

USS Plymouth Rock (LSD29)

Newsletter September - December 2011

Welcome to the USS Plymouth Rock Newsletter

Thirtieth Edition: The USS Plymouth Rock Newsletter is a publication issued every four months by the USS Plymouth Rock Ships Association. If you would like to contribute an article, a piece of Navy or Plymouth Rock history, photo, memory or anything that might be of interest to you or other shipmates, you can send it as an e-mail to:

Bill Provencal, Association Secretary/Newsletter Editor at:
billinp@metrocast.net

or regular mail at:
Bill Provencal
37 South Main Street
Pittsfield, NH 03263

 If you change **address** or **e-mail address** be sure to let me (Bill Provencal) know so we can update our **Crews List**. My e-mail is billinp@metrocast.net, my home address is listed above. We have been getting a lot of returns on our newsletter mailing to you guys who are paid dues members. Our ships website is found at www.ussplymouthrock.com



Ships Officers

President
Tom Wagner
tfwagner@wisincoh.com
812-539-9548

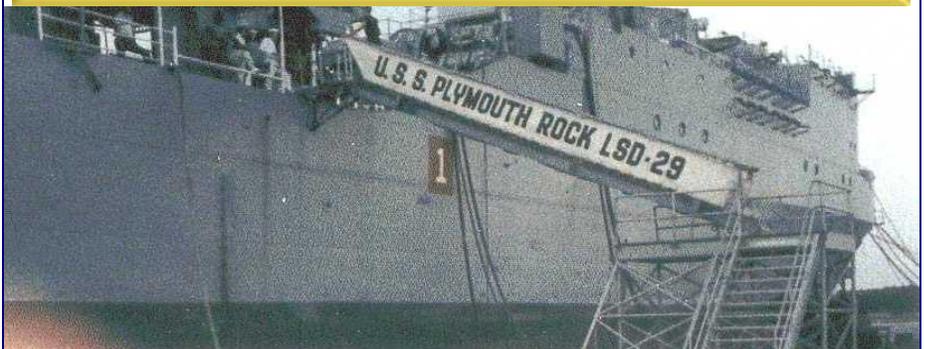
Vice President
David Dortch
870-236-3725
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Paul Mohawk
pshawks@charter.net
817-656-7739

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Bill Provencal
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★ ★ ★ Welcome Aboard ★ ★ ★



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Ships Historian
Harry T. Andersen
htajma@att.net
847-336-2151

Ships Storekeeper
Dennis (Shorty) Cyr
shortybm3@yahoo.com
203-753-6220

Reunion Coordinators:
David and Rhonda Dortch
870-236-3725
tazrhondave@yahoo.com

Recently Located Shipmates
For complete information on any shipmate, go to the Crews Muster List, found in the Ships Website

Gene Knierien, IC3, 132 Everett St., Middleboro, MA 02346.
On Board: April 76-Oct. 78. E-Mail Address:

knierieng@yahoo.com

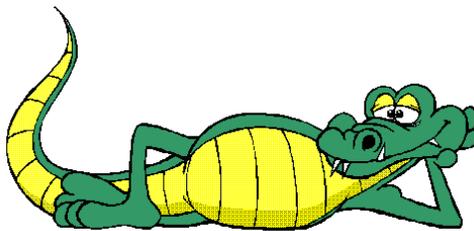
Randy Willis, HT2, 239 W. May St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022. On Board: 1981-83. E-Mail Address

randy_willis_1@yahoo.com

Charles Cooke, BT2, 3081 Old Newport Hwy., Sevierville, TN 37876

Dennis Borland, RM3, 4793 Halberd, Commerce Twp. MI 48382, On Board: 5/77-9/79. E-Mail Address:

dbolrland01@sbcglobal.net



Recent Address Changes to the Ships Muster List

Richard P. Watkins, IC3, Latrobe, PA Changed e-mail address: rpwefw@verizon.net

Richard G. Buchanan, YNC, Ret. Changed Address: 284 Clear Branch Drive, Brownsburg, IN 46112

William Anstett, SK1. Changed Address: PO Box 235, Boalsburg, PA 16827

Mike Conroy, MM2, Westfield, MA Changed e-mail address: conroymichael5@aol.com

David Brusky, EM3, Janesville, WI Changed e-mail address: dbrusky@charter.net

Ed. Comstock, MM2. Changed address: 302 Delaware St/. Sayre, PA 18840



Known Deceased Shipmates

For a complete listing of deceased shipmates, visit our Memorial Page in the ships website

Ray Krolax, SFP3, deceased February 24, 2011

Benjamin H. Logan, EN2. deceased August 20, 2011

John R. Howland, SN, deceased September 12, 2011



From the Desk of Harry Andersen, BTC, USN-Ret

Will all our members be kind enough to send me the address of their local news paper so that I could request them to publish our 2012 Reunion? Thanks so much.

Harry Andersen
2544 Chestnut St.
Waukegan, IL 60087
e-mail: htajma@att.net



Newsletter 30

Since this is our 30th issue of the newsletter, I thought it might be worth having a little blurb on it. In June, 2002, Tom Wagner convinced me that we (which meant me) should put out a newsletter every four months. This first newsletter consisted of five pages and our association membership consisted of 57 paid dues members. We have come a long way since then. In looking back at the first issue, I came across an article that really stood out that I would like to share with all of you again.

I Am the American Sailor

Hear my voice, America! Though I speak through the mist of 200 years, my shout for freedom will echo through liberty's halls for many centuries to come. Hear me speak, for my words are of truth and justice, and the rights of man. For those ideals I have "spilled my blood" upon the world's troubled waters. Listen well, for my time is eternal - yours is but a moment. I am the spirit of heroes past and future. I am the American Sailor. I was born upon the icy shores at Plymouth, rocked upon the waves of the Atlantic, and nursed in the wilderness of Virginia. I cut my teeth on New England codfish, and I was clothed in southern cotton. I built muscle at the halyards of New Bedford whalers, and I gained my sea legs high atop mizzen of yankee clipper ships. Yes, I am the American Sailor, one of the greatest seamen the world has ever known. The sea is my home and my words are tempered by the sound of paddle wheels on the Mississippi and the song of whales off Greenland's barren shore. My eyes have grown dim from the glare of sunshine on blue water, and my heart is full of star-strewn nights under the Southern Cross. My hands are raw from winter storms while sailing down round the Horn, and they are blistered from the heat of cannon broadside while defending our nation. I am the American Sailor, and I have seen the sunset of a thousand distant, lonely lands. I am the American Sailor. It was I who stood tall beside John Paul Jones as he shouted, "I have not yet begun to fight!" I fought upon the Lake Erie with Perry, and I rode with Stephen Decatur into Tripoli harbor to burn Philadelphia. I met Guerriere aboard Constitution, and I was lashed to the mast with Admiral Farragut at Mobile Bay. I have heard the clang of Confederate shot against the sides of Monitor. I have suffered the cold with Peary at the North Pole, and I responded when Dewey said, "You may fire when ready Gridley," at Manila Bay. It was I who transported supplies through submarine infested waters when our soldier's were called "over there." I was there as Admiral Byrd crossed the South Pole. It was I who went down with the "Arizona at Pearl Harbor", who supported our troops at "Inchon", and patrolled dark deadly waters of the "Mekong Delta". I am the American Sailor and I wear many faces. I am a pilot soaring across God's blue canopy and I am a Seabee atop a dusty bulldozer in the South Pacific. I am a corpsman nursing the wounded in the jungle, and I am a torpedoman in the Nautilus deep beneath the North Pole. I am hard and I am strong. But it was my eyes that filled with tears when my brother went down with the Thresher, and it was my heart that rejoiced when Commander Shepherd rocketed into orbit above the earth. It was I who languished in a Viet Cong prison camp, and it was I who walked upon the moon. It was I who saved the Stark and the Samuel B. Roberts in the mine infested waters of the Persian Gulf. It was I who pulled my brothers from the smoke filled compartments of the Bonefish and wept when my shipmates died on the Iowa and White Plains. When called again, I was there, on the tip of the spear for "Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm". I am the American Sailor. I am woman, I am man, I am white and black, yellow, red and brown. I am Jew, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist. I am Irish, Filipino, African, French, Chinese, and Indian. And my standard is the outstretched hand of Liberty. Today, I serve around the world; on land, in air, on and under the sea. I serve proudly, at peace once again, but with the fervent prayer that I need not be called again. Tell your children of me. Tell them of my sacrifice, and how my spirit soars above their country. I have spread the mantle of my nation over the ocean, and I will guard her forever. I am her heritage and yours. I am the American Sailor. Author/date unknown

I would like to thank all of you guys who have contributed pictures, comments, articles, letters that have made the Newsletter what it is today. Thank you!

Bill Provencal, Newsletter Editor



Thank You's

We would like to thank the following shipmates/friends for providing pictures, information and articles to the website, the Ships Association and newsletter.

Leo Lavalee, RM1	Orvell Cuffey, YN3	Tom Hickson, BT3
Gorge Gazzola	Harry Andersen, BTC	USS Whetstone LSD27 Ships Assoc.



Paid Association Members for 2011-2012

As of Dec 15, we now have 135 paid members

Become a Member of the Ships Association

As you can imagine any group or association such as ours requires funds. The funds are used primarily for paying the costs of the Website (server fees, registration of our .com address), mailing out the newsletter to all paying dues members (printing, postage), general mailings up-front cost of upcoming reunion and postage. Our primary source of revenue are the bi-annual dues of \$25.00. To become a member of the USS Plymouth Rock Association complete the Application for Membership which can be found in the Ships Website on the Links Page or call/write/e-mail either my self or Paul Mohawk and we will send you an application.

The 2011-2012 dues are now due, please send dues to Paul Mohawk, Treasurer. Make checks payable to USS Plymouth Rock Association. Dues are payable on a bi-annual basis (every two years) at \$25.00 and are due on the year of the reunion (are due on an even year 2004, 2006, 2008, etc). *Should a member or prospective member pay at any other time, dues will be credited from the preceding even year.* All dues paying members receive the Newsletter three times a year by US Mail. Paul Mohawk's address is: 5558 Canyon Lands Drive, Ft. Worth, TX 76137

If your name does not appear on this list and you have paid your dues, please let Paul Mohawk know as soon as possible. His e-mail address is pshawks@charter.net

Adam, Ian	Allen, Charles	Andersen, Harry	Alardyce, John	Anstett, William
Balf, Priscilla	Bell, Joe	Bellingham, Paul II	Bena, Joe	Bentheimer, Glenn
Bergeron, Richard	Betts, Roger	Bierce, George	Bild, Bob	Brown, Alvin G.
Brusky, David	Brunton, Thomas	Buchanan, Richard	Buiak, Peter Jr.	Caldwell, Tim
Cartwright, Richard	Casillas, Greg	Clark, Nick	Clark, Robert	Comstock, Ed
Conboy, Bill	Conroy, Michael	Crowl II, Martin C.	Cummings, Steve	Cyr, Dennis
Czarnetski, Bruce	Czarnetski, Jon	Dailey, Ronald J.	Dalfonzo, Sam	Dawson, Kenneth

				E.
DiFranco, Joseph	Dortch, David	Dushane, David	Dussault, Andrew	Edwards, Maurice
Eldridge, Marguerite	Farneski, Robert	Fisher, Jack	Fisher, Jay	Flanagan, Mike
Formaro, Frank	Forton, Mary	Freeman, James	Furman, Herbert III	Gee, James
Greco, Charliene	Guertin, Jerry	Hart, Ed.	Hartson, George	Haynie, Bill
Hernandez, Leo	Hickson, Thomas W., Sr	Hicks, Richard	Hill, Edward Jr.	Hopper, Richard
Howland, John	Hyatt, Walter	Jennings, Seeley	Jepson, Norm	Joyce, Ed.
Ishmael, Harry	Kane, Thomas	Kaderka, Leonard	Kluczinsky, Andrew	Krolak, Ray
Kuhns, Jimmy	Lamay, Roger	Larkin, Chuck	Larson, Jerry	Lavallee, Leo
Lillig, Bernie F	Logan, Ben	Luttrell, James	Macomber, Brandon	McCully, Wade Sr.
Morton, Jack	Miller, Ronald	Mohawk, Paul	Musella, Rocco	Nichols, Bob
O'Neill, Thomas	Pawlak, Ervin	Perino, Paul	Pihl, Walter C.	Pratt, Richard
Provencal, Bill	Pyle, Ted	Ramondetta, Vic	Reed, John F.	Rhine, Don
Richardson, Dale	Ringer, Joseph E.	Robertson, Allen	Robinson, Jim	Rook, James
Rose, Christopher	Safford, Richard	Sandlin, Richard	Scott, Bill	Shanahan, Robert
Schneider, Michael	Shewchuk, Richard	Shober, Robert	Short, Forrest	Sims, Bill
Smith, James	Smith, Larry E.	Stackhouse, Norman	Stark, Jr., Peter A.	Stull, John III
Swathwood, David	Swearingen, Ron	Tesh, Sam	Thibodeau, Doug	Tunstall, Van
Viaene, Lois	Wagner, Thomas F.	Walker, Gerald M.	Walsh, Bill	Warwick, Robert
Watkins, Richard P.	Watson, Ernest	Watts, Richard A.	Whitlock, Jerry S	Whittle, David
Ziamba, James	Ishmael, Harry	Toungette, Mike	Nicoll, Peter	Pierce, Richard
Derry, Thomas	Burch, Willard J.	Cuffy, Arvell	Baldwin, Brad	Cooke, Charles



Mail Call

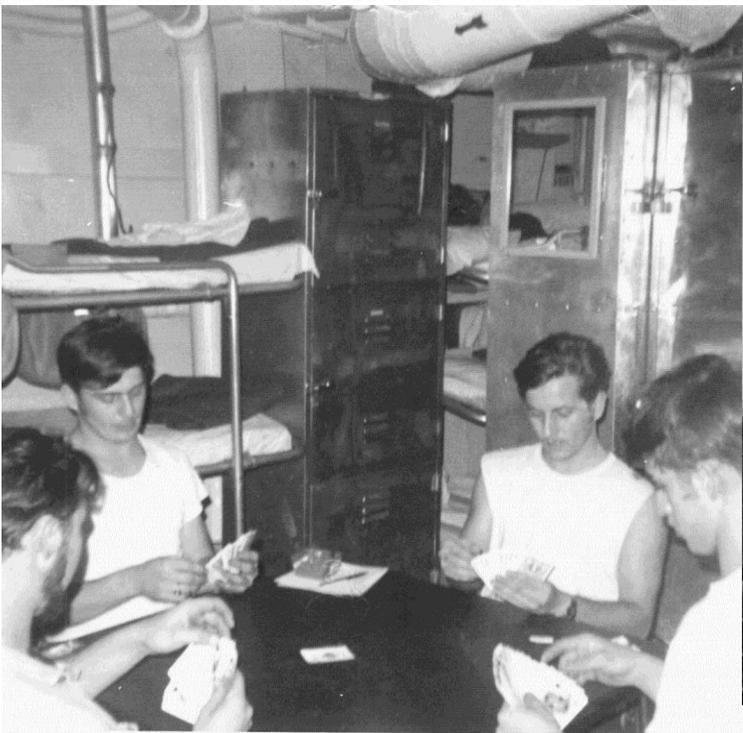


Received a note from Randy Willis, HT2, (On Board 1981-83. "Just looking for old friends I served with from R division, or from the softball team I played first base on". E.Mail Address randy_willis_1@yahoo.com

Received a note from Leo Lavallee, RM1, USN-Ret (On board 1958). "I am in receipt of the PR's newsletter and was quite amused to read parts of the letters I've previously sent you. SPECIAL INTEREST on page 17 of this newsletter *Opinions from a Former Sailor*, I have submitted the article to the Union Leader-NH Sunday News. Look for it in the future in the Sunday News, if you get the paper."

Received a e-mail from Orvell Cuffey, YN3. "Tom Wagner, I like you never heard of this cruise referred to by the name of President Eisenhower Support group (Whitetops) to South America in 1960. Operation AMIGO was the phrase used for "Ike's Good Will Tour to South America". Tom, other than Ben Logan, I've never heard anymore about that mid air collision when landing in Rio. As I recalled, the Navy orchestra was split up, with part of that of group sent from NYC to wait for us in Rio and the 19 other members were to meet with us after leaving

LA, Calif. Those 19 members never met with us because of the collision. At that time, I was the Captain's Yeoman, (YN3) under Captain A.L. Redon command of the PRock, after Jack Stovall (YN2) left. I never saw any word about the collision after the first message was received. I'm pretty sure that the collision remained Top Secret for a long time. Recently this year, I visited the Washington DC Yard requesting the PRock's Ship Log. I was told that my request was denied. I took my request to the Navy Memorial also located in Wash, DC. I walked to the Director, showed him my information concerning the PRock, not only did he liked it, but introduced me to the PRock website. One week later I got a package from The Washington DC Navy Yard with the attached letter enclosed. They still haven't sent me the Ship's Log, only what they want me to have. The USS Plymouth Rock (LSD-29) Command History Report is not the Ship Log. I'll keep trying, but maybe Mr. Curtis A. Utz doesn't know the difference! Tom, your words, "Wonderful Duty & my words Wonderful Cruise" are right on time."





The above pictures were selected from the collection of Tom Hickson, BT3, between 1970-72



2012 Ships Reunion

Valley Forge PA

The date for the ships reunion will be on September 20 - 23, 2012. The hotel that has been selected is the Dolce Valley Forge.



Nestled on 9 landscaped acres in the community of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, this hotel offers free shuttle service to area corporate offices and the King of Prussia Mall.

Dolce Valley Forge Hotel features contemporary guestrooms with flat-screen TVs and free wireless internet access. Guests can also take advantage of the hotel's full-service business center, state-of-the-art fitness center and the outdoor swimming pool.

Restaurant THREE01 at the Valley Forge Dolce Hotel serves American cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner. In the afternoon, guests can also enjoy American bistro and comfort food in the hotel's T. Burke's Lounge. The hotel rooms number 327. The Dolce is considered the #1 place to stay in Valley Forge.

The website for the Dolce is www.dolce-valley-forge-hotel-com

Address is at : Dolce Valley Forge
301 W. Dekalb Pike
King of Prussia, PA 19406
1-877-851-5551

The room rate is \$119.00 per night, this includes tickets for two \$15.00 outstanding breakfast buffets. The hotel will shortly ASSIGN a unique website and toll free number to our group for you to make reservations. As soon as

we have those contacts, they will be available online at the PR website & in the April newsletter. Also, about mid-January, you can call David or Rhonda Dortch for the phone & website contacts. Reservations to the Dolce must be made on or before August 29, 2012 in order to be eligible for the room rate. Guest accommodations will be available at 4:00 pm on arrival date and 12:00 pm on departure date. As of now, we have a total of 12 rooms and 24 people who will be possible attendees.

This information will be then available on the ships website at www.ussplymouthrock.com and in the April newsletter.

Any questions or suggestions can be directed to the Reunion Coordinators: Dave and Rhonda Dortch who can be reached at the following:

e-mail: tazrhondave@yahoo.com

phone: 870-236-3725

mail: Dave and Rhonda Dortch
4009 Hickory Cove
Paragould, AR 72450

We will have an application in the April 2012 newsletter for tours and the Banquet which will be held on the 23rd. The application along with dollar amount will be sent to the Association. Again, you will have this information available to you in the April 2012 newsletter.

We will have a hospitality room available to us with our own snacks and beverages provided by the Association. The hospitality room is non-smoking. As of August 31, 2010 all Dolce Hotels are smoke free.



A starboard quarter view of the amphibious transport dock USS PLYMOUTH ROCK (LSD 29) with a Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 74 (HS-74) SH-2 Sea King helicopter pad.

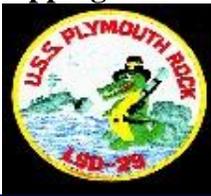
Photographer's Name: UNKNOWN Location: UNKNOWN
 Date Shot: 1/1/1988 Date Posted: *unknown* VIRIN: DN-SC-88-09110

Photo and Information provided by Jorge Gazzola.

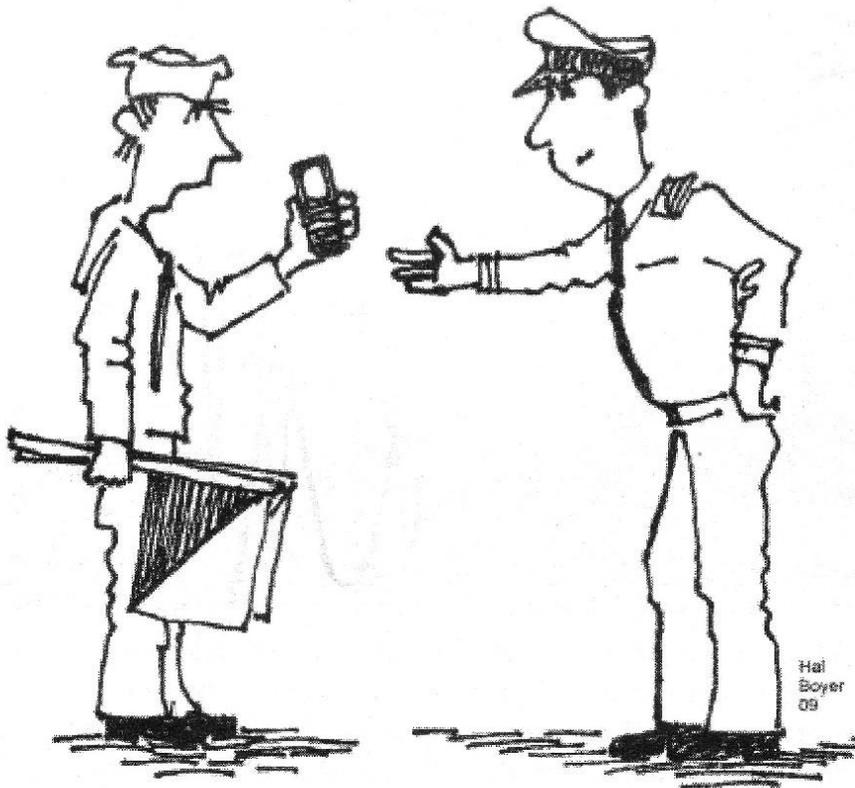


Ships Store Items

The following items are offered for sale through the Ships Store. All orders are handled through Shorty Cyr, BM3, 119 Pinecrest Drive, Waterbury, CT 06708, Phone #203-753-6220, e-mail at: shortybm3@yahoo.com All orders must be accompanied by a check. Checks must be made out to the USS Plymouth Rock Association. *You can click on any image to obtain a larger view of the item.*

<p>Plymouth Rock Mug. Price is \$15.00 includes shipping and handling.</p> 	<p>Bumper Stickers. Price is \$2.80 includes shipping and handling.</p> 
<p>Ships Patch. Price is \$8.75 includes shipping and handling.</p> 	<p>Plymouth Rock Cap. Price is \$15.00 this price includes shipping and handling.</p> 
<p>Short sleeve tee shirt. Price is \$22.00 which includes shipping and handling. The following sizes are available: Med./Lge./XL/XXL and XXXL.</p> 	<p>Personalized Commemorative Plaques. Price is dependent on size, 7x9 is \$15.00 + \$5.00 shipping, 8 x 10 is \$20.00 + \$5.00 shipping. To order contact Shorty Cyr, BM3, he will send you an order form.</p> 





It's for you sir...it's the USS Daly.
They couldn't read the message I sent.

Contributed by Harry Andersen, BTC, Retired



Mal de Mer

Edward Bookhardt, posted on October 6, 2011
The Navy Log Blog

I was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion One [NMCB-1]. The battalion had movement orders and all support materials were packed, crated and on the pier for transit. We were packed, crated and on the pier for transit. The heavy construction equipment had already been placed on an LST and the ship along with Alpha Company's personnel had set sail with the morning tide. The main body was awaiting the arrival of the USS OLMSTEAD APA 188, an attack troop transport that would take us to our deployment site.

The ship was not the bad feeder we had been lead to believe as our battalion cooks and mess men supplemented the ship's galley staff. The mess-deck was one level down, amidships. It was initially a popular place...no one missed mess-call. We joked of selling our supply of sardines and sausages to those disgruntle ship's company line-handler.

The first day out was pleasant and uneventful, spirits were high. Most of the men were lounging about on the forward main deck. Some looked at the sea and the dolphins that would occasionally race and frolic along side. Others were sitting about the deck in small groups playing cards or snoozing on blankets. As members of Operations, Bart, Joe and I were in the gloomy transit admin spaces working on crew assignments and work

[HERE'S WHY]

Recruiters are said to "drum up" recruits.

Why that phrase?

It originates from recruitment drives during the American Revolution. The Continental Congress ordered a recruiting lieutenant for each company, accompanied by a drummer and a fifer, according to the October 1780 Journal of Congress.

Recruiting parties would march through villages, playing patriotic songs. As the musicians drew an audience, the recruiter would hit up the crowd for able-bodied men.

"Drum up," though, shouldn't be confused with "drum out." That's military slang for removal from service, and it comes from the outmoded practice of dismissing disgraced troops to the sound of a drumbeat.

schedules for the battalion's pending operating commitment. We were envious of those loitering on deck enjoying the sun and invigorating sea air.

During the night the seas picked-up and the ship began to rise, fall and yaw. It would shutter as it slid of to the side and then right itself. Being in the bow section, the motion was exaggerated many fold. At reveille most of us had trouble climbing from our bunks. Standing was difficult as none had developed "sea legs" to adjust to the movement of the ship. Many grew uneasy, experiencing an inner discomfort that was very foreign. When "chow" was piped, it was with extreme trepidation that I fell in the mess-line which was sparse compared to the previous day. The usual chatter and horseplay was non-existent. As the line moved adjacent to the scullery, one of the unfortunate souls scouring metal trays in the steaming deep sinks turned ashen, tossing-up large quantities of a multi-colored substance into the pile of scattered trays

Joe and I retched, grabbed our mouths and raced up the ladder to the main deck. On reaching the rail, we convulsed until we had intermittent "dry heaves," bringing up nothing but air. These bouts lasted for what seemed eternity. Finally, after up-chucking what I recognized as assorted candies from a ninth-grade Halloween party, I knew the end was near...I began to see "the bright light!" Would I be the first Bluejacket to succumb to the curse of the sea, the dreaded Mal de Mer? I began to chant, "Oh dear God, I'm dying here! Help me Jeezz-us, [retch] please, sweet Jeezz-us, [retch] save my miserable soul..."

Joe raised his head from the railing; a string of sputum was hanging from the corner of his mouth. "Button it up Ed, Jesus ain't listening...just me, and in my condition I can't stand your pitiful whining, so can it!" He suddenly gulped, arched forward, and with a deep moaning retch grabbed the seat of his pants, "Oops! I think I just had an unauthorized pit-stop in my skivvies!" With that, Joe joined in the Jeezz-us chant...

Looking at Joe's sallow features, the slime still hanging from his contorted face, I saw a reflection of myself. In an effort to lighten our agonizing predicament, I stood erect, threw my shoulders back, faked a broad smile and nudged Joe in the side. Glancing at my pathetic attempt, he rolled his eyes back in his head...we both laughed and struggled to regain some composure. I thought, the next smart ass s-o-b that mentioned sea duty to me, was going to get those sardines inserted in his chocolate orifice!

Although the seas were rough, the day was clear and the cool sea breezes seemed in time to ease our distress. Our buddy Bart, who had not been sick, spotted us at the rail. Not to miss an opportunity to stick it to us, he called out sarcastically, "Ahoy, Barf Brothers...you boys hungry?" I managed to give him the finger. "Now, now, I noticed you missed noon chow, and as a good shipmate, I thought you would like me to go below and get some of those tasty mustard packed sardines you stocked-up on. We retched again, grabbing our aching abs...Bart laughing said, "I take that's a no...I'll tell the Ops Officer you've been reassigned to painting the side of the ship." He followed with a low thespian bow and a sweeping wave of his cap, "To you my fellow Denizens of the deep, I bid you a fond farewell...ta ta!"

Two of the ship's cooks had stepped out on deck earlier. One was large, portly and middle-aged, the other much younger, probably a Striker, carried a large floppy cook's cap filled with what appeared to be fried chicken and biscuits. The older man observing, but ignoring us, leaned on the rail, gazed out at the horizon and related to his apprentice how he enjoyed coming topside to watch the ever-changing vista of the sea...it was one of the things he loved about navy life.

He reached into the cap, pulled out a piece of chicken, took a few bites and tossed the bone over the side. With crumbs smeared across his broad greasy face and the half-eaten meat clinched between his teeth, he turned to Bart. Smiling broadly to show the partially chewed flesh, he extended the food-stained cap, "Lad, you look a bit undernourished, would you like some of the Olmstead's finest cuisine to put a little meat on your bones?"

Bart looked into the cap, then at the old cooks face, turned a vivid green, grabbed the rail and tossed his lunch! Joe mockingly slurred, "It is truly an honor for us to be sharing the rail with a real sailor." I followed, "Yes, Bart's a real crusty old barnacle; it's like having King Neptune himself here by our side. I'm so very proud to share this

moment...” Bart embarrassed, wiped the back of his hand across his mouth, “Shut up Eddie! Just shut up, you too Joe, I must be getting a flu-bug or something!” The old cook gave me a wink and returned below...

As the afternoon approached dusk, the seas continued to build with the winds increasing to near gale force. Gusts began whistling through the ship’s superstructure and rigging emitted a low moaning hum. The sounds became eerie. The skies along the horizon blackened and angrily rolled. The Captain informed the ship of impending weather and ordered all transient personnel to their assigned quarters, securing all exterior doors and hatches.

Conditions continued to worsen into the night. The ship reacting to the storm’s fury, would rise out of the water, shutter from stem to stern, yaw, and then drop off the crest into deep troughs on the backside. The bow would bury itself into the oncoming wave plowing through it in violent contortions. I lay on my back on the cold moldy canvas gripping the bunk frame with all my strength, my hands cramped in pain. The close spacing of the bunks helped keep me in place. As the ship plunged, I would be thrown upward into the bottom of the bunk above, bashing my nose and forehead.

The sounds of the ocean breaking over the ship, mixed with loose equipment ramming bulkheads, set up an indescribable din. Waste from the latrine washing back and forth with the ship’s violent contortions sloshed out across the now slimy deck. The odors, sights and sounds became horrendous. Either, through raw fear or adapting to the ships motion, I had not been sick since crawling into the bunk. I felt capable, yet powerless to help my comrades...all anyone could do was hang on and wait out the storm. It was a seemingly endless nightmare...

Over the next decade, I would sail again on APAs, LSTs, LSDs, and the Military Sea Transport Service ships, but never again would I face the experience of my maiden voyage at sea. In the 1960s with the Defense Department’s adaptation of the Rapid Deployment concept using commercial 707s and huge military C series aircraft, a new era began and ship movements of large bodies of troops basically came to and end.

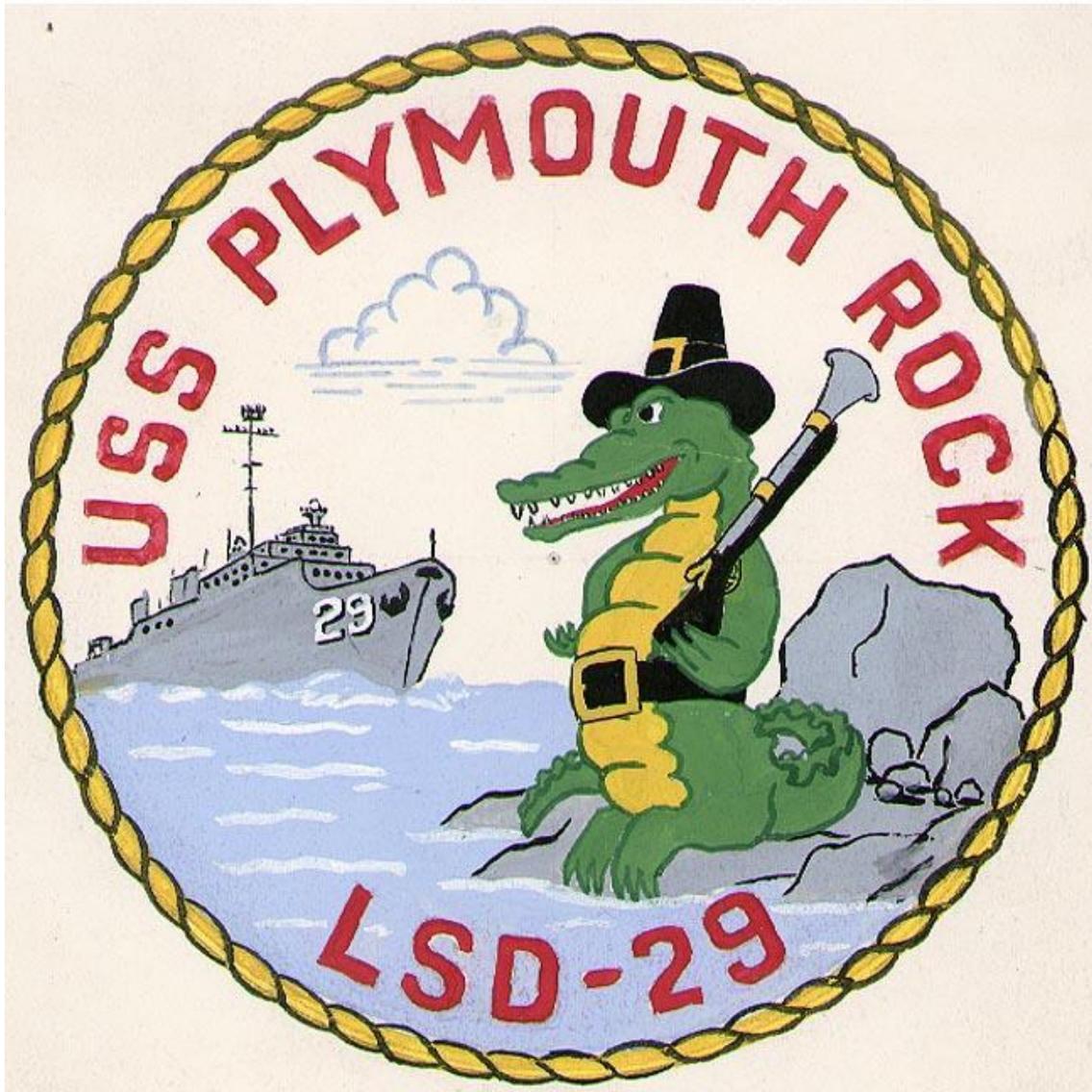
To this day, though dated, the INK SPOTS remain one of my favorite singing groups. Their harmony rarely heard today can spark a memory returning me to the days of my youth and those endearing shipmates who are remembered with gentle enduring fondness... “Got Sardines?”



USS *Plymouth Rock* (LSD-29), Chesapeake Bay, July 1964



Insignia of USS *Plymouth Rock*, circa 1958



The insignia of the USS *Plymouth Rock* (LSD-29). This emblem was received from the ship in 1958. It features an alligator (symbol of the Amphibious Force) in Pilgrim dress standing on the ship's namesake, Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts. A depiction of USS *Plymouth Rock* is in the left background. U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph. Note from Bill Provencal, editor: This emblem was created by Charles Costello, RD2. Tom Wagner, President says "When I knew him he was a Radarman 2nd Class. We called him "COS" or "Pappy". The latter because he was one of the older guys. As the story goes, he entered the Navy in the waning days of WWII was discharged and called back for the Korean War. He told the Navy that since they called him back in, he was staying around till he retired. He hailed from the Chattanooga TN area. I still have an old cigarette lighter, Zippo knockoff, with that insignia on it." Both Tom and I were on the Rock at the time of it's creation.



No Retirement at 20 Years?

A sweeping new plan to overhaul the Pentagon's retirement system would give some benefits to all troops and phase out the 20-year cliff vesting system that has defined military careers for generations, the Military Times newspapers reported. The plan calls for a corporate-style benefits program that would contribute money to troops' retirement savings account rather than the promise of a future monthly pension, according to a new proposal from an influential Pentagon advisory board.

The move would save the Pentagon money -- at a time when it's being asked to cut at least \$400 billion -- and benefit troops who leave with less than 20 years of service. The yearly contributions might amount to about 16.5 percent of a member's annual pay and would be deposited into a mandatory version of the Thrift Savings Plan, the military's existing 401(k)-style account that now does not include government matching contributions, according to the Times.

Proponents said the plan would allow more flexibility for service members, who could decide how they want to invest their retirement savings, and for the military, which would be allowed to offer higher contributions to troops who deploy frequently or take hardship assignments.



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Dock Landing Ship (LSD) Index

This hybrid sea going vessel was initially conceived in November, 1941. As the design progressed and developed, the Tank Landing Craft (TLC) was re-designated an Artillery Transport, Mechanized (APM) - 8 vessels (APM 1-8), were authorized for the U. S. Navy and 7 vessels - (BAPM 1-7) were ordered for the Royal Navy under the Lend Lease Act. Before actual construction of these 15 vessels began, the designator was again changed, this time, to Landing Ship, Dock (LSD). The Navy twice expanded orders of the design during WWII - first to total 19 vessels, then to total 27 LSDs.

Landing Ship, Docks (LSDs) were designed to transport loaded landing craft, amphibious vehicles and troops into an amphibious landing area; ballast down to flood their well decks; lower the stern gate to the sea, and disembark their craft and vehicles for the assault on a hostile beach. Once a beachhead was established, they acted as offshore repair docks for damaged ships, craft and vehicles up to Landing Ship Medium (LSM) and Landing Ship Infantry (LSI) sizes. In at least one reported case, the bow of a Destroyer Escort (DE) was docked for emergency repairs. Equipped with their long dry docks; shipfitter's shop; machine shop; and a carpentry shop; these vessels were able to handle extensive repairs at the scene of the assault. The first 27 of the LSD design were considered prototypes. As soon as one LSD was launched, commissioned and tested in actual combat conditions, successive launchings of the LSDs reflected the latest improvements in armament and transport capacity with their "super" or "portable" prefabricated decks. The end result, is that no two LSDs of the World War II design are exactly alike!



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Binnacle List Many novice sailors, confusing the words 'binnacle' and barnacle, have wondered what their illnesses had to do with crusty growths found on the hull of a ship. Their confusion is understandable. Binnacle is defined as the stand or housing for the ship's compass located on the bridge. The term binnacle list, in lieu of sick list, originated years ago when ship corpsmen used to place a list of sick on the binnacle health. After long practice, it came to be called binnacle list.

Chewing the Fat God made the vittles, but the devil made the cook was a popular saying used by seafaring men in the last century when salted beef was the staple diet aboard ship. This tough cured beef, suitable only for long voyages when nothing else was as cheap or would keep as well, required prolonged chewing to make it edible. Men often chewed one chunk for hours, just as if it were chewing gum and referred to this practice as Chewing the fat

Ditty Bags Ditty bog (or box) was originally called ditto bag because it contained at least two of everything - two needles, two spools of thread, two buttons, etc. With the passing of years, the 'ditto' was dropped in favor of ditty and remains so today. Before WW I, the Navy issued ditty boxes made of wood and styled after foot lockers. These carried the personal gear and some clothes of the sailor. Today the ditty bag is still issued to recruits and contains a sewing kit, toiletry articles and personal items such as writing paper and pens.

Fathom Fathom was originally a land measuring term derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "faetm" meaning to embrace. In those days, most measurements were based on average size of parts of the body, such as the hand (horses are still measured this way) or the foot (that's why 12 inches are so named). A fathom is the average distance from fingertip to fingertip of the outstretched arms of a man --- about six feet. Since a man stretches out his arms to embrace his sweetheart, Britain's Parliament declared that distance be called a "fathom" and it be a unit of measure. A fathom remains six feet. The word was also used to describe taking the measure or "to fathom" something. Today, of course, when one is trying to figure something out, they are trying to "fathom" it.

Galley The galley is the kitchen of the ship. The best explanation as to its origin is that it is a corruption of "gallery". Ancient sailors cooked their meals on a brick or stone gallery laid amidships.

