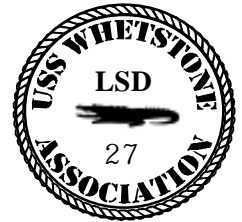




58th Edition



The Rolling Stone



Feb 2012

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Association, INC. The Association is a non profit, historical and educational organization dedicated to promoting fraternal, civic, patriotic and historical memories of those who served aboard.

Enterprise Hosts Crew from Past 50 Years

The world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, USS Enterprise (CVN 65), hosted nearly 1,000 former crew members Nov. 27 to kick off its two-day 50th birthday celebration that will culminate with a party in the ship's hangar bay, Nov. 28.

The celebration, which is the first for a ship serving 50 years in active service, provides an opportunity for crew members past and present to reflect on the importance of the sea power that Enterprise represents.

John D. Clark, a former photographer's mate who served onboard Enterprise from 1963 to 1965, said he was onboard Enterprise for "two Mediterranean tours and a world tour."

Current Enterprise Sailors were available throughout the day to show their predecessors around, but many times it was the veteran Sailors who ended up giving the tours as they recounted their service from a bygone era.

Although widely considered a very rewarding and, possibly, final opportunity for visiting

veterans to walk the passageways of one of the most famous ships in history, the experience had an impact on current Sailors as well.

"Everyone has their own experiences and feelings about this ship," said Airman Apprentice Michael C. King-solver, who helped provide tours to the veterans. "It really boosts my morale to hear these veterans share their stories with me and get excited about how things used to be."



A common theme expressed by former Sailors is that while the ship has been upgraded throughout the decades to meet the changing nature of warfare, overall it is very much the same.

"To me, it's a little like spending a day with a childhood friend that you haven't seen in many years," said Dale Inman who served as a Machinist's Mate in the early 1970s. "It makes me nostalgic for the good old days. But you know what, I'll bet I could still man my station if the skipper needed me to."

As Enterprise prepares for its final deployment, deactivation and decommissioning, the opportunity for veterans of Enterprise and future veterans of the ship to meet and interact is one that will certainly be valued by all.

Deceased Shipmates



TAPS
Gone the sun,
From the lakes,
From the hills
From the sky
All is well,
Safely rest,
God is nigh.

The shipmates listed below are assumed to be deceased. Information comes from shipmates, the V.A. and relatives of the shipmate.

This information is not Official
Please advise of any errors or omissions

Note: Due to the length of our deceased shipmate list, we are no longer printing the complete list in the newsletter. If you would like a complete list, please contact Kay Goble, Secretary.

We have been notified of the passing of the following since the last newsletter:

BM3	1950-52	David Harman
FP	1951-54	Bernard R. Lively
QM	1950-54	Lawrence W. Lonnon
MM2	1951-52	Roy W. Tracy
FT3	1960-63	Charles Van Hoosen

Bernard R. Lively

From Lewis Lively

Bernard R. Lively who served on the USS Whetstone from 1950-54. We lost my Father on October 6th, 2011.



Lawrence W Lonnon

It is with sadness that we advise you of the death of Lawrence "Larry" W. Lonnon, 81, of Astoria, Oregon on February 13, 2012.

Larry was very supportive of the Whetstone Association and has provided assistance in his private/anonymous way over the years. Larry hosted our reunion in Astoria, Oregon in 2010 and for those who attended the reunion, there are many fond memories of the great food (prepared by Larry and "the girls"), the hospitality and all of his efforts to plan a very memorable reunion. It is our understanding that a memorial service will be announced at a later date to commemorate Larry's life. Larry will be missed greatly by those who served with him and enjoyed his friendship throughout the years.



The Chaplain's Corner

Greetings shipmates. Wow! Here we are in the year 2012. I look to 2012 with HOPE. So much negative news being bombarded on us 24 hours a day, it is easy to get down in the dumps. But I look forward to a great year in 2012 because of what Christ has done for us.

I enjoy meditating on Jeremiah 29:11-12. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."

Retaining hope while we suffer shows we understand God's merciful ways of relating to his people.

The past three years have been extremely difficult for our ministry because of the economical situation the country is in. Depending totally on donations for our non-profit organization sometimes becomes very stressful wondering if we will still be able to meet our financial obligations. Our strength and courage to press on comes from the Lord. Being able to pray together daily with Jane and read God's word gives us hope. We place our faith in his hands, and trust his word. 1 Cor. 13:13 faith, hope and love are at the heart of the Christian life. Our relationship with God begins with faith, which helps us realize that we are delivered from our past by Christ's death. As I study God's word and learn God's plan for me, hope grows and gives me the promise of the future. When God's love fills our lives, we can

reach out to others. Hope also grows as we remember the promise of the resurrection. Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus? Don't go another day without inviting him into your heart to be the Lord and Savior of your life.

Have a blessed 2012. Hope to see all of you in Branson in September at our reunion.

Marv Watson, Chaplain
(RM-3 60-63)

Voluntary Dues

Again, **thank you** to all shipmates that have contributed dues and donations to the Association. Without your support, it would be impossible to publish "The Rolling Stone", maintain the Website and support our reunions. Dues are \$25.00 a year, are tax deductible, and are strictly **voluntary**. Dues are applied for one year (using date of check as beginning point, i.e. 01/01/12 check applies until 01/01/13). We recognize that not all are able to support the Association, but we welcome support from whomever is able. Dues received to date for 2012 are listed below. An asterisk designates dues paid for additional year(s) after 1/31/12. If anyone has paid and your name is not listed, please accept our apology and contact Kay Goble at 6200 Emerald Pines Cir, Ft. Myers, FL 33966, 239.768.1449 or via e-mail at marion-goble@comcast.net. Please make checks payable to: **USS Whetstone Association**.

Please use this list as your receipt.

Alsleben, Keith	Buchanan, Kenneth*
Anderson, Robert	Burik, Frank
Bell, Charles	Carson, Capt. Grant
Bisping, Neil A.*	Chidester, David*
Blenkhorn, Charles	Cickavage, Joseph*
Bogusch, W. C.	Coakley, Bill*
Boren, Ben	Coldren, Wayne
Bradow, Russell	Conover, Jan*
Brameyer, George	Costello, Charles L.*
Brannigan, Christopher	Cox, Millard A.*
Brown, Beryle	Dinda, Gerald F.
Brown, James E.*	Doerr, Gary T.

A Christmas Story

Dover, Fred
 Draper, Rusty
 Dunn, Jim
 Edney, Edward
 Edwards, H "Sonny"
 Engelken, Ralph L.
 Feathers, Paul
 Flowerree, Robert
 Fox, Sebastian
 Fraser, Douglas*
 Fry, Stephen D.
 Fulghem, Richard*
 Funk, John
 Goble, Marion
 Gordon, Eddie*
 Gregory, Carroll
 Gross, Richard*
 Grubb, Jack
 Hall, Charles
 Hammons, Willis
 Haueter, Hylton*
 Holleman, Jimmy*
 Hoover, Frederick
 Johnson, Merrill
 Jones, Dale
 Kirby, Joe*
 Kircher, Vincent
 Koons, Lee D.
 Kuehn, Melvin*
 Lanphear, George
 Leopold, Vincent
 Lonnon, Larry
 Maness, Jack
 McClellan, G.A.
 McCray, David
 McGrew, Joseph R.
 McManus, Peter
 McNitt, Russell*
 McQuillen, Tom
 Meismer, J. C.
 Mezzanotti, Paul D.
 Mitchell, Burley
 Moore, Lane*

Myers, Warren*
 Nicholson, Joe
 Noffke, Henry A.
 Oremus, Vern C.
 Pearson, Ray
 Pennington, Lavell
 Peters, Lester*
 Pierce, Charles
 Pilgreen, Vince*
 Randolph, Stephen
 Raymie, Jerry
 Remington, Richard
 Richter, Herbert B.
 Rowe, Horace
 Rudnick, Robert
 Sandrock, Capt. J.E.
 Sandwisch, Larry
 Savala, Manuel
 Savoie, Donald
 Shimmell, Thomas
 Shrader, Daniel L.*
 Smedstad, Randall L.
 Smith, Burt
 Smith, Clinton R.*
 Smith, Don
 Stanford, Roy*
 Stergeos, James P.
 Stief, Bernard
 Sutton, Doyle
 Sylvester, Kim
 Teske, Glenn*
 Timmons, Garrett L.
 Tucker, George
 Van Guilder, David
 Ward, Everett*
 Watson, Marvin
 Weston, Keith
 Widrig, Lewis*
 Winslow, Leonard
 Wood, Gerald
 Work, Robert G.
 Yedowitz, Joseph

Soldier Pawns Purple Heart for Christmas Cash

HOLLAND, Mich. -- Pawn shops are big business this time of year, thanks to the holidays and tough economic times. However, one particular West Michigan store is generating buzz over a small treasure many consider priceless.

As owner of A-Z Outlet in Holland, Bryan Vandenbosch has purchased a lot of electronics, jewelry, and tools, but after almost 19 years in business, he bought something he never expected -- a Purple Heart, a medal awarded to U.S. troops wounded in battle. This one was earned in Afghanistan in May 2010.

"[The Soldier had] been in here the week [before Thanksgiving]," says Vandenbosch. "He brought it in the following week, I purchased it from him, and put it on display."

Vandenbosch says the active-duty Soldier, on leave from Afghanistan, was reluctant to sell the medal at first, but like a lot of people, he needed a little extra cash for the holiday season. So, the Soldier gave up one of his two Purple Hearts -- something he almost gave his life to get.

As word began to spread about the medal, Vandenbosch says the phone has been ringing off the hook with people wanting to help.

"I have people that have walked in already this morning that have asked me 'Hey, how much did you pay for it? I'll pay for it so he can get it back,'" he says.

One of those people is Garrett Vanderduim, a Vietnam veteran.

"A Purple Heart is a treasured thing among service guys, and it stands for a lot," explains Vanderduim. "I thought it would be a good thing to help out, especially during Christmas time."

But the medal is not for sale, and the store owner says he'll keep it safe until the Soldier decides to come back.

"[In case] the gentleman wants it, it's never going to be sold," he says.

Now, nestled between diamond earrings and a gold watch lies the military medal. It's quite a sight for Carlos Mendez, who was born in Cuba, and doesn't take his rights as an American for granted.

"When I see something like that it's just awesome that somebody is willing to go out there and defend our freedom," Mendez says.

Many items in the pawn shop have a story; from the green leather suit that gave a woman enough money to leave an abusive marriage, to a musical instrument that paid for cancer treatments, but the story behind each Purple Heart is one that affects every American.

"It means the ultimate sacrifice for your country," Vanderduim says. "[The Soldier was] wounded, you can't get much closer to the end than that."

Vandenbosch says the Soldier will remain anonymous, but he is from West Michigan. He also would not disclose how much he paid for the medal.

Vandenbosch said that anyone wishing to help should donate to a local veterans charity like the V.F.W., because the medal is not going anywhere, unless its rightful owner comes back to reclaim it.

Repent!

A woman had just returned to her home from an evening of church services, when she was startled by an intruder... She caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled: 'Stop! Acts 2:38!' Repent and be Baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven.

The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar: 'Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a scripture at you.'

'Scripture?' replied the burglar. 'She said she had an axe and two 38s!'

MY STATE IOWA

EM3	1966-68	Brown, Beryle	Cedar Rapids
SA	1963	Duitsman, Richard	Swea City
SFM3	1967-68	Frantz, William L.	Kalona
SN	1951-53	Garton, Lars	Ogden
SN	1952	Gerhards, Richard	Des Moines
MM3	1969-70	Grandors, Joe	Fort Dodge
BM3	1964-65	Jones, Dale H.	Cedar Rapids
SN	1952-54	Lanning, Eldon	Claremont
SK3	1963-65	Lee, Romaine	Tripoli
BT	1950-54	McClellan, G.A.	Lu Verne
BM	1952-56	Menadue, Charles	Dubuque
EM3	1968-70	Petefish, Dennis	Charles City
EN2	1966-68	Poggemiller, Don	Burlington
MM3	1958-62	Raymie, Jerry	Knoxville
MM2	1955	Shott, Ralph	Centerville

Recently Located

RD2	Myers, Warren J.
1962-64	San Manuel, AZ
RM2	Pennington, Lavell F.
1966-67	San Jose, CA



Greetings from Your President



Well here we are in the year 2012, it seems like it was just last month that I was wishing the Whetstone Crew a happy year for 2011. Again I wish you all a happy new year for 2012.

Coming up quicker than you can blink an eye will be the Branson reunion. Kay, Marion and others have been working very hard to insure that the members of the Whetstone will have a great time. Come to think of it, have we ever had a bad time? (Absolutely Not !)

Bunny and myself have attended all the reunions so far, and I can honestly say that we have enjoyed each one, so if you have never attended a Whetstone reunion, set your sights for Branson this Sept. you will not be disappointed

That's it for now, hope to see you soon

God Bless and Support Our Troops

Bill Coakley

USN / 1958 - 1962

Pearl Harbor Survivors Group to Disband

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii -- Veterans from Pearl Harbor observed the 70th anniversary of the attack Wednesday with a solemn ceremony at the site of the Japanese bombing, as an aging and dwindling group of survivors announced it would disband at the end of the month.

"It was time. Some of the requirements became a burden," William Muehleib, president of the Pearl Harbors Survivors Association, said after the ceremony. He also cited poor health among the group's 2,700 members, adding that most of the survivors have realized there are other things they'd like to do at their age.

The Japanese attack on Dec. 7, 1941, killed 2,390 Americans and brought the United States into World War II.

Survivors will be able to attend future commemoration ceremonies on their own. About 3,000 people, including Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and military leaders, attended this year's anniversary at a site overlooking the sunken USS Arizona and the white memorial that straddles the battleship.

Muehleib said there are an estimated 7,000 to 8,000 Pearl Harbor survivors. Local chapters of the group will function as long as they have members and survivors can gather socially, but they will no longer have a formal, national organization.

The group's announcement came as President Barack Obama hailed veterans of the bombing in a statement proclaiming Wednesday as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

"Their tenacity helped define the Greatest Generation and their valor fortified all who served during World War II. As a nation, we look to December 7, 1941, to draw strength from the example set by these patriots and to honor all who have sacrificed for our freedoms," he said.

3 Navy Ships on Course for Longest Deployment in Years

NORFOLK -- Three Navy amphibious ships that left Norfolk ahead of schedule in March are set to stay at sea into February, which would make their cruise the longest ship deployment in decades.

The amphibious assault ship Bataan, the amphibious transport dock Mesa Verde and the dock landing ship Whidbey Island left Norfolk Naval Station on March 23, three months earlier than planned because of the unrest in Libya.



The thousands of Sailors and Marines aboard the ships were recently told that their deployment will last about 10 1/2 months, Lt. Cmdr. Bill Urban, a spokesman with Naval Surface Force Atlantic, confirmed Monday. Navy officials said that would make the Bataan group's cruise the longest in decades. Typical deployments last six to seven months.

After the Bataan group left Norfolk, it spent three weeks training in the Atlantic. The ships then steamed to the Mediterranean, where the Bataan relieved the amphibious assault ship Kearsarge, which was involved in early strikes into Libya. The Kearsarge spent 8 1/2 months at sea before coming home in May; it left Norfolk ahead of schedule to help flood victims in Pakistan.

In August, the Bataan arrived in the Arabian Gulf for its planned deployment, replacing the West Coast-based Boxer.

Since leaving Norfolk, each of the ships in the Bataan group has spent about a month in port in various cities. The Bataan has had four port visits, the Mesa Verde five, and the Whidbey Island six.

Also this week, five ash scattering and interment ceremonies are being held for five survivors whose cremated remains are returning to Pearl Harbor after their deaths.

USS Utah survivor Gilbert Meyer said he comes back each year to see his shipmates entombed in the battleship which rests not far from where it sank.

Meyer, 88, recalled his ship rolling over after being hit by a torpedo and seeing Japanese planes dropping bombs. When the planes began showing machine gun fire, he knew it was time to move.

"That really got my attention, so I got in the water and swam ashore," he said.

Patriots Point's plans for the Laffey

In 2009, Patriots Point asked the state for a loan to improve its facility and repair the USS Laffey. Since then, they've moved the ship to North Charleston for repairs, asked the state to extend their loan and prepared for the Laffey's return. Now, with the ships scheduled to return in January, Patriots Point has until June 2013 to come up with a plan to repay the state.

"This board was presented with a number of projects and challenges over the last year, and bringing the Laffey back home was one of the most important," said Ray Chandler, chairman of the board. "She will once again become an asset to our museum and, I believe, an integral part of our business plan."

The Laffey has been docked at Shipyard Creek in North Charleston since she had repairs to her hull in 2009.

Moving the Laffey will cost \$573,354 and moving the Clamagore will cost \$311,350. The entire project including the deconstruction and reconstruction of the 60-foot section of pier will cost a total of \$1,006,526 and will not require dredging.

Funds for the project will come from the authority's Capital Maintenance Fund. Patriots Point still owes \$8.7 million on a state loan given to repair the Laffey. It has until June 2013 to submit a plan for repayment.

"We've got the money sitting in the bank (for the move) so it's not a problem there," said Mac Burdette, executive director, adding that having the Laffey back will add value to the museum and generate more revenue.

Patriots Point will close beginning Jan. 9 for the pier removal and moving project, which is expected to take four or five days. Limited touring of the Laffey will begin about a week after she is re-docked, with full touring and exhibits to open in February.

"We're planning on having a big party in the spring to celebrate her coming back," Burdette said.

Bundling the projects will save money in the future, Burdette said — Patriots Point expects the Clamagore to be dry docked in the future.

Burdette said the historic value of the Laffey made the project of particular importance.

"She is truly a historic ship whose service spanned three wars," he said. "While many know of her storied past in the Pacific Theater of Operations, they don't know that she participated in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, where she eliminated at least two German bunkers. She is a true asset for any naval museum."

Stevens Towing Co. of Yonges Island won the contract for bringing the Laffey home and moving the Clamagore to her new home.

The \$1 million dollar plan for the relocation project must be approved by the Joint Other Funds Oversight Committee of the Legislature, which will meet at 11 a.m. Nov. 30 in Columbia.

The committee's recommendation will be made to the staff of the state Budget and Control Board, which must sign off on the proposal because Patriots Point is a state agency.

"We feel very confident that it's going to be approved,"

Burdette said, adding that there was an assumption when the state loaned money for the Laffey's repairs that she would return to Patriots Point.

"It doesn't make sense to leave her up in North Charleston where no one can see her," he said. "It was always intended she be brought back here. This is the end of the road, let's get it done."

Another American Army

True story and most people will never know it.

Here's an interesting side bar. After the Japanese decimated our fleet in Pearl Harbor Dec 7, 1941, they could have sent their troop ships and carriers directly to California to finish what they started. The prediction from our Chief of Staff was we would not be able to stop a massive invasion until they reached the Mississippi River. Remember, we had a 2 million man army and war ships.....all fighting the Germans. So, why did they not invade?

After the war, the remaining Japanese generals and admirals were asked that question. Their answer.....they know that almost every home had guns and the Americans knew how to use them.

The world's largest army... America's hunters! I had never thought about this....

A blogger added up the deer license sales in just a handful of states and arrived at a striking conclusion:

There were over 600,000 hunters this season in the state of Wisconsin alone.

Allow me to restate that number.

Over the last several months, Wisconsin's hunters became the eighth largest army in the world.

More men under arms than in Iran ..

More than in France and Germany combined.

These men deployed to the woods of a single American state to hunt with firearms, and no one was killed.

That number pales in comparison to the 750,000 who hunted the woods of Pennsylvania and Michigan's 700,000 hunters, All of whom have now returned home.

Toss in a quarter million hunters in West Virginia and it literally establishes the fact that the hunters of those four states alone would comprise the largest army in the world. The point?

America will forever be safe from foreign invasion with that kind of home-grown firepower.

Hunting -- it's not just a way to fill the freezer. It's a matter of national security.

That's why all enemies, foreign and domestic, want to see us disarmed.

Food for thought when next we consider gun control

Veteran of Three Wars Will Finally See Memorials

His motorized wheelchair scoots between two posters decorating his room at the nursing home: a tiger representing the University of Missouri football team, and a black flag with a white silhouetted man and the acronym, POW/MIA.

Fitting bookends for the story of Bill Watson's life.

He's an 88-year-old great-grandfather who played college football at MU, served in three wars and spent more than two years as a prisoner of war in Korea.

In May 1951, Watson was captured by the Chinese Communist army in Korea. He survived 837 days -- in the initial months marching from town to town, eating road kill and grass. He lived through a tale more gruesome than any slasher movie, more sad than any Hallmark drama and more real than any fiction writer could ever imagine.

But there's one thing Watson wishes he had done: visited the national memorials for all three wars in which he served.

This week, that wish will come true.

Chosen from a pool of 1,000 people with wishes, Watson will leave Monday on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to see the memorials to those who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

New ears will hear his war stories -- perhaps even President Barack Obama's.

Watson's trip is a gift from Jeremy Bloom's Wish-of-a-Lifetime, a group that honors senior citizens by trying to turn one of their life dreams into reality.

Watson is thrilled. But it reinforces a bit of wisdom he learned early: Talking about painful memories eases their sting. So he does a lot of talking now.

From his wheelchair in the Raymore nursing home, Watson's right hand dances along with his descriptions. When he talks of bombs, his hand swooshes up. When he talks about carrying fellow prisoners on his back, it grasps an imaginary prisoner buddy. When he talks about snatching a piece of rancid meat from his pocket, the hand follows his words, showing how he did it.

His descriptions are so vivid, you can nearly smell the rotting meat.

Watson and his military history is well-documented. A platoon leader in the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, he survived the May Massacre in Korea.

He arrived in that country as part of a group of experienced Soldiers, deployed from inactive reserve status after World War II, because the U.S. government feared Korea was the beginning of World War III.

Watson was replacing someone, but that officer didn't greet him on arrival. He had been killed hours before.

Instead, he encountered the opening salvos of a massive attack from Chinese Communist and North Korean soldiers, a battle that historians would later name the Korean May Massacre.

Outnumbered, the Allies girded themselves in foxholes behind barbed wire, determined to survive.

Thousands of enemy troops died on the front lines that day. But thousands more Allied troops would die in the weeks after their capture.

"We watched as the Chinese generals ordered their men to lay down on the barbed wire," he says, describing how the enemy sprawled their bodies out like a human pyramid "16 men high." It allowed others to climb over.

"It was my job to make the radio call for air support."

But at this, the smile on his face sinks away, as he sorts through what images of hell to talk about next.

"I called in asking for everything we had. From the Air Force, the Marines, the Navy. ... We strafed 'em, bombed 'em, napalmed 'em. ... All you could see was dead Chinese."

But the corpses became shields for the next wave of enemy soldiers.

"Their commanders ordered still more men to lay down on top of them ... awful. I have never seen anything like that in my life."

Even after 60 years, this memory gnaws Watson. He blinks away the sadness. He recounts how he told his men to escape the foxholes in twos and threes under the cover of darkness. Some made it. He didn't.

The days and nights of captivity would be brutal.

"I couldn't understand why some men gave up. I always knew I'd make it out of that."

At 6 feet 4 inches tall, Watson tried to carry anyone who couldn't go on. If a man fell from fatigue or illness, he was shot or bayoneted. The enemies left only corpses on their path.

Watson changes the subject, talks about his happiest moment, when he was reunited with his wife and children after his imprisonment. Watson was 100 pounds lighter, but scars went deep.

Still, he had survived.

But then he faced another battle at Fort Riley, Kan. Some surviving POWs alleged he was now a Communist. Watson had to defend his honor before a board of inquiry.

Attorney Robert C. Tilden, the officer who represented Watson, wrote about the case in his memoirs.

The prison camps were filled with rumors of favoritism, paranoia and a lack of leadership, Tilden wrote. At the camp, Watson was "employed" by Chinese officers because of carpentry skills he learned as a teen.

But in testimony, the whole world learned how many bunk beds Watson made for his fellow prisoners and how many of their lives he bargained for. All charges against him were dropped months later, and Watson was promoted to captain.

It took years, and the birth of another child, before Watson would ever talk about his POW experience. One of his younger daughters, Cindy Meyer, says now that she never tires of hearing them.

"My high school friends were transfixed whenever

he started telling them about the wars," she says.

Watson was deployed once more -- to Vietnam. He was part of a team of "advisers" helping in the jungle battles of the early 1960s. But after one very close encounter with a bullet, he felt his luck was running out.

After 25 years of military service, he retired.

Watson eventually moved his family to Peculiar, but he couldn't stay away from public service. Watson ran for mayor and served eight years in office, where he befriended another mayor -- Emanuel Cleaver II from Kansas City.

Which is why a page from the Congressional Record is now stuck on his bedroom door. In a speech to Congress, U.S. Rep. Cleaver told the story of his fellow mayor and personal friend, Maj. William C. Watson.

It's about honoring Watson, Cleaver said in the speech, for his "tireless patriotism and unrelenting heroism."

The Re-boot

Arriving home from work as usual at 5:30 p.m., I discovered that it had not been one of my wife's better days. Nothing I said or did seemed to be right.

By 7 p.m. Things had not changed, so before a fight started in earnest I suggested I go outside, pretend I had just gotten home, and start all over again. My wife agreed.

I went outside, came back in and, with a big smile, announced,

"Honey, I'm home!"

"And just where have you been?" she replied sharply. "It's after seven o'clock!"

A change in our Website And Email Addresses.

By: Russ McNitt

(Webmaster USSWHETSTONE.US)

Hi,

I am switching web site providers from Blue Domino at \$204 per year to WebHostingHub at \$190 total for the first three years, then it will go to approx. \$7.00 per month (\$84.00/yr). In doing so I have moved everything to usswhetstone.us and it will be up and alive in November 2011 for you to check out.

All of the emails have also changed from usswhetstone.net to usswhetstone.us so please add this change to your email client. The settings will all be the same as usswhetstone.net. I set them up using the same passwords that David used. Any address with less than 4 digits I added 0's.

I will be closing down usswhetstone.net within approx 2 weeks at which time I will redirect .net .com .org to point to usswhetstone.us and you can delete usswhetstone.net from your mail client.

Gap Between Military and Civilians Growing

A new report confirms a concern defense and military leaders have long recognized: There's a growing disconnect between Americans and their military.

The report, published last week by the Pew Research Center, notes that a smaller share of Americans currently serve in the armed forces than at any time since the peacetime era between World Wars I and II.

Just one-half of 1 percent of Americans served in uniform at any given time during the past decade -- the longest period of sustained conflict in the country's history -- the report says. Meanwhile, as the military shrinks in size, the connections between military members and the broader civilian population "appear to be growing more distant," the report says.

The report was based on surveys of more than 2,000 civilian adults and almost 1,900 veterans, more than 700 of whom served after 9/11.

Among the respondents, most said they have family members who are serving in the armed forces or have served in the past. However, older Americans were considerably more likely to have close military ties.

More than three-quarters of civilian adults ages 50 and older reported having an immediate family member -- a spouse, parent, sibling or child -- who served or serves in the military. For many, that service took place before the end of the draft and the introduction of the all-volunteer force in 1973.

Only 57 percent of civilian respondents ages 30 to 49 said they had an immediate family member who served. The percentage dropped to one-third among respondents ages 18 to 29.

The report appears to confirm that for many Americans, military service is a family tradition. Seventy-nine percent of veterans surveyed reported that an immediate family member is serving or has served in the military. That compares to 61 percent among the civilian respondents.

Decisions to serve also appear to be influenced by race, region and political preference, the report showed. Sixty-eight percent of whites, 59 percent of blacks and 30 percent of Hispanic respondents reported having immediate family members who serve or have served in uniform.

Sixty-four percent of Southerners reported immediate family ties to the military. The percentage for those living in the Northeast was 56 percent, and in the West, 57 percent. City dwellers were somewhat less likely than those in the suburbs or rural areas to say a family member served in the military.

Political party also appeared to be an influencing factor. Seventy-three percent of Republicans, 59 percent of Democrats and 56 percent of Independents said an

(See *Civilians* on page 9)

Best Dog Story Ever

They told me the big black Lab's name was Reggie, as I looked at him lying in his pen. The shelter was clean, no-kill, and the people really friendly. I'd only been in the area for six months, but everywhere I went in the small college town, people were welcoming and open. Everyone waves when you pass them on the street.

But something was still missing as I attempted to settle in to my new life here, and I thought a dog couldn't hurt. Give me someone to talk to. And I had just seen Reggie's advertisement on the local news. The shelter said they had received numerous calls right after, but they said the people who had come down to see him just didn't look like "Lab people," whatever that meant. They must've thought I did.

But at first, I thought the shelter had misjudged me in giving me Reggie and his things, which consisted of a dog pad, bag of toys almost all of which were brand new tennis balls, his dishes and a sealed letter from his previous owner.

See, Reggie and I didn't really hit it off when we got home. We struggled for two weeks (which is how long the shelter told me to give him to adjust to his new home). Maybe it was the fact that I was trying to adjust, too. Maybe we were too much alike.

For some reason, his stuff (except for the tennis balls --- he wouldn't go anywhere with out two stuffed in his mouth) got tossed in with all of my other unpacked boxes. I guess I didn't really think he'd need all his old stuff, that I'd get him new things once he settled in. But it became pretty clear pretty soon that he wasn't going to. I tried the normal commands the shelter told me he knew, ones like "sit" and "stay" and "come" and "heel," and he'd follow them - when he felt like it. He never really seemed to listen when I called his name --- sure, he'd look in my direction after the fourth or fifth time I said it, but then he'd just go back to doing whatever. When I'd ask again, you could almost see him sigh and then grudgingly obey.

This just wasn't going to work. He chewed up a couple of shoes and some unpacked boxes. I was a little too stern with him and he resented it, I could tell. The friction got so bad that I couldn't wait for the two weeks to be up, and when it was, I was in full-on search mode for my cell phone amid all of my unpacked stuff. I remembered leaving it on the stack of boxes for the guest room, but I also mumbled, rather cynically, that the "damn dog probably hid it on me." Finally, I found it, but before I could punch up the shelter's number, I also found his pad and other toys from the shelter. I tossed the pad in Reggie's direction and he snuffed it and wagged, some of the most enthusiasm I'd seen since bringing him home.

But then I called, "Hey, Reggie, you like that? Come here and I'll give you a treat." Instead, he sort of glanced in my direction maybe "glared" is more accurate and then gave a discontented sigh and flopped down ... with his back to me. Well, that's not going to do it either, I thought. And I punched the shelter phone number.

But I hung up when I saw the sealed envelope. I had completely forgotten about that, too. "Okay, Reggie, I said out loud, "let's see if your previous owner has any advice." To Whoever Gets My Dog: Well, I can't say that I'm happy you're reading

this, a letter I told the shelter could only be opened by Reggie's new owner. I'm not even happy writing it. If you're reading this, it means I just got back from my last car ride with my Lab after dropping him off at the shelter. He knew something was different. I have packed up his pad and toys before and set them by the back door before a trip, but this time... it's like he knew something was wrong. And something was wrong...which is why I have to try to make it right. So let me tell you about my Lab in the hopes that it will help you bond with him and he with you.

First, he loves tennis balls. The more the merrier. Sometimes I think he's part squirrel, the way he hordes them. He usually always has two in his mouth, and he tries to get a third in there. Hasn't done it yet. Doesn't matter where you throw them, he'll bound after them, so be careful. Don't do it by any roads. I made that mistake once, and it almost cost him dearly. Next, commands. Maybe the shelter staff already told you, but I'll go over them again: Reggie knows the obvious ones ---"sit," "stay," "come," "heel." He knows hand signals, too:"back" to turn around and go back when you put your hand straight up; and "over" if you put your hand out right or left. "Shake" for shaking water off, and "paw" for a high-five. He does "down" when he feels like lying down --- I bet you could work on that with him some more. He knows "ball" and "food" and "bone" and "treat" like nobody's business. I trained Reggie with small food treats. Nothing opens his ears like little pieces of hot dog.

Feeding schedule: twice a day, once about seven in the morning, and again at six in the evening. Regular store-bought stuff; the shelter has the brand. He's up on his shots. Call the clinic on 9th Street and update his info with yours; they'll make sure to send you reminders for when he's due. Be forewarned: Reggie hates the vet. Good luck getting him in the car. I don't know how he knows when it's time to go to the vet, but he knows. Finally, give him some time. I've never been married, so it's only been Reggie and me for his whole life. He's gone everywhere with me, so please include him on your daily car rides if you can. He sits well in the backseat, and he doesn't bark or complain. He just loves to be around people, and me most especially.

Which means that this transition is going to be hard, with him going to live with someone new. And that's why I need to share one more bit of info with you....

His name's not Reggie. I don't know what made me do it, but when I dropped him off at the shelter, told them his name was Reggie. He's a smart dog, he'll get used to it and will respond to it, of that I have no doubt. But I just couldn't bear to give them his real name. For me to do that, it seemed so final, that handing him over to the shelter was as good as me admitting that I'd never see him again. And if I end up coming back, getting him, and tearing up this letter, it means everything's fine. But if someone else is reading it, well ... well it means that his new owner should know his real name. It'll help you bond with

him. Who knows, maybe you'll even notice a change in his demeanor if he's been giving you problems. His real name is "Tank. Because, that is what I drive. Again, if you're reading this and you're from the area, maybe my name has been on the news. I told the shelter that they couldn't make "Reggie" available for adoption until they received word from my company commander. You see, my parents are gone, I have no siblings, no one I could've left Tank with, and it was my only real request of the Army upon my deployment to Iraq , that they make one phone call the shelter ... in the "event"... to tell them that Tank could be put up for adoption. Luckily, my colonel is a dog-guy, too, and he knew where my platoon was headed. He said he'd do it personally. And if you're reading this, then he made good on his word.

Well, this letter is getting downright depressing, even though, frankly, I'm just writing it for my dog. I couldn't imagine if I was writing it for a wife and kids and family ... but still, Tank has been my family for the last six years, almost as long as the Army has been my family. And now I hope and pray that you make him part of your family, too, and that he will adjust and come to love you the same way he loved me.

That unconditional love from a dog is what I take with me to Iraq as an inspiration to do something selfless, to protect innocent people from those who would do terrible things ... and to keep those terrible people from coming to the U.S. If I have to give up Tank in order to do it, I am glad to have done so. He is my example of service and of love. I hope I honored him by my service to my country and comrades. All right, that's enough. I deploy this evening and have to drop this letter off at the shelter. I don't think I'll say another good-bye to Tank, though. I cried too much the first time. Maybe I'll peek in on him and see if he finally got that third tennis ball in his mouth. Good luck with Tank. Give him a good home, and give him an extra kiss goodnight every night from me.

Thank you, Paul Mallory I folded the letter and slipped it back in the envelope. Sure, I had heard of Paul Mallory, everyone in town knew him, even new people like me. Local kid, killed in Iraq a few months ago and posthumously earning the Silver Star when he gave his life to save three buddies. Flags had been at half-mast all summer.

I leaned forward in my chair and rested my elbows on my knees, staring at the dog. "Hey, Tank," I said quietly. The dog's head whipped up, his ears cocked and his eyes bright. "C'mere boy." He was instantly on his feet, his nails clicking on the hardwood floor. He sat in front of me, his head tilted, searching for the name he hadn't heard in months. "Tank," I whispered. His tail swished. I kept whispering his name, over and over, and each time, his ears lowered, his eyes softened, and his posture relaxed as a wave of contentment just seemed to flood him. I stroked his ears, rubbed his shoulders, buried my face into his scruff and hugged him. "It's me now, Tank, just you and me. Your old pal gave you to me. Tank reached up and licked my cheek. "So whatdaya say we play some ball? His ears perked again. Yeah Ball? You like that Ball? Tank tore from my hands and disappeared into the next room. And when he came back, he had three tennis balls in his mouth.

(Civilians from page 7)

immediate family member served in the military.

The report confirmed perceptions by civilians as well as veterans that the American public doesn't understand the problems faced by those in the military. Seventy-seven percent of veterans and 71 percent of the general public shared this view.

Retired Navy Adm. Mike Mullen spoke frequently during his tenure as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff about what he called a "worrying disconnect" between civilians and the military.

Speaking earlier this year at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., Mullen expressed concern that civilians don't fully understand the sacrifices military members make.

"Our work is appreciated, of that I am certain," he told members of the 2011 graduating class. "But I fear [civilians] do not know us. I fear they do not comprehend the full weight of the burden we carry or the price we pay when we return from battle."

This is important, Mullen said, "because a people uninformed about what they are asking the military to endure is a people inevitably unable to fully grasp the scope of the responsibilities our Constitution levies upon them."

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, speaking last month at the Woodrow Wilson Center, called the tiny percentage of Americans who make up the all-volunteer force the most important ingredient of U.S. national defense.

Panetta praised the "men and women who represent less than 1 percent of our nation, but who have shouldered the burden of protecting the American people and who have shown the strength of the American character in their willingness to put their lives on the line to defend our values, our interests and our freedom."

The secretary emphasized the need for the country to provide them the support they deserve -- even in the face of budgetary challenges.

"The 1 percent of the country that has served in uniform, and their families, have borne the heavy costs of war for 10 years," he said. "They cannot be expected to bear the full costs of fiscal austerity as well."

From the Australian Shooter Magazine,

"If you consider that there has been an average of 160,000 troops in the Iraq Theater of operations during the past 22 months, and a total of 2,112 deaths, that gives a firearm death rate of 60 per 100,000.

The firearm death rate in Washington , DC is 80.6 per 100,000 for the same period. That means you are about 25 per cent more likely to be shot and killed in the US capital, which has some of the strictest gun control laws in the U.S. , than you are in Iraq .

Conclusion: The U.S. should pull out of Washington .

Hope to be Free

In July 1948, 27-year-old Air Force lieutenant Gail Halvorsen was flying food and supplies into West Berlin, which was blockaded by the Soviet Union. One night he encountered a group of hungry children who had gathered near the runway to watch the planes land.

"They could speak a little English," he recalled later. "Their clothes were patched and they hadn't had gum and candy for two or three years. They barely had enough to eat."

Halvorsen gave them two sticks of gum and promised to drop more candy for them the next day from his C-54. He said he'd rock his wings so that they could distinguish him from the other planes. Then he returned to the base and spent the night tying bundles of candy to handkerchief parachutes.

Over the next three days he dropped candy to growing crowds of West German children. He had wanted to keep the project secret ("It seemed like something you weren't supposed to do"), but when a newsman snapped a photograph Halvorsen began receiving boxes of candy from all over the United States, many with parachutes already attached. Halvorsen went home in February 1949, and the blockade was lifted three months later.

In 1998, when Halvorsen returned to Berlin, a "dignified, well-dressed man of 60 years" approached him. He said, "Fifty years ago I was a boy of 10 on my way to school. The clouds were very low with light rain. I could hear the planes landing though I couldn't see them. Suddenly out of the mist came a parachute with a fresh Hershey chocolate bar from America. It landed right at my feet. I knew it was happening but couldn't believe it was for me. It took me a week to eat that candy bar. I hid it day and night. The chocolate was wonderful but it wasn't the chocolate that was most important. What it meant was that someone in America knew I was here, in trouble and needed help. Someone in America cared. That parachute was something more important than candy. It represented hope. Hope that some day we would be free."



Grand Plaza Hotel

245 North Wildwood, Branson, MO

Reservations:

Call Direct: 800-850-6646

www.bransongrandplaza.com

Attendees may begin making reservations for the Reunion at this time. When you speak with the front desk staff, attendees should mention the group code "WHETSTN" (USS Whetstone Reunion) so you receive the group rate of **\$84.00 plus tax** for a Double Queen Bed room (**2 people in room. \$5.00 charge for each additional adult in each guest room**). Mini suites, King Feature Suites and Family Suites are available at an added cost. **Complimentary breakfast is included in all room rates.**

Reunion Itinerary

Sunday

12:00 p.m. Hospitality Room & Check-In

5:30 p.m. Reception (Light Meal) at Hotel

Monday

9:00 a.m. Veterans Memorial Museum

1:30 p.m. Area Tour and Memorial Service and Showboat Branson Belle Dinner, Show and Cruise

Tuesday

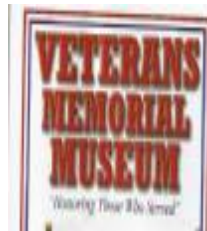
10:00 a.m. Clay Cooper Show & Lunch

Wednesday

9:00 a.m. Business Meeting & Women's Meeting

6:00 p.m. Group and Individual Photos

7:00 p.m. Banquet at Hotel w/Entertainment



NOTE: ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE WITH PAM BROWN BY AUGUST 16, 2012. NO EXCEPTIONS.

REUNION NEWS: We have contracted with Pam Brown at Gatherings Plus in Branson, Missouri to handle the reunion. Pam is a well-established Planner and handles numerous military reunions. Pam is able to provide us the most cost-efficient package for our reunion. She handles all contracts and accepts liability for same, food for reception and banquet, show ticketing, transportation to group activities and hospitality room set-up and maintenance. Our group will maintain the snacks, beverages, etc. in the hospitality room. Gatherings Plus also provides welcome packets upon check-in that will include name badges, coupons, an area map and an updated itinerary with departure times from the hotel. A reunion itinerary has been provided for a set price of **\$158.00** per person which includes: Reception, Banquet, Veterans Memorial Museum, an area tour, the Memorial Service accommodations and Showboat Dinner Theatre and Show. The Clay Cooper Show and lunch is available for an additional cost of **\$47.00**. If someone is interested in only the reception and/or banquet, they can contact Pam directly at **417-338-4048** and discuss pricing. A registration form follows on Page 11 of the newsletter for you to complete and mail, along with your check/money order made payable to **GATHERINGS PLUS**. Upon receipt of the reservation, Pam will send confirmation letters and itinerary of reunion events and post your name at the reunion website she has set up for our group. Although this is change from our past reunions, we firmly believe this is the most affordable package that we can attain for our group and will work to our group's advantage. If you prefer to send your reservation and check to Kay Goble, 6200 Emerald Pines Cir, Ft Myers, FL 33966, you may and I will forward to Pam for processing. If you have any questions, please contact Kay Goble at Page 10

USS WHETSTONE
Branson, Missouri Reunion
September 16-20, 2012

NAME _____ GUEST _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
TELEPHONE _____ EMAIL _____
DATES ON BOARD _____ RANK _____

Host Hotel: The Grand Plaza, 245 N. Wildwood Drive

For hotel reservations call direct to: 1-800-850-6646

Be sure and mention you are with the USS Whetstone reunion group to get the special group rate of \$84.00 plus tax. That rate is good 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion, based on hotel availability. Rooms not reserved by August 16 will be released from the group block.

PLEASE REGISTER ME FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Activity Package Total _____ # of Attendees x \$158.00 = \$ _____

Clay Cooper Show and Lunch _____ # of Attendees x \$47.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL DUE.....\$ _____

A 50% deposit is requested by July 16 with final payment due by August 16. There will be a 10% cancellation fee if reservation is cancelled by Sept. 11. Refunds after that date will be on a case by case basis. Questions?? Call us at 417-338-4048 and we'll be happy to assist you.

For ticketing to additional shows in Branson call us at 417-338-4048.

Mail Registration Form and Check To:

GATHERINGS PLUS

P. O. BOX 1023, BRANSON WEST, MO. 65737

417-338-4048

Reunion Website:

www.reunionproregistration.com/usswhetstone.htm



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SHIP'S STORE



To order any Ship's Store item please contact Marion Goble, 6200 Emerald Pines Circle, Ft. Myers, FL 33966, (239)768-1449 or e-mail marion-goble@comcast.net When submitting an order, please make checks payable to **USS Whetstone Association**. All jackets and golf shirts are navy blue with gold lettering. T-shirts are navy blue with gold lettering or gray with navy lettering. Hats are navy blue with gold silhouette of ship, white with navy blue silhouette of ship or red with gold silhouette of ship, or camouflage with gold silhouette of ship (**red and camouflage hats and DVD of Reunions are new items**).

Items for Sale:

Ball Caps (With Silhouette)	\$20.00
Cruise Books (57, 61,66,67/68 & 69)	\$20.00
DVD of Reunions (1996-2006)	\$10.00
DVD of 2008 or 2010 Reunion	\$10.00
Golf Shirts (S,M,L,XL)	\$35.00
T-Shirts (S,M,L,XLG, XXL)	\$20.00
Jackets (S,M,LG,XLG)	\$50.00
Jackets (XXL & XXXL)	\$52.00
Mouse pads w/Whetstone Picture	\$10.00
Yosemite Sam Patches	\$ 8.00
Zippo Knives w/Ship Silhouette	\$20.00
Zippo Lighters w/Ship Silhouette	\$13.00
Whetstone Pictures on Canvas	\$25.00

Note: All Prices Include Shipping

**A true story from the pages of the
 Manchester Evening News . . .**

Last Wednesday a passenger in a taxi heading for Salford station leaned over to ask the driver a question and gently tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention.

The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove up over the curb and stopped just inches from a large plate window.

For a few moments everything was silent in the cab. Then, the shaking driver said "are you OK? I'm so sorry, but you scared the day-lights out of me."

The badly shaken passenger apologized to the driver and said, "I didn't realize that a mere tap on the shoulder would startle someone so badly."

The driver replied, "No, no, I'm the one who is sorry, it's entirely my fault.

Today is my very first day driving a cab.
 I've been driving a hearse for 25 years."

SEAL Quote of the Week

Dana Perino (FOX News) describing an interview she recently had with a Navy SEAL. After discussing all the countries that he had been sent to, she asked if they had to learn several languages?

"Oh, no ma'am, we don't go there to talk."