



USS Gunston Hall LSD 5

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Seasons Greetings from the Chairman ...

Hello shipmates.

Well the holiday season is in full swing and I'm sure that everybody is making plans to get together with family and friends during this wonderful time of year. I just wanted to let you all know that we are constructing our own website that will contain all of the same links and information that Chester currently has on the Angelfire website. You will be able to contact us through an e-mail address on the site. The address of our website will be www.ussgunstonhall.org and we will have links to our newsletters and other pertinent information and you will be able to download newsletters to read or print out at your leisure. If you have any input such as pictures or stories that you would like in a future newsletter or for consideration as something more permanent on the website, contact us and we will be glad to work with you on it. We want to make this a website available to all of our members for everyone's enjoyment. The website is under construction and we hope to have it up and running very soon.

I would also like to take a minute to thank a couple of people that have been of great assistance to me and who make my job a lot easier. They are Chester Harris EM 54-

55 and Jack Buick RD 56-59. Both of these men put in a lot of time and effort helping me with the newsletter and other association duties and I want to let them know how much I appreciate their help. Also at this writing Chester is in the hospital after undergoing recent knee surgery. We hope you have a speedy recovery Chester.

And special thanks to Guillermo Bovone, Mike Michelsen and Joe Kiraly who made significant contributions to this newsletter. We do need inputs fellows ... especially sea stories and pictures. Or, send us enough notes so that our editors can spin it into a yarn.

Our last newsletter dropped the dues expiration date from the mailing label. We have corrected that oversight and your due date appears on the mailing label if you are receiving the newsletter in the U.S. mail. If you receive this by e-mail, your due date appears after your name in the "To:" field in the header. If you are due, past due or will soon be due, send your check for \$20 payable to GHRA to our treasurer, Chod Cremer at P.O. Box 154, Agency, IA 52530.

In closing I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

Christmas, EM Club, Subic Bay, P.I., 1957



Anybody recognize these handsome, young holiday revelers?



ARA Candido de Lasala

We recently heard from Guillermo Bovone, a crewmember of ARA Candido de Lasala. He found our website on the Internet and contacted the ship's office in Arizona for more information about the reunion association.

For those of you that may not know, our ship was sold to Argentina and was commissioned in the Argentine Navy as the ARA Candido de Lasala. (Note: ARA translates to "Armada of the Republic of Argentina"). Señor Candido de Lasala was a Spanish naval hero credited with repelling the English invaders from Argentina. He also was the founder of the Argentine Marines. More details of this part of the ship's life can be found on our website.

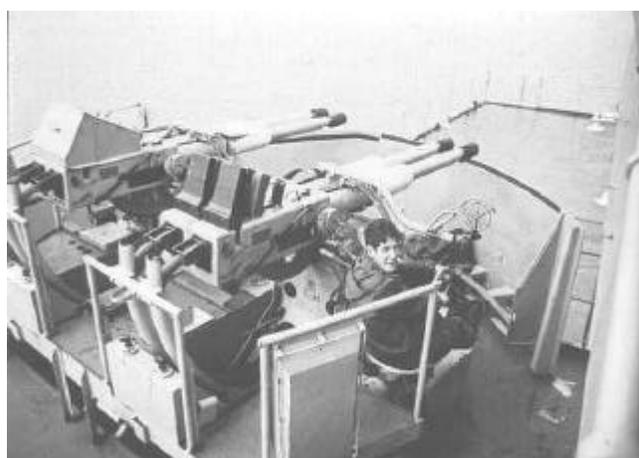
Guillermo was a 21-year-old medical student in 1974 when he was drafted into the Argentine Navy. After a period as a desk jockey, he volunteered for sea duty on board the (ex) USS Gunston Hall. During his tour, the ship made a five month voyage to Bremen, Germany to pick up a smaller ship and bring it back to Argentina. There were numerous stops in many European ports in England, France, Spain and Germany. Guillermo looks back on his service aboard ASA Candido de Lasala as one of his most intense life experiences in which he learned much of the world, people, life and himself. Most of us can share those feelings with Guillermo.

The crossing took 21 days at 12 knots; the entire cruise took five months between October, 1974 and March, 1975. The trip was not without unexpected misfortune. On December 23, 1974, two days before Christmas, a steam pipe broke and took the lives of three sailors. There was a moving memorial service on board with the three coffins wrapped in Argentine flags.

The ship then made an unscheduled stop in Portsmouth for repairs. Later, during a storm near the coast of France, what Guillermo reports as a "hole in the bottom" caused yet another stop for repairs, this time in Brest. In the course of that storm, the ship took a 42-degree roll. There was a time in the mid-fifties, in the South China Sea, that she also did that which this reporter can recall as quite a terrifying experience.

In 1981 the ship was sold for scrap. Guillermo drove 900 miles from his home to the naval base to make a last visit to the ship and relived many favorable memories of his sea going experience. Prior to being dismantled, he was able to "liberate" a few souvenirs from the ship. Among them, the brass ring from the porthole that was nearest his bunk, a navigation book, a signal light, a desk lamp and a napkin holder engraved with "USS Gunston Hall."

Guillermo is now an MD and Radiologist with an MBA in Public Health living with his wife in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



The above photos show Guillermo at the controls of a 40mm cannon



NOSTALGIA ...

... from **Joe Kiraly** (Lt. 1967-68)

Vietnam Cruise: 1968: Transported 3 – 16' spare gun barrels from Hawaii to Subic to pre-stage for USS New Jersey (a first by an LSD); carried logistic supplies to Saigon for all services; carried all sorts of gear and craft, including Riverine Forces, between Saigon and Danang with many stops at Cam Rahn Bay to deliver Swift Boats to replace damaged ones and took the damaged ones to Subic for repair. Carried "Nasty Boats" to Danang. We even carried COMPHIPFORCE's Helo for several days and the first three Navy Hover Craft. We stenciled everything we transported, including boats with our slogan, "YOU CALL, WE HAUL", "Compliments of LSD 5". That gave the ship quite a notoriety. Ship was awarded the Navy Meritorious Unit Award for the cruise.

... from **Mike Michelsen**, SF, 1946

As the Gunston Hall was steaming for Bikini in 1946, the ship stopped and lowered the stern gate and took on enough water to make a large swimming pool in the well deck. Swim call was announced and almost all of the crew went swimming including a Machinist Mate by the name of Gillette. Gillette had a live monkey onboard with him and tied it up to a stanchion, stripped down and dove in. As was observed by many of the crew, Gillette had two props tattooed to the cheeks of his rear end. One on each cheek. Above the tattoos were the words "twin screws stand clear." Luckily in those days it was still an all man crew unlike today's Navy! It was quite a sight to see and produced many laughs. Hopefully the Captain didn't see Gillette or his monkey at this unique swim call in the middle of the ocean on the old Gunny Sack!



KUDOS

Patrick J. Shanahan (SK 49-52) of Cedar Rapids has been named All-American Department Commander of the VFW. He is one of 36 VFW Department Commanders selected. Congratulations Patrick!

From the Editor's file:



Beer break on the fantail, ca 1954

CONNECTIONS

We have newly connected with the following shipmates:

Don Wagner, SM, 1956-59 has retired from a 24 year Naval career and is now living the good life with his wife in Denver, CO.

Ken Nielsen, RD, 53-54 is a musician currently living in Denmark.

Terry Kloss, PN, 1957 is alive and well and living with his wife in a Chicago suburb.

Pat (Steve) Stevenson, RD, 1964-68 signed the guest log at our website.

William Roadman, RM, 1968-70

Albert Stremple, SF, 1968-69

Bill Wyrick, RD, 1950-52

MYSTERY PHOTO

The mystery photo in the previous newsletter must have been in a shipyard during repairs. The more observant of us noted that the starboard stack had been removed!

IN MEMORIAM

We have received word that one of our shipmates has passed away. **Houston A. (Tony) Thompson** died on June 26, 2003 in Kingston, Tennessee at the age of 72. Tony served on the Gunston Hall as a BT from 50- 54 and will be missed by many of his former shipmates in our association.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

25 DECEMBER 1957

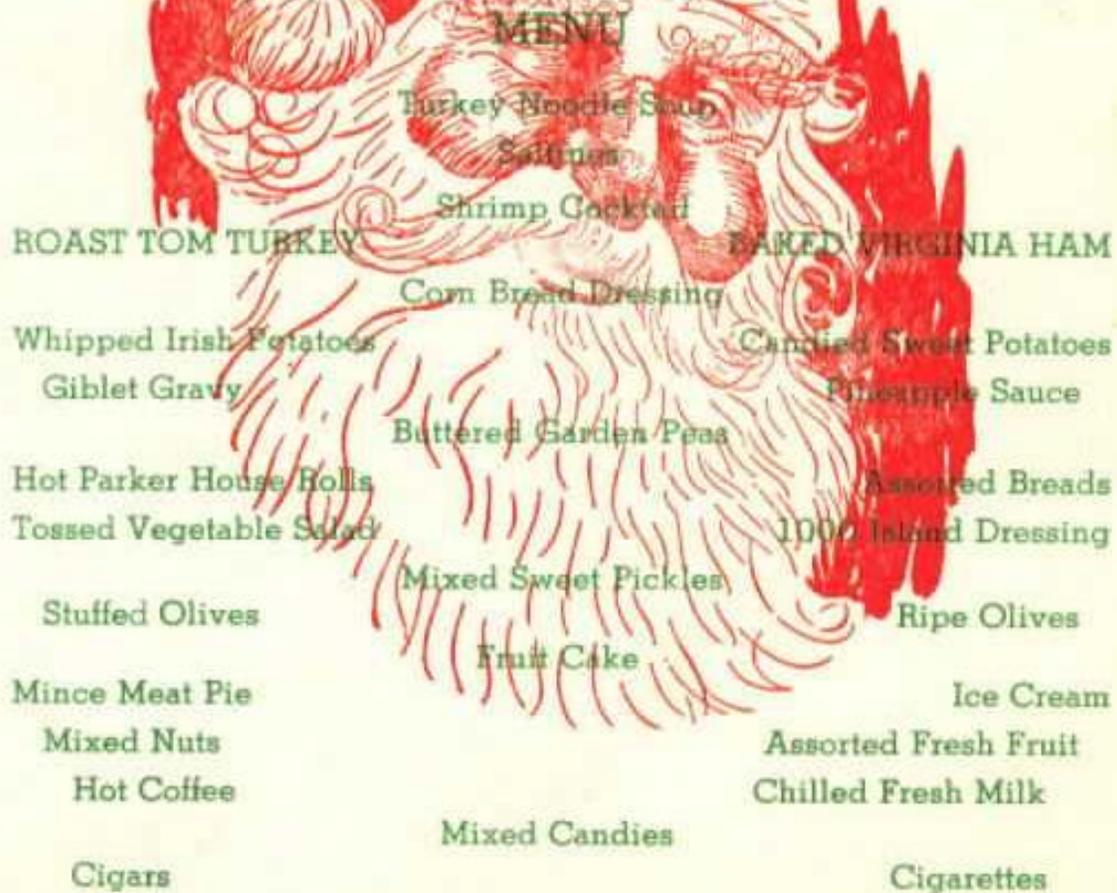
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SUPPLY OFFICER

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