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The Brown Water Navy in Vietnam

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Part 2

[Part 1 covered Operation MARKET TIME. In Part 2 we will look at Operation GAME WARDEN. This is operation took the war from the coastal regions, up the river deltas, up the rivers and into the canals of South Vietnam.]

The naval war in South Vietnam during the years 1964 to 1975 was very dynamic. For the Americans aiding the South Vietnamese, the effort was several fold: (1) build and equip a capable Vietnamese Navy; (2) teach the new VNN how to fight; (3) how to keep itself supplied; and (4) how to keep itself operational.

At the same time, the United States Navy found itself embroiled in a war that was fought at first, off the coastal waters of South Vietnam, and then in the river deltas, smaller waterways and canals of the country. To combat North Vietnamese infiltration of men and supplies by sea, three Task Forces were formed: TF-115 called Operation MARKET TIME; TF-116 called Operation GAME WARDEN; and TF-117 called the MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE (a joint amphibious Army-Navy riverine operation).

Operation GAME WARDEN

Task Force 116 was established on December 18, 1965 and given the name Operation GAME WARDEN. During the Vietnam War, there were over 50 LSTs serving in direct support of the Navy's Brown Water forces. LSTs in Vietnam earned 360 battle stars, 19 Presidential Unit Citations (PUC), 45 Navy Unit Citations (NUC), and 39 Meritorious Unit Citations (MUC).

By mid-1968 and just prior to the Tet Offensive, the compliment of PBRs was increased to 250. Patrol areas were expanded into I Corps and even into Cambodia under Operation SEALORDS (South East Asia Land, Ocean, River, and Delta Strategy) in the fall of 1968.



The original Game Warden TF-116 consisted of the following units:

Support Ships (1966)

USS BELLE GROVE (LSD-2)
USS COMSTOCK (LSD-19)

multiple entrances from the South China Sea. Although the LSTs made it possible to project a mobile support base for PBR boats and helicopters deep inland, putting such large slow moving ships like these on narrow waterways surrounded by dense jungle presented risks.

On September 12, 1968, USS HUNTERDON COUNTY was ambushed near Ben Tre. She was hit by rocket and recoilless rifle fire from shore and suffered extensive structural damage. Two crewmen were killed and another twenty-five were wounded.

The PBRs (Patrol Boat, River) became known as the mainstay of river patrol operations. But, when the Navy decided to commit itself to river patrol operations in Vietnam, it did not have a readily available small fast patrol craft, nor did it have time to design one of its own. The Navy decided to find a commercially available hull and modify it for combat. They needed a small, light boat with high speed, shallow draft, water jet propulsion system, and heavy firepower. A contract for 120 PBRs (called Mark I) was awarded to United Boat Builders (Uniflite) of Bellingham, Washington at a cost of \$75,000 each.

The Mk I PBR had a 31-foot long fiberglass hull. It could do 28 knots and was powered by two GM 6V53 220 hp diesel truck engines that gave 2,800 rpm direct drive to the Jacuzzi water jet propulsion pumps. Each boat carried a Raytheon 1900 radar unit for night operations. Armament consisted of twin .50 machine guns in a gun tub on the bow, a single .50 machine gun was aft, two M60 7.62 NATO caliber machine guns (or one M60 and one Mk 18 40mm grenade launcher) were on armored shields amidships, plus the personal weapons of the crew. Later, some

PBR crews "augmented" firepower with such weapons as 57mm and 90mm recoilless rifles, M72 light anti-tank weapon (LAW) rocket launchers, flamethrowers, 7.62 NATO Miniguns, 60mm mortars, or 20mm cannon.

The crew of a PBR was four men -- A first class or chief petty officer, a gunner's mate, an engineman, and a seaman. Each man was cross-trained to do the other man's job if he was wounded or killed. PBRs operated in pairs and patrolled the various rivers and canals day and night. The PBRs searched sampans and junks for weapons and supplies. The Viet Cong were very good at concealing such material in even the smallest of boats. Only by thoroughly checking every boat could the flow of weapons and supplies be stopped.

The PBR crews (along with the rest of the GAME WARDEN fleet carried out this mission so effectively that movement of supplies to the Viet Cong by these waterways was severely curtailed.

Other GAME WARDEN Units

Task Force 116 was more than just LSTs and PBRs. Task Force 116 also included Naval Special Operations Groups including: Mobile Support Team ONE, Mobile Support Team TWO, Beach Jumper Unit ONE, Assault Craft Unit ONE, Harbor Clearance Unit ONE, SEAL Team ONE and TWO, Underwater Demolition Team 12 and 13, Explosive Ordnance Disposal detachments. Also included were Strike Assault Boat Squadron 20 (StabRon 20); a Patrol Aircushion Vehicle Squadron (PACV); and Naval Support Activities (to man the forward bases ashore and afloat).

Taken together, these units fielded some very interesting and diverse craft. Ships and boats and other

vehicles engaged in Operation GAME WARDEN were: Landing Ship Tank (LST), Landing Craft Vehicle-Personnel (LCVP - 1966-1971), Patrol Boat River (PBR), STRike Assault Boat (STAB - 1970), SEAL Team (aka Tactical) Assault Boat (STAB - 1967 to 1968), Heavy SEAL Support Craft (HSSC - 1966-1971), Medium SEAL Support Craft (MSSC - 1969-1971), Light SEAL Support Craft - 1968-1971), Landing Craft Personnel, Large Mk 4 (1967-1969), Boston Whaler (13-foot - 1966-1971), Kenner Ski Barge (17-foot - 1968-1971), Inflatable Boat Small (IBS - 1966-1971), Landing Craft Mechanized Mk 3, Mk 6, and Mk 8 (1966-1971), Patrol Air Cushion Vehicle (PACV - 1966-1968), Landing Craft Utility (LCU - 1966-1971), and Swamp or Air Boats (1967-1971).

LST - LST-542-class tank landing craft



Above: The 328-foot USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786) was a LST-542 class World War 2 built ship. In this photo the ship is shown with her brood of PBRs, boat booms, and the boat lift crane. [Photo: Gerald Basic]

Below: USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821) was also home to the Navy Seawolf UH-1B gunships of Light Helicopter

Attack Squadron 3 (HAL-3). Two alert birds are spotted on her foredeck ready to launch. [Photo: Seawolf.org]



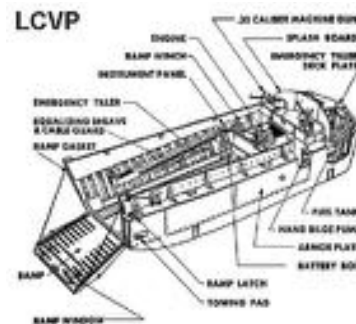
Above: An Army CH-47A “Chinook” heavy-lift helicopter in the process of hooking up a damaged UH-1B Seawolf helicopter for transportation to NAS Binh Thuy for repairs. The photo was taken aboard USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821). [Photo: Seawolf.org]

Below: USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821) shows off her boats and helicopter facilities in this photo. The helicopter in the center is an UH-34 Sea Horse admin helicopter, a UH-1B gunship is to the right. Judging by the mud and sand stirred up, the waters must be quite shallow in this anchorage. [Photo: Ed Pietzuch]



LCVP – Landing Craft Vehicle-Personnel (LST ship’s boat)

Below: The LCVP was a World War 2 design by Higgins Industries in New Orleans, LA. It was a 36-foot boat designed to move troops, cargo, or small vehicles like Jeeps from ship to shore. An LCVP was crewed by three men: coxswain, boat engineer and a seaman. When the machine gun mounts were fitted, the latter two manned the guns. Later LCVP models were made of fiberglass instead of wood. A ¼-inch steel armored plate was fitted on both sides of the hull to offer some protection to the occupants. The boat had a diesel engine and a single prop. The prop, shaft, and rudder were protected by a skeg when the boat was driven onto the beach. LSTs carried two or four LCVPs on davits. [Drawing: US Navy]



Above: An LCVP from USS DRAKE (APA-159), heavily loaded with troops, heads to the beach in World War 2. [Photo: US Navy]

PBR – Patrol Boat River, Mark I



Above: One of the 120 Mk I PBRs deployed to Vietnam in 1966. The PBR was a commercial design adapted for patrol work. Left, Mk I PBR number 138 heads out on patrol. Right, two Mk I PBRs demonstrate how the boats patrolled in pairs: one boat would assume the lead and the other boat would cover it. If either boat were attacked, the other boat would engage the attackers to catch them in crossfire. One hundred sixty-one PBRs were delivered in 1966. [Photos: Lee Wahler]

Below: A good profile shot of the Mk I PBR. [Photo: Lee Wahler]



Above: This Mk I PBR is being brought aboard USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786) for maintenance. The running lights, radome, and pilothouse cover have been removed or relocated for the lift. [Photo: Gerald Basic]

PBR – Patrol Boat River, Mark II/



III



Above: The Mk II PBR was brought into service in 1967. The Mk II was a redesign of the Mk I to incorporate lessons learned in Vietnam. The Mk II introduced a redesigned forward twin gun mount, in increased size pilothouse with additional armor for the coxswain, and the hull was strengthened – especially where the main deck and hull join. Left, a Mk II plows at low speed on patrol. Right, like other PBRs, the Mk II was very maneuverable and could turn within its own length. In this photo, a Mk II does a crash turn to starboard. [Photos: Lee Wahler]



Above: A Mk III PBR. Eighty-seven Mk II PBRs were brought into service in 1967-1968. The Mk III was externally indistinguishable from the Mk II. The Mk III was the most numerous variation of the PBR: 145 were delivered in 1968-1969; 37 were delivered in 1969-1970; 23 in 1970-1971, 30 in 1971-1972; 10 in 1972-1973; 37 in 1973-1974; and 7 in 1976-1978 (289 total). The last 5 operational Mk III PBRs belong to Special Boat Team 22 in Stennis, MS. One of the SBT-22 boats is shown here completing a sharp starboard turn. [Photo: US Navy]

STAB – STRIKE Assault Boat



Above: The STAB was the brainchild of ComNavForV, VADM Elmo R. Zumwalt. The boat was designed around the 24-foot Light SEAL Support Craft (LSSC) built by Grafton Boatworks, Grafton, IL. The STAB boat was lengthened from 24 feet to 26 feet and the propulsion changed from two 427 Ford gasoline engines and Jacuzzi water jet pumps to two 427 Chevy gasoline engines and MerCruiser stern drives. [Photo: Tom Lefavour]



Above: The STAB was the fastest boat deployed to Vietnam – 20 were deployed there during the year 1970 with StabRon 20. [Photo: Dan Kurant]

Below: Three boats of StabRon 20 returning from an operation. Note the heavy armament used on the STABs – M60 machine guns and 40mm grenade launchers. The LSSC used by MST-2 units were more lightly armed because they could rely on the SEAL squad's firepower if they were ambushed. The STABs relied on more firepower with less manpower. [Photo: Dan Kurant]



Naval Special Operations Craft (MST-1, MST-2)

Mobile Support Team ONE predated Operation GAME WARDEN. MST-1 was established in early 1964 to conduct covert missions against North Vietnam by VNN-crewed boats whose crews were trained and the boats maintained by USN personnel. These boats were drawn from Boat Support Unit ONE, Coronado, CA and were called PTF (Patrol Torpedo, Fast). The PTF was actually a misnomer, because this multi-purpose boat was designed function as either: (1) a patrol torpedo – PT – boat; (2) a motor gunboat; or (3) a fast minelayer. The USN used the PTF as a motor gunboat throughout its service (1962 to 1979). MST-1 operated from Da Nang, Vietnam.

Operational control of the PTFs in Vietnam was through the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam - Studies and Observation Group (MACV - SOG). SOG was a joint unconventional warfare command that integrated many different units of the American armed forces and intelligence community. MACV-SOG was established on 24 January 1964.

Under SOG auspices, the American sailors of MST-1 trained the VNN in PTF operation and maintained the PTFs under their care. The VNN crews took the PTFs into North Vietnamese waters to raise all kinds of particular hell. Over 1,000 of these OP 34A raids were conducted by the VNN from March-April 1964 until January 1972. In January 1972, all PTFs were transferred back to the custody of the USN and brought back to the United States.

There were a total of 26 PTF boats that could be divided into four general groups: (1) the Legacy Group – PTF 1 (ex-PT 810) and PTF 2 (ex-PT 811); (2) the Nasty Group – Norwegian boats PTF 3 through PTF 16; the Trumpy Group – U.S. built boats PTF 17

through PTF 22; and the Osprey Group – U.S. built boats PTF 23 through PTF 24.

Of the four groups, the PTF 1 and PTF 2 were Korean War-era prototype PT boats that had been refurbished for Vietnam service. The boats were aluminum construction, the engines burned 115/145 octane aviation gasoline, and parts were difficult to find for them. These boats were discarded as soon as possible and replaced by the modern Norwegian Nasty-class boats.

There were 14 Nasty-class boats purchased from Norway by the USN; PTF 3 through PTF 8 were taken directly from Norwegian Navy stocks and PTF 9 through PTF 16 purchased from the Norwegian builders. These boats were delivered from 1962 through 1966. All Nasty-class boats were 80 feet by 24 feet, of wooden construction and weighted 75 tons.

There were 6 Trumpy-class boats purchased from Trumpy and Sons, Annapolis, Maryland for the USN and delivered in 1968 and 1969. The Trumpy boats were very similar to the Nasty-class boats, but were differences in internal arrangement, in engineering, and in the electronics carried. Construction, dimensions, and weights were the same as the Nasty-class boats.

There were 4 Osprey-class boats purchased from Stewart Seacraft in Berwick, Louisiana for the USN and delivered in 1968. The Osprey-class was aluminum construction, 95 feet by 24 feet, and about 125 tons.

PTF – PTF 1, PTF 2, Nasty-class, Trumpy-class, Osprey-class (patrol torpedo, fast)

Below: The 89-foot PTF 1 (ex-PT 810) built by Bath Iron Works for the USN in 1951. The boat was aluminum, weighed 95 tons, and

had four Packard marine engines burning 115/145 octane aviation gasoline. This boat became PTF 1 in 1962 and was one of the first four craft sent to MST-1 at Da Nang, RVN in early 1964. All USN PTFs were on-loan to the VNN and no PTFs were transferred to the VNN. [Photo: Jim Gray]



Below: The 95-foot PTF 2 (ex-PT 811), built by John Trumpy and Sons for the USN in 1951. The boat was aluminum, weighed 95 tons and had four Packard marine engines burning 115/145 octane aviation gasoline. This boat became PTF 2 in 1962 and was one of the first four craft sent to MST-1 at Da Nang, RVN in early 1964. [Photo: US Naval Institute]



Above: PTF 3 was a Nasty-class motor gunboat. She is shown at top speed in Manila Bay during February 1964. This boat was one of four that began operations from Da Nang, Vietnam in March-April 1964. All PTFs were shipped through the Philippines prior to deployment to Vietnam. The MST-1 repair shops at Subic Bay, made changes to the boats to prepare them for war. One of the

changes was to remove the forward 40mm Bofors gun and replace it with the Navy Mk 2 Mod 0 81mm mortar. The mortar was used for indirect fire and for illumination of North Vietnamese targets. [Photo: Mark Tondel]

Below: PTF 7 is seen next to USS SAINT PAUL (CA-73) at Subic Bay Naval Base. The sleek lines of the PTF are well shown in this photo. The Mk 2 Mod 0 81mm mortar is installed forward of the bridge under the gray cover. [Photo: Robert T. Webb]



Above: PTF 21 is seen at top speed off Hawaii about 1972. One of six Trumpy-class boats, she differed in minor details from the Nasty-class.

Note the difference between the Decca and Litton radar antennas and ammunition box arrangement. [Photo: Chip Marshall]

Below: PTF 23 was the lead boat of the Osprey-class. Of aluminum construction, the Ospreys were 15 feet longer than the Nasty and Trumpy boats. As can be seen from the photos, the superstructure of the Osprey was quite different

from the earlier PTFs. The Ospreys were designed to take gas turbine engines, but they were never installed. The Ospreys used the same Napier Deltic T18-37K turbo-supercharged diesels of the Nasty and Trumpy boats. [Photos: W a r b o a t s . o r g]



Mobile Support Team TWO was established in 1967 to provide boat support for Navy SEAL Teams and UDT Detachments assigned to the Republic of Vietnam. Early SEAL operations (begun in 1966) had relied on SEALs operating their own makeshift craft. It soon became obvious that the SEALs and UDTs were needed fulltime for their tasks and the boat support needed to be spun-off to a dedicated unit. Boat Support Unit ONE created Mobile Support Team TWO that had its headquarters at Binh Thuy. Binh Thuy was on the Bassac River, a couple of miles from the large city of Can Tho. The MST-2 OIC (officer-in-charge) shared his office with the SEAL/UDT OIC. Together, they were responsible for all the boat and special operations in Vietnam from Saigon south to the tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula.

Special operations craft in Vietnam went through continuous development and improvement

through the years 1966 through 1971. Roughly speaking, we can trace this as:

1966 – ST-1 personnel are using at least one LCPL fitted with armament and a modified LCM-6 (Heavy SEAL Support Craft 1) as well as Boston Whalers and the ubiquitous IBS (inflatable boat, small).

1967 -- ST-1 modified HSSC 1 is heavy damaged (on two occasions) by direct mortar hits; MST-2 brings two purpose-built HSSCs (HSSC 2 and HSSC 3) to Vietnam along with four modified LCPLs. ST-2 brings two STAB (SEAL Tactical Assault Boats) to Vietnam. MST-2 also uses Boston Whalers and the IBS on some operations.

1968 -- STAB boats and Boston Whalers are retired from tactical operations in favor of the new Light SEAL Support Craft (LSSC); HSSCs and LCPLs continue in use. Some use of Kenner Ski Barges and Boston Whalers are used for non-tactical operations. 1969 -- LCPLs are phased-out in favor of the Medium SEAL Support Craft (MSSC). HSSCs and LSSCs continue in use.

1970-1971 -- All SEAL/UDT support is done with LSSCs, MSSCs, and HSSCs. There is some use of Boston Whalers and Kenner Ski Barges, but not for tactical ops. One HSSC is lost in a storm in the Gulf of Thailand, January 1971. All MST-2, SEAL, and UDT units stand down in November 1971.

1966 – LCPL, HSSC, Boston Whalers, IBS



Above and below: SEAL Team ONE at Nha Be was forced by circumstances to scrounge boats and modify them for use in Vietnam. Here ST-1 members are in the process of converting an LCM-6 that became known as the "Mighty Mo" due to its armor and heavy armament of 7.62 NATO, .50 machine guns, a 60mm mortar, a 57mm recoilless rifle and a Mk 18 40mm grenade launcher. [Photo: Frank Anderson]



1967 – LCPL, HSSC, STAB, and Boston Whaler



Above: The MST-2 LCPL noses into the beach to insert its SEALs. Whether this is a practice insertion or actual mission is unknown. Most missions like this were conducted at night. (Photo: Tom Hawkins)



Below: A bow-on shot of the LCPL nosing into the beach for an insertion. The presence of the photographer on the shore and the background suggest this is a practice insertion for the camera. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Above: A rare shot of a Mk 4 LCPL conversion by BSU-1 as part of Project ZULU. The LCPL has been fitted with heavy machine guns, gun shields and additional armor. Four LCPLs would be converted and were heavily utilized by MST-2 from 1967 through 1969 when they were replaced by the new MSSC. The problem that plagued both the Project ZULU conversions of the LCM-6 and LCPL Mk 4s were their lack of speed. This was not solved until the advent of the LSSC and MSSC. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Above: A Mk 4 LCPL as hastily modified by members of ST-1. Some guns lack armored shields to protect the gunners and the crew is much too exposed. Whether it was used on operations is not known. [Photo: Chuck LeMoynes]

Below: Loaded with SEALs and MST-2 personnel, this LCPL is on its way to an insertion somewhere near Can Tho, Vietnam. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Below: The ubiquitous IBS was an inflatable boat that traced back to the days of the Navy Combat Demolition Units and Underwater Demolition Teams of WW2 and Korea. This IBS belonged to MST-2 detachment Alpha at My Tho. [Photo: Jim Born]



Above and below: The LCM-6 conversion by ST-1 was called the "Mighty Mo" due to its heavy armament. This was the first of the Heavy SEAL Support Craft (HSSC). Two MST-2 purpose-built HSSCs replaced the "Mighty Mo" in mid 1967. [Photos: Jerry

Clark (upper); Erasmo Riojas (lower)]



Above: Three photos of the SEAL Tactical Assault Boat at Little Creek, VA. Two of these boats were brought to Vietnam by ST-2 in 1967. [Photos: Tom Hawkins]



Above and below: The third STAB of ST-2 under going air transport trials by a CH-46 "Sea Knight" helicopter at Little Creek, VA. On one trial, the straps holding the boat failed and it was sent crashing into a parking lot on base where it demolished a car. This boat was used for weapons immunity trials before being scrapped. [Photos: Tom Hawkins]



Above: Members of ST-2 and MST at Nha Be attend a pre-operation briefing before setting out in their STABs. [Photo: LIFE Magazine via Jim Gray]

Below: A shot of STAB 1 underway. Note how low the transom sits relative to the water. This feature caused the capsizing of the STABs on several occasions and several SEALs and LDNNs (Vietnamese SEALs) were hurt. [Photo: Jim Gray]



Above: The two STABs of MST on their way back from an operation. This was not a time to relax as shown by the SEAL scanning the riverbank and ready to return any enemy fire. [Photo: LIFE Magazine via Jim Gray]

Below: Mission completed, one of the STABs is pulling up to the pier at Nha Be. The fellow at the far left is a Vietnamese LDNN while some of the SEAL operators are still wearing their inflatable life jackets. [Photo: LIFE Magazine via Jim Gray]



Above: A well-worn STAB comes up to the LCPL with detainees aboard. The detainees would be questioned and their identity papers checked. If they were OK, they'd be released. If not, they'd be taken back for more questioning. [Photo: Gary Smity]

Below: The same LCPL with its two detainees aboard. There were no good roads in the Delta and so

everyone, friend and foe, took sampans. These detainees may be innocent villagers or fishermen or VC. Time will tell. [Photo: Gary Smity]



Above: A factory-fresh 13-foot Boston Whaler at the BSU-1 piers at Coronado, CA. The Whaler was a very robust boat, but got very cramped when you put MST and SEALs aboard it. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]

Below: An MST-2 crew checking the papers of a Vietnamese sampan's occupants. These people could be innocent civilians or VC trying to smuggle arms and supplies. [Photo: Bill Moreo]



Above: MST modified their Whalers to move the coxswain to the center of the boat and added armor plate to protect him. A similar plate was added to the bow to afford some protection for the gunner. MST crews put the same engines as the STABs on their boats to give them greater speed. [Photo: Bill Moreo]

Below: It did not take long to use up what space there was in the Whaler. Here two Nha Be Whalers move out on an operation with some "visitors." Both boats have been modified to place the coxswain in the center of the craft behind some armor plate and put the radio next to him. [Photo: Randy Miller]



Above: An overhead view of the MST-modified Whaler showing the added armor plate for both the coxswain and gunner. Note the radio location to the coxswain's left. [Photo: Randy Miller]

Below: Sometimes operations with the Whalers required a tow from the LCPL. In this photo, both Nha Be MST-run Whalers are towed by the LCPL. If SEALs were along for the operation, they would be aboard the LCPL due to safety and room considerations. There

wasn't a lot of protection on a Whaler if you were ambushed and the best tactic was to run away as fast as you could go. [Photo: Bill Moreo]



1968 – HSSC evolution, Kenner Ski Barge, and LSSC



Above: HSSC evolution (Can Tho boat). As received as part of Project ZULU in 1967, this HSSC had no armor for the engine room and a soft top. The Can Tho boat can be recognized by the diamond-shaped ballistic plates to protect the well deck gunners from incoming shots. Two MST-2 LCPLs are outboard of the HSSC. [Photo: Jim Gray]

Below: The same boat after the fitting of armor around the engine room. A solid deck replaced the well deck soft top. This deck was capable of supporting a UH-1 helicopter. [Photo: Jim Gray]





Above: The Can Tho HSSC with its first major armament upgrade – an M40A1 106mm recoilless rifle. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]

Below: Loading a 106mm round into the recoilless rifle. The .50 spotting gun was used to put the 106mm round on target. The gunner, wearing sound powered phones, sits on the tripod leg. [Photo: Bill Moreo]



Below: The next major armament upgrade to the Can Tho boat – a GAU-2B/A (M134) 7.62 NATO Mini-gun (rotary barrel machine gun). Note the gun smoke from the Mini-gun that partially obscures the recoilless rifle barrel. [Photo: Bill Moreo]



Above: The Can Tho HSSC prior to its last major upgrade in 1969. This last upgrade replaced the Mk 2 Mod 0 81mm mortar (gray

object in side lowered bow ramp) with the Mod 1. The Mk 2 Mod 1 was an over and under rig with a .50 machine gun above the 81mm barrel. At the same time, bar armor was installed from the armor bulge around the engine room to the bow ramp. Bar armor had proved very effective on similar LCM conversions used by the Mobile Riverine Force (TF-117). [Photo: Don Crawford]

Below: Typical bar armor arrangement on command and control boat CCB-18 (now a memorial at Coronado, CA) as seen from the stern starboard side. The space between the hull and bar armor was filled with Styrofoam blocks to absorb shrapnel from projectile explosions. The bar armor was very effective against rockets, but less so against recoilless rifle fire. [Photo: Lee Wahler]



Above: The evolution of the Nha Be HSSC was similar to the Can Tho boat. However, the Nha Be boat was different in appearance. Note the square armor around the pilot house, different armor plating around the engine room spaces and overhead cover for the well deck. The boat is seen here at low

tide in mid 1967 and before armament upgrades were made. [Photo: Randy Miller]

Below: The first armament upgrade to the Nha Be HSSC was the addition of an M40A1 106mm recoilless rifle and sand bags over the solid helicopter landing pad. Left, the HSSC beached in the RSSZ. Right, a close-up of the recoilless rifle and the sand bag “armor” on the well deck overhead cover.



Below: Close-up of the conning station on the Nha Be HSSC. Note the long box at the back of the sunroof. This box carried all the boat’s radio equipment. Various antennas, including the radome for the radar and running lights, attached to the sunroof. Armor for the conning station was arranged in the form of a box on the Nha Be boat; the Can Tho boat’s armor was roughly octagonal in shape. [Photo: Randy



Miller]



Above: The next armament upgrade to the Nha Be HSSC was the addition of a large gun tub for twin .50 machine guns. Unlike the Mini-gun tub for the Can Tho boat, the tub on the Nha Be boat was not attached to the edge of the helicopter deck. The helicopter deck has been reinforced to land a UH-1 helicopter and the sand bags have been removed. [Photo: Ron Allen]



Above: Detail shots of the twin .50 gun tub, shields, and ammunition supply for the guns. Left, the .50 machine guns were set side-by-side and had extended oversize ammunition boxes. The extent of the boxes can be seen behind both crewmen. Right, the twin guns and their oversize ammunition boxes from the gunner's position. [Photos: Ron Allen]



Above: The MST-2 detachment at Vinh Long had an LCPL that had twin .50 machine guns behind a custom armored gun shield. The center plate was designed to stop straight-on shots from hitting the gunner. [Photo: Bill Strawbridge]



Above: A port side view of the Nha Be HSSC. Note the gap between the edge of the top deck with the M40A1 recoilless rifle and the twin .50 gun tub. [Photo: Ron Allen]

Below: In addition to the Boston Whaler, the Kenner Ski Barge was larger and wider. Often called a "Boston Whaler", the Kenner was 17 feet long and mounted two outboard engines. The Kenner had a pedestal mount for an M60 machine gun, a distinctive side railing on both sides, and the coxswain sat at his station in the rear by the twin outboards. Shown here is one of the Kenner boats belonging to MST-2. [Photo: Dave Porter.]

Below: The MST-2 detachment at Nam Can used a 7.62 NATO Mini-gun in the bow position and had a Navy Mk 4 60mm mortar next to it. [Photo: John Engstrom]

Below: Another look at the arrangement of the Nha Be HSSC. It is not known whether this boat received the bar armor upgrade of the Can Tho boat. [Photo: Ron Allen]



Below: An MST-2 LCPL alongside an Ammi pontoon. Each of the four Mk 4 LCPLs used by MST were slightly different. This LCPL has a single .50 machine gun forward. The sunroof of this LCPL is being repainted – the yellow color is the primer coat that was applied just before the final green paint coat and aircraft recognition marking. An LSSC is nested outboard of the LCPL. [Photo: Rick Erwin]



Above: A brand new LSSC on the Mississippi River near Grafton Boatworks, Grafton, IL in 1968. Grafton delivered 16 LSSCs to the USN during 1968 and early 1969. The LSSC replaced the worn-out



STABs and Boston Whalers (and Kenner Ski Barges) for SEAL and UDT operations. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]

Below: When a load of SEALs went aboard the LSSC, it got rather crowded as shown here. This LSSC is on a training exercise in 1968. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Above: The LSSC typically carried a .50 machine gun and two or more M60 or M60D (shown here) machine guns. The excellent condition of this boat indicates this picture was taken in early to mid 1969. By 1970, operations dictated the removal of the Raytheon 1900 radar and its cumbersome radome. The radar was not very useful on the small rivers and canals where the LSSC operated and the radome was seen as a B-40 rocket shrapnel hazard. [Photo: Jim Gray]



Below: An LSSC operating with the LCPL just ahead. A Vietnamese LDNN (SEAL) is standing on the bow, while a SEAL with an M60 machine gun is standing just behind him and to the left. SEALs would do insertions and extractions over the bow of the LSSC. Many MST detachments removed the forward firing M60s as an aid to the SEALs' movement on and off the boat. The forward guns were relocated amidships with the .50 covering the after part of the boat.

Above: A new LSSC drops off its SEAL squad during training operations in 1968. The LSSC saw much hard fighting during 1968 to 1971. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]

Below: Its SEALs inserted, the same LSSC retracts from the shore. The LSSC would then move to a pre-arranged pickup point and act as a radio relay link while the SEALs were in the field. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



[Photo: Jim Gray]



Above: The Navy was fascinated by the idea of flying the LSSC from one location to another behind enemy lines. This was the origin of the STAB (STrike Assault Boat) concept that created StabRon 20 (1970). However, the LSSC fared no better at airlift than the STAB of ST-2 had at Little Creek, VA in 1967. On the third LSSC lift, the slings supporting the boat failed and the boat fell into a rice paddy from about 3,000 feet. The boat engines kept right on going at impact with the ground. Tactical aircraft bombed the remains. [Photo: Jim Gray]

1969-1971 – MSSC and LSSC Evolution



Above: The replacement for the venerable LCPL was the Medium SEAL Support Craft (MSSC). This 36-foot aluminum boat was built by Atlantic Research Corporation in Costa Mesa, CA. Ten of these boats were delivered

in 1969 for use by MST detachments in Vietnam. The MSSC carried 300 gallons of gasoline in four bladders low in the hull. Propulsion was by two 427 Chevy gasoline engines and two MerCruiser stern drives. The MSSC became the workhorse for SEAL/UDT boat support units until November 1971 when all NSWG units were withdrawn from Vietnam. Here, an MSSC is fitting out at the builder's pier in Costa Mesa. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]

Below: The 36-foot MSSC was designed for transport on a special trailer pulled by a heavy truck. In this photo, a new MSSC is lowered aboard its trailer. The most vulnerable part of the MSSC is prominently shown in this photo -- the boarding steps. These steps were always getting crunched when the boat put into the beach to unload or load SEALs. Another weak point was the piano hinge for the forward-folding windshield. The welds tended to break and repair was difficult. The crew compartment was well protected by an inner and outer hull, Styrofoam insulation to absorb rocket shrapnel (and to act as flotation and sound deadening), a ceramic-backed steel-alloy armor plate, and thick Kevlar® flak curtains. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Below: An MSSC tied up at the Nha Be piers in late 1969 or early

1970. The boats in the back are MSBs (Mine Sweeping Boats) whose job it was to keep the Long Tau shipping channel to Saigon open and free of mines. The boats were made of wood and carried minimal firepower. Many people in Vietnam thought the guys that manned these boats were some of the bravest men they'd ever seen. The MSB was not fast enough to run from a fight and had neither the armament nor armor to stay and duke it out with the bad guys. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Above: Looking forward, the interior of the MSSC shows functional design. It is roomy for the SEALs and their gear (as well as the MST crew). The SEALs have rapid movement in and out over the bow, yet there is space for the gunners as well as good weapons locations for them. The center location allows the OIC to run the radios and navigate while the coxswain drives. The thick flak blankets that cover the interior armor are very prominent in this view. [Photo: Tom Hawkins]



Above: Interior of the MSSC looking aft shows a typical assortment of gear. The .50 caliber machine guns were installed amidships on all boats and a 7.62 NATO Mini-gun replaced the after mounted .50 machine gun from July and August 1970 onwards. C-ration cases and fresh water coolers are for extended operations. The 3,500-round magazine for the Mini-gun is directly below the bend in the belt feed chute leading to the gun. The spent case and link collection bag is directly below the gun. [Photo: Gary Hunt]

Below: A rear port quarter view of the MSSC as it pulls out on a SEAL operation. [Photo: Gary Hunt]



Above: The MSSC was a fast boat with a top speed of over 30 knots. Notice that the boarding steps are gone from this boat. The field expedient for the missing and broken steps was to hang a cargo net over the bow as shown here. This MSSC was based at Long Phu (Dung Island). [Photo: Bill Bremer]

Below: This Nam Can based LSSC is high and dry on the beach after the tide has gone out. The photo shows the water jet nozzles and cables that operate the reverse

gates to good effect. [Photo: John Engstrom]



Above: By 1970, the LSSCs had removed their radar and radomes for increased interior room and protection from rocket shrapnel if the radome was hit. From the expression of the SEAL radioman on the bow, there's some kind of communications glitch. Note that the SEALs are wearing Levi's. The reason was the new camouflage pattern jackets and trousers had a problem. The trousers' crotch would rip-out; the Levi's were far more durable. Some SEALs also wore extra large panty hose underneath their Levi's because any leaches they picked up would not stick to them. [Photo: Gary Hunt]

Below: Close-up of the Nam Can LSSC about September 1970. The post for the radar's radome makes a convenient rack for the coxswain's flak vest (big "lump" behind his head). [Photo: Bob Stoner]



Above: In January 1971, the LSSC at Nam Can took two B-40 rockets that killed the SEAL advisor and his LDNN interpreter and wounded many of the other MST and SEALs aboard. The reverse gate cables were severed by the rocket hits, but SEAL Don Crawford who took over the coxswain's seat didn't need reverse (fortunately). He was able to bring the boat back. The MST OIC and two other MST members required medical evacuation for their wounds. Don Crawford took this photo on the morning after the ambush of the night before. The two hits show up as large dents, one shows a perforation of the hull, and there are numerous shrapnel gouges. The LSSC looks the worse for wear after the ambush. [Photo: Don Crawford]

Other Craft – PACVs, LCMs, LCUs, and Air Boats

The Navy purchased its PACV (Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles) from the British Hovercraft Company as the Type BHC SR.N5. Seven hovercraft were converted by Bell Aero Systems to the SK-5 Model 7232 after re-equipping them with GE LM-100 gas turbine engines.

The Navy brought three PACV to Cat Lo as PACV Division 107, TF-116 (May 1966 to January 1967). Returned to Bell for overhaul, modification, and repair, they returned to Vietnam in 1968. This time they were assigned to Coastal Division 17 at Da Nang

and Tan My until they returned stateside after the end of the Tet Offensive in September 1968.



Above: A Navy PACV comes ashore from USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD-5) in May 1967. PACVs also operated from USS TORTUGA (LSD-26) during their first deployment to Vietnam. [Photo: US Naval Historical Center]

Below: PACV No. 2 is shown at Moc Hoa in 1967. Notice the lack of outside decking for the crew or passengers. The decking was added before the PACV's second deployment in 1968. The forward access door is open. Although the PACV was fast and could cross all manner of terrain and water it was NOISY. No way could you sneak up on anyone. PACVs carried twin .50s above the pilothouse and M60 machine guns on either side (one is poking out of the second window aft of the standing crewman). [Photo: US Navy]



Above: PACV 3 at top speed over marshy ground somewhere near Da Nang or Tan My. Note the added deck on top of the hull that

identifies a second tour modification. [Photo: US Navy]

Below: PACV 3 just after skirt inflation and before moving out. The heavy reinforcement for the post-modification external deck is very clearly shown. PACV units used revetments made of M8A1 steel mats to create a work and servicing area. An M8A1 mat was an interlocking, welded steel panel, 1.75 inches thick by 12 feet by 2 feet, weighing 144 pounds. A very durable servicing and work area could be put down in a very short period of time. PACV 3 is resting on M8A1 matting in this photo. [Photo: US Navy]



Above: A PACV demonstrates its amphibious capabilities at Da Nang during the second deployment to Vietnam in 1968. [Photo: Lee Wahler]

Below: The sole surviving PACV 4 (left) at the Bellingham International Maritime Museum, Bellingham, WA. When the PACVs returned to the United States, some were transferred to the USCG. This may be one of those, based on the plexiglass bubble replacing the twin .50 machine gun mounting. The patch of PACV Div 107 (right). [Photos:

B I M M , Lee
W a h l e r .



The Army's 9th Infantry Division used three modified SK-5 ACVs based on a trials basis from 1968 to 1970. Army ACVs differed in physical arrangement from Navy PACVs.

The Army's three improved SK-5 ACVs operated from its base at Dong Tam on the Mekong River. These craft arrived between January and May 1968 and operated from Dong Tam as the Air Cushion Unit (Provisional) until July 1969. When the 1st and 2nd Brigades of the 9th Division rotated to the United States, the three ACVs were reassigned as the 39th ACV Platoon, 3rd Brigade in July 1969 until withdrawn from service in September 1970.



Above: One of the Army's ACVs roaring down the My Tho River near Dong Tam at full speed. Army ACVs had a modified hull that incorporated a large deck for carrying troops, a larger cockpit than the Navy PACV, and two side-by-side .50 machine tubs. Performance was much the same as the Navy PACV. [Photo: Lee Wahler]

The Army ACVs had improvements over their Navy counterparts, although overall sizes remained about the same at 39 feet long, 24 feet wide, 16 feet high, and a range of 165 nautical miles. Army ACVs had more powerful engines than the Navy PACVs, a wider cockpit, two gun positions instead of one, and a flat deck on top of the lift skirt for troops. Although Army evaluation of the ACV was of much longer duration than the Navy's, the vehicle was far too expensive to buy and maintain to justify expansion of its fleet.

A cushion of high-volume, low-pressure compressed air generated by a centrifugal lift fan supported both the Army ACV and Navy PACV. The lift fan created air pressure, contained by the side skirts, to lift the ACV off the ground. The ACV was almost frictionless in operation and could travel over land, swamps, or water at a speed of 75 knots. An ACV could clear rice paddy dikes and solid obstacles up to 3 feet high and negotiate a slope 6 feet high. The ACV could also force its way through tall grasses, fell small trees and brush, and navigate ditches and canals.

The same engine that powered the ACV lift fan also drove a 9-foot, three-bladed propeller. Twin rudders enabled the ACV to steer in much the same manner as an airboat. To maintain the air cushion, the ACV used canvas and

rubber skirts to contain the compressed air.

Disposition of ACVs:

Number 901 was written off in January 1970 when an ARVN soldier with full equipment was sucked through the lift fan. Number 901 was used as a source of spare parts for Numbers 902 and 903.



Above: ACV 901 in the salvage yard at Dong Tam. It was written-off in January 1970 and became a source of spares for 902 and 903. [Photo: US Army]

Number 902 survived until September 1970, when the unit was disbanded.



Above: ACV 902 on alert status at Dong Tam. It was the only one of the three ACVs to mount an M5 40mm grenade launcher on the left front of the hull. The wide troop deck of the ACV is well shown in this shot. When the 39th ACV Platoon stood down, 902 was taken to Ben Luc and probably scrapped there. [Photo: US Army]

Number 903 was destroyed in combat in August 1970 and the unit commander killed. His successor commanded Number 902 for two months until the unit disbanded.



Above: ACV 903 up on jacks while her canvas and rubber skirt is replaced. The 903 was destroyed in action. [Photo: US Army]

Below: ACV 902 awaits her fate at the Ben Luc salvage yard sometime after the 39th ACV platoon stand down in September 1970. [Photo: Ralph Christopher]



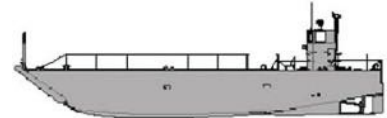
Perhaps no other amphibious craft had more modifications done to it during the Vietnam War than the humble Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) Mark 6. The Mk 6 was a 56-foot long landing craft that had been designed to land M4 Sherman tanks in World War 2. The Mk 6 was identical to the Mk 3, its 50-foot long predecessor. Unless both boats were seen side-by-side, they were very difficult to tell apart. The Mk 6 was 14 feet wide and weighed 65 tons (loaded). It had two GM 6-71 diesel engines driving two props for a top speed of 10 knots. Useful load was 34 tons of cargo or 80 troops.

The LCM Mk 6 was used as the basis of many specialized conversions for the riverine warfare environment. The HSSC versions done by SEAL Team ONE and Boat Support Unit ONE are only two examples. Many more conversions were done and most of those boats were attached to TF-117, the Mobile Riverine Force. The MRF is described in Part 3 of this series.



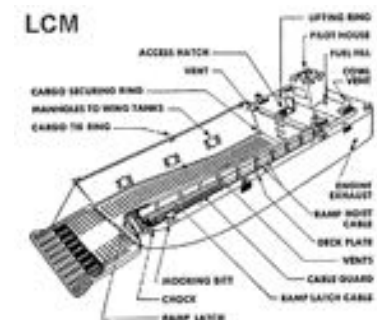
Above: A drawing showing the arrangement of the LCM Mk 6.

Below: A scale drawing of the LCM Mk 8. [Drawings: US Navy]



The LCM Mk 8 was a much longer and heavier craft of post-Korean War design. The Mk 8 was designed to transport the M48 or M60 tank that was much larger and 40 percent heavier than the WW2 Sherman tank. The Mk 8 had two 12V-71 diesels driving two props, was 74 feet long and 21 feet wide, weighed 105 tons (loaded), and carried 52 tons of cargo or 200 troops. The Mk 8 was widely used by both the Navy and the Army in Vietnam to carry all manner of cargo. The Army's Transportation Corps ran Army LCMs.

Below: A Navy drawing of the LCM Mk 3 showing the features of the boat; the Mk 6 is identical except it is 6 feet longer. The LCM-6 or "Mike 6" is still used by the Navy although its primary role of beach assault has been superseded by much larger and faster craft. [Drawing: US Navy]



Below: A factory fresh LCM-6. Note the lack of identifying unit numbers and codes that will be added when it is assigned to a ship or unit. [Photo: US Navy]



Above: An LCM-8 coming ashore through the surf with a load of vehicles. The "CH" and "KA 113-2" identify this as the number 2 LCM-8 from the USS CHARLESTON (LKA-113). [Photo: US Navy]

Below: An Army LCM-8 in Vietnam. Army crews lived aboard their craft and so they enlarged the conning stations into bunkrooms using 2x4s and corrugated sheet metal and tarpaper for the standard crew of 4 or 5 men. In this shot, a UH-1D medical evacuation helicopter is taking off a casualty. Armament was two .50 machineguns. [Photo: Lee Wahler]



Originally called the Landing Craft Tank (LCT) the vessels of the 1466-class were reclassified as LCUs (Landing Craft Utility).

The LCT/LCU had triple the cargo capacity of the LCM-8. The "U-boats" did a lot of supply hauling in Vietnam and their work went largely unnoticed. The modified LCT-5/LCU-1466 class was 119 feet long, had a beam of 34 feet, and drew 6 feet of water. Its speed was 10 knots and it carried a crew of 14. Cargo capacity was 150 tons and it weighted 360 tons (loaded). Armament consisted of three twin 20mm guns or twin .50 machine guns. Propulsion was by three diesels turning three propellers. Range was roughly 700 nautical miles at 7 knots. The USN transferred sixteen LCUs to the VNN by January 1971.



Above: LCU-1475 at Da Nang loading a cargo of ammunition bound for Hue in 1969. LCU-1475 is a Mk 5 LCT design with one ramp. YFU-60 (ex-LCU-851) is moored alongside. This is a Mk 6 LCT design with an offset pilothouse and both a stern and a bow ramp for roll-on and roll-off cargo. LCU-1475 was transferred to the VNN as HQ-540 by January 1971. [Photo: Tom Lanagan]



Above: A good starboard side shot of LCU-1493 moving cargo on the Perfume River in South Vietnam about 1969. Like her sister,

LCU-1493 was transferred to the VNN as HQ-543 by January 1971. [Photo: Joe Criscione]

Below: One of the stranger craft was this swamp boat or airboat. Army SOG advisors and Chinese mercenaries ran these craft in the Plain of Reeds, a vast Everglades-like swamp northwest of My Tho. [Photo: Don Basallion]



Historic Trivia *Contributed by Charlie Weaver*

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, 'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg'. (Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint)

As incredible as it sounds, men and women took baths only twice a year (May and October) Women kept their hair covered, while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs made from wool. They couldn't wash the wigs, so to clean them they would carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell, and bake it for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term 'big wig.' Today we often use the term 'here comes the Big Wig' because someone appears to be or is powerful and wealthy.

In the late 1700's, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board folded down from the wall, and was used for dining. The 'head of the household' always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor. Occasionally a guest, who was usually a man, would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. They called the one sitting in the chair the 'chair man.' Today in business, we use the expression or title 'Chairman' or 'Chairman of the Board.'

Personal hygiene left much room for improvement. As a result, many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bee's wax over their facial

skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, if a woman began to stare at another woman's face she was told, 'mind your own bee's wax.' Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term 'crack a smile'. In addition, when they sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt. Therefore, the expression 'losing face.'

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in 'straight laced'. Wore a tightly tied lace.

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the 'Ace of Spades.' To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't 'playing with a full deck.'

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some ale' and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were

eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term 'gossip.'

At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in 'pints' and who was drinking in 'quarts,' hence the term 'minding your P's and Q's '

One more: bet you didn't know this! In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. However, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method devised was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem...how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a 'Monkey' with 16 round indentations. However, if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make 'Brass Monkeys. 'Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more

and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey. Thus, it was quite literally, 'Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.' (All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you?)

Shipmates

I am sorry to report that I had a call today from Pam Hollenbach advising me that Bill had passed away on 12/19. Bill and I served on the Bristol at the same time and it was always good to see him and Pam at quite a few reunions. Bill occasionally missed a reunion but that was usually because his favorite fishing tournament was scheduled for the same week. He had his priorities.

He will be missed.

Tony Molnar, RD3 1957-1959



In Memoriam

William Franklyn "Bill" Hollenbach, Jr

Inman... William Franklyn Hollenbach, Jr, 79, of 405 Lakewinds Blvd, Inman, passed away Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at Golden Age Nursing Home in Inman.

Bill was born in Coaldale, PA on March 2, 1938, a son of the late Ruth Blew Hollenbach and William Franklyn Hollenbach, Sr and was the husband of Pamalia Jackson Hollenbach. He retired from United Airlines and was a member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Inman. He also served in the U.S. Navy.

In addition to his wife, Bill is survived by a son; William F. "Bill" Hollenbach III and his wife Robin of Inman, a grandson; William F. "Will" Hollenbach, IV of Inman, two brothers; Harry Hollenbach of Jacksonville, FL, Bobby Hollenbach of Tamaqua, PA, a sister; Betty Sulpezio of Philadelphia, PA. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, Neil Hollenbach. Services are being planned and will be announced.

Roger Allen Meek

(July 2, 1942 - February 8, 2018)
 Roger Allen Meek age 75 of Burgaw, passed away Thursday February 8, 2018 at New Hanover Regional Medical Center. He was born July 2, 1942 in Staunton VA, son of the late Marshall and Thelma Black Meek.

He is survived by his wife Anne Marie Pellegrino Meek; two sons, Christopher Patrick Meek and wife Patricia of Wilmington, and Stephen Thomas Meek and wife Julie of TN; two granddaughters, Riley Nichole Meek, and Christina Rose Meek; a brother, Roy Meek and wife Bonnie of CA; two sisters, Linda Tullos and husband Kenneth of FL, and Barbara

Whyitt and husband James of NJ; and many nieces and nephews. Roger was a lifetime member of



the Knights of Columbus. He was a general contractor in New Hanover County. Roger was a member and on the Board of Directors of the Hanover Kennel Club and a member of the American Eskimo Dog Club of America. Roger served honorably in the United States Navy.

A memorial Mass will be at 11:30am Tuesday February 13, 2018 at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church. Reverend Father Roger Molanda Nyimi will officiate.

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Editor's Note:

Many of our shipmates' health have deteriorated over the years due our aging process. Please remember our shipmates in your prayers. Without mentioning any names to avoid embarrassing them, let us remember those whose heart valves need replacement, those of us who were

very close to death due to a fall injury (but God must have an additional mission for him) and is doing well in physical therapy, those who are extremely ill and on life support, those of us who have had our knees replaced and are being treated for Parkinson's disease as a result of being exposed to Agent Orange. Remember also those shipmates who are still battling the nightmares of their service to our country

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**COUGHLIN,
Jeremiah & Robin**

Editor's Note:

The photo above was taken at our 17th reunion in Branson, MO. The family of Mr. Jeremiah O. Coughlin of Hoffman Estates created this Life Tributes page to make it easy to share your memories. <http://www.morizzofuneralhome.com/obituaries/Jeremiah-Coughlin/#1/TributeWall>

Obituary for Mr. Jeremiah O. Coughlin Jeremiah O. Coughlin, 80, U.S.N., of Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

Loving husband of Robin Coughlin, nee Hickson; beloved

father of Kathleen Pope, Jeremiah T. Coughlin, Eileen (Kyle) Karvala, Frederic Price and Anthony (Diane) Price; proud grandfather of Brian (Sara) Pope, Kevin Pope, Kristen Pope, Annika Karvala, Chris Price, Jonathan (Melissa) Price, Benjamin Price, Monica Price and Nicholas Price; devoted brother of Maryann (Raymond) Berzins and the late Kathleen "Kitty" (the late Wendel) Halter; fond uncle of Raymond, Peter and Timothy Berzins and Theresa Bacon, Mary Orr and Michael Halter.

Visitation will be Friday, December 29, 2017 from 4:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at Morizzo Funeral Home and Cremation Services, 2550 West Hassell Road, (Northeast corner of Barrington Road), Hoffman Estates, IL. 60169.

Family and Friends will meet Saturday, December 30, 2017 at Cardinal Drive Church of Christ, 2300 Cardinal Dr, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 for a funeral service to begin at 10:00 A.M.

The family has created this Life Tributes page to make it easy to share your memories, photos and videos. For further information please contact the Morizzo Funeral Directors at 847.752.6444. Arrangements entrusted to Morizzo Funeral Home and Cremation Services, at 2550 West Hassell Road, (Northeast corner at Barrington Road), Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60169.

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Heroes Among Us

Nice story about a WWII destroyer Sailor!

A Sailor's Dying Wish.....

After signing my pop, EM2 Bud Cloud (circa Pearl Harbor) up for hospice care, the consolation prize I'd given him (for agreeing it was OK to die) was a trip to "visit the Navy in San Diego."

I emailed my friend and former Marine sergeant, who's currently serving as a Navy Public Affairs Officer, at midnight on 28 May. I asked if she had enough pull on any of the bases in San Diego to get me access for the day so I could give Bud, who served on USS Dewey (DD-349), a windshield tour.

The next day she sent me an email from the current USS Dewey (DDG 105)'s XO, inviting us down to the ship two days later.

We linked up with Mandy outside Naval Base San Diego and carpooled to the pier where we were greeted by a squad-sized group of Sailors.

Bud started to cry before the doors of the van opened. He'd been oohing and pointing at the cyclic rate as we approached the pier, but when we slowed down and Mandy said, "They're all here for you, Bud," he was overwhelmed.

After we were all out of the van directly in front of the Dewey, shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries, A petty officer introduced himself and said as the ship's Sailor of the Year he had the honor of pushing Bud's wheelchair for the day. Unbeknownst to us, they'd decided to host Bud aboard the Dewey, not at the Dewey.

And so they carried him aboard. None of us expected him to go aboard the ship. I'd told him we

were going down to the base and would have the chance to meet and greet a few of the Sailors from the new Dewey. He was ecstatic. The day before, he asked every few hours if we were "still going down to visit the boys from the Dewey," and "do they know I was on the Dewey, too?"

Once aboard, we were greeted by the CO, the XO, and a reinforced platoon-sized group of Sailors. To say it was overwhelming is an understatement. These men and women waited in line to introduce themselves to Bud. They shook his hand, asked for photos with him, and swapped stories. It was simply amazing.

They didn't just talk to him, they listened.

Bud's voice was little more than a weak whisper at this point and he'd tell a story and then one of the chiefs would repeat it so all of the Sailors on deck could hear.

Bud was telling a story and the chief was repeating the details when a petty officer walked back into view holding a huge photo of the original USS Dewey. That moment was priceless. Bud stopped mid-sentence and yelled, "There she is!" They patiently stood there holding the photo while he told them about her armament, described the way it listed after it was hit, and shared other details about the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Bud finally admitted how tired he was after more than an hour on deck. While they were finishing up goodbyes and taking last minute photographs, the chief asked if it'd be OK to bring Sailors up to visit Bud in a few months after a Chief's board. I hadn't said it yet because I didn't want it to dampen the spirit of the day, but I quietly explained to him the reason we'd asked for the visit was simple:

Bud was dying.

I told him they were welcome to come up any time they wanted, but I suspected Bud had about a month left to live. Almost without hesitation, he asked if the crew could provide the burial honors when the time came. I assured him that'd be an honor we'd welcome.

Leaving the ship was possibly more emotional than boarding.

They piped him ashore. The chief leaned in and quietly told me how significant that honor was and who it's usually reserved for as we headed towards the gangplank.

Hearing "Electrician's Mate Second Class William Bud Cloud, Pearl Harbor Survivor, departing" announced over the IMC was surreal.

Later that night Bud sat in his recliner, hands full of ship's coins and declared, "I don't care what you do with my power tools; you better promise you'll bury me with these."

He died 13 days later. For 12 of those 13 days he talked about the Dewey, her Sailors and his visit to San Diego. Everyone who came to the house had to hear the story, see the photos, hold the coins, read the plaques.

True to his word, the chief arranged the details for a full honors burial. The ceremony was simple yet magnificent. And a perfect sendoff for an ornery old guy who never, ever stopped being proud to be a Sailor. After the funeral, the Sailors came back to the house for the reception and spent an hour with the family. This may seem like a small detail, but it's another example of them going above and beyond the call of duty, and it meant more to the family than I can explain.

There are more photos, and I'm

sure I missed a detail, or a name. What I didn't miss and will never forget, is how unbelievable the men and women of the USS Dewey were. They opened their ship and their hearts and quite literally made a dream come true for a dying Sailor.

They provided the backdrop for "This is the best day of my life, daughter. I never in my whole life dreamed I'd step foot on the Dewey again or shake the hand of a real life Sailor."

Without question, it's the best example of Semper Fidelis I've ever seen.

We can't all be heroes, some of us have to stand on the curb and clap as they go byMark Twain

DIVER
VNV/LV M/C
CHAPTER EVIL
DALLAS, TX

Respect the younger generation and their opinions. They may not have the same ideals as you, but they are the future, and will take the world in their direction. Give advice, not criticism, and try to remind them that yesterday's wisdom still applies today.

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From: Robert Lang To: edwardelynych1
Sent: Tue, Nov 7, 2017 2:30 pm
Subject: Newsletter-USS Laffey DD724

Hello, Ed, very interesting news letter. I was with Marty at the National Tin Can Sailors Reunion in King Of Prussia, Pa. in August. We were the two representing the Bristol. I, also was the lone representative of the Hanson DD/DDR 832. It was very convenient for me living only 15 minutes from the Hotel.

About the Laffey: Since the Chief Gunners Mate, Larry Delewski and I lived so close we became

very good friends sharing our sea stories. He was the director of mount 53. I have attached a request letter to Sonny Walker of the Laffey association for a copy of the DVD they use to now demonstrate the actual battle noise of that day, while visitors sit inside the mount. The noise is so real that one of Larry,s crew was shaken so bad he thought he was in the battle again. I related that DVD would be a good tool for showing to the VFW, other veteran groups, the Historical Society & possible use for Parade Background sounds.

Unfortunately, he never answered my letter.

Talk later,
Bob Lang GMSN (45-47)

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Any Volunteers?

There is a little story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody would do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

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10 Essential Health Tips for Seniors:

1. Quit smoking. Take this critical step to improve your health and

combat aging. Smoking kills by causing cancer, strokes and heart failure. Smoking leads to erectile dysfunction in men due to atherosclerosis and to excessive wrinkling by attacking skin elasticity. Many resources are available to help you quit.

2. Keep active. Do something to keep fit each day, something you enjoy that maintains strength, balance and flexibility and promotes cardiovascular health. Physical activity helps you stay at a healthy weight, prevent or control illness, sleep better, reduce stress, avoid falls and look and feel better, too.

3. Eat well. Combined with physical activity, eating nutritious foods in the right amounts can help keep you healthy. Many illnesses, such as heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis, can be prevented or controlled with dietary changes and exercise. Calcium and vitamin D supplements can help women prevent osteoporosis .

4. Maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight increases your risk for heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Use the Kaiser Permanente BMI (body mass index) calculator to find out what you should weigh for your height. Get to your healthy weight and stay there by eating right and keeping active. Replace sugary drinks with water, water is calorie free!

5. Prevent falls. We become vulnerable to falls as we age. Prevent falls and injury by removing loose carpet or throw rugs. Keep paths clear of electrical cords and clutter, and use night-lights in hallways and bathrooms. Did you know that people who walk barefoot fall more frequently? Wear shoes with good support to reduce the risk of falling.

6. Stay up-to-date on immunizations and other health screenings. By age 50, women should begin mammography screening for breast cancer .. Men can be checked for

. prostate cancer. Many preventive screenings are available. Those who are new to Medicare are entitled to a "Welcome to Medicare" visit and all Medicare members to an annual wellness visit. Use these visits to discuss which preventative screenings and vaccinations are due.

7. Prevent skin cancer. As we age, our skin grows thinner; it becomes drier and less elastic. Wrinkles appear, and cuts and bruises take longer to heal. Be sure to protect your skin from the sun. Too much sun and ultraviolet rays can cause skin cancer.

8. Get regular dental, vision and hearing checkups. Your teeth and gums will last a lifetime if you care for them properly; that means daily brushing and flossing and getting regular dental checkups. By age 50, most people notice changes to their vision, including a gradual decline in the ability to

see small print or focus on close objects. Common eye problems that can impair vision include cataracts and glaucoma. Hearing loss occurs commonly with aging, often due to exposure to loud noise.

9. Manage stress. Try exercise or relaxation techniques perhaps meditation or yoga as a means of coping. Make time for friends and social contacts and fun. Successful coping can affect our health and how we feel. Learn the role of positive thinking.

10. Positive attitude. Start each day by being grateful for what you have and looking forward to the adventure that lies ahead.

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USS Mason

All-Black Crew Overcomes Racism to Save WWII Convoy

12 February 2018 From Elizabeth M. Collins, Defense Media Activity

Sailors called the storm the worst of the century, perhaps recorded history. Frigid, 50-foot waves rocked Convoy NY 119, tossing Navy ships and Army tugboats alike into the air like toy boats. It went on for days in October 1944, the type of weather to make even seasoned mariners turn green while calling on the gods and patron saints of the sea for protection.

Wind speeds reached 90 miles an hour by one calculation. Waves that crashed over decks turned instantly to ice. The destroyer escort *USS Mason* (DE 529) documented a 70-degree roll. About 15 of the convoy's 50-odd tugboats, barges and oilers - many never designed for a trans-oceanic voyage, let alone the hostile north Atlantic - simply disappeared into the gray, swirling drink below. About 20 souls would be lost forever, according to the Warfare History Network.

Those who survived, historians said, did so out of a combination of courage and skill and a lot of luck. Many of the Sailors and merchantmen owed their lives to

the *Mason*, which led the convoy to safety on the British coast.

A Second War

But *Mason*, and especially its crew, had another battle to fight: not the weather, not even the Nazi U-boats that stalked almost every trans-Atlantic Allied convoy. That insidious foe was racism. The military was highly segregated at the time. In fact, until mid-1942, black men could only serve in the Navy as cooks and stewards - officers' servants, essentially. They could also be stevedores, manual labors who unloaded cargo from ships, according to the National World War II Museum. Earlier in the 20th century, they would also have held even more unpleasant jobs, said Dr. Regina Akers, historian at the Naval History and Heritage Command.

It takes time not only to change the policy, but to change the culture of the service that's accepting and embracing that policy change. ... It started in World War II in our Navy." - Akers

It took years. African-American leaders spent much of the war fighting to get black men in combat. They struggled to overcome a stereotype that black servicemen would simply turn tail and run at the first sign of danger, even as their young men proved themselves over and over again in combat. Cook 3rd Class Dorie Miller grabbed a machine gun and defended his ship at Pearl Harbor,

for example. Mess Attendant 1st Class Leonard Roy Harmon sacrificed his life to protect a wounded shipmate during the [Naval Battle of Guadalcanal](#). (Both men received Navy Crosses for their actions.)

Efforts to ensure equality cumulated in the Double V Campaign, a term coined by an African-American newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, to signify that there were two victories worth fighting for: victory abroad and victory over racism at home. According to the New York Public Library, Double V Clubs sent care packages to servicemen, sold war bonds, met with businessmen about nondiscriminatory hiring practices, wrote congressmen to protest poll taxes and conducted demonstrations in a precursor to the civil rights movement.

Trailblazers

African-American activists also had an influential ally in First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. She worked throughout the war to ensure that black men and women had, if not equality, at least opportunities to prove themselves. That opportunity came to the Navy with the 290-foot *USS Mason* and *PC-1264*, a submarine chaser. The two ships were the only vessels to be crewed by African-American Sailors during World War II, albeit under the command of white officers and chiefs.

Named after Newton Henry Mason, an aviator lost during the

[Battle of the Coral Sea](#) and commissioned in March 1944, according to Naval History and Heritage Command, *Mason* was nicknamed "Eleanor's Folly," and was an experiment Navy leaders expected to fail, many veterans believed.

"I said, I really don't want to go into the Navy because I don't want to be a cook or a person who makes beds and stuff like that. So just before I was called in [for the draft] ... the Navy changed and stopped discriminating so you could go in and be in the seaman branch," remembered Radioman 3rd Class Merwin Peters in an oral history for the Tacoma, Washington, Community History Project.

Signalman 1st Class Lorenzo Dufau was from New Orleans and no stranger to racism and Jim Crow. Still, he didn't let that stop him from volunteering to defend his country.

"If you call yourself a man, you defend your home and country," he said in an oral history for the Veterans History Project. "I felt that if I can get in and make it possible to be helping to protect this place, I would also help open doors for my son."



Segregation

Unfortunately, racism followed him. The Navy set up a segregated

training facility, Camp Robert Smalls, near Great Lakes, Illinois. Later, the *Mason's* crew was housed in primitive Quonset huts with stewards' mates, far from the mess hall, while other DE men had brand new barracks. Nor were African-American Sailors allowed in the almost-empty base movie theater one night, simply because all of the black seats were already filled. Some of the *Mason* officers put a stop to the unfair treatment, declaring "they'll be treated as any DE Sailor on this base," and had the men moved into new quarters, Dufau remembered.

But it still stung. To avoid confrontations with white crews, *Mason* Sailors sometimes couldn't get liberty, and when they were allowed ashore, they were forbidden from using USO clubs. Instead, they were repeatedly told at the door, they had to make do with far more Spartan "Negro" clubs nearby. "If you were black, forget it, get back," Peters noted.

While the men loved their captain, Lt. Cmdr. William Blackford, some of their own chiefs subjected the Sailors to treatment that was straight out of the old South. Dufau remembered that Blackford eventually kicked most of the chiefs off the ship, telling colleagues he would match his crew against anyone. He wasn't there to solve a race issue, he told his men, but to run a Navy ship.

"He said, "As long as you do your jobs and keep your nose clean and don't get in any kind of trouble ...

everything will be fine," Dufau recalled.

Veterans remembered only one place where they felt like Americans and not second class citizens: Belfast, Northern Ireland, where they had pulled in to refuel and resupply after their first convoy. They danced with Irish girls and downed pints down at the pub with local blokes. And they reveled in a new nickname: not, "N---rs" or even "Tan Yanks," but simply "Yanks," like any other American servicemen.

"A lady apologized because the sun wasn't shining. ... We couldn't believe it. ... The people were so nice to us. We had to go 3,000 miles from home to be treated like humans," said Dufau. It was like being liberated, agreed Peters.

Storm of the Century

Both men were aboard *Mason* for Convoy 119. Dufau called it "the strangest convoy we had ever seen," explaining that the far-from-seaworthy tugboats and barges restricted the convoy's speed to about five knots. Tensions were high, he remembered. Intelligence reports warned that German submarines intended to intercept the convoy. At one point, *Mason's* crew stood on general quarters for 24 hours, expecting an imminent attack.

The weather, Dufau said, saved them. Then it turned on them.

"That was an ordeal. I've never been on the ocean in such a storm," said Dufau. "The vessel was lifted up by one wave and you'd be on top of that wave and ... you'd slide down the wave. You could hardly imagine the size of that wave. ... I think about three or four tugboats were swallowed. The water would just take them down."

Quartermaster 2nd Class Charles Divers remembered the storm as one of the scariest experiences of his life. "We went over 70 degrees," he told historian Mary Pat Kelly, author of *Proudly we Served: The Men of the USS Mason*. "I watched the inclinometer and thought, 'This is it. Ninety degrees is a flat over. How are we going to come back from 70?' But she held!"

It proved impossible to keep the convoy together. *USS Mason* received orders to take the first group into Falmouth, England. They made it, but the ship's deck plate split from the constant pressure of the surging sea. Two damage controlmen braved the icy deck and lashing rain in lifejackets to weld the deck together.

"If they neglected to take care of it, the storm would cause that ship to split," explained Dufau. "The water was going down to the motor rooms, so they had to get that job done."

Then *Mason* returned to the storm to gather about a dozen more of Convoy 119's scattered ships, even

as two British warships turned back due to the conditions. It took days, but most of the boats eventually made it to port, their crews lucky not to join almost 20 shipmates on the ocean floor.

"Every day we would go down to chow and usually talk about which ship had gone down and how many people had been lost," said Peters, explaining it was a practice the crew maintained for the rest of the war. "They were all young and nobody ever thought they were going to die. Everybody had the attitude that they were going to survive this."

Lost then Found Again

Impressed with the crew's bravery, both Blackford and the commander of Convoy 119 recommended the men receive Navy commendations. Instead, they were forgotten, the *Mason* sold for scrap within two years of victory.

It was a common refrain for black World War II veterans who, more often than not, found their bravery downplayed at best and buried at worst, according to historians. In fact, it wasn't until the men of the *Mason* reconnected in their 70s and 80s and Kelly told their story that people remembered they ever existed. The men themselves didn't even know they should have been honored. They were simply doing their duty, holding themselves to the highest of standards to prove that black men were just as good as anyone else.

"It was real noteworthy to even tell people that you were on a ship and that your ship had the same kinds of responsibilities as all the other ships in the Navy," remembered Peters.

In the mid-1990s, survivors of the crew finally got their commendations, presented by then-Secretary of the Navy John Dalton, who said, "It's an important part of Navy history that needs to be told."

Can you imagine? The secretary of the Navy, on camera, apologizing to us?" - Dufau

President Bill Clinton also honored them as part of a ceremony commemorating African-American contributions during the war, according to news reports. (In 1997, Clinton also awarded Medals of Honor to seven black, World War II Army veterans, hoping to partially undo half a century's wrongs.) There was a book and a documentary and a movie and, in 2003, another *USS Mason* (DDG 87), named in honor of the little destroyer escort that could, according to Naval History and Heritage Command.

"I become emotional when I realize the role that I was picked to play in developing America," Dufau, who donated his dog tag to DDG 87, told crewmembers of the modern *Mason* during an African-American History Month observance in 2012. "You all don't know how beautiful it is to see young people, all together,

developing a friendship, and more than just a friendship - shipmates."

"I would do it all over again if I had the choice," he said in the oral history. "I never did develop any bitterness or hatred or anger toward anyone. ... Hate is a sickness and it will destroy you."

Editor's Note: To learn more about African-Americans in the Navy, read "[Remembering a Lost Hero: Black Medal of Honor recipient discovered after some 130 years](#)" and "[Breaking Down the Walls of Segregation: Veterans Remember First All-Black Navy Band.](#)"

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Editor's Note:

The following piece I encountered while waiting in a surgery center where my wife, Anne, was having cataract surgery. I overheard one lady telling her friend the following and I started laughing. I identified myself as your newsletter editor and gave her my business card. The lady gave me the article and thanked us for our service. The prices are not accurate.

I want to go to the Holiday Inn

No nursing home for me. I am checking into the Holiday Inn! With the average cost for a nursing home per day reaching \$188.00, there is a better way when we get old and feeble. I have already checked on reservations at the Holiday Inn. For a combined long term stay discount and senior

discount, it's \$49.23 per night. That leaves \$138.77 a day for:

1. Breakfast, lunch and dinner in any restaurant I want, or room service;
2. Laundry, gratuities and special TV movies. Plus, they provide a swimming pool, a workout room, a lounge, washer, dryer, etc. Most have free toothpaste and razors, and all have free shampoo and soap. They treat you like a customer, not a patient. \$5.00 worth of tips a day will have the entire staff scrambling to help you. There is a city bus stop out front, and seniors ride free (Philadelphia). The hand bus will also pick you up (if you fake a decent limp). To meet other nice people, call a church bus on Sundays. For a change of scenery, take the airport shuttle bus and eat at one of the nice restaurants there. While you're at the airport, fly somewhere. Otherwise, the cash keeps building up. It takes months to get into decent nursing homes. Holiday Inn will take your reservation today. And you are not stuck in one place forever, you can move from Inn to Inn, or even from city to city. Want to see Hawaii? They have a Holiday Inn there too. TV broken? Light bulbs need changing? Need a mattress replaced? No problem. they fix everything, and apologize for the inconvenience. The Inn have a night security person and

daily room service. The maid checks to see if you are ok. In not, the will call the undertaker or an ambulance. If you fall and break a hip, Medicare will pay for the hip, and Holiday Inn will upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life. And no worries about visits from the family. They will always be glad to find you, and probably check in for a few days mini vacation. The grandkids can use the pool. What more can you ask for?

So, when I reach the golden age, I'll face it with a grin. Just forward all my email to: me@HolidayInn



Charlie Weaver doing a hull inspection of USS Enterprise CVN 65

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – SPRING 2018

Shipmates:

Spring is upon us and hopefully winter is behind us. The planning for the 20th Reunion of the USS Bristol Association being held in Savannah, Ga. has been finalized. This gathering is a milestone event; it is our 20th Reunion. Diane and I have attended 16 of the 19 previous reunions. It has been a great ride.

This year, as voted on by the membership at the last annual meeting, our reunion is being held in Savannah, Georgia from Monday, October 22nd to Friday, October 26th. The

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Reunion Brat will be sending out the itinerary shortly. The Board and I, along with the Reunion Brat, have put together another memorable and enjoyable program. We feel that we have balanced the structured part of the reunion with a good amount of free time for socializing and hanging out in the hospitality room or doing some sightseeing on your own.

I am asking all of you who are able, to make an effort to attend this reunion and continue to build good memories and enjoy the companionship of your shipmates from the USS Bristol. If you have any questions about the reunion, do not hesitate to call me. My

numbers are 570 698-7102 or Cell 973 309-4040.

Lastly, let's hope that the Hurricane season will be over by the time we have our reunion and not interfere with traveling like last year. I look forward to seeing you at the reunion.

Also, let us keep our sick members in our thoughts and prayers.

Paul Ratcliffe EM2,
President