



USS Gunston Hall LSD 5

Newsletter of the Gunston Hall Reunion Association
Winter 2004 – 05

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Happy Holidays

The winner of the free room in Las Vegas for Reunion '05 is ...

BILL SOULSBURG

Chod Cremer enlisted the assistance of Ward Ransford, Iowa VFW Commander to draw the winning entry.

Bill served as a Damage Controlman from 1952 to 1956.

Disappointed because you didn't win? Don't worry about it, everyone will be a winner at the reunion. Each shipmate will receive a special commemorative gift upon arrival at the Imperial Palace. If you haven't made the arrangements, there is still time to do it. Sooner is better ... we really need to know.

Step 1: **The Reunion registration fee is \$78 for yourself or \$156 if you are bringing a guest.** This is to pay for the expenses related to the event (dinner, hospitality suite, extras) and does NOT include your hotel room. **Make your check payable to GHRA and send it to Chod Cremer, P. O. Box 154, Agency, IA 52530. If you dues are delinquent or soon will be, add \$20 to the amount of the check.**

Step 2: **You must make your room reservations directly with the Imperial Palace at 1-800-800-2981.** To get the special group rate of \$69 + tax, single or double occupancy you must tell them you are attending the USS Gunston Hall LSD5 reunion. Your credit card will be billed for one night at the time you make your reservation. If you have to cancel, that charge will be refunded as long as you cancel at least 48 hours before arrival time.

Step3: Get a cup of coffee and take the rest of the day off.

Hello shipmates,

I hope that everybody had a great holiday season and I want to wish all of our shipmates a very Happy New Year and a wonderful 2005. Hope to see many of you next May in Las Vegas for a successful reunion. Time is growing short so please make your hotel reservations as soon as you can and send your registration fees to Chod as soon as possible so we can get an accurate count of shipmates that are planning to attend. I am looking forward to seeing you in Las Vegas. Thanks for your support. **Ron Kennedy**, Chairman

REUNION 2007

In the past, the method for selecting a site for our reunion has been a simple poll of members with no prior information or research. Everyone just picked the city of their choice.

We would like to change that a little. Instead of everyone picking any city, it may be better if we limit the choices to a few cities and then we vote for one. The USS Skagitt Reunion Association has a method that could work well for us. Basically, we would need volunteer 'hosts.'

A host can help us to make an informed decision simply by doing a few hours of homework in the city of his choice and presenting the information to the members. In the last election, the top vote getters were: Las Vegas, San Diego, Branson MO, New Orleans and Norfolk. If you voted for one of these locations and would like the '07 reunion to be there, be a host! If you really want us to come to the city of your choice, this is a way to make it happen.

There could also be hosts for cities that are not mentioned here. It is quite possible that the members would respond favorably to your choice if there was some information available. Call or e-mail Ron for more info.



GHRA Website

Most of us with Internet connections have visited the original Angelfire website somewhere along the way. **Chester Harris, EM 54-55**, put that together for us a few years back. In 2002, he opted to make major changes and we agreed to establish a proprietary site to avoid the heavy advertising and the annoying pop-ups that come with the free sites.

At the time of Chester's death this past summer, the transition was well underway but not quite ready. In November, it was largely completed and is up and running.

If you have Internet access, check it out: <http://www.ussgunstonhall.org> Be careful to use the '.org' suffix. Someone has a prior claim on the '.com' but it is a blank page at this time. Send an e-mail with any comments or corrections you may have. We are still sorting through pictures that we will be adding soon. Regrettably, a lot of the related information was in Chester's head and is lost to us. We need more pictures. Particularly from the 1940's. It would be good if we could accumulate enough so that each division could have it's own page.

The current plan is to run both websites until the new one is regularly recognized by the major search engines. There will be a link at the original site to send visitors to the new site.

Connections

Bill Wible LTJG 57-60 billwible@comcast.net

Moon Mullin PN 52-54
maumoon@cmaaccess.com

In Memoriam

Kenneth P. DeHart CMDR 51-52

Tommy Gallegos SH 56-58

Vegas info ...

Chuck Belting, MM 65-70 now resides in Las Vegas and has compiled this list of helpful information.

MINI LAS VEGAS CITY TOUR
\$29.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
DELUXE LAS VEGAS CITY
AND RED ROCK CANYON TOUR
\$49.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
MINI HOOVER DAM
\$31.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
DELUXE HOOVER DAM
\$41.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
HOOVER DAM & LAKE MEAD CRUISE
\$61.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
GRAND CANYON WEST RIM
\$139.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
COLORADO RIVER RAFT TOUR
\$109.99 ALL-INCLUSIVE
LAKE MEAD DINNER CRUISE
\$79.99
LAUGHLIN TOUR
\$7.50 ALL-INCLUSIVE
AIRPORT SHUTTLE SERVICE
Transfers to Strip hotels
\$4.25 pp ONE-WAY \$8.25 pp round trip

Info on any of the above can be obtained from the organizer at:

<http://www.vegastours.com>

TELEPHONE:

Outside of Las Vegas 1-800-704-7011
Within Las Vegas 702-895-9976

Another good source for up to the minute news of events and happenings in Las Vegas is:

<http://www.lasvegasadvisor.com>

Interesting Internet Links

<http://community-2.webtv.net/mj24582/LINKSTOALLTHINGSNAVY/>

An amazing compilation of facts and history.
<http://www.kitchentablegang.org>

A worthwhile site that supports US troops.

"Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile...can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, 'I served in the United States Navy'." - John F. Kennedy

Not Our Best Day

as recalled by **Jim Culp**, EN 51-54

In the early 50's we had many more ships in San Diego Bay then we had dock space and as mooring buoys were assigned according to the rank and seniority of the C.O. and who got there first, we often ended up way south ... not quite in Tijuana, but close. Of course everyone was anxious to get tied up and ready for liberty, so perhaps, things were rushed a little.

Too many years have gone by and I don't remember who the boat crew were and I didn't see it happen so my account is second hand after quizzing the boat engineer.

What I was told is they lowered the V.P. to take the buoy party to tie us up while we were still underway. We were moving too fast for the V.P. to keep up and the coxswain turned away from the ship. The V.P. was still fast to the crane and it just pulled the boat under. Thank goodness one of the cables didn't pull loose so we didn't lose the boat. Nobody drowned and nobody hurt.

I don't know what happened to the boat after we got it out but we borrowed one from the boat pool.. A couple of days later, **Tiny Spillman** and I went over to the Destroyer Base and selected a new boat for the ship from the boat pool. He was to check the hull and I, the engine. We took our liberty cards and our dress jumpers in the toolbox, sent the boat back with the boat crew and got an early start on



From Dan Van Wolvelaere - YN 49-51

I was on the Gunny Sack at the time the Badoeng Strait rammed us. I was in the log room and looked out the port hole and saw that huge bulk of a ship right on top of us. We had dutch doors in the log room and I jumped right over the bottom half. The log room was very close to the port crane. I thought that ship was coming right through us!!

Question: Anyone remember

"The Real McCoys"?

Photos provided by **Jim Culp**, EN 51-54

NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

(US Navy Version ... Author Unknown)

'Twas the night before Christmas, compartments were still,
The sailors were sleeping, as most sailors will.
The ditty bags hung by the lockers with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.
The men were all peacefully dreaming in bed
As visions of liberty danced in each head.
The Chief in his skivvies, hopped into his rack,
Having just came from town and a quick midnight snack.

When out on the deck there arose such a roar,
I ran to the porthole to find out the score.
I stuck out my head and started to shout,
Just what in the world is this noise all about?"

A moon made for boondocking showed with a glow,
It was downright cold out, 'bout seven below.
What I saw out there looked like those Mardi Gras floats,
'Twas a Captain's gig drawn by four white Navy goats.

In the boat was a man who seemed quiet and moody,
I knew in an instant St. Nick had the duty.
As quickly as Monday his billy goats came,
He whistled and shouted and called them by name.

"Now Perry, now Farragut, Dewey and Jones,
What's the matter John Paul, got lead in your bones?
A little to Starb'rd, now hold it up short,
No fluffing off now, or you'll go on report!"

He was wearing dress "Reds" that fit like a charm,
His hash marks they covered the length of his arm.
The gifts to be issued were all in his pack,
The gedunk was ready to leave on each rack.

His eyes they were watering, his nose caked with ice,
He wiped it with canvass, then sneezed once or twice.
He opened his mouth and started to yawn,
It looked like the Sun coming up with the dawn.

The stump of a pipe, he held tight in his teeth,
And took a small nip from a bottle beneath.
He wasn't so big, but he must have been strong,
I figured he'd been in SEALs early and long.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old Tar,
Who said "Evenin' Matey, here have a cigar."
He filled every seabag with presents galore,
And left us all leave papers, right by the door.

With "Anchors Aweigh" he climbed back into place,
A broad smile was creeping all over his face.
One look at his watch and he started to frown,
"This mid watch is certainly getting me down."



GHRA Membership

As we approach the '05 reunion, it is interesting to note that we have more fully paid members now than we did at the time of the '03 reunion. As of November 30, 2004, there were 175 fully paid active members.

The nature of the group is that our population is aging ... it will never be younger than it is. It might be interesting to find our youngest member but he will be over 50. And, the reality is simply that we are passing on at an increasing rate. We have lost 10 members that were on the roster at the '03 reunion. A membership increase at this point in our history is rather amazing.

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.

Your dues must be current to continue receiving the newsletter and if you plan to attend the reunion.

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