMPS wanted to place the ship in San Francisco. Later, when the Navy officially declared USS Iowa available for donation, other groups also became interested. When the City of San Francisco declared that a USS Iowa memorial was not welcome in their port, HSMPS changed their designated location to Mare Island/Vallejo, CA. Groups from Stockton and a competing San Francisco group also prepared applications for USS Iowa, but for various reasons their applications were not accepted. As of this date, only HSMPS still has a valid application for donation of USS Iowa. However, before a ship can be donated many requirements must be fulfilled, including but not limited to: a transit plan, docking plan, restoration plan, and demonstration of sufficient funding to ensure long-term success. The absence of sufficient funding has thus far prevented donation. It is anticipated that over \$20 million is required in order for HSMPS to qualify for donation. These funds have not yet been raised.

The Veterans Association of the USS Iowa has continued to hold its reunions every year. Our primary objective still, is to do all possible to ensure that USS Iowa enters into memorial status. That is the main topic of discussion at every reunion. It dominates the thought of every USS Iowa veteran. We just want to be able to set foot aboard our beloved ship again. Each year about 50 of our members pass away, not having been able to board their ship one last time. Most of us are now at the age where time is becoming critical. We dream of seeing our ship again and pray that somehow it will become a museum in the near future. But setting foot aboard USS Iowa is not our over-arching goal. We are constantly thinking about the long-term enrichment that can be provided by an Iowa in museum status. USS Iowa will be a living demonstration of the ingenuity of our people and the power of the United States Navy long after we are all gone. Our children, grandchildren, and their grandchildren will all get to see USS Iowa and learn from its rich history. It is for them that we continue to hold out hope that it will happen, and soon.

Jerry Gneckow
President, USS Iowa Veteran’s Association
Homosassa, Florida

THE JERSEYMAN

EX-USS IOWA - 2007

Editor's notes:

These ex-USS Iowa photos were taken in 2007. Courtesy of Jerry Gneckow, President, USS Iowa Veteran's Association. - TH



THE JERSEYMAN



Battleship volunteers host crewmen of the USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG-108) for golf

As a welcoming hand by volunteers of battleship New Jersey to the crew of the newly commissioned USS Wayne E. Meyer, a golf outing was arranged and offered by the Navy League, and members of the battleship volunteer "Dufferteers."

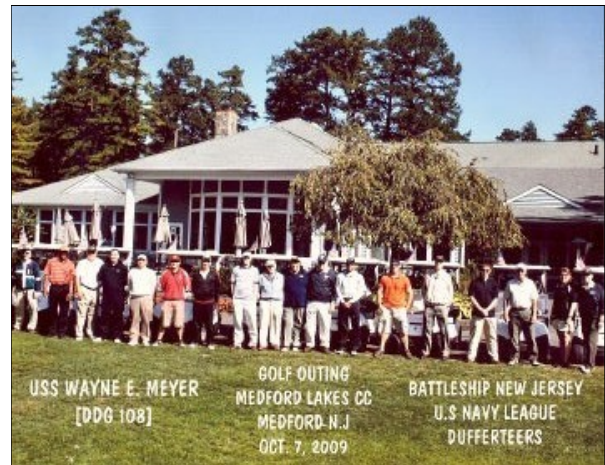
According to Rich Castro, "Back in 2008 when USS *Carney* came to Philadelphia for a few days, we asked Fran O'Brien of the Navy League of Philadelphia if she would ask the crew if they would like to play golf one day with the *Dufferteers* from BB-62, and she arranged so that 6 of their crew were bused by the Navy League to Westwood Golf Club in Woodbury to play golf with the *Dufferteers*. The Club picked up the tab for golf for the crew while we paid their own way, hosted their lunch, and transported them back to their ship.

That was in 2008, and when we heard that the USS Wayne E. Meyer was to be commissioned here, we again contacted Fran at the Navy League, and offered to have the *Dufferteers* host up to 8 of the crew to play golf at Volunteer Bruce Haegley's golf club at Medford Lakes, NJ. Bruce arranged so that the crew fees were paid for by the club, and we were also given a special rate to play. Bruce also arranged to have box lunch for all because the crew could not leave the ship to arrive at the club until after 1130 Hrs. After lunch and golf, *Dufferteers* Dudley Thomas, Dave Eigenrauch and I drove the 8 crewmembers back to the ship.

Several of us also attended the Commissioning of the ship and the duty chief, DCC Derrick Rector, kindly arranged a tour for us aboard USS Meyer on the following Monday. Chief Rector was also one of the crewmen that played golf with us and he hosted 14 ship volunteers and *Dufferteers* for the ship's tour.

Our hope is to make this a welcoming tradition, and in cooperation with the Navy League, to offer our visiting US Navy ships some battleship hospitality and to maybe have a chance to play some golf with us."

Volunteer/Dufferteer Richard Castro
Cherry Hill, New Jersey



The USS WAYNE E. MEYER (DDG-108) is the 58th of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers and carries the 100th AEGIS Combat System built. The ship will be able to conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection. The new destroyer honors the retired Navy Rear Admiral who led the development of AEGIS, the first fully integrated combat system built to defend against air, surface and subsurface threats.

Navy Commander Nick A. Sarap will command USS Meyer, which will call San Diego home. She carries a crew of 370, is 509-feet, 5-inches in length, and carries the 100th Aegis Weapons system built and delivered by Lockheed Martin.

(Source and ship's photo: Official website of USS Wayne E. Meyer)

THE JERSEYMAN

The battleship New Jersey *Dufferteers*...

John DiBlasio—Medford, New Jersey

I started as a volunteer on the New Jersey in January of 2000. Born and raised in Camden, I firmly believe the ship will help to revitalize the city. I was lucky to meet Bob Walters early on, and to work for him in the curatorial department. Meeting so many of the guys that served on this ship, and many other navy ships, plus hearing their experiences, was a real pleasure for a history buff like me. When I was in high school I tested for the Air force aviation cadet training program, was told that I qualified, and I then planned to join as soon as I graduated. When I applied the summer after graduation I was then told that they had so many applicants they were now only accepting those with college degrees. So I had to go to work and go to night school. The flying bug was always very strong for me, and in 1964 I began taking flying lessons at local airports and that led to a commercial pilot certificate and a flight instructors rating. When I thought I finally had enough education I again applied to the Air force and was told I was now too old at age 27! The irony is that as a flight instructor I wound up helping Air force pilots earn their civilian pilot certificates. I have a tremendous respect for the Navy personnel I have had the privilege to work with. Being a Docent and a *Dufferteer* has been a wonderful experience and I hope to continue with both for some time to come.



Dave Eigenrauch - Cherry Hill, New Jersey

I served on active duty with the US Air Force for 11 years, and 15 more years with the active reserve, and with service of 26 years upon retirement. I received my commission as a 2nd Lt, USAF upon graduation from Allegheny College in 1966 and retired as a Lt Col. in 1993. My favorite Air Force assignment was with SAC (Strategic Air Command), with the 351st SMW (Strategic Missile Wing) at Whiteman AFB, MO. This base now has the B-2 stealth bombers. As a Missile Combat Crew Commander, I was responsible for the launch of the Minuteman ICBM's under my control, and when properly directed. My office was in a concrete and steel capsule, 60 feet underground in the corn fields of Missouri. I was glad to have had the opportunity to serve in an operational unit with SAC during the Vietnam War period. The Air Force provided the opportunity also to earn an MBA Degree from the University of Missouri which paved the way for future career opportunities as an Air Force Contract Administrator and civilian Contract Manager. I enjoy very much the position I now have as a Docent Supervisor on the Battleship NJ. My father was a WWII Ensign aboard LSM-487 in the Pacific and with thanks to my folks, I was born at Naval Station Farragut, Idaho. Yes, Idaho.



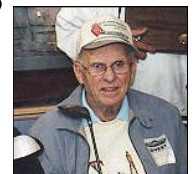
Dudley Thomas - Cherry Hill, New Jersey

I retired as a Commander, Supply Corps, U.S. Navy. My favorite duty was as the Supply Officer, USS Halsey (CG-23) from 1972-1974, and we proudly won the battle efficiency "E" for best cruiser Supply Department in Pacific Fleet for 1973. You probably don't need this last part for *The Jerseyman*, but I'm darn proud of it and want to say that I had a fine Assistant Supply Officer, a couple of very fine CPOs, and an outstanding division of enlisted men in USS Halsey.



Morton Schwartz - Cherry Hill, New Jersey

I was in the 456th Bomb Group, 457th bomb Squadron of the 15th Air Force from Nov. 1944 to the end of the war in Europe. Our Group was stationed in among a group of bases around Cerignola, about 20 miles East of Bari, and along the Eastern rim of the Italian boot. I was never in North Africa. I flew in 21 missions; fortunately, our planes were never hit by heavy flak or attacked by enemy aircraft. The Luftwaffe was pretty much crippled by the time we arrived in Italy and we made sure it stayed that way by constantly bombing their airfields and supply lines. Our most exciting mission was when we were forced to make a dead stick landing in an olive grove after a 10-hour mission and we ran out of gas. None of our 10 crew members suffered any injuries, and all of us got back to the states safe and sound. I have been in constant touch with them ever since. We still go to the 456th Bomb Group reunions held every year. The next one will be in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



THE JERSEYMAN

James Ramentol - Mount Laurel, New Jersey

I joined the Marine Corps in April of 1940 and went to boot camp at Parris Island, S.C. In June of 1940 I transferred to my first assignment at the Marine Barracks, Naval Ammunition Depot, Hingham, Mass., where we did guard duty on horseback. One night, while on duty, I spotted a fire at the industrial area, which caused a large commotion in the Boston area, as they could hear the alarm that far away. The next day I was called in to the Major in Charge and was made a PFC on the spot. He also wanted to know what and where I wanted to serve. So I said "sea school", and off I went.

In January 1941 I received orders to USS North Carolina, and in September 1942 we were attacked by a Jap submarine, and I watched as the USS Wasp was sunk, as my ship, USS North Carolina, was also hit by a torpedo. What an attention getter that was! Then, in November 1943 I transferred to the Marine Detachment in Pearl Harbor with duties as Sergeant of the Guard. In April 1944, I was chosen as Sergeant of the guard detachment protecting President Roosevelt, General McArthur, and Admiral Nimitz as they met at the HQ Pacific Command. In January 1945 I was sent home for 30 days leave, and reported in to Boca Chica, where we were in stand-by awaiting orders to Camp Pendleton for the Invasion of Japan. Thankfully, the war ended, and I discharged in April 1946.



Paul Hansen - Aston, Pennsylvania

I entered the US Army in January 1968, and after basic, attended AIT (Advanced Individual Training) at Ft Bliss, Texas. From there I spent a year in Vietnam, moving convoys and helping to protect numerous fire bases and compounds. In mid 1969 I transferred to Ft Bliss for a year, and trained troops for Vietnam. Then, from July 1971, it was more time in Vietnam, and following that it was back to Ft Bliss training troops again.

By then I had decided, since Quad 50's were gone, that I was going to go Cavalry in 1972, and it was the best decision of my career. To make a long story short, I served in Ft Lewis, Washington, and then Germany, with lots of time on the East German Border watching Russian Tank Maneuvers. Then it was on to Ft Sill, Oklahoma, training National Guard and Reserves in Oklahoma and Kansas, and then returning to Germany, on the East German Border, where I made 1SG-First Sergeant (E-8). In the mid to late 1980's, I served with the 6th US Army Inspector General's Office, and was promoted to Sergeant Major, as the Investigations branch NCOIC for 13 Western States with National Guard and Reserve Component issues. Finally, from Jan 1988-Oct 1990 I was the First Cavalry Division Operations and Training Sergeant Major. I had one hell-of-a-US Army ride with super officers and even better NCO's and troops!



Tom McCorkel—Mount Laurel, New Jersey

I enlisted in the USN following graduation from St. Benedict's Prep, and signed up for the Nuclear Propulsion program. I served as an Electronics Tech aboard USS *Intrepid* for one year then started Nuke training. I then attended the University of Washington under NESEP for four years, and was advanced to Chief Electronics Tech (ETC), graduating with a BS in Mechanical Engineering. Now an OCS Ensign, I was sent TAD in USS *Ingraham*. In October 1967 it was back to Nuke school. From November 1968-April 1972 I served in USS *Truxtun* with various jobs in the Engineering Dept. I qualified as: OOD, EOOW, CIC Evaluator, CDO, Surface Warfare Officer and Engineer Officer of a Nuclear Powered Surface Ship. In April 1972 I was assigned to the pre-comm unit of USS *Nimitz* as Auxiliaries Officer, and with thousands of others, I proudly became a USS *Nimitz* Plank Owner. I then attended Department Head School in Newport, RI., and later served as the Ops Officer in USS *South Carolina* (CGN-37). My last assignment was on the ComNavSurfLant staff, and I retired from the USN with 21 years of service in 1978.



Richard Castro - Cherry Hill, New Jersey

I enlisted in the Naval Reserve in 1950 and was activated for Korea in 1952, serving as a storekeeper aboard the USS *Accokeek* (ATA 181) out of the Philadelphia Naval Base and also PCER 856, a training ship that took reservists on their 2 week cruises. USS *Accokeek* was only a small ocean going tug, but on reporting aboard, I found that there was another storekeeper already on board! After about 6 months, the Captain of the PCER found out that our Tug had two storekeepers, so he complained to the Admiral of the Naval base, and since I was the junior man, I was transferred over to the PCER. It was great duty, but about 6 months later the storekeeper of the *Accokeek* was assigned shore duty and the Captain of the *Accokeek* wanted me back. The Admiral of the Base ok'd it and it was back to the *Accokeek* where I completed my active duty and I was discharged in 1954.



THE JERSEYMAN



On October 10, 2009 battleship New Jersey fired Mount 52 three times in a salute to the newly commissioned USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG-108) at Penn's Landing, Philadelphia.

Recently, a movie clip of Mount 52 firing was sent to us courtesy of Rich Thrash of Reston, Virginia.

These still photos, taken from the movie clip, were produced for *The Jerseyman* by volunteer Andy Roppoli of Shamong, New Jersey.

In recognition of the battleship volunteers that work hard to safely prepare, and clean Mount 52 after each firing, special thanks are due to:

Volunteer Turret Captain
Marty Waltemeyer and his team:

Ken Kersch
Joe Moran
Paul Neissner
John Alberta
Rich Thrash

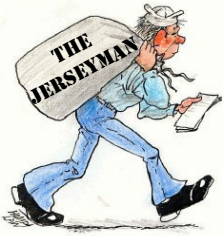
We have also been advised by Turret Captain Marty Waltemeyer, that effective as of now, he has handed over Turret Captain duties to Vol./Turret Captain Ken Kersch.

(Ken Kersch is a former crewman of USS *New Jersey*, and served with the ship during Vietnam).

We have also been told that both barrels of Mount 52 are scheduled to fire on New Year's Eve !



THE JERSEYMAN



Dad served in USS New Jersey...

My Dad, Merrill L. Butler, served in the USN from September 1936 until

May 1960. He served aboard several vessels including USS *Quincy* (CA-39), USS *Jarvis* (DD-393), USS *Niagara* (PG-42) and he was onboard when it was sank by a Japanese dive bomber on 22 May 1943. He then transferred to the USS *Gunston Hall* (LSD-5) where he lost his right thumb when a hatch slammed shut on it during heavy seas.

After a brief stay in a hospital he joined the *Gunston Hall* prior to being transferred to the USS *William D. Powell* (DE-213). Returning to the states he was stationed at USNB, Philadelphia when he was selected as part of the Big J's new crew as a Gunner's Mate 1st Class for her re-comm in November 1950. Somewhere there is a certificate declaring him a Plank owner in November 1950. I remember we were living in government quarters there and he took me aboard her for a day cruise for dependents when I was around 3 years old. I got my butt "warmed up" when I crawled under the side railing on her deck to look down at the water – and later got to hold onto the wheel up on the bridge as she returned to port.

My Mom, myself, and my brother returned to Minnesota when he left for Korea in 1951. He served aboard her until 2 January 1954 and participated in all her operations including when she served as the Flag ship for Task Forces 95 and 77.

I can't remember exactly which mount he worked in, but it's on an engraved belt buckle at home. He was one tough fella I can tell you. He never had a drivers license – because he walked everywhere he went. After retiring from the Navy as a Chief Gunners Mate, he worked our farm, fished, hunted and trapped in Back Bay, Virginia, to feed 8 kids and put us all through school.

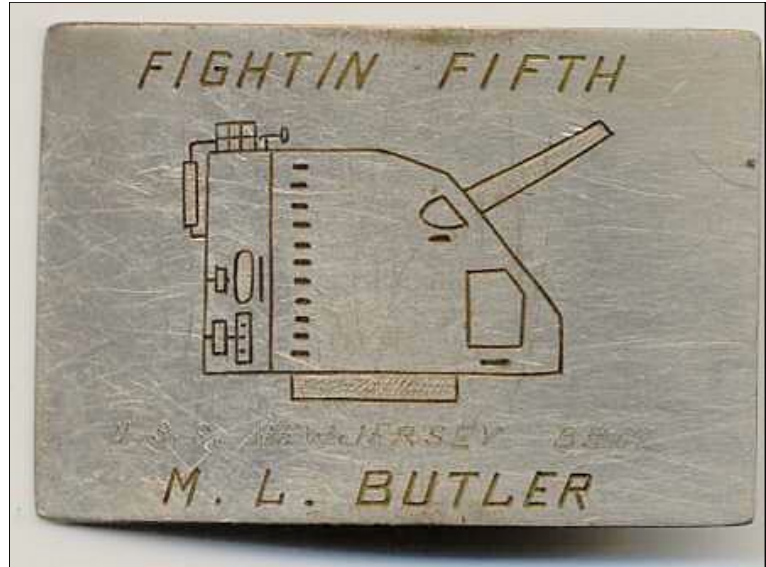
For a number of reasons, later in life dad moved back to his birthplace in Wellsboro, Pa., where he and one of his several brothers had built a log cabin at the base of the hills. Dad passed away while I was in the Med with the 26th MEU (SOC) in July 1991, and even after me serving in the Corps for 30 years and 2 months, he is still the hardest man I ever knew – hands down!

Semper Fidelis

Sergeant Major Jim Butler, USMC (Retired)

Jacksonville, North Carolina

MAILCALL...

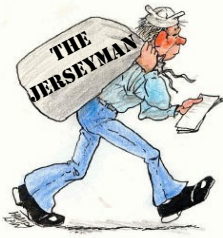


USS *Missouri* (SSN-780) commissioned...

We thank Herb Fahr, Corresponding Secretary, and Membership Chairman, USS *Missouri* (BB-63), for sending us this patch photo from the recent commissioning of USS *Missouri* (SSN-780). Note the hull number "63" on the battleship's bow. **Thanks Herb.**



THE JERSEYMAN



MAILCALL...

PNSY 1968/1969...

I worked on the New Jersey in 1968, when we pulled it out of mothballs to fit it out as a weapons platform for Vietnam. I was part of the drilling teams boring out holes for air conditioning units. I also worked testing fuel and water tanks in #11 shop. We had to use boring bars because of the armor plating on the main deck, it would take us up to two days to get thru that armor plating.

I went on from being a mechanic to heading up the Tanks and Voids Rehab Department in code 330 of the SLEP program (Shelf-Life Extension Program) for Aircraft Carriers. I was actually aboard USS *Kennedy* when she left Philly for her shakedown cruise to Mayport, and was the last Philly worker to step from the carrier before she deployed.

I also had the distinction of being the last employee to step off of the last ship that left the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard before she closed down. Yes, I am very proud of my shipyard days...

**Michael Iannelli -
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

My days aboard USS New Jersey (BB-62)...

I spent two years aboard USS New Jersey from 1955 to 1957. I was assigned to Deck Division #1, and later became the Coxswain for Officer's boat #1. A 28 foot plywood boat with forward deck and windshield, and a hard top.

I had boat duty 24/7 when we were at anchor, and liberty when docked. My duty station was the boat, and I kept it looking good. Normally a Bosn's Mate 3/c had the boat, but I got the assignment. At sea, my watch was as a Lee Helmsman under the Quartermaster on watch. We took turn steering the ship on a four-hour watch. My best memory was watch when we were in the North Atlantic with the seas about 40 to 60 feet. At the end of the watch, the Officer in Charge of the bridge invited me onto the bridge, and to show me a view of what I was steering into. He said I was great at keeping the Big "J" on course. That sight is in my memory forever. The seas actually came over Turret #1, and there was white water all the way up to the bridge.

My General Quarters station was under Turret #1 on the shell deck, or in the black powder magazine—both were interesting. I was never aboard when they fired the 16" guns because the 2 officer's boats could not stand the

concussion sitting on deck underneath Turret #3. So we went ashore with our boats and met the ship when firing was completed. This was usually off Gitmo and the Island of Culebra. I was also one of the last crew aboard in 1957 for the decommissioning. My entire naval career was spent aboard USS *New Jersey*.

**Joe Perry
Wall, New Jersey**

USS Whitehurst (DE-634) at Surigao...

Tom, let me thank you for the copy of *The Jerseyman*. I read about the battle of Surigao Strait and it brought back vivid memories. The USS *Whitehurst* was also in Leyte Gulf during that battle. We could see the white hot shells flying out from our battleships during the night. I'm glad I didn't know what was going on at the time. We were extremely lucky the other Jap force that ran into Admiral Kinkaid's baby carriers turned back when it did or we might have been caught there.

**Lew Cowden
Indianapolis, Indiana**

A USS *Missouri* sailor tells his story...

I was only 16 when I enlisted in Portland, Maine, and I went to Newport, Rhode Island for boot camp. From there I went on to Gunners Mate school and ended up as a Seaman 1/c, Gunners mate striker. My first duty was on patrol boats in North Carolina. We had two 50/cal. guns and four 300 lb depth charges. I spent 9 months there and was then transferred to USS *Missouri*, 8th Division, as a Gunners mate striker.

I refused to go for my rates (dumb kid). They gave me two 20mm guns to maintain. I was also the gunner on a 20mm port side of Turret #3. We fired a lot of ammo. I was on watch the day the *Franklin* was hit. She was off our port quarter. What an explosion and I will never forget it.

I was 3 decks above the surrender deck on the day of the surrender. What memories.

**Art Dixon
Cape Neddick, Maine**

####

Editor's note: Again, we send our grateful thanks and appreciation to BM1 (SW) Charles Brown, USN (Retired) of St. Louis, Missouri.

"Boats" is tireless in his efforts (and at his own expense), to help generate many of the MAILCALL, and other stories and bell photos published in *The Jerseyman*.

Many thanks Boats! - TH



THE JERSEYMAN

SHIP'S BELLS...

USS *Copahee*
ex-merchant *Steel Architect*
AVG 12 - ACV 12 - CVE 12 - CVHE 12

Specifications (As converted, 1942)

Bogue-Class Escort Carrier

Displacement: 7,800 tons standard;
15,700 tons full load (design)

Dimensions (wl): 465' x 69.5' x 23.25'

Dimensions (max.): 495' 8" x 111.5'

Armor: None

Power plant: 2 boilers (285 psi);
1 steam turbine; 1 shaft; 8,500 shp

Speed: 16.5 knots

Armament: 2 single 5"/51

(later 5"/38) gun mounts;

(1943) 8 twin 40-mm/56-cal gun mounts;

(1943) 27 single 20-mm/70-cal gun mounts

Aircraft: 24 **Crew:** 890

Built by Seattle-Tacoma,

and converted at Bremerton Navy Yard.

Laid down 18 June 1941, launched 21 Oct 1941, acquired by
the US Navy 8 Feb 1942, Commissioned 15 June 1942.

Copahee served as a transport in the Pacific with a brief period as a combat carrier.

Re-designated as helicopter escort carrier (CVHE 12) 12 June 1955.

Stricken for disposal 1 March 1959. Sold and scrapped in 1961.

Source: Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships - DANFS

(NavSource: A total of 123 CVE's were built and commissioned in WWII)

Submitted by:

Bill Lee

Monroe, North Carolina



USS *Copahee* (CVE-12)

National Archives photo

USS *Copahee* (CVE-12) left the Garapan anchorage off Saipan on 8 July 1944 with a load of captured Japanese planes (13 *Zekes* and 1 *Kate*) and equipment (37 engines) to be used for intelligence and training purposes. Arrived in San Diego on 28 July.

(Photo # 80-G-276964).



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HISTORY &
HERITAGE
★ COMMAND ★

THE JERSEYMAN - 2009

The Jerseyman for 2009, is available on CD from the Naval History and Heritage Command, 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 also available from 2002 through 2008. A separate \$10 check is required for each year.

Send CD requests to:

Curtis Utz

Head, Operational Archives Branch
Naval History and Heritage Command

805 Kidder Breese Street, S.E.

Washington Navy Yard, DC

20374-5060

THE JERSEYMAN

SHIP'S BELLS...



USS BALTIMORE (CA-68)

Class - Baltimore

Displacement: 13,600

Length: 673' 5"

Beam: 70' 10"

Draft: 26' 10"

Speed: 33 knots

Complement: 1142

Keel Laid on 26 MAY 1941

by Bethlehem Steel Co., Fore River, MA

Launched 28 JUL 1942

Commissioned APR 1943, Decommissioned JUL 1946

Commissioned NOV 1951, Decommissioned MAY 1956

Stricken FEB 1971 and Sold for scrap MAY 1972

Between November 1943 and June 1944 BALTIMORE was a unit of the fire support and covering forces at the Makin Islands landings; Kwajalein invasion; Truk raid; Eniwetok seizure; Marianas attacks; Palau-Yap-Ulithi-Woleai raid; Hollandia landing; Truk-Satawan-Ponape raid; air strikes against Marcus Islands and Wake Island ; Saipan invasion; and the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Returning to the United States in July 1944, she embarked President Roosevelt and his party and steamed to Pearl Harbor. After meeting with Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur, the President was carried to Alaska where he departed BALTIMORE 9 August 1944.

After the cessation of hostilities BALTIMORE served as a unit of the "Magic Carpet" fleet and then as a part of the naval occupation force in Japan (29 November 1945-17 February 1946).
(Source: Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships - DANFS)



Naval Archives Photo

"The original brass plaque from the BALTIMORE only covered the WW II operations of the ship. In February 2009 - when we received permission from the University of Baltimore to update the plaque and provide a new stand, we started collecting money for this effort. The culmination of this effort was a dedication on 7 November 2009 in the Langsdale Library of the University with some 13 former shipmates attending with their guests.

The bell itself is unusual and probably one of the largest that the Navy ever used. We estimated it's weight as between 500-1,000 lbs, approximately 30" tall, and 30" in diameter at the base. It was originally cast in 1903 for the Armored Cruiser USS MARYLAND (CA-8), and commissioned in 1905. On one side of the bell is engraved USS MARYLAND 1905. Around 1913 the ship's name was changed to USS FREDERICK so that a battleship could be named MARYLAND. When the ship was scrapped in the 1930s the bell was put in reserve. Then, when USS BALTIMORE (CA 68) was built, the bell was engraved **USS BALTIMORE 1943** and installed on the ship. The University of Baltimore inherited the bell in 1986."

Submitted by:

Chris Zirps, Captain, USN (Retired)
USS Baltimore 1953-1955
Alexandria, Virginia

Roy Grundy
USS Baltimore 1952-1955
Naperville, Illinois

THE JERSEYMAN



Richard Wedman

Leisuretown, Southampton, New Jersey

...on July 16, 2009

Richard "Dick" Wedman was born in Wilmington, Delaware, and with his beloved wife Kathleen, they made their home in Leisuretown, N.J. Before retirement, Dick was an Electrical Engineer, working for Unisys Corporation, and for RCA in Camden, NJ.

For the past 7 years, Dick had served with us as a battleship New Jersey volunteer, and he had also served aboard the USS *New Jersey* as a crewman during the Korean War. He was very proud of his ship, and 50 years later he again volunteered to serve aboard, and to share USS *New Jersey*'s proud history with visitors as a Docent. Our good friend and shipmate Dick Wedman was 77.

Fred Cassentino

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

...on August 5, 2009

Fred Cassentino passed on August 5, 2009 after courageously fighting lung and bladder cancer for 11 years. He celebrated his 80th birthday on July 20th with a bang. The string band was there, and we had a cookout at St Joseph's Manor, where he had been living since May 29th of this year. He said it was "the best birthday he ever had", and he definitely held on for that birthday, because 3 weeks later (to the day), we buried him.

He had many hobbies in his life, but one that he held dearest was volunteering to help restore BB-62. Due to his declining health, he only had about a year of volunteering on the ship, but LOVED going to the ship and came home with many great stories. The only reason he stopped is because he became too weak to do the work after a recurrence of the lung cancer. It broke his heart. He walked me down the aisle and danced at my wedding in October of 2003. Then it came back again and he then had to take chemo therapy.

After the chemo, he developed neuropathy in his hands and feet so that he couldn't walk very well and he just couldn't hold onto anything. But he often talked about wanting to go back to the ship. He just loved it!

Dad also built a model of the Battleship and displayed it at a show once. At his viewing, along with pictures of family, we also displayed one of his *Battleship New Jersey* T-shirts with the picture of him working on the ship.

Thanks for keeping in touch, for calling him, and for sending him all those copies of *The Jerseyman*.

Michelle Angelluci - Fred Cassentino's daughter

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Paul C. Tine

Palmyra, New Jersey

...on August 18, 2009

Paul Tine was born in New York City, and graduated from Brooklyn Polytechnical Institute with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He then went on to receive his master's degree in ME from Drexel University.

Paul worked as a mechanical engineer, and then as an engineering manager at RCA, GE, and Martin Marietta in both Camden and Moorestown, New Jersey. He was working on the AEGIS Program in Naval Systems as an Engineering Manager when he retired from Lockheed Martin in 1996.

Paul was a long-time volunteer Docent aboard Battleship *New Jersey*, having signed aboard with many of the earlier volunteers in 2002. A wonderful friend and shipmate, Paul will be great missed. He was 81 years old.

THE JERSEYMAN

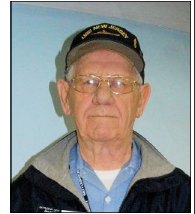


Don Trucano

Vineland, New Jersey

... on October 13, 2009

Born in Vineland, New Jersey and raised in Philadelphia, Don had resided in Vineland since 1966. A US Navy veteran, he served during World War II aboard USS *Oahu* (ARG-5). He retired as a systems analyst for the FAA, and worked for the Atlantic City Airport.



USS *Oahu* - May 1944 Naval Archives photo



After his retirement, Don served as a volunteer Docent aboard Battleship New Jersey. He was an active parishioner of Sacred Heart Parish in Vineland, and was one of the original founders of the parish CYO program, a former boy's basketball coach, and a past PTA President of Our Lady of Mercy Academy. Friend, Shipmate, and volunteer, Don Trucano was 82.

Michael J. Murphy, GMCS, USN (Ret.)

Panama City, Florida

... on August 26, 2009

During the Vietnam war, Senior Chief Gunners Mate Mike Murphy was Chief-in-charge of the portside secondary batteries aboard USS *New Jersey*. His spotter ashore was Gunny Sergeant Steve Sprunk, "the ship's first Marine spotter from day-one on the line." Later, when Captain Ed Snyder brought soldiers and Marines aboard the *New Jersey* for hot showers and chow, Mike and Steve met for the first time as seen in these photos below.



After retirement from the navy, Senior Chief "Mick" Murphy went to work for a short time as a police officer in Panama City, Florida, and then as a licensed private investigator. Gunny Sprunk remained in the Marine Corps, serving 5 tours in Vietnam, was wounded 3 times, awarded a Silver Star and retired as a Sergeant Major. Time and distance between Florida and New Mexico made little difference to these buddies, and as grave illness set in for both, their friendship grew. There were many letters and phone talks between the two men, and in a grim irony, both developed the same form of extremely aggressive Cancer, and they died only three months apart.

During the past few years, and starting in 2003 with the first of many ship's artifacts that Mike Murphy had sent to the ship's archives via *The Jerseyman*, I also got to enjoy a number of phone calls with Mike and Susan Murphy.

Although Mike never had the chance to write about it, he talked quite a bit about planning to write an article for *The Jerseyman* of what it was like to dive below and to inspect the hull, especially the cavernous tunnel area between the massive ship's rudders of USS *New Jersey*. In Vietnam, Mike said Captain Snyder usually operated the ship very close to shore to provide the most possible distance for the guns, and so there was always a threat of mines being placed on the ship by enemy frogmen. As ship's diver, Mike was sent down on hull inspections... "hearing motors through the hull, and ship sounds amplified underwater is an experience that few men have had - it was unreal and I loved it. ... and no, we never did find any mines on the hull."



Sergeant Major Steve Sprunk was 72 when he died on May 19th. Senior Chief Mike Murphy vowed to his wife that he would make it for his 74th birthday on August 6th, and he did. - TH

THE JERSEYMAN

BATTLESHIP DAYS... BY HAMP LAW



Update... -

This past October, Hamp Law was placed in Hospice care. According to daughter Terri, Shipmate Hamp received more than 40 notes and cards from readers of *The Jerseyman*, and she has asked that we pass on her very grateful thanks for all of them. "One of dad's two greatest joys in the past few years, was visiting the World War II memorial with Honor Flight, and drawing his battleship cartoons for *The Jerseyman*. These cartoons reminded him so much of his shipmates from USS *Tennessee*, and he'll always have a big place in his heart for all battleship sailors." Shipmate Hamp celebrated his 86th birthday on November 13th. - TH



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

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