

USS Plymouth Rock (LSD29)

Newsletter January - April 2012

Welcome to the USS Plymouth Rock Newsletter


Thirty-first 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

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tfwagner@wisincoh.com

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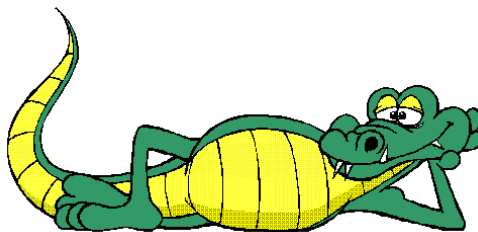


★ ★ ★ Welcome Aboard ★ ★ ★



Recently Located Shipmates

603-435-8603 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	For complete information on any shipmate, go to the Crews Muster List , found in the Ships Website Vic Pineda, TN, 2432 Barrett Station Rd., Ballwin, MO 63021, On Board: 8.67-10/70. E-Mail Address: lpineda4393@sbcglobal.net Kevin Dunmire, SM3, 15223 N. El Frio Ct., El Mirage, AZ 85335. On Board: 1978-1980. E-Mail Address: kdunmire01@cox.net
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Known Deceased Shipmates

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

Thomas K. Derry, QMC	Charles Schreiner, SFP3



Paid Association Members for 2011-2012

As of April 15, we now have 140 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 Vic Pineda, TN, On Board 8/67-10/70 "The Navy gave me enough time think about my future. I treasured the time I spent at the ship (LSD 29). A lot of nice liberty ports in Northern Europe and the Caribbean's. Yes... I remember those good times." His E-Mail Address is lpineda4393@sbcglobal.net

■ Received a note from Dave Wardle, QM1, On Board: 10/58 - 7/64. "Bill, When the PRock went to South America with Eisenhower we were under the Command of a Commander Hess since Captain Readon had contacted Hepatitis and was hospitalized. I was a part of the QM gang and remember him as a real good Skipper, as an Exec we thought he was terrible. When we were in Montevideo Eisenhower's son wanted us to haul some stuff back and Hess refused (wasn't authorized to, I imagine) Seems to me he ordered the kid off the ship when he started pushing his weight around. That was one of the best cruises I have EVER been on. Out of all the Med cruises I went on the South American cruise sticks out. His E-Mail Address is: golferwhiskey60@yahoo.com Thanks for the newsletter."

■ Received a note from Bob Pruett, Capt., USMC (Ret) (On Board Jan 1960). "Bill, I read with special interest the message from Orvell Cuffey, YN3 regarding Operation Amigo. As you already know I was TAD from or with HMX-1 out of Quantico Virginia aboard the Rock. We sailed out of Norfolk in January 1960, made a couple of stops along the way. Became a Turtle as we crossed the Equator, survived a small storm and off loaded my group in Rio. Apparently the "incident" that killed the Navy Band members is still off-limits but I know some of the details. If anyone wants to know more for the record you can contact me by phone at 252-728-6113 (H) or 252-241-9412 (M). Thanks" His E-Mail Address is: bobpruett@coastalnet.com

■ Received a note from Ron Swearingen, DC3, On Board 2/67-8/68 "Hi Bill, Thanks once again for all the work you do for the PRock association. The latest newsletter was great, thanks for keeping us all connected. A shipmate, Ron" His E-Mail Address is rsweARINGen@charter.net

■ Received a note from Kevin Dunmire, SM3, (On board 1978-1980). "Had good memories of the Rock. Will always remember.. Stedman, Clausen, Flanigan and SMSC Gene Suggs. His favorite saying was YO WHAT'S THE HAPPENING". Kevin's E-Mail Address is kdunmire01@cox.net



Tragedy Strikes Navy Band in 1960

ACTING ON THE BELIEF that the Soviet Union was attempting to expand its influence in the Western Hemisphere, President Dwight Eisenhower traveled to South America in 1960 on a goodwill mission dubbed *Operation Amigo*.

In support of that mission, 93 members of the Navy Band departed Feb. 6, 1960, for a 30-day tour to perform at various functions for the President and other dignitaries.

While the band and President Eisenhower were visiting Buenos Aires, Argentina, Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira invited Eisenhower to a reception at the U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Feb. 25. The Navy Band was asked to provide music for the reception.

On the morning of the concert, a chamber orchestra of 18 enlisted men and one officer boarded a Navy R6D transport plane for the short trip to Rio de Janeiro. On approach to the airport in heavy fog, the Navy plane collided with a Brazilian commercial airliner over Guanabara Bay, and fell in pieces into the water. Including the Brazilian airliner, some 80 lives were lost that morning.

"President Eisenhower was extremely upset and saddened, as he knew band members personally," said then-White House Press Secretary Jim Haggerty.

Security measures related to the President's trip made it difficult to immediately inform families in the U.S. about the accident and release an official list of the deceased. The rest of the tour continued as scheduled.

At a funeral service on March 8, 1960, at Arlington National Cemetery, 14 of the band members were buried with military honors. A memorial stained-glass window in Christ Church of Rio de Janeiro was dedicated Sept. 24, 1961, in honor of the Navy personnel who perished in the crash.

This is an article written in the VFW Magazine about the Navy Band Disaster in 1960. This should answer all of the questions that have been posted about this incident. This article was submitted by Allan Robertson, BT2, on board 58/61



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 Doubletree which is part of the Hilton family of hotels.

To book a room for the reunion, call 610-337-1200 which is a central booking number for Hilton Hotels. You will need to ask to make a reservation at the Doubletree Hotel in Valley Forge, PA for the USS Plymouth Rock Reunion. ALL OF THESE ITEMS ARE NEEDED IN ORDER TO GET THE CORRECT ROOM RATE & TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR GROUP COUNT!!!!!!

Also, all members booking a room, if interested, can get the same room rate for up to 3 days before & after the reunion dates.

The website for the Doubletree is www.doubletree.hilton.com/valleyforge

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

The room rate is \$119.00 per room, per night, this includes tickets for two \$15.00 outstanding breakfast buffets. Reservations to the Doubletree 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.

Our personalized group web page has been approved and has been published to the web. The web page address is: http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/P/PHLVFDT-USS-20120920/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

**USS Plymouth Rock Association Biennial Reunion
20-SEP-2012
24-SEP-2012
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia - Valley Forge
301 West DeKalb Pike
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania
19406
610-337-1200**

2012 Reunion Agenda

Thursday: September 20

1600

Hotel Check In

Registration for Reunion In the Hospitality Room

Supper on your own

Friday: September 21

0630-0900

Complimentary Breakfast at hotel “with room reservations.”

0900-1700

Tour of Historical Philadelphia with lunch on your own at Reading Hall & inclusive tour of USS New Jersey.

1700-

Supper on your own--list of restaurants will be provided

Saturday: September 22

0630-0900

Complimentary Breakfast at hotel “with room reservations.”

0900-1200

Tour of Historic Valley Forge including Memorial Service

1200- Holiday Routine (free time)

Sunday: September 23

0630-0900

Complimentary Breakfast at hotel “with room reservations.”

1400-1500
Officers Call

1500-1600
All Hands Muster (members business meeting)

1730-1745
Group Pictures

1800-
Banquet (at the hotel)

Monday: September 24

0630-0900

Complimentary Breakfast at hotel “with room reservations.”

Departure

****Hospitality Room will be available for scuttlebutt as much as possible.****

2012 USS Plymouth Rock Reunion Tours Through American Heritage Landmark Tours

Friday 9am-5pm Historical & Cultural Philadelphia National Constitution Center PLUS USS New Jersey tour.

History comes alive as we walk in the footsteps of our Founding Fathers along brick walkways & Cobblestone streets in Penn’s “Green Countrie Towne,” Philadelphia. This city, which served as the capital of the colony of Pennsylvania, the capital of Colonial America, and the Federal capital from 1796-1800, has a history that is unrivaled in America. In an area known as “America’s Most Historic Square Mile,” we visit or pass such sites as Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were signed: The Liberty Bell, America’s most cherished artifact now housed in a new Pavilion with interesting displays regarding the bell’s history, Elfreth’s Alley, the oldest continuously occupied residential street in America, Betsy Ross House, Quaker seamstress who legend maintains made our first flag & whose home is an excellent example of an 18th c. working class residence; & Christ Church, Anglican church founded in 1695 where many of the founding fathers worshiped.

Lunch will be on your own at the Reading Terminal Market, Philadelphia’s famous indoor food market where you can enjoy a variety of foods from Philadelphia cheese steaks to Amish pot pie & everything in between.

Your tour will also include a driving overview of downtown Philadelphia including the Penn’s Landing area along the Delaware waterfront, the charming 18th century neighborhood of Society Hill to see it’s many mansions, churches, cemeteries and gardens, City Hall, which is the largest municipal building in the U.S., & the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, referred to as the “Champs Elysees of America.”

The group will also visit the Camden waterfront to tour the Battleship New Jersey. Built entirely at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, the Big "J," as it has been nicknamed, was launched in December 1942 & was one of just 4 Iowa class battleships built. During its 48 years of service, the ship, the most decorated ship in U.S. naval history, has received some 16 battle stars & 13 additional citations, medals & ribbons.

Saturday 9am-Noon Valley Forge National Park

Your tour of Valley Forge National Park will take you through some 3,500 acres of the beautiful rolling hills of this very historic site occupied by the Continental soldiers during the winter 1777-78. At Muhlenberg's Brigade area you'll have the opportunity to visit authentically reconstructed huts, referred by Lafayette as being "scarcely gaye[r] than the dungeons of Europe", earthen fortifications known as redoubts and a working example of a field "bake-oven". Imagine what it must have been like to "winter" here as did some 12,000 soldiers and hundreds of women and children.

Continuing on, we pass The National Memorial Arch, houses that were occupied by the officers, and the Valley Creek from which the Forge took its name, as we make our way to the home of Isaac Potts, the 18th century structure which served as Washington's Headquarters. Tour this building and imagine the lifestyle of His Excellency and Mrs. Washington during their stay at the Forge. Not the level of comfort you might expect! A short distance away is the Grand Parade where this "rag-tag" band of soldiers was trained under Baron von Steuben and transformed into the American Army. No tour of Valley Forge is complete without a visit to the beautiful Washington Memorial Chapel, built in the early 1900's to honor Washington and his men. A beautiful site!!

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 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 BIZARRE BIT OF U.S. NAVAL HISTORY ABOUT WHICH MOST AMERICANS KNOW "ZILCH"

From November 1943, until her demise in June 1945, the American destroyer 'William D. Porter' was often hailed - whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships - with the greetings:

"Don't shoot, we're Republicans!"

For a half a century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation.

A Miami news reporter made the first public disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer's crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice. In 1943, the Willie D as the Porter was nicknamed, accidentally fired a live torpedo at the battleship Iowa during a practice exercise. As if this weren't bad enough, the Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time, along with Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and all of the country's W.W.II military and Churchill.

Had the Porter's torpedo struck the Iowa at the aiming point, the last 60 years of world history might have been quite different. The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns, but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads. This destroyer was placed in commission on July 1943 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy's fast career track.

In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew. The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa. The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa, the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship's side and her anchor tore down the other ship's railings, life rafts, ship's boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor, but her career of mayhem and mishaps had begun.

Just twenty four hours later, the four-ship convoy, consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers, the Willie D, and two other destroyers, was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. Since they were going through a known U-boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defense.

Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced anti-submarine maneuvers. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The 'safety' had not been set as instructed.. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become side-tracked. Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn't lashed down. A man washed overboard and was never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers. The Captain, at this point, was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa about the Willie D's difficulties.

It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk. But, no, she sailed on. The morning of 14 November 1943 dawned with a moderate sea and pleasant weather. The Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda, and the president and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, the Iowa launched a number of weather balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the President was proud of his Navy.

Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J King, the Chief of Naval Operations; large in size and by demeanor, a true monarch of the sea..Disagreeing with him meant the end of a naval career. Up to this time, no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean. Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker watched the fireworks display with admiration and envy. Thinking about career redemption and breaking the hard luck spell, the Captain sent his impatient crew to battle stations. They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity. Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship, which, even though 6,000 yards away,

seemed to blot out the horizon. Lawton Dawson and Tony Fazio were among those responsible for the torpedoes. Part of their job involved ensuring that the primers were installed during actual combat and removed during practice. Once a primer was installed, on a command to fire, it would explode shooting the torpedo out of its tube. Dawson, on this particular morning, unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3. Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing. "Fire 1, Fire 2," and finally, "Fire 3." There was no Fire 4 as the sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whooooooshhhhhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo. Lt H. Steward Lewis, who witnessed the entire event, later described the next few minutes as what hell would look like if it ever broke loose. Just after he saw the torpedo hit water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, 'Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?' Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through naval history, although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal 'Damn the torpedoes' figured centrally within.

Initially there was some reluctance to admit what had happened, or even to warn the Iowa. As the awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of imminent danger. First, there was a flashing light warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated the torpedo was headed in another direction. Next, the Porter signaled that the torpedo was going reverse at full speed! Finally, they decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence. The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "'Lion (code for the Iowa), Lion, come right." The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first.

Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo. Meanwhile, on the Iowa's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive maneuvers, all of her guns were trained on the William D. Porter. There was now some thought that the Porter was part of an assassination plot. Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed.

The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it." Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the US Navy.

The ship was surrounded by Marines when it docked in Bermuda, and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened. Torpedo man Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake. The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy.

Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years hard labor.

President Roosevelt intervened; however, asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident. The destroyer William D. Porter was banished to the upper Aleutians

. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any for the ship and anyone who came near her.

She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was re-assigned to the Western Pacific. However, before leaving the Aleutians , she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired into the front yard of the American Base Commander, thus rearranging his flower garden rather suddenly. In December, 1944, the Porter joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft. Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers. In April, 1945, the destroyer Porter was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa . By this time, the greeting "Don't Shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing.

But the crew of her sister ship, the USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire. On 10 June, 1945, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally) attacked it from underwater. A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defense. Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter, but just at the last moment veered away and crashed alongside the unlucky destroyer. There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight, but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible place. Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water. Not a single soul was lost in the sinking. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.

Kit Bonner, Naval Historian

Hi Bill, I can't confirm any of this story but it is an interesting read. Hope all is well, Ron Swearingen, DC3.

"I followed up on this by Googling the ship, found a number of sources that confirm this story. Bill Provencal, 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.

Andy Dusault, DC2	Ron Swearingen, DC3	Alan Robertson, BT2
Harry T. Andersen, BTC	Rich Pratt, SN & Ft. Snelling Website	





"The picture on the left, which was taken in the carpenter shop, was developed during Feb. 1961, so I expect that it was taken in Jan. Anyway, it shows Phil Canney of Lee, NH who was discharged in 1963 as an MM2 and Thurlow "Butch" Brewer a fisherman from Boothbay Harbor, Maine. Phil was killed in a car accident during March of 1968. The last time that I saw Butch was in East Boothbay Harbor on July 4 during the late '70's The picture on the right I do not remember the date or occasion for the PRock cake. I was on board from May '60 to Jan '63. Was it a birthday of sorts? Maybe someone out there has a recollection". Pictures were contributed by Andy Dusault, DC2.



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.

Plymouth Rock Mug. Price is \$15.00 includes shipping and handling.



Bumper Stickers. Price is \$2.80 includes shipping and handling.



Ships Patch. Price is \$8.75 includes shipping and handling.



Plymouth Rock Cap. Price is \$15.00 this price includes shipping and handling.

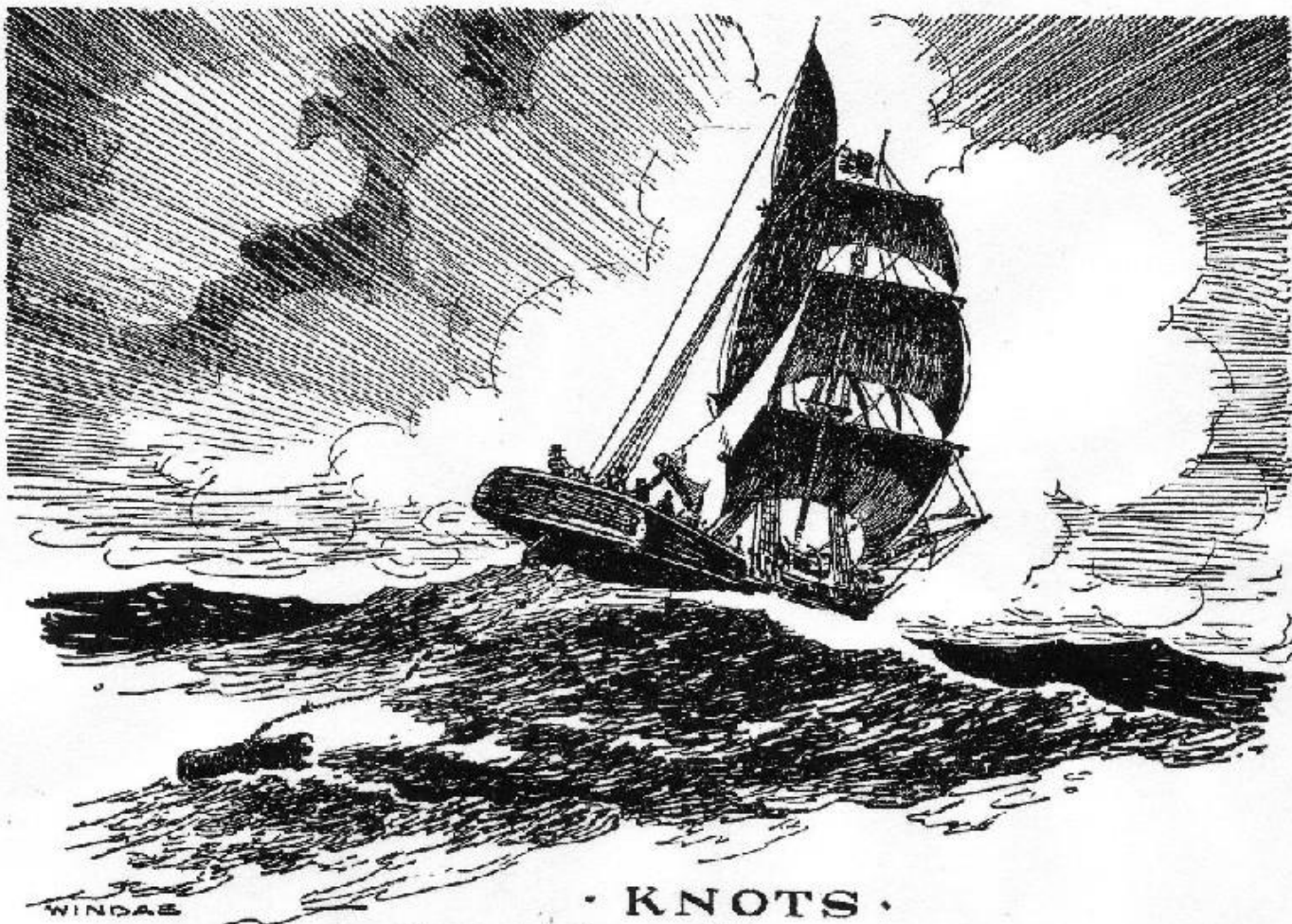


Short sleeve tee shirt. Price is \$22.00 which includes shipping and handling. The following sizes are available: Med./Lge./XL/XXL and XXXL.



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.





• KNOTS •

To ascertain the speed of his vessel, a British commander had knots tied at regular intervals in a coil of rope. The rope was then bent onto a log, and the log hove overboard. With an hour-glass, he timed each knot as it disappeared over the taffrail --- thus originating the custom of telling off a ship's speed by knots instead of miles.

• HALLIARDS •

Originally an order "Haul Yards"; these two words were corrupted into one which now designates any lines used for hoisting sails, flags etc.



• THE CUT OF HIS JIB •

An everyday phrase referring to a man's general appearance. The term derives from the days when it was possible to distinguish French vessels at a distance because of their two small jibs, and a British ship by her huge single jib.

• JACK TAR •

International nickname for government sailors, because of the custom among old navy men of giving their work-clothes a light coating of tar to waterproof them.





Picture of the Fort Snelling and the P.Rock tied up together at the quay wall in Little Creek. Picture contributed by Rich. Pratt, SN. Image is from the Ft. Snelling website.



Hazing incident aboard, the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6)

The USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) steams off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia while conducting humanitarian assistance, Eight sailors have been discharged from the Navy after video surfaced of a hazing incident aboard, the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6), a San Diego-based amphibious assault ship that included the choking of a fellow sailor, a Navy spokesman said Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012.

The eight received general discharges following allegations they assaulted and choked the sailor aboard the ship, the Bonhomme Richard, as part of a rite to initiate the sailor into a new department, said Lt. Commander David McKinney.

McKinney said the assault, which took place Jan. 17 in the ship's berthing area, was videotaped, and the victim treated for injuries. "He was choked out, evidently blacked out and had bruising," said McKinney. The injuries were not serious, but the sailor sought treatment and reported the incident to his superiors, leading to the discharges, McKinney said.

One of the sailors seen in the video, Charlie Davis, 20, of Dallas, told ABC10 News that the attack was just "play wrestling" and "boys being boys," and he and others had been through the same thing earlier in the day. "A couple of the guys wrestled me down and had fun with me and then shook my hand and welcomed me aboard," he said. Davis, who had in the Navy for just five months, told the TV station he's disappointed in himself, but believes the Navy's zero-tolerance hazing policy is too harsh. "I buy into it for drugs and alcohol: that's zero-tolerance," said Davis. "But play wrestling with no malicious intent and for eight people's lives to be destroyed? You've got to be kidding me."

The sailors could have appealed their captain's discharge decision, but none have done so, McKinney said.



Pea coat

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A pea coat (or **pea jacket**, **pilot jacket**) is an outer coat, generally of a navy-colored heavy wool,^[1] originally worn by sailors of European and later American navies.^[2] Pea coats are characterized by broad lapels, double-breasted fronts, often large wooden or metal buttons, and vertical or slash pockets.^[3] References to the pea jacket appear in American newspapers at least as early as the 1720s,^[4] and modern renditions still maintain the original design and composition.^[1]

ORIGIN OF "PEA COAT"

Sailors who have to endure pea-soup weather often don their pea coats but the coat's name isn't derived from the weather. The heavy topcoat worn in cold, miserable weather by seafaring men was once tailored from pilot cloth and a heavy, course, stout kind of twilled blue cloth with the nap on one side.

The cloth was sometimes called p-cloth for the initial letter of "pilot" and the garment made from it was called a p-jacket and later, a pea coat. The term has been used since 1723 to denote coats made from that cloth.

Material on the Pea Coat contributed by Harry T. Andersen, BTC, USN Ret.



BTC Harry Andersen, Ret., with Nicholas. A WWII fighter plane recovered from Lake Michigan. Harry is the Chief of the Ships Association, being one of the founders.



Navy to step up Breathalyzer tests of sailors

By BROCK VERGAKIS Associated Press The Associated Press
Monday, March 5, 2012 9:37 PM EST

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — The Navy soon will begin giving Breathalyzer tests to many of its sailors before they report to work aboard a ship under a new program that will spread to the Marine Corps later this year. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus announced the plan Monday during a rare "all hands" call from aboard the USS Bataan at Naval Station Norfolk.

Mabus' comments were broadcast to sailors and Marines worldwide, who were able to submit questions to him via email and each service's Facebook page. During the question and answer session, Mabus was not asked about the Breathalyzer tests, which are already in use aboard submarines in the Pacific Northwest.

The Marine Corps will begin a similar pilot program in April for four of its units, including one at the presidential retreat at Camp David. Lt. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commander of Marine Corps Forces Command, said the program would expand to the rest of the force after that initial six-month pilot program.

Hejlik said it is important to identify Marines who may have an alcohol problem early on so that their careers aren't hampered and, more importantly, that they don't put other Marines at risk.

Details of the Navy program are still being worked out, but not every sailor who walks onto a ship will be given a Breathalyzer test. Navy officials estimate that between one sixth and one eighth of a ship's crew will be given the test, which will target those standing watch and overseeing important aspects of a ship, such as its nuclear reactors. Other sailors may be tested at random. The Navy is setting aside \$8 million to begin the program and anticipates spending \$2 million to keep it going.

Mabus said sailors who are found to have been using alcohol before reporting to work won't necessarily be punished, but the tests will be used as a way to help identify sailors in need of treatment and to serve as a deterrent for those considering drinking heavily the night before a shift.

"We're not telling you not to drink if you're old enough," Mabus said. "We are telling you that it's important to keep legal, responsible use of alcohol from turning into a problem. Your jobs and your lives are too important."

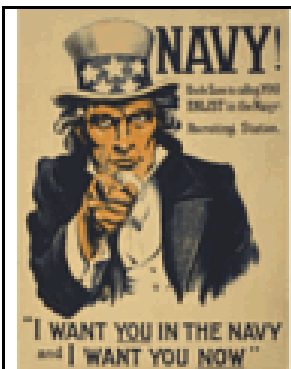


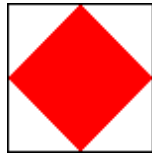
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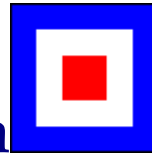
Photographs accompanying articles are much appreciated.

Send your articles to the editor at: billinp@metrocast.net





Navy Trivia



POOP DECK: No, this term does not come from sailors hanging off the stern of the ship, relieving themselves. Rather, it is from the Latin *puppis* meaning stern. So the poop deck is the aft deck of a ship.

KNOCK OFF WORK: The galleys of sailing ships were once filled with men rowing to the rhythm of a mallet striking a wooden block. It was only time to quit rowing when the knocking stopped.

SONAR: Sound Navigation Ranging. An acronym for underwater echo-ranging equipment, originally for detecting submarines by small warships.

PORT AND STARBOARD: Port and starboard are shipboard terms for left and right, respectively. Confusing those two could cause a ship wreck. In Old England, the starboard was the steering paddle or rudder, and ships were always steered from the right side on the back of the vessel. Larboard referred to the left side, the side on which the ship was loaded. So how did larboard become port? Shouted over the noise of the wind and the waves, larboard and starboard sounded too much alike. The word port means the opening in the "left" side of the ship from which cargo was unloaded. Sailors eventually started using the term to refer to that side of the ship. Use of the term "port" was officially adopted by the [U.S. Navy by General Order, 18 February 1846](#).

COXSWAIN: A coxswain or cockswain was at first the swain (boy servant) in charge of the small cock or cockboat that was kept aboard for the ship's captain and which was used to row him to and from the ship. The term has been in use in England dating back to at least 1463. With the passing of time the coxswain became the helmsman of any boat, regardless of size.