



USS Gunston Hall LSD 5

Newsletter of the USS Gunston Hall Reunion Association

Fall 2005

Reunion '07

Although not exactly around the corner, it will soon be upon us; we need to begin preparations for *REUNION '07*.

At the last reunion, we decided to change the method of selecting a site. Three candidate cities were nominated one of which will be selected by a majority vote: San Diego, Norfolk or New Orleans. Regrettably, at this time it seems very unlikely that New Orleans will be a viable choice. The actual balloting will not take place until December; if there is more reliable information regarding New Orleans it will be presented in the Winter newsletter in time for a vote before the end of the year.

One of our members has suggested that an alternative to New Orleans be substituted for the third city. Since we could not foresee the need for any substitutions at the business meeting there is nothing for us to consider at this time. Any thoughts on the matter or suggestions for an alternate location will be appreciated and must be received at the office by the end of November 2005 at the very latest to be considered.

A number of hotels in Norfolk and in San Diego have sent proposals; however, none of them will make a firm commitment more than a few months in advance. The costs presented here are what it would be if the reunion were held at some time in the next six months. However, the relative expense will likely remain a constant. That is, if there is an increase it will likely be the same percentage at all locations. Perhaps to be safe, it would be prudent to expect an increase of about 5% on all of these rates.

The first proposals suggest that the registration fee will be about the same at any of the locations ... the current estimate is in the range of \$80 to \$90 per person no matter where we end up. It is expected that all of the amenities: buffets, hospitality facilities, etc will be at least the same as at the Imperial Palace. If there is a volunteer (hint, hint) in the city of choice, perhaps he can even get us a live band and arrange for some extra-curricular activities.

Here's a thought ... one of you guys could volunteer your wife to help out. A woman's touch may be to our benefit.



Norfolk



If you haven't been to Norfolk in a while, you will be surprised at what is billed as the "NEW" Norfolk. Among the many attractions, they have the USS Wisconsin, the largest battleship ever in the US fleet; it is open for free tours. Also, tours of the naval station are available with lunch in the mess hall. Non-Navy attractions include museums, shopping, cultural events, etc. Those with internet access should visit the Norfolk visitors bureau website for more information

<http://www.norfolkcvb.com>

If the reunion was to be held in 2006, several hotels are offering us rooms at \$70 to \$109 per day, single or double occupancy. The reunion fee would be about \$85 per person to cover buffet dinners, hospitality suite refreshments, etc.

San Diego



San Diego ... the town many of us once loved to hate! If you haven't been there since you left the Navy, you may be in for a real shock. San Diego has become a very cosmopolitan city with something for just about everyone. The USS Midway is docked and open for tours. There are nightclubs, boutiques, casinos, beaches, maritime museums, a world famous zoo and more. And, the weather comes close to perfect all year long. Mexico is minutes away and accessible without visas for US citizens (with proof of citizenship).

A bit more expensive than Vegas or Norfolk, several hotels have sent proposals with room rates ranging from \$90 to \$125 per night, single or double occupancy. The reunion registration fee would be about the same as Norfolk and only slightly higher than Vegas.

As might be expected there is a website that has a lot of information:

<http://www.sandiego.org>

‘SHOOTING GOING ON ALL AROUND,’ GUNSTON HALL UNTOUCHED

A guy gets nervous when the mortar rounds start whistling overhead— as any crewman aboard the USS Gunston Hall (LSD-5) can tell you.

“Hauling cargo and amphibious craft is usually a peaceful job,” said a crewman, “unless you happen to be carrying it up the Long Tau River.”

The Gunston Hall made her second run up the river at the end of May, carrying three monitors, three attack troop carriers and one command monitor. Setting general quarters, the ship steamed 38 miles up the meandering river to Nha Be.

Arriving in mid-afternoon, the Gunston Hall was required to stay at anchor off Nha Be because of the 5 p. m. river curfew. During the night the ship remained at fully darkened condition with guns manned.

“The shooting was going on all around us,” recalled an officer aboard the vessel. “The Riverine Base area, the nearby villages and the river itself were repeatedly lit up by explosions.”

The officer noted that the Gunston Hall remained untouched by enemy fire throughout the night. “Shortly after midnight, a number of mortar rounds passed directly over the ship and exploded on the outskirts of Nha Be village,” he recalled. “However, Gunston Hall never appeared to be the object of enemy fire, as far as we could determine, so from our standpoint it was a night without incident. Of course, I’ve got to admit we were quite concerned for a while.”

Other cargo runs by the Gunston Hall have proved less hazardous. In early June more than 100 Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corp (NROTC) midshipmen were “loaded aboard” for delivery to Yankee Station in the Tonkin Gulf and the First Corps Tactical Zone. Eighty-one of the middies were transferred by helicopter, more than half at night stations, while the remaining 20 went by small boat to the recipient ships.

A noteworthy achievement was chalked up by the middies while they were aboard the Gunston Hall; they consumed 75 pounds of popcorn from the ship’s refreshment store during their five-day stay aboard.

Whether the “cargo” is amphibious craft or a group of middies, the crew lives up to their ship’s motto: “You call, we haul, Gunston Hall.”

Reprinted from South China Sea Sentinel, July 12, 1968

Submitted by **Mike Anderson**, RM, 1966-68

Do you remember?

It was in the early fifties, we were on our way to Seattle, running about seven miles off the coast of Oregon and encountering heavy ground swells. My bunk was on top next to a porthole in the Supply Department’s sleeping quarters. I had rigged a long antenna out the porthole and was listening to the Indy 500 race. Normally, the water was a long way down, but suddenly the ship took a 45 degree roll and the water came up just below the open porthole. It was the only time in my four years on the Gunny Sack that I wondered if she was going to go all the way over.

All hell broke loose on the ship. Steel plates in the ship fitters shop banged as they shifted in their racks. Typewriters and chairs fell off desks. China cups stored in the passageway next to the galley came crashing down. All over the ship things were crashing and breaking.

The PA system crackled, "The A Division lay back to the well deck on the double!" An LCVP had broken loose on the portable deck and was sliding around. Finally, the bridge turned the ship into the swells to slack off the rolling.

I ran back to the well deck just as the boatswain mate put a hook on the LCVP and the crane operator lifted it up a couple of inches. Suddenly the ship took another roll and the boat swung to the port and crashed into a new pickup truck tied down next to the crane. The crane operator dropped the boat back down on the deck and the deck hands finally got it turnbuckled down again. If I recall, both the boat and the truck were damaged in the incident.

It was a memorable Memorial Day that I’ll always remember, as will many others.

Ellsworth "Frank" Frankson SK2, 1951-54

Recycle your old cell phones

Careless disposal of old cell phones can be environmentally unfriendly. So, what to do with them?

It happens that there is some residual value and the Kitchen Table Gang has an agreement with GRC Wireless Recycling. They get up to \$30 for old cell phones which they use in their work with the V.A. hospitals.

Shipping to them via FedEx can also be free of charge. What better way to get rid of the old phones, protect the environment and effectively make a contribution to a worthy cause?

For more information and instructions, check out <http://www.kitchentablegang.org> or call the GRC at: 877/744-3601; mention the Kitchen Table Gang program.

Okinawa Invasion

Sunrise - 0553 OKINAWA INVASION
Sunset - 1900 U. S. S. GUNSTON HALL 11/rs

PLAN OF THE DAY

Monday 30 April 1945

Officer's Deck Watches

	00 – 04	04 – 08	08 – 12	12 – 16	16 – 18	18 – 20	20 – 24
OOD -	Wright	Scherneck	Garfield	Gorman	Bracy	Wright	Scherneck
JOOD -	Hurley	Sica	Heckman	Vinson	Hickman	Hurley	Sica

Day's Engineering Duty Watch Officer – Florenzi

0000 - Rotate Condition III Watches as always.

0550 – Call P.P.O's.

0600 – Reveille.

0615 – Turn to. Sweep down and clamp down weather decks.

0645 – Breakfast. The Oncoming Watch will eat and then relieve.

0700 – Send #3 boat with Mail Orderly to ARS 33 to deliver outgoing mail.

0800 – Turn to. Muster on stations. Make reports to Ship's Office. All compartments must be cleared until 0900. Sick Call. Air bedding if weather permits.

0900 – Rest period for Section I.

1130 – Pipe sweepers. Dinner for the Oncoming Watch.

1200 – Dinner.

1300 – Turn to. Pipe sweepers. All compartments must be cleared until 1400.

1400 – Rest period for Section III. Pipe down all aired bedding.

1600 – Pipe sweepers. Supper for the Oncoming Watch.

1630 – Supper.

1830 – Sick Call.

1900 – Darken ship.

1945 – Eight O'clock reports to the Executive Officer.

2100 – Taps. Lights out. Silence about the decks.

2200 – M.A.A. reports "10 o'clock lights" to the O.O.D.

- NOTES: 1. A case of a man not being at his general quarters station was reported to the Commanding Officer during one of the alerts last night. Unfortunately, no one had thought of sending for him until it was reported to the Commanding Officer. None of us can win the war alone. Teamwork is necessary and every member of the team must be in his place when called upon. The final responsibility for getting to general quarters stations promptly, as for relieving the watch on time, rests with the individual. However, the Commanding Officer expects and demands that Division Officers and Petty Officers and seniors at gun and work stations will instruct the less experienced and will see that all have adequate arrangements for being called, particularly those who are heavy sleepers or whose bunks are remote from the alarm bell outlets. They should be particularly careful at times when large numbers of the crew have recently lost much sleep, as at present.
2. The control of the gun crews last night was again gratifying. Orders to commence firing were not given until gun crews asked permission to fire, stating that they could see the planes. 20mm crews should not have fired. Their judgement as gunners should have told them that all targets were beyond their range. It is doubtful that the two latter targets were within 40mm range. Normally, planes are not good targets when going away from the ship. Hereafter, we will not fire at such planes.
3. Pay for the crew – A to N (inclusive) 0930 to 1000;
N to Z (inclusive) 1000 to 1030.
4. WAR BOND ALLOTMENTS may be registered in the Pay Office from 1300 to 1400.
5. LOST: Gold Crucifix and Cross. Finder please return same to Ship's Office.

/s/ W. F. Bentley Executive Officer

CONNECTIONS

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HELP WANTED

The success that we have had with the newsletters has been partly because some shipmates have sent us sea stories, pictures, memories, etc and we have been able to publish them. Without these contributions, the newsletters would have been far less interesting.

We are at the point where we are out of material. We need to have something from you guys in order to continue to provide what we all enjoy reading. Please send us anything you have, whether it is a sea story, a picture, a memory, whatever. Don't worry about the condition of the picture or how the grammar is or anything else. We can find a way to make it work.

You can call me, send it via US mail or e-mail. We really need some fresh input from everybody. I know that a lot of you have interesting sea stories or pictures so get them to me and we will share them with other shipmates.

On a related matter, we need a couple of volunteers to help out with various GHRA activities. For example, it would be helpful to have someone in each of the proposed reunion cities.

We do NOT need a committee that just wants to advise and consent; we need hands-on people. GHRA is OUR organization ... it belongs to ALL of us. Take an active interest.



USS Gunston Hall LSD 5 Reunion Association
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SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

There are a number of ways to become actively involved. Many service people have needs that can be easily met - perhaps a care package or simply a penpal. This website has a lot of information and can help you get started if you have any interest:

<http://www.americasupportsyou.mil>

TRIVIA

The following has been paraphrased from an e-mail sent in by Don Wagner, SM, 1958 – 60 ...

Regarding the history of the Gunston Hall: prior to being classified a Landing Ship, Dock (LSD), and while she was still in the prototype design stages, she was classified an APM. The APM abbreviation is controversial, but the Navy Historical Center has it's meaning as Artillery Transport, Mechanized. For this reason, the guys that sailed in her during WWII called her the "Gun Hauler".

Now, who can tell us the origin of "Gunny Sack?"

Reunion '07

Ballots to decide the location of the next reunion will be mailed out before the end of the year. *If your dues are not current, you will not get a ballot! There will be NO EXCEPTIONS.* Don't be left out - send your \$20 to Chod *today*. Make the check payable to GHRA.

NEW ADDRESS

CHOD CREMER, our treasurer, has a new address. Please send your dues to:

Chod Cremer, P.O. Box 201, Agency IA 52530

WEBSITE

If you are reading this on-line, you will have noticed the re-designed front end of the website. There are also a few changes throughout the site. New pictures have been added to the 2005 Reunion page and the "Links" page has been updated. If you are reading a hard copy of this newsletter, come on and check it out: <http://www.ussgunstonhall.org>