

USS Plymouth Rock (LSD29)

Newsletter September - December 2002

Welcome to the USS Plymouth Rock Newsletter

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 members, you can send it as an e-mail to:

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

Newsletter Information

This is the second issue of the newsletter. I want to thank you crew members who e-mailed me with comments, thanks, criticisms, etc. We will publish a newsletter every 4 months (3 times a year). Our plan is to e-mail the newsletter to all Crew Members who have e-mail and to mail the newsletter to all paid association members. The newsletter prior to the reunion date, we will mail the newsletter to all Crew members either by e-mail or regular mail. **If you change address or e-mail address be sure to let me (Bill Provencal) know so we can update our Crews List.**

It would help us if those of you who receive the mailed copy of the newsletter and who have e-mail to let me know what your e-mail address is.

Reunion Update

The USS Plymouth Rock Ships Association will hold its 4th Reunion on June 5, 6, 7 2003 in Waukegan, IL. The reunion will be held at the Ramada Inn, Waukegan, IL. Cost is \$84.36 (tax included) per night. We would also visit the Volo Illinois Auto Museum, cost is approximately \$18 - 22 per person bus fare and \$4.00 admission. We would also attend a recruit graduation at Great Lakes, IL. Chief Harry Andersen reports that this is just a rough schedule and that a firmer plan would be available for the December newsletter. Harry can be reached by phone at: 847-336-2151 or by e-mail at andycporetsnipe@aol.com

Recently Located Shipmates

Roger LaMay, Brushton, NY e-mail roghlamay@yahoo.com
Mark Orlando, Mount Pleasant, MI e-mail earthdad23@yahoo.com
JC Fisher, Chambersburg, PA e-mail denisej95@comcast.net
James Freeman, Michigan City, IN e-mail olgoofy@attbi.com
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Tony Epley, Central City, KY e-mail tepley@muhlon.com
Victor Nichols, Broken Arrow, OK e-mail vnichols-olp@olp.net
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Paul Wagner, Manchester, NJ e-mail wag268@aol.com
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 Ray Krolak, Schenectady, NY e-mail rkrolak1@nycap.rr.com
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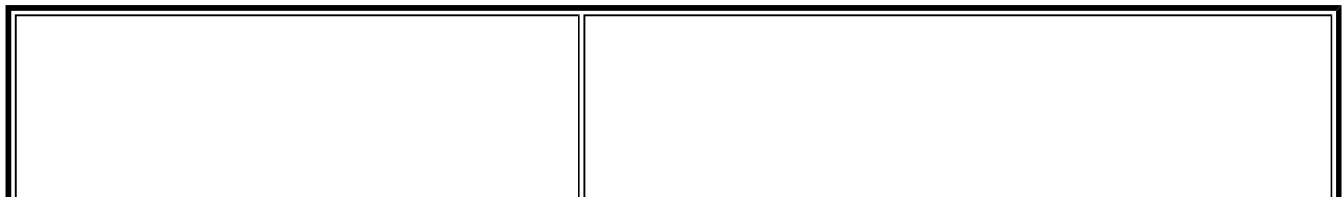
THE USS PLYMOUTH ROCK

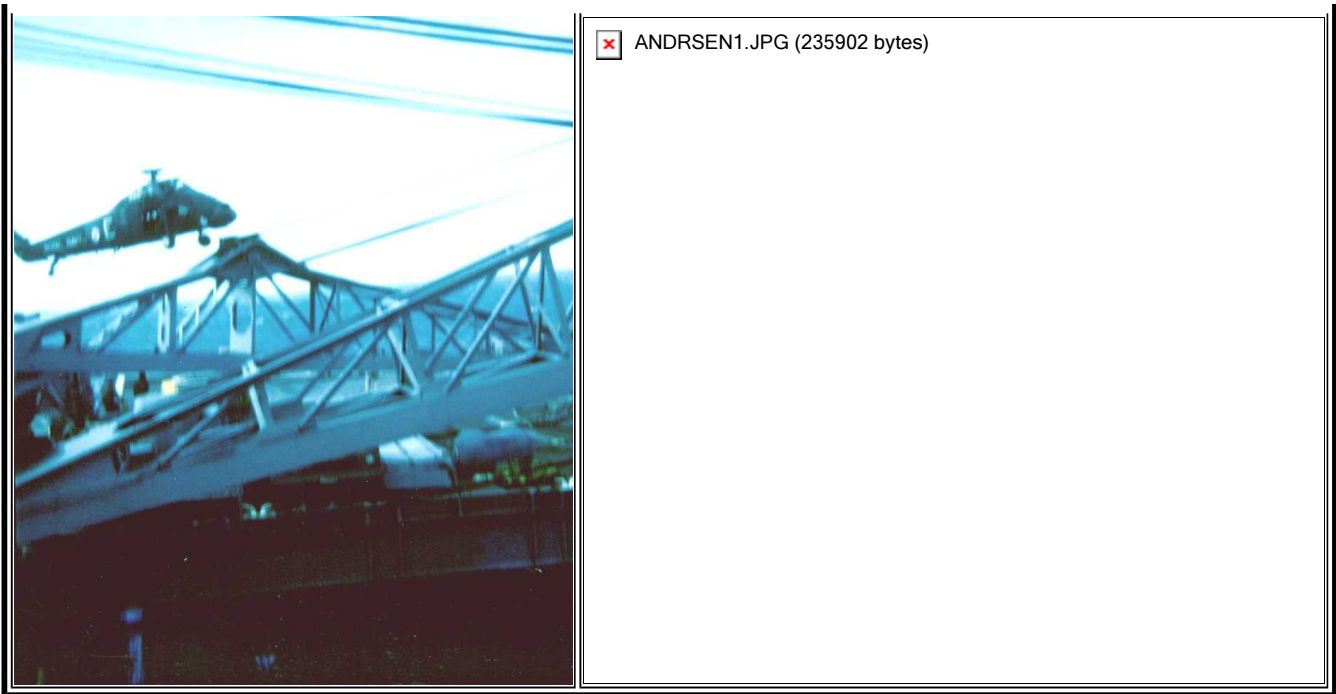
OUR MISTRESS OF THE SEA

By Thomas W. Hickson, BT3, 1970-72

<p>FRESH OUT OF SCHOOL MY ORDERS THEY CAME, ON AN LSD YOU WILL SERVE, THE PLYMOUTH ROCK IS HER NAME.</p>	<p>BUT THEN CAME THE TIME AS IT DID FOR US ALL WHEN WE WOULD LEAVE HER, WHEN THEY WOULD SOUND THE LAST CALL.</p>
<p>THE FIRST TIME I SAW HER, THIS MISTRESS OF THE SEA A PROUD SHIP AT BIRTH, AS SHE BECKONED TO ME.</p>	<p>OTHERS BEFORE US, AND THOSE WHO CAME HENCE, KNOW OF HER BEAUTY, HER MIGHT AND HER STRENGTH.</p>
<p>COME LET ME SHOW YOU THE WONDERS OF THE SEA, COME LET ME SHOW YOU, COME SERVE WITH ME.</p>	<p>SHE WILL BE WITH US ALWAYS, HER CREW, WE WILL ALWAYS BE, TO THE PROUD PLYMOUTH ROCK, OUR MISTRESS OF THE SEA.</p>
<p>ON A CRUISE I WILL TAKE YOU, TO MANY A FOREIGN LAND, AND WHEN WE RETURN, THEY'LL STRIKE UP THE BAND.</p>	<p>IF YOU STAND QUIETLY NEAR THE SHORE, AND GAZE UPON THE SEA, IF YOU LISTEN EVER SO CLOSELY, THERE SHE WILL BE.</p>
<p>HER ENTICEMENT WAS GREAT, HER BEAUTY AND HER STRENGTH COULD NOT BE HIDDEN, 'NEATH PRIMER AND PAINT.</p>	<p>FOR YOU WILL SURELY HEAR HER WHISPER, EVER ENTICING SHE WILL BE, AS SHE WHISPERS TO YOU SOFTLY, AND BECKONS YOU TO THE SEA.</p>
<p>SERVE WITH HER WE DID, MANY FOREIGN SHORES WE DID SEE, TOGETHER WE SERVED PROUDLY, WITH OUR MISTRESS OF THE SEA</p>	<p>COME LET ME SHOW YOU, THE WONDERS OF THE SEA, COME LET ME SHOW YOU, COME SAIL WITH ME.</p>

Photo on left by Tom Hickson BT3, 1970-72, on right by Harry Andersen, BTC, 1968-70





I like the Navy.

by V. Adm. Harold Koenig, USN (Ret)

I like standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe - the ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drive her through the sea.

I like the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswains pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I like the vessels of the Navy - nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries, sleek submarines and steady solid carriers. I like the proud sonorous names of Navy capital ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea - memorials of great battles won. I like the lean angular names of Navy 'tin-cans': Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix, McCloy - mementos of heroes who went before us.

I like the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pull away from the oiler after refueling at sea. I like liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even like all hands working parties as my ship fills herself with the multitude of supplies both mundane and exotic which she needs to cut her ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there is water to float her.

I like sailors, men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trust and depend on them as they trust and depend on me - for professional competence, for comradeship, for courage. In a word, they are "shipmates."

I like the surge of adventure in my heart when the word is passed "Now station the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port", and I like the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pierside. The work is hard and dangerous, the going rough at times, the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the 'all for one and one for all' philosophy of the sea is ever present.

I like the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flit across the wave tops and sunset gives way to night. I like the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead lights,

the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and join with the mirror of stars overhead. And I like drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that tell me that my ship is alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch will keep me safe.

I like quiet midwatches with the aroma of strong coffee - the lifeblood of the Navy - permeating everywhere. And I like hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed keeps all hands on a razor edge of alertness. I like the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations", followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transforms herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war - ready for anything. And I like the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I like the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I like the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones. A sailor can find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent can find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods - the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and messdecks. Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon. Remembering this, they will stand taller and say,

"I WAS A SAILOR ONCE. I WAS PART OF THE NAVY & THE NAVY WILL ALWAYS BE PART OF ME."

LSD ASSOCIATION

Gerald T. Tesar who served on the USS Donner (LSD20) wrote to me of the idea of saving a piece of history by saving one of these great ships (LSD's) and turning it into a floating memorial/museum for the benefit of all the men who served aboard these ships and for future generations. He is now laying the groundwork for forming a UNITED STATES LSD ASSOCIATION whereby all the LSD associations such as ours can be brought together and in a united effort go forward to save one of these ships. He would like to know the feelings of our association about this. Is it a good idea, would we be willing to support this idea and endeavor. What ideas and suggestions do we have. He can be reached at 386-860-0524 or e-mail at g12tesar@n-jcenter.com or by mail at 1167 Peak Circle, Deltona, FL 32738



*Plymouth Rock (LSD-29) Seen here fitted with a retractable sonar forward, circa 1963.
US Navy photo # NH 97360, from the collections of the US Naval Historical Center.*

Association Dues

As you can imagine any group or association such as ours requires funds. Our primary source of revenue are the bi-annual dues of \$20.00. Please be advised that dues for 2001-2002 are due prior to the reunion in June 2003. Anyone who wants to pay their 2003-2004 dues in advance, Bob Nichols assures me that they will be gladly accepted. For those of you who are not paid Association members, any support in the form of dues would be appreciated. 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 and mail to Bob Nichols.

Bob Nichols, EM1
24 Geraldine Rd.
N. Arlington, NJ 07031
201.998.5778
E-mail: enichols24@aol.com

Make your checks payable to: USS Plymouth Rock Association.

Paid Association Members

Allaire, Bob	Andersen, Harry	Baldwin, Brad	Balf, Jim	Bello, Ralph
Bena, Joe	Bierce, George	Buchanan, Richard	Bullington, Calvin	Casillas, Greg
Chappel, John	Conboy, Bill	Copeland, Tory	Crowl II, Martin	Cypher, Harold
Cyr, Dennis	Dalfonzo, Sam	DeCastro, Tom	Dussault, Andrew	Edwards, R. A.
Eldridge, Margurite	Fisher, Jay	Forton, Andrew	Freeman, James	Greco, Jr., Sal
Gregory, Peter	Guertin, Jerry	Hart, Ed	Hartson, George	Hoffman, Dave
Hopper, Richard	Jennings, Seeley	Jepson, Norm	Johnson, John	Joyce, Ed
Krolak, Ray	Kuhns, Jimmy	Lamay, Roger	Luttrell, James	Madill, Shorty
Mathis, Richard	McAvoy Sr., John	McCully, Wade	Mohawk, Paul	Moyer, Larry
Murtha, Jerry	Musella, Rocco	Nichols, Bob	O'Neil, Marty	O'Neil, Thomas
Power, Rand	Provencal, Bill	Purvis, Anthony	Pyle, Ted	Raniszewski, Louis
Rhine, Don	Robinson, Jim	Robinson, Warren	Rose, Chris	Schneider, James
Scott, Bill	Shanahan, Robert	Shewchuk, Richard	Simon, George	Sims, Bill
Smith, Larry	Stull, John III	Tacinelli, Jerry	Verhagen, Mike	Viaene, Robert
Wagner, Paul	Wagner, Tom	Ward, James	Watkins, Richard	Wessels, Gary
Ziamba, James	Stoval, Jack	Fisher, Jack E.	King, Ronald	

Any paid Association members (2001-2002) who are not on this list and who have paid their dues, please contact Bob Nichols.

USS Spiegel Grove

by Bill Provencal

As has been reported in newspapers across the country, on May 17, the USS Spiegel Grove (LSD32), while in tow to be scuttled as an artificial reef for scuba divers off Key Largo in the Florida Keys sunk prematurely. The ship ended upside down in about 160 feet of water. The ship has since been rotated by divers and now is in its final resting place. I want to thank the many of you who e-mailed me about this incidence. While I can understand the purpose of its serving as a divers platform, I also feel some sorrow for its demise and for its former crew members. All of us can understand the loss of a ship, since our Plymouth Rock was sent to the scrap yards in 1996 and a bit of us went with it.



Why did the Chicken cross the road?

By the U.S. Navy

Naval Education and Training Command (NAVEDTRA):

- The purpose is to familiarize the chicken with road-crossing procedures. Road-crossing should be performed only between the hours of sunset and sunrise. Solo chickens must have at least three miles of visibility and a safety observer.

Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS):

- Due to the needs of the Navy, chicken was involuntarily reassigned to the other side of the road. This will be 3-year unaccompanied tour and we promise to give the chicken a good-deal assignment afterwards. Every chicken will be required to do one road crossing during its career, and this will not affect its opportunities for future promotion.

Naval Air Warfare Center (NAWC):

- This event will need confirmation; we need to repeat it using varied chicken breeds, road types, and weather conditions to confirm whether it can actually happen within the parameters specified for chickens and the remote possibility that they might cross thruways designated by some as "roads."

Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR):

- The purpose is not important. What is important is that the chicken remained under the OPCON of COMSIXTHFLEET and did not CHOP to the theater on the other side of the road. Without Chopping, the chicken was able to achieve a seamless road crossing with near perfect, real-time in-transit visibility.

Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIRSYSCOM):

- The chicken was instructed to hold short of the road. This road incursion incident was reported in a Hazardous Chicken Road-Crossing Report (HCRCR). Please re-emphasize that chickens are required to read back all hold short instructions. Finding--CHICKEN ERROR.

Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWARSYSCOM):

- The "stovepipe" chickens of today will be replaced with a multi-function, supported, affordable, integrated and interoperable world-class chicken-to-warriors and supporting elements, enabling them to dominate the roads of today and tomorrow, as we move "Forward...From the Sea." Comptroller holds and corporate taxes, however, will require delay fielding for two years, unless Congressional plus-ups are approved.

Office of Naval Intelligence:

- What chicken?

Ricky's Tour

By JO3 Mike C. Jones



Navy Trivia

Boatswain's Pipe. One of the oldest and most distinctive pieces of nautical equipment, the pipe or flute was used in Greece and Rome to keep the stroke of galley slaves. The pipe was used in the Crusades to call English cross bowmen on deck for attack. In time, the pipe came to be used as a badge of office by commanders. The whistle was used for salutes to distinguished persons as well as to pass orders.

A 1645 publication detailing honors for an admiral, orders; *"The ship's barge to be sent to fetch the visitor having the cockson with his silver whistle in the stern... Upon the near approach of the barge the noise of the trumpets are to sound and so to hold on until the barge comes within less than musket shot, at that time the trumpets are to cease and all such as carry whistles are to whistle a welcome three several times."*

The parts of the pipe are the buoy, gun, keel and shackle.

USS PEARL HARBOR

(LSD 52)

"...a day that will live on in infamy"



Ship Built. USS PEARL HARBOR (LSD 52) was built by Avondale Industries in New Orleans, Louisiana

Ship Commissioned: 30 May 1998



Homeport: San Diego, California

Crew: 24 Officers, 327 Enlisted

MISSION: The primary mission of USS PEARL HARBOR is to dock, transport, and launch the Navy's Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) vessels and other amphibious craft and vehicles with crews and Marines into potential trouble spots around the world . The ship also has the capability to act as the primary control ship during an amphibious assault. It is the last of the LSD 49 (CV) Harpers Ferry Class LSD 's. USS PEARL HARBOR will be a principal component of the amphibious fleet and support Amphibious Ready Groups well into the 21st Century.

The PEARL HARBOR is the last of the United States Navy's four new cargo variants of the Whidbey Island Class (LSD 41) of Landing Dock Ships.

USS PEARL HARBOR CHARACTERISTICS

Ship's force 24 officers, 327 enlisted
Landing force 504 Marines (incl. 102 surge troops)
Length 609 ft., 7 in.
Beam 84 ft
Height 177 ft., 2 in
Engines 4, 16 cylinder Colt-Pielstick Diesels
Horsepower 33,000 combined shaft HP
Propellers 2, 13.5 ft. controllable pitch blades
Speed 20+ knots
Weapons 6, .50 caliber machine guns
2, mk 38 25mm gun systems
2, Close-In Weapons Systems (CIWS)
Rolling Airframe Missile Launchers
Ships Self Defense System
