

# USS Plymouth Rock (LSD29)

Newsletter May-August, 2015, 41st Edition

Welcome to the USS Plymouth Rock Newsletter

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](mailto: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 <mailto: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/](http://www.ussplymouthrock.com/)



## Ships Officers

President

Tom Wagner

[tfwagner@wagner-insurance.net](mailto:tfwagner@wagner-insurance.net)

812-537-9548

Vice President

Bill Haynie

864-934-2900

<mailto:whhaynue@charter.net>

Treasurer

David Dortch

870-236-3725



★ ★ ★ Welcome Aboard ★ ★ ★

[tazrhondave@yahoo.com](mailto:tazrhondave@yahoo.com)

Secretary/Webmaster  
Bill Provencal  
[billinp@metrocast.net](mailto:billinp@metrocast.net)  
603-435-8603

Ships Historian  
Norm Jepson  
586-755-3814  
[rnjepson@aol.com](mailto:rnjepson@aol.com)

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

Reunion Coordinators:  
Bill and Lynn Haynie  
864-934-2900  
<mailto:whhaynie@charter.net>



**NOTE: Additional information is available on the Website "Crews Muster List"**



A long-time friend of the ships Association, Marguerite (Peggy) Eldridge passed away May 13, 2015. Marguerite was the widow of Milt Eldridge. YN2, who was a plank owner of the USS Plymouth Rock. She will be remembered for the wonderful poems that she wrote while attending the many reunions we had over the years.

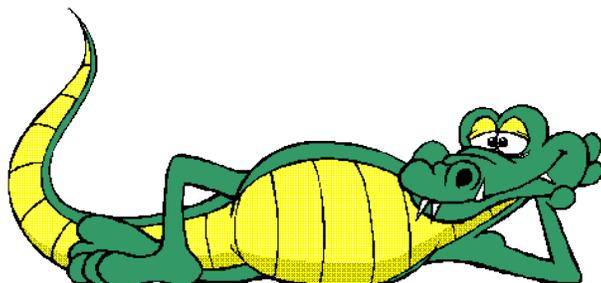


### Information on the Reunion in 2016



The 2016 Ships Reunion will be held in Pensacola, FL. We have the tentative dates of Sept 28 through Oct 2, 2016 reserved. We will be staying at the Holiday Inn, located at 7813 N. Davis Hwy, Pensacola, Fla. This location is adjacent to Exit 13 of I-10. These arrangements will be guaranteed as soon as Bill Haynie signs the contract. We have 2 room rates @ \$99.00 /night plus taxes. The second rate is \$109.00/night plus taxes. The second rate includes breakfast.

Possibilities for activities include the Naval Air Museum and a practice/show of the Blue Angels. As we acquire more information it will be posted on the website and in the next newsletter in December 2015.



### Recent Address/E-Mail/Phone Numbers Changes to the Ships Muster List

Eddie Palmer, SM3, Alexandria, LA On board: 75-78. New e-mail address:

[mepalmer2@att.net](mailto:mepalmer2@att.net)

Robert Black, ET2, Fayette AL. On board 1980-83. New Mailing Address: 380 Pistol Rd., Fayette, AL 35555, 281-756-7122. New e-mail address: [simstick@gmail.com](mailto:simstick@gmail.com)



### Known Deceased Shipmates

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

James Kuhns, BT3, on board 1954-55, Plank Owner, Deceased November 11, 2014	Ed. Alexander, CPO, on board 1974-78, Deceased December 20, 2011
Robert Nichols III, EM1, on board 3/65-3/67, Deceased August 11, 2015	



### Paid Membership List

Due to the length of our Paid Memberwhip List, we are no longer printing the complete list in the newsletter. If you wish to view the complete list, go to the Website [ussplymouthrock.com](http://ussplymouthrock.com) and select the Paid Dues Member link. If you are in doubt if your dues are due just look at the date on your blue association membership card.



## 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.

Harry T. Andersen, BTC	USS Alamo LSD33	USS Whetstone LSD27
Ron Swearingen, QM3		



Image contributed by Ron Swearingen, QM3



## WRITE AN ARTICLE!

We need your articles and letters to the newsletter editor for publication in our newsletter.

Photographs accompanying articles are much appreciated.

Send your articles to the editor at: [billinp@metrocast.net](mailto:billinp@metrocast.net)





Whisk brooms stand at attention and so do their owners during this seabag inspection by Admiral Richard H. Leigh, Commander in Chief Battle Fleet on board his flagship *California*. The men of the *California* are wearing dress whites, a uniform which became extinct with the advent of World War II. Some prewar sailors still mourn its passing. The number of bands on the blue cuffs indicated a nonrated man's grade. Only petty officers had rating insignia on the upper sleeves. Saturday morning inspections were an institution in the prewar Navy, although the crew still had a five-day work week in port. They got liberty on Wednesday afternoon, known as "rope-yarn Sunday."

Photo and article contributed by Harry Andedrsen, BTC, Ret.



### Old Sailors

OLD SAILORS SIT AND CHEW THE FAT  
ABOUT THINGS THAT USED TO BE,  
OF THE THINGS THEY'VE SEEN,  
THE PLACES THEY'VE BEEN,  
WHEN THEY VENTURED OUT TO SEA.

THEY TALKED OF THE CHOW OL' COOKIE WOULD  
MAKE  
AND THE SHRILL OF THE BOSUN'S PIPE.  
HOW SALT SPRAY WOULD FALL  
LIKE SPARKS FROM HELL  
WHEN A STORM STRUCK IN THE NIGHT.

THEY REMEMBERED FRIENDS FROM LONG AGO,  
THE TIMES THEY HAD BACK THEN.  
THE MONEY THEY SPENT,  
THE BEER THEY DRANK,  
IN THEIR DAYS AS SAILING MEN.

THEIR LIVES ARE LIVED IN DAYS GONE BY,  
WITH THOUGHTS THAT FOREVER LAST.  
OF BELL BOTTOM BLUES,  
WINGED WHITE HATS,  
AND GOOD TIMES IN THEIR PAST.

THEY RECALL LONG NIGHTS WITH A MOON SO  
BRIGHT  
FAR OUT ON A LONELY SEA.  
THE THOUGHTS THEY HAD  
AS YOUTHFUL LADS,  
WHEN THEIR LIVES WERE WILD AND FREE.

THEY KNEW SO WELL HOW THEIR HEARTS WOULD  
SWELL  
WHEN OLD GLORY FLUTTERED PROUD AND FREE.  
THE UNDERWAY PENNANT  
SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT  
AS THEY PLOWED THROUGH AN ANGRY SEA

THEY REMEMBER OLD SHIPMATES ALREADY GONE  
WHO FOREVER HOLD A SPOT IN THEIR HEART,  
WHEN SAILORS WERE BOLD,  
AND FRIENDSHIPS WOULD HOLD,  
UNTIL DEATH RIPPED THEM APART

THEIR SAILING DAYS ARE GONE AWAY,  
NEVER AGAIN WILL THEY CROSS THE BROW.  
THEY HAVE NO REGRETS,  
THEY KNOW THEY ARE BLESSED,  
FOR HONORING A SACRED VOW.

THEIR NUMBERS GROW LESS WITH EACH PASSING  
DAY  
AS THE FINAL MUSTER BEGINS,  
THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE,  
ALL HAVE PAID DUES,  
AND THEY'LL SAIL WITH SHIPMATES AGAIN.

I'VE HEARD THEM SAY BEFORE GETTING  
UNDERWAY  
THAT THERE'S STILL SOME SAILING TO DO,  
THEY'LL SAY WITH A GRIN  
THAT THEIR SHIP HAS COME IN  
AND THE LORD IS COMMANDING THE CREW

Source: USS Alamo, LSD33.



**✉** Received this e-mail from Jamie Luttrell, son of James Luttrell, GMM2, on board 7/54-8/56. "I just wanted to inform you that, after putting up a brave battle, my father has been moved to an Alzheimer's unit in Washington, IL. Although most of his memory is gone, he still remembers his dear ship, the Plymouth Rock, and a few of his shipmates from '52-'56. He enjoys getting the newsletters and will look at them over and over again. He wears his Plymouth Rock hat proudly and we have often been approached in public by people coming to thank him for his service. His new address is 1280 Independence Court, Washington, IL 61571. "



## 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](mailto:shortybm3@yahoo.com) All orders must be accompanied by a check. Checks must be made out to the USS Plymouth Rock Association. To view all of the items in the Ship Store go to the ships website at [ussplymouthrock.com](http://ussplymouthrock.com), select Ships Store Link

**Items for Sale:**

**Sweatshirt (S, M, L, XL) \$30.00**

**Sweatshirt (XXL) \$35.00**

**Sweatshirt )XXXL) \$37.00**

**Plymouth Rock pin \$4.00**

**Ships Patch \$8.75**

**Plymouth Rock cap \$15.00**

**Tee Shirt, short sleeve (blue) (M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL) \$32.00**

**Plymouth Rock Mug \$15.00**

**Personalized Commerative Placque \$20.00 or \$25.00 depending on size**

**Bumper Stickers \$2.80**

**Ships Sleeve Patch \$17.00**

**Note: All prices include shipping and handling**



**MILITARY SPOUSES**  
**USS Whetstone LSD27, June 2015 newsletter**

Over the years, I've had a lot of jokes about military spouses. I want you to know how special they are and the price they pay for freedom too. The funny thing about it is most military spouses don't consider themselves different from other spouses. They do what they have to do, bound together not by blood or merely friendship, but with a shared spirit whose origin is in the very essence of what love truly is.

Is there truly a difference? I think there is. You have to decide for yourself. Other spouses get married and look forward to building equity in a home and putting down family roots. Military spouses get married and know they'll live in base housing or rent, and their roots must be short so they can be transplanted frequently. Other spouses decorate a home with flair and personality that will last a lifetime. Military spouses decorate a home with flare tempered with the knowledge that no two base houses have the same size windows or same size rooms. Curtains have to be flexible and multiple sets are a plus. Furniture must fit like puzzle pieces. Other spouses have living rooms that are immaculate and seldom used. Military spouses have immaculate living room/dining room combos. The coffee table got a scratch or two moving from coast-to-coast, but it still looks pretty good. Other spouses say good-bye to their spouse for a business trip and know they won't see them for a week. They are lonely, but can survive. Military spouses say good-bye to their deploying spouse and know they won't see them for months, or for a remote, a year. They are lonely, but will survive. Other spouses, when a washer hose blows off, call Maytag and then write a check out for getting the hose reconnected. Military spouses will cut the water off and fix it themselves. Other spouses get used to saying "hello" to friends they see all the time. Military spouses get used to saying "good-bye" to friends made the last two years. Other spouses worry about whether their child will be class president next year. Military spouses worry about whether their child will be accepted in yet another new school next year and whether that school will be the worst in the city...again. Other spouses can count on spouse participation in special events...birthdays, anniversaries, concerts, football games, graduation, and even the birth of a

child. Military spouses only count on each other; because they realize that the flag has to come first if freedom is to survive. It has to be that way. Other spouses put up yellow ribbons when the troops are imperiled across the globe and take them down when the troops come home. Military spouses wear yellow ribbons around their hearts and they never go away. Other spouses worry about being late for mom's Thanksgiving dinner. Military spouses worry about getting back from Japan in time for dad's funeral. And other spouses are touched by the television program showing an elderly lady putting a card down in front of a long, black wall that has names on it. The card simply says "Happy Birthday, Sweetheart. You would have been sixty today." A military spouse is the lady with the card. And the wall is the Vietnam Memorial. I would never say military spouses are better or worse than other spouses are. But I will say there is a difference. And I will say that our country asks more of military spouses than is asked of other spouses. And I will say, without hesitation, that military spouses pay just as high a price for freedom as do their active duty husbands or wives. Perhaps the price they pay is even higher. Dying in service to our country isn't near as hard as loving someone who has died in service to our country, and having to live without them.



The US Navy and Raytheon have successfully conducted a flight test, demonstrating the new capabilities for the Tomahawk Block IV cruise missile.

Performed at the guided missile cruiser USS Anzio (CG-68), the test saw the mission missile recording a direct hit on its target.

The flight test proved that the missile can operate with an improved, more flexible mission planning capability.

Raytheon Air Warfare Systems vice-president Mike Jarrett said: "Together with our US Navy partners, we continue to modernise the Tomahawk Baseline IV weapon system to outpace threats and provide war fighters with a tactical edge.

"Tomahawk continues to be our nation's weapon of choice for long-range, precision strikes against high-value targets."

Designed for long-range precision strike missions against high-value and heavily defended targets, the Block IV missile has a range of approximately 1,000 statute miles, while cruising at 550mph.

The test verified recent updates made to the mission planning system software, which supports planners to quickly design dynamic missions.



According to Raytheon, the mission planning system software updates represents the first significant software update to the Tomahawk missile in more than five years.

"Tomahawk continues to be our nation's weapon of choice for long-range, precision strikes against high-value targets."

The new capabilities will be delivered throughout the fleet to support overseas contingency operations.

In June, the US Navy and Raytheon completed the operational testing and evaluation live-fires of the AIM-9X Sidewinder Block II infrared air-to-air missile.

The testing and evaluation process involved 16 planned shots against a variety of full-scale and sub-scale targets.

The new development helped the US Government to finalise the approval, acceptance, and delivery of the missiles to its services and allies later this year.



## [A Rare Recovery: CSS Georgia](#)

– July 24, 2015 Posted in: [Exploration And Technology](#), [Platforms](#)

### Ship History

CSS Georgia was a Confederate ironclad gunboat that was built to help defend the city of Savannah, Georgia during [the Civil War](#). Georgia was launched on 20 May 1862 and soon came to serve as a floating battery moored adjacent to Old Fort Jackson when it was discovered that she was substantively underpowered. On 20 December 1864, CSS Georgia was scuttled in the Savannah River near the fort in order to prevent capture by advancing

Union forces. Salvage attempts were conducted on the site shortly after the war and then the vessel lay forgotten until partial remains were rediscovered in 1968 during dredging operations. Several archaeological surveys of the site have been subsequently conducted. CSS Georgia was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

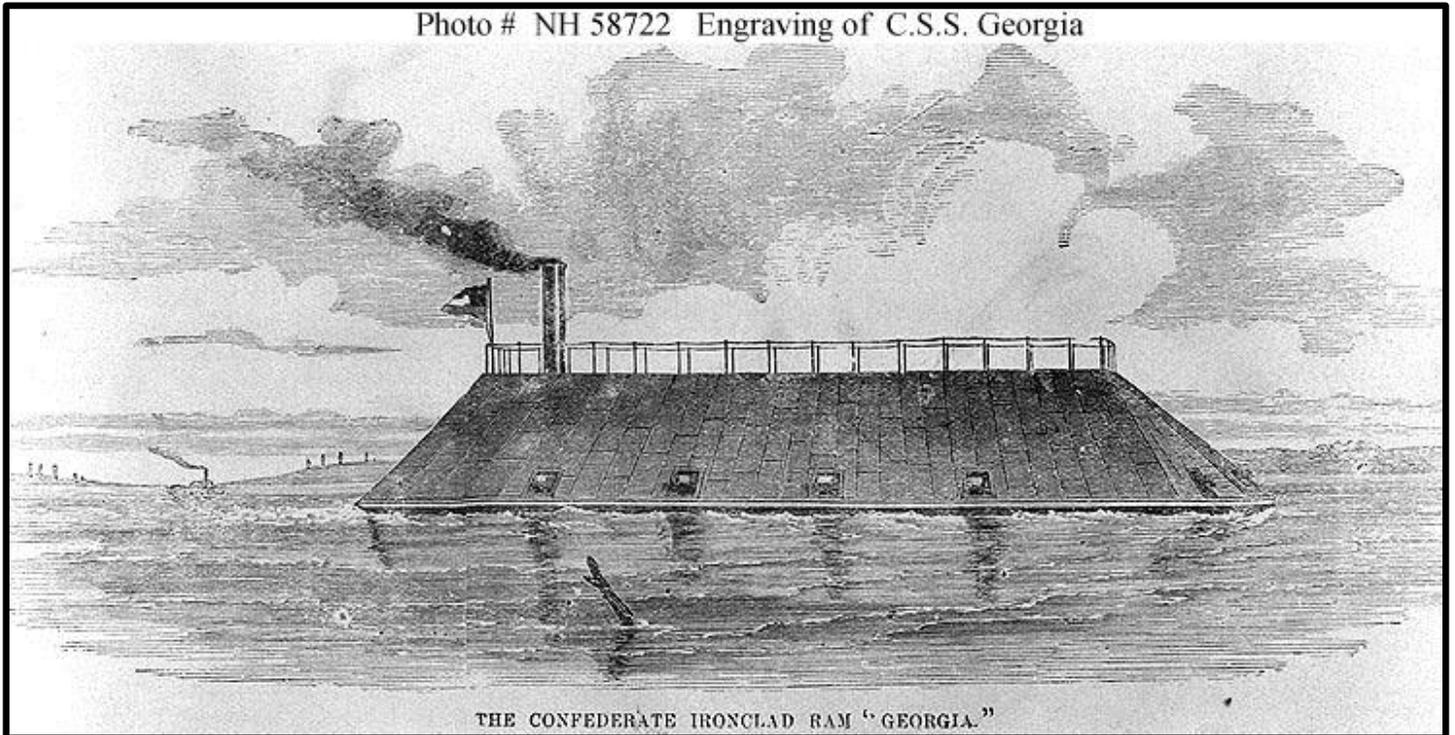


Photo #: NH 58722 The Confederate Ironclad Ram 'Georgia' Line engraving published in *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Volume II, page 31, depicting CSS Georgia, an ironclad floating battery that served in the defenses of Savannah, Georgia. Despite the caption included in the original image, this vessel was not a ram. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph



## **George Washington to Arrive in San Diego, Three Carrier Swap Continues**

**CORONADO, Calif. (NNS) --** The aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) is scheduled to arrive at Naval Air Station North Island Aug. 10 to initiate a crew and equipment swap with the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) before beginning its transit to Norfolk, Virginia, where it will prepare for its mid-life refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH).

George Washington's arrival in San Diego is part of the three-carrier swap announced by the Navy January 2014 involving George Washington, USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) and Ronald Reagan.

George Washington departed Japan in May to participate in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2015

with Australia and New Zealand. The ship has been forward deployed in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility since 2008.

In San Diego, George Washington will conduct a 10-day turn over period with Ronald Reagan before leaving the Southern California operating area for Naval Station Norfolk, where the ship is expected to begin mid-life RCOH at Newport News Shipbuilding, Huntington Ingalls Industries in fall 2016.

Ronald Reagan will depart San Diego as well and proceed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility to serve as the fleet's forward deployed naval forces aircraft carrier out of Yokosuka, Japan. Ronald Reagan recently completed a maintenance period in which it had many of its systems upgraded.

"We are sending one of our most advanced carriers to join our forward deployed forces in Japan to support the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region," said Vice Adm. Mike Shoemaker, commander, Naval Air Forces. "Sending USS Ronald Reagan demonstrates our continued commitment to the region and ensures the Navy is where it matters, when it matters."

Theodore Roosevelt, which is currently conducting an around-the-world deployment after leaving Norfolk in March 2015, is expected to arrive to its new homeport of San Diego in late fall 2015. Theodore Roosevelt will replace Ronald Reagan as a U.S. 3rd Fleet rotational carrier.

Intense planning went into the three hull swap evolution. The crew swap allows geographic stability for many of the Sailors while providing a savings of approximately \$41 million in permanent change of station (PCS) costs to the Navy.

Approximately two-thirds of each crew will remain in their original homeport while one-third will transfer with their ship. Reactor Department personnel will remain with their respective hull as well as a small number of personnel deemed critical to the ship's operations, such as the ship's commanding officer and executive officer. Command master chiefs will remain with their respective crews. Each ship will go through tailored training for the new crew following the personnel swap.



### WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

**My daughter** and her husband, naval reservists, have an eight-year-old son. When one of his parochial school classmates told my daughter that Angus had said a bad word, she said, "He can't help it. Both his parents are sailors."

*Muriel Smith*





## Carriers Eisenhower and Nimitz

From the desk of Tom Wagner, Association President



PREZ SEZ:

The month of August is almost behind us and we are closing in on being a year out from the 2016 Reunion. As you probably know, the 2016 Reunion will be held in Pensacola Florida. To my recollection, this is the first ever Reunion in Florida. Our VP/Reunion Chairperson, Bill Haynie, has been checking out lodging, tours, sightseeing and other amenities the city has to offer. More specific information will be forthcoming in the Newsletter and on the Website.

Recently, I was informed of the passing of a shipmate who was instrumental in organizing the PROCK Association. Elaine Nichols notified the Association that her husband, Bob Nichols, had passed away August 11, 2015. Bob was the original Treasurer of the Association. Bob's wit could always make you laugh. He will be missed.



June 18<sup>th</sup> is my birthday, nothing special about that day, but this most recent birthday, it was announced in Cincinnati, at a Cincinnati Reds ball game, by the Secretary of Navy that a new ship will be built bearing the name USS Cincinnati LCS-20. I think that's special! LCS stands for Littoral Combat Ship. The ship is said to be "formidable" and "maneuverable". One look at this "puppy" and you know it

will "fly". The Navy Department admits to a speed of 54 MPH. Pictures of the ship are available on the web.

I hope you all had a great summer and remember Pensacola is not far off.

Tom Wagner  
President



## Navy Trivia

**The Navy SEAL Trident is sometimes called the "Budweiser."**

The trident worn on the uniforms of Navy SEALs is officially designated as the "Special Warfare Insignia," but it is sometimes called the "Budweiser," named in part for the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) course, the grueling twenty-five week special warfare school. The trident also has an uncanny resemblance to the Anheuser-Busch logo

**In the Navy, there are no walls or bathrooms**

The Navy has a rich lexicon established by millennia of naval tradition. Ships don't have walls, they have bulkheads. The mess deck is where you eat food, the deck is where you walk. The head is where you'll find a toilet. The rack is where you sleep. Birds take off from the bird farm or, rather, planes take off from an aircraft carrier

**NCIS isn't just a TV show**

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is a federal law enforcement agency operating from 140 locations in the world. Special agents for the largely civilian organization are charged with criminal investigations (obviously), counterterrorism, and counter-intelligence. It was founded

as the Office of Naval Intelligence, and at the time was responsible for gathering information on foreign vessels, passengers, bodies of water, and naval infrastructure. During World War I, its mission expanded to espionage and sabotage. Today, it's a cash cow for CBS.

## **Bib**

The portion of a Navy enlisted uniform that hangs from the back of the neck. In the wooden navy it was fashion for sailors to have long hair but it would get blown about by the winds and get stuck in the rigging or machinery. To counteract this sailors at sea would braid their hair and dip it in tar (used to seal the boards on the ship). When ashore on liberty (as opposed to a longer leave where they would wash the tar out of the hair) they would cut a bib out of sack cloth and tie it around their neck to keep from getting tar on their one good shirt. The bib eventually became an official part of the enlisted uniform.



*Plymouth Rock underway, 10 September 1974*



<b>Launched:</b>	<b>7 May 1954</b>
<b>Commissioned:</b>	<b>29 November 1954</b>
<b>Decommissioned:</b>	<b>30 September 1983</b>

Struck:	24 February 1992
Fate:	Sold for scrap, 25 August 1995



## U.S. Navy Officer Ranks and Enlisted Rates

### Enlisted Rates



The use of the word "rank" for Navy enlisted personnel is incorrect. The term is "rate." The rating badge is a combination of rate (pay grade, as indicated by the chevrons) and rating (occupational specialty, as indicated by the symbol just above the chevrons).

The insignia here represents a Petty Officer First Class (the rate) who is a Boatswain's Mate (the rating). A rating badge is worn on the left upper sleeve of all uniforms in grades E-4 through E-6. Chief Petty Officers (E-7 through E-9) wear collar devices on their white and khaki uniforms, and rating badges on their Service Dress Blues.

An explanation of the the enlisted [rates](#) is hyperlinked from the chevrons in the image to the left, and an explanation of the various Navy occupational specialties is hyperlinked from the [rating symbol](#), in this case the crossed anchors..

### Officer Ranks



Navy officers wear their rank devices in different places on their uniforms, depending upon the uniform. The three basic uniforms and the type of rank devices are: khakis (a working uniform) -- pins on the collar; whites -- stripes on shoulder boards; and, blues -- stripes sewn on the lower sleeve. Shoulder boards are also worn on bridge coats and reefers. A chart of the officer ranks is hyperlinked from the ensign's bar at the left.



## Navy Commissioned Amphib Designed for F-35's and No Well Deck

Edited by Bill Provencal

On October 20, 2014 the formal commissioning of the Navy's newest amphibious assault ship took place, the USS America (LHA-6)—a big deck amphib designed to more fully leverage the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter and the ability to air-drop Marines behind enemy lines.



Unlike previous Wasp-class amphibious assault ships, the America will not have a well deck to launch vehicles that transport Marines and equipment from ship to shore over water. Instead, the America is specifically engineered for aviation. Compared with prior amphibians, the America has a larger deck space and hangar area for aircraft. The America is configured to house up to 31 aircraft, including as many as 12 MC-22 Ospreys and the CH-53 Super Stallion, AH-1Z Super Cobra, UH-1Y Huey, F-35B Short-take-off-and-landing Joint Strike Fighter and NH-60 Sea Hawk Helicopter.

The ship can transport up to 3,000 sailors and marines. Amphibious technology on board the ship can include up to 60 Light Armored Vehicles, mortars, artillery and smaller internally Transportable Vehicles or ITV's configured to drive into the back of an Osprey.

There is no doubt that leaving the well deck off the *America Class* takes a lot of the multi-role flexibility out of the what has become the Pentagon's floating multi-tools of expeditionary combat. Yet times do change, and being able to storm and hold beaches may not be as relevant as it once was. Instead, the *America Class* is more about striking deeper into enemy territory via the Marine's Ospreys and F-35Bs.

Apparently the whole well deck-lacking *USS America* controversy is not lost entirely on the US Navy. The *America Class*, at least in its aviation-centric, non-well deck format, will have a short run of only two ships. *America Class* ships following LHA-8 *USS Tripoli* will be designed with a well deck, which will result in a smaller island structure, reduced hangar space and less storage for jet fuel and munitions.

So basically, the Marines have their own carrier now? Given the ship's mission using vertical take off aircraft like the Osprey and F35B, it would have been better to come up with an amphibious assault ship rather than a scaled down carrier. So this February, 2015, after months of study, the Marine Corps Commandant and the Chief of Naval Operations signed an official memorandum of agreement that restores the well deck to LHA-8 and subsequent ships.