



USS Gunston Hall LSD 5

Newsletter of the Gunston Hall Reunion Association
April, 2004

Ron Kennedy (PN, 57-59), Chairman
11832 W. Virginia Avenue
Avondale AZ 85323
623/907-3688

<http://www.ussgunstonhall.org>
Email: info@ussgunstonhall.org
Chester Harris (EM 54-55), Webmaster

Contributors: Jack Buick, Gene Covey, Chod Cremer, Lewis Hevel,
Ron Kennedy, Ken Nielsen, Chuck Overkleeft, Perk Perkins

Chairman's Column

Hello shipmates.

We have been in contact with several hotels in Las Vegas for our 2005 reunion and are now receiving bids. Most have established a policy to not bid anything more than one year out. At any rate we will have more information about the 2005 reunion in our July newsletter and possibly sooner.

Several shipmates have informed me they do not like Las Vegas being the site of the reunion and said they do not plan to attend. I understand their feelings but we all had a vote and Las Vegas received the most votes. If for no other reason Las Vegas is a good choice in that airline fares and hotels are generally cheaper than a lot of sites and it is more readily accessible from anywhere in the country. The main function of the reunion is to provide a place where we can spend some time together, renew old and make new acquaintances. At the next reunion we will have to spend some time in determining how we will select the location of future reunions so that we can have the highest attendance and hopefully still make all shipmates happy with the selected site. Obviously everybody will not be happy no matter where we go but I know the cost factor is very important to many shipmates and that is one reason Las Vegas is so popular.

Notes from the Editors

Here we have a few thoughts and requests from the editorial staff that brings you this newsletter.

Regarding this newsletter ...

The best parts are those that are submitted by the members. Note that in this issue, there are several contributors (each of them credited in the blue field along the left margin of this page). We need more. There are a lot of members and a lot of stories and we need you to send them to us. If you prefer, just send notes and we will re-write them into a narrative.

We also need more pictures. Black and white as well as color. They may be mailed to the address above or if you have the capability, e-mail them to us. We particularly need a few good quality, color pictures of the ship. They seem quite rare ... most of them have already faded too far to be recovered but send what you can. We can have our "experts" try to restore them.

I received an e-mail from the wife of one of our deceased shipmates and she wanted anybody who remembered her husband to please contact her. His name was **Robert Monical** who served on the Gunston Hall in 64-65. If any of you remember him please contact me and I will give you her e-mail address so you can contact her.

Reunion '05 — Las Vegas



The Strip at night

Collision at Sea

Shortly after the Korean War started on June 25, 1950, the Gunston Hall was ordered to pick up elements of the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California. Sometime around July 12 the ship steamed for Pusan, Korea and was later joined with other ships including the aircraft carrier USS Badoeng Strait, CVE 116.

Approximately mid-July the Gunston Hall was taking on fresh water and fuel from the Badoeng Strait and as they were finishing the operation **Bob Conrad** and **B.W. (Perk) Perkins** were told to disconnect the fresh water replenishment hose. As they were in the process of disconnecting the fresh water hose, port side just aft of the crane, a shadow came over them. They looked up and saw the Badoeng Strait making contact with the port side of the Gunston Hall. This collision resulted in the port crane being ripped loose and was swinging around freely as the ship rolled. As the ships pulled away, there was also damage to the carrier's flight deck which was caused by the Gunston Hall rolling underneath the carrier. Some of the Gunston Hall's gun tubs aft of the port quarter deck also sustained some minor damage. One of the bosun's mates was able to get a cable on the crane to stop it from swinging around.

When the refueling hose was cut black oil spewed onto the port side aft of the quarter deck and our esteemed treasurer, **Chod Cremer** was given the privilege of scraping and washing off the oil which must have been one hard and time consuming job. The Badoeng Strait also received damage to it's forward end of the starboard side of the flight deck.

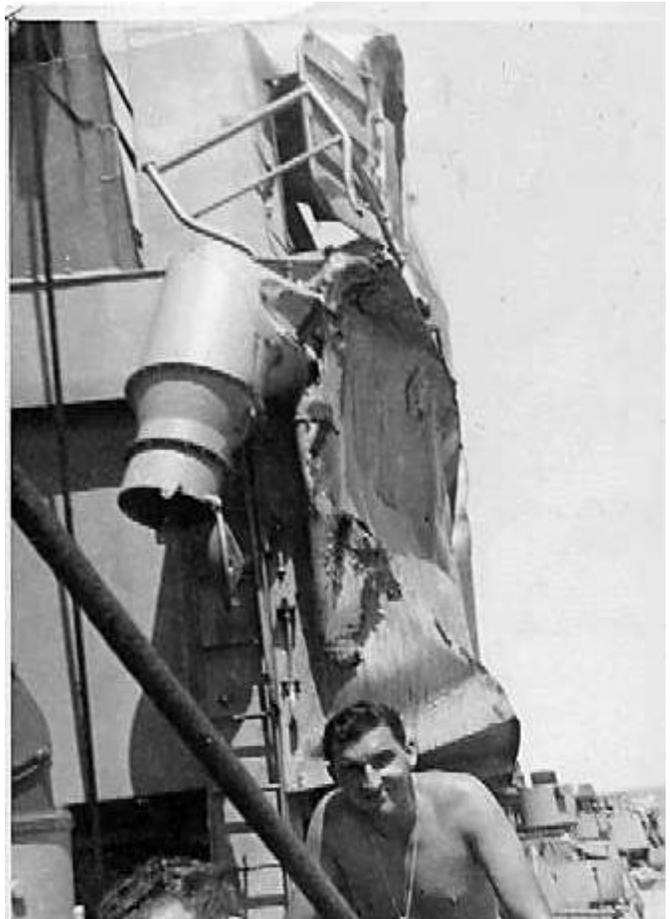
The ship then proceeded to Pusan and when they arrived there with the Marines, the fighting was only 35 miles away. They off loaded the Marines and other cargo and proceeded to Yokosuka, Japan for emergency repairs and later sailed to Sasebo for more extensive repairs. The Gunston Hall then spent the next 8 months operating in and out of Korea.

The Gunston Hall's skipper was CDR **J. W. Motes** and being junior to the carrier's skipper, was relieved of his command shortly after arriving in Japan.

Fortunately no crew members were injured in this collision.

The Badoeng Strait was known as the "Bing Ding" by its own crew and from then on by the Gunny Sack crew also.

Special thanks to **Chod Cremer, B. W. (Perk) Perkins, Chuck Overkleeft and Gene Covey** for their recollections making this story possible.



Mysteries ...

Can anyone identify the sailor in the above picture?

In our last issue, we had a photograph on the front page with three Gunston Hall bluejackets and one marine. They are: left to right: **Jack Buick**, RD, 56-59; **Bill Ludtke**, RD, 56-59, the forever unidentified marine and a still unknown shipmate.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

For those shipmates that receive this newsletter via the Internet, please note that your dues due date is a part of your e-mail header. The 3 or 4 digit number after your name in the "To" section of your e-mail header is the month and year your dues expire. If you receive this via US Mail, your due date is the 3 or 4 digit number after your name on the mailing label. Your check or money order for \$20 must be payable to "GHRA" and sent to our treasurer, Chod Cremer, P.O. Box 154, Agency IA 52530. Do NOT make the check payable to Chod; that just complicates banking it.

THE SCHLITZ BREAK

By **Lewis Hevel**, PN3, 55-56

When I opened the January edition of the Gunston Hall newsletter I was surprised to see the picture of the young sailor drinking a can of Schlitz. I suddenly saw myself when I was forty-nine years younger!
John Tradup (YN, 54-56) was sitting directly in front of



me when the picture was taken. The picture was taken in January or February, 1955. The Gunston Hall made six round trips from Haiphong to Saigon and was under way at least part of every day for fifty-five days during those two months. We were transporting various materials and equipment from the north to the south before the two Vietnams were partitioned in July 1955. We steamed alone and because we were underway so much the captain allowed two cans of beer per man on some Sunday afternoons. Sometimes a guy could accumulate several more beers from non-drinking friends. Several warm beers on a hot sunny afternoon could cause a few cases of the "staggers"! I remember one Sunday afternoon during one of the beer breaks several non-qualified helmsmen took their turns on the bridge. As a result we left a wake that looked like we were taking severe evasive action! I retired in 1993 after working in the Parsons School System for thirty-five years. Although I enjoyed seeing the picture and having old and good memories brought back, I am somewhat thankful that our Newsletter doesn't have general circulation in the Parsons community. I think many of my former junior high students would have a good time teasing me and telling me I wasn't a very good example! At the time the picture was taken I was a Seaman and Personnelman Striker. I later made PN3 and was transferred to the USS Bexar (APA-237).

In Memoriam

We have received word that two of our shipmates have passed away.

Keith Woolstenhulme, SN, 51-55 passed away on Dec. 15, 2003. Keith was one of our most supporting members having attended five reunions.

Ross Tonsall Sr., BT, 62-66 passed away on Nov. 1, 2003 and had attended three reunions.

Our condolences and best wishes go out to their families and friends.

They will be missed by many shipmates.

THE DAY THE SHIP LOST WEIGHT

By **Ken Nielsen** RD3, 53-54

We had just completed various duties and assignments and were steaming for port in Japan's northern most island, Hokkaido. The island is the second largest and most sparsely populated of the major island groups. Winters are severe and although it was early fall, one could feel the chill in the air.

We welcomed the chance to have a little pause in our busy shipboard duties. While we were underway we had taken aboard a number of men in transit who were being re-assigned to other ships and shore duties. We pulled into port about 1100 and shortly thereafter chow was called. After chow we went about our daily routine. Finally the evening meal was served and after chow those who were not on watch hit the rack early for some much needed rest.

It must have been around midnight or close to it that I woke up with a pain in my gut and headed for the head along with others close behind me. We got to the passageway and we met others scrambling for the head also. As I remember it now it looked like pandemonium had broken loose. The big question was what was happening, were we being attacked? No one knew. After a sleepless night and repeated trips to the head, the next morning we found out that the transients who had scullery duty had used too strong a mixture of dishwashing detergent and had been lax in rinsing the plates, cups, etc. As a consequence, after the noon meal we were given an unwanted laxative.

Looking back on it now I can see the humor in it but at the time it was a little frightening. Later that day those of us who could went on liberty. We looked back at the ship on our way to town and we all swore that the ship was at least a foot higher out of the water!

NEW CONNECTIONS

From the website Guest Log

Oliver Humphrey

E-Mail: ziggie2000us@yahoo.com

Comments: I served on the USS Gunston Hall LSD-5 from 3/66 to 2/70 I would love to hear from some of the old shipmates. I was MM3 when I left her. I met a lot of good friends while on her.

Ted Marvelle, 1959

Coy (Leon) Wilson, Plank Owner, 43-45

SICK CALL

As we go to press with this issue, our webmaster, **Chester Harris**, is in the VA hospital in Loma Linda recovering from knee surgery. Get well Chester!

Meritorious Service



Top Row - Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation

Second Row - American Campaign Medal - Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (9) - World War II Victory Medal

Third Row - National Defense Service Medal (2) - Korean Service Medal (8)- Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (1-Cuba, 6-Vietnam)

Fourth Row - Vietnam Service Medal (9) - Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation (11) - Philippines Liberation Medal (2)

Fifth Row - United Nations Service Medal - Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal - Republic of Korea War Service Medal (retroactive)

Ashland Class Dock Landing Ship: Originally authorized as (APM-5), a *Mechanized Artillery Transport* Reclassified *Landing Ship Dock (LSD-5)*, 1 July 1941 Laid down (date unknown) at Moore Drydock Co. Oakland, CA. Launched, 1 May 1943 Commissioned **USS Gunston Hall (LSD-5)**, 10 November 1943 Decommissioned, 7 July 1947, at Naval Station Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA. Laid up in the Pacific Reserve Fleet. Converted for Arctic Service and re-commissioned, **USS Gunston Hall (LSD-5(A))**, 5 March 1949, at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Decommissioned and struck from the Naval Register in May 1970 Transferred (sold) to Argentina, under terms of the Security Assistance Program, renamed **ARA Candido de La-sala (Q-43)** Decommissioned by the Argentine Navy in 1981 Final Disposition, scrapped at Campana, Buenos Aires, Argentina *Gunston Hall* earned nine battle stars for World War II service, nine battle stars during the Korean War and twelve battle stars for the Vietnam War

The 1st Navy Jack

Excerpt from SECNAV Instruction 10520.6

As the first ships of the Continental Navy readied in the Delaware River during the fall of 1775, Commodore Esek Hopkins issued a set of fleet signals. His signal for the "whole Fleet to Engage" the enemy provided for the "strip'd Jack and Ensign at their proper places." Thus, from the very beginning of our Navy, the Jack has been used on board American warships. The first navy Jack was a flag consisting of 13 horizontal alternating red and white stripes bearing diagonally across them a rattlesnake in a moving position with the motto "Don't Tread On Me."

Action. The First Navy Jack will be displayed on board all U. S. Navy ships in lieu of the Union Jack ... during the War on Terrorism.



Until this recent action by the Secretary of the Navy, all commissioned ships displayed the Union Jack on the ship's jackstaff from 8 a.m. until sunset while the ship was at anchor except that the ship with the longest period of continuous duty displayed this First Jack