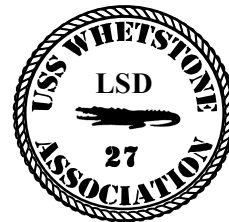




47th Edition



The Rolling Stone



April 2009

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The Rolling Stone is a Quarterly publication of the USS Whetstone LSD-27 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.

Enemies become Friends!

Charlie Brown was a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot with the 379th Bomber Group at Kimbolton, England. His B-17 was called 'Ye Old Pub' and was in a terrible state, having been hit by flak and fighters. The compass was damaged and they were flying deeper over enemy territory instead of heading home to Kimbolton.

After flying over an enemy airfield, a pilot named Franz Stigler was ordered to take off and shoot down the B-17. When he got near the B-17, he could not believe his eyes. In his words, he 'had never seen a plane in such a bad state'. The tail and rear section was severely damaged, and the tail gunner wounded. The top gunner was all over the top of the fuselage. The nose was smashed and there were holes everywhere.

Despite having ammunition, Franz flew to the side of the B-17 and looked at Charlie Brown, the pilot. Brown was scared and struggling to control his damaged and blood-stained plane.

Aware that they had no idea where they were going, Franz waved at Charlie to turn 180 degrees. Franz escorted and guided the stricken plane to and slightly over the North Sea towards England. He then saluted Charlie Brown and turned away, back to Europe.

When Franz landed he told the c/o that the plane had been shot down over the sea, and never told the truth to anybody. Charlie Brown and the remains of his crew told all at their briefing, but were ordered never to talk about it.

More than 40 years later, Charlie Brown wanted to find the Luftwaffe pilot who saved the crew. After years of research, Franz was found. He had never talked about the incident, not even at post-war reunions.

They met in the USA at a 379th Bomber Group reunion, together with 5 people who are alive now — all because Franz never fired his guns that day.

Research shows that Charlie Brown lived in Seattle and Franz Stigler had moved to Vancouver, BC after the war. When they finally met, they discovered they had lived less than 200 miles apart for the past 50 years!!

Brown and Stigler did finally find each other

in 1989 (and eventually met) after Brown placed an advertisement in a newsletter and discovered that Stigler was living in Canada near Vancouver. However, every news article we've found describing the reunion mentioned that since his retirement from the Air Force in 1972, Brown had been living in Miami, not Seattle (which would have put him about 3,500 miles away from Stigler's home): After the war, Brown remained in the Air Force, serving in many capacities until he retired in 1972 as a lieutenant colonel and settled in Miami as head of a combustion research company. But the episode of the German who refused to attack a beaten foe haunted him. He was determined to find the enemy pilot who spared him and his crew.

He wrote numerous letters of inquiry to German military sources, with little success. Finally, a notice in a newsletter for former Luftwaffe pilots elicited a response from Franz Stigler, a German fighter ace credited with destroying more than two dozen Allied planes. He, it turned out, was the angel of mercy in the skies over Germany on that fateful day just before Christmas 1943.

It had taken 46 years, but in 1989 Brown found the mysterious man in the ME-109. Careful questioning of Stigler about details of the incident removed any doubt.

Stigler, now 80, had emigrated to Canada and was living near Vancouver. After an exchange of letters, Brown flew there for a reunion. The two men have visited each other frequently since that time and have appeared jointly before Canadian and American military audiences. The most recent appearance was at the annual Air Force Ball in Miami in September [1995], where the former foes were honored.

In his first letter to Brown, Stigler had written: "All these years, I wondered what happened to the B-17, did she make it or not?"

She made it, just barely. But why did the German not destroy his virtually defenseless enemy?

"I didn't have the heart to finish off those brave men," Stigler later said. "I flew beside them for a long time. They were trying desperately to get home and I was going to let them do it. I could not have shot at them. It would have been the same as shooting at a man in a parachute." Franz Stigler passed away on 22 Feb 2008.

Departed 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

DECEASED LIST

Due to the extensive list of departed shipmates, we are going to print the complete list in only 2 newsletters (January and July). The April and October newsletters will reflect any notifications/obituaries that we have received.



Lucius "Lou" Young

Born: 9/28/1934
 Died: 3/20/2009

Manny Savala contacted last week regarding the passing of his friend and shipmate, Lucius "Lou" Young. In addition, we received an e-mail from Lou's daughter, Julia, detailing her father's courageous battle with cancer and of his passing. Services for Lou were held March 27, 2009 at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, California. Lou and Leilana have attended the majority of the reunions throughout the years and many of you will remember them. Lou and Leilana were married 54 years and have two children, Jonathan and Julia. We highly recommend that those of you who would like to extend your sympathy should visit the Rose Hills Memorial Park website, www.rosehills.com, and read Lou's Biography, enter the Guest Book area and send a message to Leilana and children, Jonathan and Julia. If anyone would like to send a card to Leilana, please contact us for their address either via e-mail (sectreas@usswhetstone.net) or mail (6200 Emerald Pines Circle, Fort Myers, FL 33966). The USS Whetstone Association sends its sympathy and God's comfort to Lou's family.



The Chaplain's Corner

Are you struggling? Maybe you're feeling the effects of our negative economy or experiencing problems in relationships or with your health. There are many factors in our world that make happiness a difficult thing to come by. But you can find true happiness regardless of your circumstances. God's value system is upside down from the world we live in. Jesus has given us the keys to divine joy and perfect happiness through the Beatitudes. (Matthew 5:1-12) Jesus proclaimed his attitude toward the law. Position, authority and money are not important in His kingdom – what matters is faithful obedience from the heart. Keep our focus on God's word and promises instead of being caught up in the endless hours of negative news.

Easter Sunday is a day to celebrate the living Jesus. He died for each and every one of us and on the third day arose to victory. So if we keep our eyes on God's values instead of the worlds, we will also have victory. Remember, He will never leave us or forsake us through good times or bad. So let us choose: The happiness the world offers or the happiness God offers. May you all have a blessed Easter.

Marvin Watson, Chaplain
 (RM-3 1960-1963)

Many Years Ago I Was Told About Getting Old

Another year has passed and we're all a little older. Last summer felt hotter and winter seems much colder.

I rack my brain for happy thoughts to put down on my pad, but lots of things that come to mind make me kind of sad.

There was a time not long ago when life was quite a blast. Now I fully understand about "Living in the Past."

We used to go to weddings, football games and lunches. Now we go to funeral homes and after-funeral brunches.

We used to go out dining and couldn't get our fill. Now we ask for doggie bags, come home and take a pill.

We used to often travel to places near and far. Now we get sore behinds from riding in the car.

We used to go out shopping for new clothing at the Mall. Now we never bother....all the sizes are too small.

We used to go to nightclubs and drink a little booze. Now we stay at home at night and watch the evening news.

That my friend is how life is and now my tale is told. So, enjoy each day and live it up before your too darned old!!

MY STATE IDAHO

BM	1947-48	Auwen, Bryan L.	Pocateoo
EM	1967-69	Frans, Jack	Boise
SN	1950-54	Fread, Wayne	Montpelier
FN	1950-52	Ingraham, Floyd	Boise
SN	1959-60	Kettwig, Terry	Lewiston
EM	1962-65	Kuchynka, Edward	Weippe
SM	1958-60	Smith, Burl	Kuna
SN	1950-54	Smith, Clinton	Deary
SN	1962-64	Stot, W. Michael	Boise

MY STATE WYOMING

MR3	1968-69	Doerr, Gary T.	Sheridan
BT	1953-54	Highland, Harry B.	Casper
GM	1952	Sapp, William	Powell
LTJG	1966-68	Selzer, Bryan E.	Laramie

Voluntary Dues

Again, **thank you** to all shipmates that have sent dues and donations to the Association. Without your support, it would be impossible to publish "The Rolling Stone", maintain the Website and have 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. 4/1/08 check applies dues until 4/1/09). We recognize that not all are able to support the Association, but we welcome support from whom-ever is able. Dues received to date for 2008 are listed below. An asterisk designates dues paid for additional year(s). 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 e-mail: sectreas@usswhetstone.net Please make checks payable to:

USS Whetstone Association.
Please use this list as your receipt.

Alleman, G. J.
 Anderson, Robert*
 Beebe, Raymond
 Bell, Charles*
 Bisping, Neil A.*
 Blenkhorn, Charles
 Bogusch, W. C.*
 Bolick, Wesley
 Boren, Ben
 Boswell, Robert G.
 Brameyer, George A.
 Brannigan, Chris
 Breedlove, James
 Brewer, Melvin
 Britt, Tom
 Brown, Beryle
 Brown, James E.*
 Burt, Sammy
 Caffey, Irby R.
 Caldwell, William
 Carrell, Zane
 Carson, Capt. Grant
 Chidester, David
 Cickavage, Joseph*
 Coakley, Bill*
 Coldren, Wayne*
 Conover, J. W.
 Cox, Millard*
 Crawford, F. Slaton
 Cunningham, Michael
 Dinda, Gerald
 Doerr, Gary T.
 Draper, L. E. "Rusty"
 Dunn, Jim
 Durnil, Allen*

Edney, Edward L.
 Edwards, H. "Sonny"
 Edwards, "Ed"
 Eshelman, Thomas
 Espointour, Maurice
 Feathers, Paul
 Finnes, Roger
 Flowerree, Robert
 Fortine, Archie
 Fox, Sebastian
 Fry, Steve
 Fulghem, Richard*
 Goble, Marion
 Goodrich, James G.
 Goodrich, Jesse
 Gordon, Eddie
 Graves, Darrell
 Green, Kenneth
 Gross, Richard
 Grubb, Jack*
 Hall, Charles*
 Halvorson, G. H.
 Hammons, Willis
 Harrison, Burlin
 Hart, Walter
 Haynes, Earl
 Hitt, John W.
 Hollister, Victor
 Holmes, Robert
 Hoover, Frederick
 Johnson, Kermit
 Johnson, Merrill*
 Jones, Dale H.
 Keen, Charles
 Kiffmann, Helmet*

Leopold, Vincent
 London, John
 Maness, Jack
 McClellan, G. A.
 McCray, David
 McGavock, Bert
 McGrew, Joseph R.
 McManus, Peter
 McNitt, Russell
 McQuillen, Tom*
 Meismer, J. C.
 Mezzanotti, Paul
 Miller, Charles
 Mitchell, Burley*
 Moore, Lane
 Noffke, Henry A.
 Ogletree, Ronald*
 Oremus, Vern
 Pangrass William
 Patterson, Cpt. Peter
 Pearson, Ray
 Pennal, Floyd
 Pilgreen, Vincent
 Pineda, Jamie
 Polk, James
 Posey, Billy
 Raymie, Jerry D.*
 Reed, George
 Reid, James P.
 Reinheimer, Theodore
 Richey, Albert
 Rowe, Horace
 Rudnick, Robert
 Sandrock, John
 Savala, Manny
 Savoie, Donald*
 Seaton, Walter
 Shimmell, Thomas*
 Shrader, Daniel L.
 Smith, Don J.
 Solari, Frank
 Stanford, Roy*
 Stergeos, James
 Stevens, William M.
 Stief, Bernard
 Sylvester, Kim C.
 Thomson, John "Jack"
 Throener, Larry*
 Tucker, George*
 Van Guilder, David*
 Vaughn, Joe
 Ward, Everett*
 Ward, Robert
 Watson, Marvin
 Weigt, Earl*
 West, Cdr. G. Ray
 White, David*
 Wiesemann, Donald
 Winslow, Leonard
 Young, Robert
 Zdolsek, Martin
 Zordich, John



EM Club, Subic Bay, Philippines
 L to R: John Pitts (Deceased), Jerry Raymie, Bernard D. Stief



Bill Coakley

Recently Located Shipmates

CYN3 1969-70 Brandon, John
 Fresno, CA

IC3 1964-66 Lewis, John
 St. Louis, MO

NOTICE

The Goble's e-mail address has changed once again...hopefully for the last time. You may contact us via any of the following addresses:

membership@usswhetstone.net
sectreas@usswhetstone.net

I would like to take this time to ask you to write down your experiences on the ship and send them to John for the newsletter. It is always great to try to recollect what you remember!

Editors Note: We do not publish personal Email addresses in the online editions.



Standing: Jenkins ; Sitting L-R: Welke, Scott, Pineda, Hayter, Raymie

The above photos are compliments of Jerry Raymie (MM3 1958-62)



Greetings from Your President



Here is hoping that everyone is doing fine in our new year of 2009. Now that we have a new Commander In Chief let us all hope that politics are put aside and our elected officials join together and get the country back on track.

Right now my Wife and I are acting like respected snow birds in sunny Florida. We are doing our part to keep the economy moving, by doing three months here. Had a very pleasant visit with Kay & Marion in Fort Myers last weekend. Don Smith and his Wife Rose drove down from Jacksonville so we got to see them also. Of course the up coming reunion was hashed over. I think it is safe to say that things are shaping up just fine. We do hope that that more of the Whetstone Crew that live on the West Coast plan to attend this reunion. There are quite a few out there that it would be great to see. I truly mean it when I say that you don't know what you are missing, it is a great experience.

Reading the last two Presidents Articles that I myself wrote, I notice that I was remiss in mentioning the great work that has been done by our 1st VPs Wife, Bernadette. She has been right there working tirelessly for the Whetstone Family. So the Plan Of the Day will include a Great Big Thank You that goes out to Bernadette. I am quite sure that Gene, our 1st VP, was right there lending a hand. Thank you also Gene. That's it for now my Whetstone Friends. Hope that everyone that receives the news letter gives some serious thought to the next reunion in Astoria. SUPPORT OUR TROOPS and GOD BLESS Bill Coakley 59 / 62

Love to have been there!

Opportunities like this comes only once in a lifetime.

In addition to communicating with the local air traffic control facility, aircraft are required to give the Iranian Air Defense Radar (military) a ten minute "heads up" that they will be transiting Iranian airspace.

This is a common procedure for commercial aircraft and involves giving them your call sign, transponder code, type aircraft, and points of origin and destination. I just flew with a guy who overheard this conversation on the emergency frequency 121.5 MHz while flying from Europe to Dubai. It's too good not to pass along.

The conversation went something like this ...

Air Defense Radar: "Unknown aircraft at (location unknown), you are in Iranian airspace. Identify yourself."

Aircraft: "This a United States aircraft. And I am in Iraqi, not Iranian--- airspace."

Air Defense Radar: " You are in Iranian airspace. If you do not depart our airspace we will launch interceptor aircraft!"

Aircraft: "This is a United States Marine FA-18 fighter jet.

..... Send'em up!"

Iranian Air Defense Radar: (no response .. Total silence)

A suggestion from David Vydra

John,

I have attached an article that I put together as pieces and parts came to mind. You can use it whenever you need to fill in some blanks. I am hoping to add additional articles as memory becomes available. I have titled this one, "Track of the Stone". Perhaps, you could make this or something similar a regular column. Of course, you will also have to solicit members for items to put into it. I will add what I can. Better you should have been a dentist!

Also, if you can fit it, please insert a notice in the upcoming edition to the effect that the online opt-in for requesting to receive the newsletter electronically will be discontinued as of December 31, 2008. I am beginning to receive too many bogus entries.

Thanks,

David

Track of the Stone

David A. Vydra RD2 (58-61)

Several editions ago, a question had been raised as to how many ribbons the Whetstone had earned. In the subsequent edition, we answered that with a picture and a detailed listing. I don't know how many of you noticed that there were several from Viet Nam. And, that they stretched from 1954 until her last deployment to these waters. It would take a little searching to obtain all of the minute details. But, in 1954, WHETSTONE proved her versatility by evacuating civilians (men, women and children) from north, and central Viet Nam. For this, WHETSTONE was awarded the Viet-Nam "Ribbon of Friendship" (The Viet Nam Presidential Unit Citation) in recognition of the humanitarian assistance rendered. Do a little "Googling" for Operation "Passage to Freedom," the movement of North Vietnamese to the South after the partition of the country in observance of the Geneva accords that ended the French-Viet Minh hostilities. Also, do a pictures search under the same criteria. Several of the other U.S. Naval vessels that took part have web pages about the event. Now, if there are several members that are able to recall some of what they observed, we would like to hear from them.

Speaking of Viet Nam; I am reminded of an adventure that a few of us from the "O" division had. It was when we were on our 59-60 Cruise. The Whetstone was tied up to the pier in Kaohsiung, Formosa after delivering something or other. Five of us hit the town. Won't say who each was beside me of course. But, they will know. Anyway, we proceed to tour all the gin joints in town. One fact was evident. All of the women were extremely gorgeous. And, pretty much un-touchable. Which, naturally, created an additional reason partake in the demon rum. At one point in the evening, we met a group of Army guys from a MAAG group. They were whooping it up because they were shipping out the next day for Viet Nam. In talking with them, we deduced that there were numerous MAAG personnel already in Viet Nam. And, that while they were only supposed to be training the South Viet Nam army, it was a dangerous place to be. Some of these men had already been under fire. Several had been

killed. So, while the United States was not officially engaged in combat, we had casualties even prior to the actual onset of hostilities.

As the evening progressed, our group continued the tour. Needless to say, we had more than our share. Then, things became somewhat interesting. Midnight approached. Remember "Cinderella Liberty"? It was time to return to the ship. As we entered the pier, someone had the bright idea to untie several of the vessels moored there. "Yeah, let's do it!" was the consensus answer. So, we proceeded to untie a tug and I believe a barge. The next target was a large freighter. The problem here was, they had someone on watch with a sub-machine gun. One of us was detached to be a distraction. We only managed to untie the bow. It would not have been too smart to attempt the stern mooring lines now that the guard was aware of our presence. Remember, we were only pie-eyed. Not totally devoid of all our faculties. I believe we were full of ourselves as we hit the rack.

The next morning is when the reality of our nefarious deeds became clear. At quarters, we looked around. It was then we realized that we had been very lucky. Around the wharf were storage buildings. Most were about two stories. All had Anti-Aircraft mounts on each corner. Even worse, there were soldiers stationed at each of the doors. It is a wonder that we had not been shot at or, even arrested. In this case, I guess it was true that; "God suffers fools". It goes without saying; we did not discuss the events of the prior evening.

My first time to visit Kaohsiung, Formosa was another memorable event. It was during the 58-59 Cruise. According to notes in the Cruise Book, we had been scheduled to be there for about a month. But, a week after first tying up, we were given orders to depart and head north up the Formosa/China Straits. For those that remember, the Whetstone had a standard speed of 12 knots. Full speed was little more than 14 knots. Possibly, a little more, on a good day. Much of this was dependant upon when the last yard period had been. Fortunately, we were only a few months from having been to Long Beach for a top to bottom overhaul. They had removed the 5" gun and the old SA Radar. And, of course, the hull was now barnacle free. All of this was a good thing. We were going to traverse up the strait. There was an average current of 14 knots coming down. It would be interesting to know whom at COMPHIBPAC or COMPACFLT or whichever command had the smarts to schedule this. To add to our woes was the ongoing clashes between the Chinese peoples. The waters between China and Formosa were still a battle zone.

Any vessel traversing the strait had to identify itself in order to avoid being shelled. This was accomplished through the use of signal flags during the day and a string of lights at night. The flags and lights were given specific sequences for specific time periods. I don't recall exactly what the time period length was but, I believe the changes were required every two hours. Under most circumstance, this would be a rather simple task. However, because we were going against the prevailing current, there were some unimaginable waves breaking over the bow. In fact, many

of them reached the 03 level. The spray was almost continuous and reached the top mast much of the time. Anyone changing the signals was completely drenched. Of course, we were all very well aware of the consequences for failure to make the changes on time. Yet, in all, there were a few moments of levity for many in the crew. A few hardy souls ventured out onto the bow to experience the waves. Up until the minute the Captain spotted them anyway. The CMMA was promptly dispatched to remove them and write them up. I don't recall the outcome of their Masts. Those involved will have to fill us in. Eventually, though at times we were near dead-in-the-water, we slowly made our way northward and out of the straits. It is novel to do something like this the first time. I don't think anyone would have voted for a second opportunity.

There are a few more tales to tell. I will leave them for another day. These are my memories and perhaps a bit fuzzy. If anyone has anything to add or correct, please let John know. Of course, he will always want to hear from you regarding your recollections of the "Track of the Stone".

Calm Waters,
David A. Vydra RD2 (58-61)

So there you go, David has, I think, a fine idea. But for it to work, we will need some stories submitted by the crew.

Short stories, long stories, true stories, some-not-so-true stories; I love them all! I'll be happy to run the *Track of the Stone* columns every time I get a story.

Step up here Whetstone crew, and tell us what you remember.

Thanks,
John

US Navy Presidential Drill Team Submitted by Martin Zedolski

The rest of the story..

This was about three years ago. Our Navy Ceremonial Guard Silent Drill Team was invited to compete in an International Tattoo in Norway ..

They competed against military units from all over NATO. They won first place.

An incredible group of Sailors .

http://www.whc.net/rjones/USN/USN_team.html

If you have a computer and are on-line, this is a movie clip well worth watching... I can't imagine the practice it takes to do things like that! Better those guys than me.—John

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But then I repeat myself.
-- Mark Twain

Close Quarters

Back in 65 San Diego harbor was a crowded and busy place. It was a common occurrence for a ship to have to anchor outside the harbor and wait for traffic to clear before entering and that we did on several occasions. I remember once when the Stone had to wait at the pier for a while before we could get clearance to go out. Every kind of ship the navy had from subs to carriers used that harbor.

SD harbor makes a horse shoe shape with an island in the center of it and it was used from one end to the other, mostly by navy ships and other navy stuff. The North Island Naval Air Station was on the island, along with the small town of Coronado just south and east of the air station.

A trip into the harbor started as you rounded Point Loma. To the west side and past the point was where the water and oil barges tied up and then came the sub base where the Stone tied up once while I was aboard. The tugs also nested near the sub base. Across the channel to the east were several anchorages where the Stone tied up during underway training. East of those anchorages, on the island you could see a bunch of old sea planes being cannibalized for spare parts.

Further into the harbor at the north end you could usually see a floating crane anchored north of the channel. Beyond that north shore line was NTC and Lindbergh Field where Ryan Aircraft built Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St Louis. Then to the south side of the channel at the island sometimes you could see a carrier tied up at the Air Station. I remember seeing the WW II carrier Essex CV-8 tied up there once. At this point, it was common to see ferry boats from San Diego in the harbor because there was no bridge from SD to the island back then. Also at this point the city of San Diego was in front of you to the east and you .

Further in and turning south along the island, you pass SD and the navy supply depot to the left and the sea plane base on the island to the right. Then it was common to see a cruiser or two anchored left of the channel. Further along the first piers at the navy base south of SD start to come by. The first three piers were for destroyers and other combat ships. Across the channel to the right (west), the amphibious base at North Island came just before the town of Coronado. Then along a little more and to the left were piers 6-8 where the amphibious navy ties up. South of there is where some of the mothball fleet is kept. The island to the west plays out across from pier 7 but it is connected to the mainland south by a causeway. Before the causeway was built, whales came into the harbor south of the island during a short period every year. Today the environmentalist would not allow that causeway to have been built because of the whales.

Along the inner harbor side of the causeway is where the sea planes practiced their touch and go; that is to say repeated take off and landings. Now all of this constitutes a full harbor.

I said all that to say this. The sea planes in that harbor were not confined to the practice strip south of the island. You might see one taking off just anywhere in that harbor and sometimes it was in close quarters.

In Nov. of 65 the Stone had entered SD harbor and was on its way to tie up at the piers. We were passing the north end of the island and the crew not on watch was topside along the hand

rails as usual. From my position fwd on the 02 deck that day, I could see a sea plane sitting in the harbor about a quarter mile ahead of us and slightly to starboard. I was thinking he was waiting for us to pass, before taking off, but I was wrong.

As we were closing on the planes position, he revved his engines and started toward us. This caused quiet a stir among the crew, because he would be crossing over our path at a slight angle and at a short distance away. He crossed in front of us and lifted off at a short distance, probably about 100 yards or less from our port bow. At his lifting off, he corrected his course to parallel the ship and he looked to be no more than 100 ft from our port side and level with the 02 deck when he passed my position. As he was passing he made a slow turn to his left and came close to our stern. I lost sight of him because my line of sight was blocked by the super structure as he flew around the stern. I did manage to take three pretty good pics of this incident and I have them on a Whetstone Album I have on CD.

Tom Lucas MM3



The USS Whetstone LSD-27 1957 WestPac Cruise

Commanding Officer

This book, which is an effort to help us to remember and re-live some of our experiences in Whetstone, will become of more value to each of us as the times of our experiences together become more remote.

Sooner or later. Most of us approach a crossroad in life. I can state that in my case. Whetstone represents my crossroad: I have not previously had the good fortune whereby the paths of so many fine shipmates all converged within one ship: that is what gives meaning to any ship . . . its efficiency, its morale, its SUCCESS, are born of the CHARACTER of the MEN who man her stations. Each of you has contributed importantly to the GOOD NAME of Whetstone! You have given a worthy meaning and vitality to the ship, for which. "Well Done!"

Robert J. Ahern, CDR USN
Commanding Officer



For the few weeks in June during which Captain Ahern was laid up with a broken arm, we were fortunate in having CDR Mell G. Porter replace him as our commanding officer.

Commander Porter, who came to us from the Renville, where he was the Executive Officer, endeared himself to us all by his manly and professional character.

When he was relieved aboard the Whetstone, Commander Porter received orders making him the Commanding Officer of the Naval Communications Station at Charleston, North Carolina. The crew of the Whetstone wishes him well, knowing he is continuing a fine naval career in his new billet.

Goodbye to Kitty Hawk

The U.S. Navy is retiring the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, the oldest active warship in the fleet with nearly five decades of service, officials say.

More than 2,000 former and current crew members, their families and dignitaries gathered in Bremerton, Wash., Saturday to bid goodbye to the ship, the Seattle Times reported.

"Miss Kitty" is the Navy's last fossil-fueled aircraft carrier, and will be moved from the Bremerton Naval Station to the shipyard next door where it will ultimately be decommissioned, military officials said.

William Dobbins, of Grass Valley, Calif., told the newspaper he was among the original crew that first sailed the Kitty Hawk out of Philadelphia, around the tip of South America and into her first home port at San Diego, saying he'd jump to her service again if he were called.

"To me, she still looks like she's ready to go to sea," he said.

More on Former COs

By John Hitt

I just received the January newsletter and was reading the letter from Grant Carson stating that CDR Ahern broke his leg in June of 1957. I too served on the Whetstone in 1957 and I remember him breaking his arm.

Per my 1957 cruise book, CDR Meil G. Porter did temporarily replace CDR Ahern as commanding officer in June 1957. I have attached copies of 5 and 50 from the 1957 cruise book. Page five shows a picture of CDR Porter that states he replaced CDR Ahern for a few weeks in June 1957 and page 50 shows a picture of CDR Ahern with his broken arm being examined in Sick Bay. He may have broken a leg later on (however, I do not remember him breaking a leg) but he did indeed break his arm.

I am very sorry to learn of the passing of CDR Porter.

John Hitt

Foreign aid might be defined as a transfer of money from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries.
-- Douglas Casey,
Classmate of Bill Clinton at Georgetown University

The USS Whetstone LSD-27 1957 WestPac Cruise

Sick Bay



Caldwell examines Capt. Ahern's arm

SICK BAY



Change of Command ceremony, Smith and Lalla

"H" is for Hospitalman, and Health, and How-gooden-a-racket-get. The H Division is composed of the corpsmen; these are the boys who watch our health, giving us periodic shots, which we all love, binding up our minor wounds, and sending us to shore hospitals when we're in serious trouble. They can even be persuaded to give the boots sea sick pills on occasion.

J. J. Lalla, who was a familiar character aboard the Whetstone for many months was recently relieved as leading corpsman by Smitty Smith, who is also a baseball enthusiast.

Catching a Bird

After reporting aboard the Stone in Nov. '63, I was having the time of my life. The furthest I had ever been away from Mississippi was Texas and Florida. Now for a small town boy and part of the time farm boy, getting that far away from home was very exciting. The Stone gave me the greatest adventure I would ever have.

There were many things to hold my attention over the next four years and one of these was birds. I enjoyed watching the brown pelicans diving after fish as I waited on the piers for the Stone's boat to fetch me back to the ship. The gulls to my surprise would dive after fish just like the pelicans. I was shocked to see gulls floating on the water next to the piers just like ducks.

Once when we were tied along pier 7 in SD. and I was taking the trash out to the pier before quarters. Seagulls were flying around over the dumpster and one of them crapped and it landed on my left shoulder. Needless to say, it ruined that shirt.

When we were out to sea, I often watched the gulls hover after the ship when we were close to land. They seemed to know that we dumped trash just before dark and their numbers would more than double at that time.

At times we would throw slices of bread to the gulls and watch them catch it before it hit the water. Sometimes we would try to fool them by throwing something they couldn't eat, but most of them seemed to know it wasn't eatable and didn't bother to try and catch it. What if we had Styrofoam back then, would they have been fooled by that? I have been told by other former sailors that a seagull would catch an Alka-Seltzer and as he flew away, he would explode. As far as I know, no one on the Stone tried that.

Which brings me to this; one day when we were throwing bread to the birds off the starboard quarter deck, someone pondered if a gull could be caught on a rod and reel. Well it wasn't long before someone in the deck dept., got his rod and starting throwing bread on the hook. At first the bread wouldn't stay on the hook, but eventually he figured it out. As a result it wasn't long before he caught a gull in his beak.

That bird was really hard to reel in but he finally got him. Let me tell you, that was one MAD bird. That gull tried to

attack all of us and he chased us and we chased him until someone got him from behind. It was still a chore to get him unhooked, but finally he was loose. This one had a wing span of about three feet.

It seemed like a half hour that we dealt with that bird, but eventually when he got back out there we saw he was one of the smaller gulls in the group. We never tried that again. What if we reeled in a larger one the next time; it would have been really tough.

Albatross are a bit larger than gulls and they seem to appear about the time the gulls are thinning out as we got further away from land. I was always amazed as to how they seemed to glide over the waves and never flap their wings. I have watched what I thought was the same bird gliding behind the ship for several days.

One night while underway I was on my way down to starboard engine room for the 00 to 04 watch. As I entered the uptakes above the engine and fire room I heard something scratching around and decided to investigate. Around behind the ladder leading down from the main deck was an albatross scurrying around in the corner.

I went on down to the watch and several other people said they had also seen him. Someone said, "He probably was attracted by the light in the hatch and flew in". Well whatever the reason, we had us a big bird. That dude's body looked about like the gull we had reeled in a year earlier, except this bird was black and had a wing span of over four feet.

Thinking he would be attracted to the light of the sun and get out the next morning, we left him there in the uptakes for most of that day. Finally two brave souls cornered him and took him topside. He didn't put up the same kind of fight that gull did. When they threw him overboard, he went out among his brothers and he too was a small one, compared to them.

I took a lot of pictures aboard the Stone and I wish I had taken a lot more. I didn't get any photos of the birds. SORRY.

Tom Lucas
MM3

The problem with socialism is
that you eventually run out of
other people's money.

– Margaret Thatcher



WWII Tank Found after 62 Years.

WW II Russian tank with German markings uncovered after 62 years. WW II Buffs will find this interesting. Even after 62 years (and a little tinkering), they were able to fire up the diesel engine!

A Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer pulled the abandoned tank from its tomb under the boggy bank of a lake near Johvi, Estonia. The Soviet-built T34/76A tank had been resting at the bottom of the lake for 56 years. According to its specifications, it's a 27-ton machine with a top speed of 53km/hr.

From February to September 1944, heavy battles were fought in the narrow, 50 km-wide, Narva front in the northeastern part of Estonia. Over 100,000 men were killed and 300,000 were wounded. During the summer of 1944, the captured Soviet tank was from the German army. (This is the reason are German markings painted on the tank's exterior.) On 19th September, 1944, German troops began an organized retreat along the Narva front. It is suspected that the tank was then purposefully driven into the lake to conceal it when its captors left the area.



At that time, a local boy walking by the lake, Kurtna Matasjarv, noticed tank tracks leading into the lake but not coming out anywhere. For two months he saw air bubbles emerging from the lake. This gave him reason to believe that there must be an armored vehicle at the lake's bottom. A few years ago, he told the story to the leader of the local war history club 'Otsing'. Together with other club members, Mr. Igor Shedunov initiated diving expeditions to the bottom of the lake about a year ago. At the depth of 7 meters they discovered the tank resting under a 3 meter layer of peat.

Enthusiasts from the club, under Mr. Shedunov's leadership, decided to pull the tank out. In September of 2000 they turned to Mr. Alexander Borovkovthe, manager of the Narva open pit company AS Eesti Polevkivi, to rent the company's Komatsu D375A-2 bulldozer. (Currently used at the pit, the Komatsu dozer was manufactured in 1995, and has recorded 19,000 operating hours without major repairs.)

The pulling operation began at 09:00 and was concluded at 15:00, with several technical breaks. The weight of the tank, combined with the travel incline, made for a pulling operation that required significant muscle. The D375A-2 handled the operation with power and style. The weight of the fully-armed tank was around 30 tons, so the active force required to retrieve it was similar. A main requirement for the 68-ton dozer was to have enough weight to prevent slippage while moving up the hill.

After the tank surfaced, it turned out to be a 'trophy tank' that had been captured by the German army in the course of the battle at Sinimaed (Blue Hills) about six weeks before it was sunk in the lake. Altogether, 116 shells were found on board. Remarkably, the tank was in good condition, with NO RUST, and all systems (except the engine) in working condition. This is a very rare machine, especially considering that it fought both on the Russian and the German sides. Plans are underway to fully restore the tank. It will be displayed at a war history museum in the Gorodenko village on the left bank of the River



Preparing to pull it out.



People from the nearby village come to watch



Here it comes!



Through the muddy bank of the lake



In mint condition



Incredibly, after a few minor repairs, they were able to start its diesel engine!



Hosing off 62 years of muck

Pretty amazing...

Zundapp KS750 Dug Up after 64 years in Normandy!

Zundapp KS750 with sidecar

In our recent feature Normandy Relics we mentioned a farmer in sight of MILWEB's office in Normandy who found 3 German bodies last spring. Though identification efforts continue, it is certain from insignia that the bodies were from 10th SS soldiers who fought so desperately to stop the British break-out.

Normandy's dark harvest continues and the week before Christmas 2008 our same farmer dug up this Zundapp KS750 and sidecar – 2 meters down in the ground.

It is a truly incredible find and is yet another important artifact of the Normandy battleground.

M. Thierry told MILWEB that he discovered some debris in the soil and knowing the tell tale signs from years of ploughing up a wide range of wartime relics, he ran over the area with his metal detector and realized there was something large – so returned with a large digger and was amazed when he found the Zundapp on a bitterly cold December day. He initially thought it was a BMW R75 but examination shows it to be a Zundapp KS750. He also found an officers gauntlet with the Zundapp, he firmly believes that the remains of the driver are likely to be nearby.

Why was it 2 meters below ground? It was most likely in one of thousands of shell holes that were filled in when the farmers returned to what little was left of their homes and farms. But many of the locals didn't come back as they had lost everything - life in Normandy had changed forever.

The Zundapp appears to have taken a mortar or shell hit and the engine was ripped off and the transmission was found 20meters away.

This particular farmland is in the epicenter of the bloodiest part of the Operation Bluecoat during August 1944 and he has built up a large collection of relics found on his own farmland. Recently a German veteran returned to retrace his part in the battle, finally being wounded on the farm. He produced a fascinating war diary and map of his personal few days of hell deep in the bloody Bocage.



MILWEB's editor is seriously researching Operation Bluecoat and M. Thierry was kind enough to provide an accurate insight into the location of some of the key locations in the battle of the Perrier Ridge – such as farmhouses and hamlets that have now disappeared since the destruction of those terrible 10 days in August 1944 that played such a key part in the liberation of Normandy.

It is hoped that the Zundapp can be preserved as found and perhaps form part of a display for the 65th anniversary, when veterans of 11th Armored Division and the Norfolks and Monmouth Regiments return, perhaps for the last time to the now so tranquil Normandy countryside.

15 Years Out, Vet Ordered Up to Deploy

A Tennessee man who last kicked off his combat boots 15 years ago after serving in the Persian Gulf War has been told he's going once more into the breach.

According to a report Jan. 2 by KMBC-TV of Kansas City, Mo., 50-year-old Paul Bandel got his notice from the Army right about the same time he got his AARP card.

"(I was) kind of shocked, not understanding what I was getting into," Bandel told KMBC. The Nashville-area resident he could understand if the Army wanted to give him a stateside assignment, something that recognized he has been away from soldiering for 15 years.

"But, 'Hey, here's a gun, go back to the desert?'" he quipped. Bandel originally was trained in missiles, he told the station, but said the system he worked on is no longer in service.

Bandel said he is not angry at being recalled, but concerned at the financial affect it will have on his family. Going back to active duty will about cut his pay in half, he told the station.

His wife, Linda, is less understanding.

"It's like a dream or a nightmare," she said, arguing the absurdity of his being called up to be deployed "with 18-year-olds" at the same time he's getting his AARP card.

Bandel left the Army without retirement in 1993, never thinking he'd be called up again, he told KMBC.

"I certainly never thought I'd be going back there at this point in my life," he said.

In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm and three or more is a congress. -- John Adams

Fun Page

DEAR NAVY,

The following sentences about allotments were taken from actual letters from wives, mothers, fathers, etc. of men who were in the U.S. Navy in the late 40's, They were submitted by Martin Zdolsek of Greenwood..

1. Please send me my allotment as I have a four month old baby and he is my slow support and I need all I can get every day to by food and keep in close.
2. Both sides on my parents is poor and I can't expect nothing from them as my mother has been in bed for one year with the same doctor and won't change.
3. Please send my wife's form to fill out.
4. Please send me a letter and tell me if my husband made application for a wife and baby.
5. I have already wrote to the President and I don't hear from you. I will write to Uncle Sam and tell him about you both.
6. I can't get my pay. I got six children/ can you tell me why this is?
7. Sir, I am forwarding my marriage certificate and my two children; one is a mistake as you can see.
8. Please find out for certain if my husband is dead as the man I am living with won't eat or do anything until he nose for sure.
9. I am writing to tell you that my baby was born two years ago and is two years old. When do I get relief?
10. I am annoyed to find that you branded my children as illiterate, Oh, the shame of it It is a dirty lie an I married their father a week before they were born.
11. In answer to your letter, I have given birth to a boy weighing ten pounds. I hope this is satisfactory.
12. I have no children as my husband was a truck driver and worked day and night when he wasn't sleeping,
13. You changed my little boy to a girl, does this make any difference.?
14. In accordance with your instruction, I gave birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.
15. I am glad to say my husband who has been reported missing is now dead.
16. Unless I get my husband's money soon I will he forced to lead an immortal life,
17. I want my money as quickly as I can get it. I'd been in bed with my doctor for two weeks and he doesn't seem to be doing much good. If things don't improve I will have to send for another doctor.
18. I am a poor widow and all that I have is in front.
19. My husband had his project cut off two weeks ago and I haven't had my relief since.

Subject: IMPORTANT NOTICE: Check with your Tax adviser to confirm.

Your income taxes are normally due on April 15th unless that date falls on a Saturday or Sunday in which case they are due on Monday the 16th or 17th.

The good news is that I have learned of a recent change, and for the next 4 years, they will not be due until you are nominated to a cabinet position.

Ray & Bubba

Ray & Bubba (Redneck mechanical engineers) were standing at the base of a flagpole, looking up.

A woman walked by and asked what they were doing.

'We're supposed to find the height of the flagpole,' said Bubba, 'but we don't have a ladder.'

The woman took a wrench from her purse, loosened a few bolts, and laid the pole down. Then she took a tape measure from her pocket, took a measurement, announced, 'Eighteen feet, six inches,' and walked away.

Ray shook his head and laughed. 'Ain't that just like a woman!'

We ask for the height and she gives us the length!'

Bubba and Ray are currently working for the government....

... and helping to design the "stimulus package."

Gun Ownership in Texas

A woman was called in front of a Texas grand jury for manslaughter after she shot a mugger 6 times in the back as he was running away with her purse.

He grabbed the purse and ran, she had her hand on the gun in it, and was left with the revolver in her hand.

When asked by the grand jury why she shot the man 6 times in the back as he was running away, she replied under oath:

"Because when I pulled the trigger the 7th time it only went click"

Acquitted of all charges.

Best New Idea:

Members of Congress should be forced to wear uniforms like NASCAR drivers. That way we could easily identify their corporate sponsors.



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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: shipstore@usswhetstone.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 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

Email delivery of the "Rolling Stone"

So far, according to Kay Goble, the email delivery of the "Rolling Stone" is a great success. This is tempered, of course, by the fact that only one issue has been delivered this way.

There were a few hiccups in the signing on process, a few delivery snafus, and at least "How are we going to do this?" issue. I think most of these problems are pretty well under control. The sign up process, in case you missed it, is to send an email to Kay Goble at:

sectreas@usswhetstone.net

Kay will put you on the email list. (I know you have email as you need it to get the newsletter :-))

By sending out 30 newsletters via email, the association saved \$25.00 on printing and \$8.00 on postage on the January newsletter alone.

If we get greater participation and multiply the savings by the four newsletters a year, the organization can save some serious change!

It's understood that for some, this delivery method is not a step up. That's fine, as the printed newsletter isn't going away. A ship-mate's dues more than pay for his newsletter, and the organization is more than happy to mail it. For those than like to receive it via email, there is a benefit to the group.

One other benefit to email delivery, for any email address or web page address, I can hyperlink it in the newsletter. This means you can just click on the link to go to a web location or send an email to someone featured in the newsletter.