Often, technology supplements tradition.

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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.

TAPS

He marched past the palm trees, the headstones, the limousine and the hearse. Under his arm he carried a silver horn, light in weight but robust with history.

He stopped yards away from the South Florida VA National Cemetery's memorial site on a bed of grass.

A family stepped out of the limo. A flag-draped coffin was carried from the hearse. Three riflemen shot three volleys into the air.

And then it was his time to play the somber song of Americana, a tune etched in our collective memory but fading away from singular moments like this.

Sgt. Keston Marin plays taps. It is a skill that fewer service people have, prompting musicians and politicians to question how to keep pure one of the country's most honored traditions.

Marin, 24, of Coconut Creek, alters the tradition. He uses the trumpet -- not the valve-free bugle.

In the Pembroke Pines-based 13th Army band, there are five trumpeters who can play the musical farewell to the fallen.

But in South Florida, the unit handles some 50 funerals a day.

"Not everyone can do it," said Sgt. Seth Innes, who coordinates military funeral honors in South Florida. "It probably takes 10 to 12 years to play a good taps. It sounds simple but it isn't. Sometimes the simplest songs take the most work."

Shortage problem

Some 1,900 veterans die each day in this country, and the law entitles all of them to have taps played at their funeral. Combine that with the decreased focus on military bands and fewer young people learning to play instruments and the shortage is a problem in terms of supply and demand.

Often, technology supplements tradition. (See TAPS on page 4)

Man Finds Rifle Dad Used in Korea

DAVISON TOWNSHIP, Mich. - As gifts go, Jim Richardson's choice for his father's 79th birthday was a long shot.

Virgil Richardson fondly remembered the .30-caliber M1 Garand rifle he carried during his time as a soldier during the Korean War.

He even still had the weapon's serial number.

Using that number, Jim Richardson went online and found the firearm at a Kentucky gun broker.

"I couldn't even talk when he gave it to me," Virgil Richardson told The Flint Journal. "It didn't even have to be the same gun to be important to me."

About 7 million of the sturdy rifles were produced during the Korean War period, making the odds of finding the right one so long that the broker didn't believe the serial number matched, said Jim Richardson, 54, of Saginaw County's Frankenmuth, about 70 miles northwest of Detroit.

"After the war, the soldiers couldn't bring the rifles back with them," Jim Richardson said. "They stayed in Korea (until the 1980s), when they were able to be imported back to the United States."

He won't say exactly how much he spent, but some collectors have paid as much as $3,000. He gave the Garand to his father last week, although the elder Richardson's birthday isn't until next month.

Virgil Richardson served from 1951-53 as an Army radio operator in the 25th Infantry Division. When he speaks of the war, the General Motors Corp. retiree often mentions the rifle's accuracy and dependability, as well as his own marksmanship.

"My sister lives in the country, and it came up that you could shoot a deer right from the deck of her home," Jim Richardson said. "Dad made a comment that he could hit a silhouette target at 500 yards without a scope. Most people can't see that far without a scope."

Virgil Richardson said he'll wait until his Oct. 26 birthday to shoot the weapon.

"What shocked me the most is how very heavy it is," he said. "I have trouble now holding it up and aiming it. I guess they were made for 20- and 21-year-olds."
Departed Shipmates

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.

Alqueza, Christiano
Anderson, Foster
Anthony, Lloyd
Attamont, Tony
Bagley, Donald V.
Bailey, Finley A.
Barbarossa, Russell
Barber, George
Baker, Charles S.
Barkas, John C.
Batalomiew, Bart
Baxter, William
Becker, Leon
Bell, Rex
Bell, W. A. "Bill"
Berry, Robert E.
Bell, W. A. "Bill"
Bertolino, R. "A."
Blandin, Sherman
Black, Gordon
Bullock, David
Burney, John L.
Bourgeois, Clair C.
Breedlove, James E.
Brown, Kenneth
Bruce, Marvin D.
Bullock, Charles S.
Burgess, Thomas R.
Burney, John L.
Burris, Richard E.
Call, Jay J.
Callahan, Alvin
Chidester, Doug
Childs, Cecil C.
Cihak, Wesley
Clark, Tom
Cobb, John V.
Coker, Orval M.
Conine, Bob
Cooksey, Robert B.
Cormier, Norman G.
Covey, Gene F.
Covino, Frank
Cow, Richard M.
Crenshaw, Edwind
Cridger, Walter
Cruz, Antonio R.
Dailey, Wilbur A.
Dalton, Leon
Darrow, J. S.
Davis, James E.
Davis, Murate
Dea, David M.
Dilley, Richard J.
Divine, Orlando
Dixon, Thomas
Doherty, Harold
Donzell, Richard
Dudley, Walter
Durrr, Joseph H.
Dunaetz, Hershel
Dyches, Archie
Dykas, Edward J.
Edge, Horace
Edmonds, Anthony
Edwards, Millard
Edwards, Thomas
Elder, Charles
Eshom, James M.
Esteban, Eduardo
Fern, Richard P.
Fields, Roger
Fisher, Orval M.
Flowers, Charlie J.
Floy, Brooks
Folks, Arlie Joe
Folks, Macie D.
Folks, Tracie F.
Follis, Jerry
Fontenot, Royle
Foster, Freddie
Foust, Roe
Fox, James Arthur
Frank, Victor K.
Franzen, Leroy C.
French, Dean M.
Fritz, Michael
Gaffon, Frank C.
Galing, Searyl G.
Gamble, William
Greedy, Paul C.
Gensler, Delbert J.
Gentry, Alva "Pap"
Gifford, Gilbert
Gilliam, Cleland R.
Giovanetti, R. A.
Giusti, Julius
Glover, Joseph R.
Gold, Boyd O.
Gooslin, Don C.
Gorby, Gene E.
Gore, Reever E.
Gough, Terry G.
Graham, James
Graupmann, Donald
Gray, Amos
Greenhill, Edward
Haglin, Clarence
Hall, Fred L.
Hall, LeRoy "Lee"
Hanson, David M.
Harbin, Sannie
Harden, Herman R.
Hardy, George D.
Harrelson, Glenn
Harrelson, Henry
Harrelson, Lonnie
Harrington, Richard
Harwood, Boyd L.
Havelin, Wayne
Hayduck, David M.
Hayter, Harvey R.
Heitz, Richard
Henderson, Thomas
Henry, Donald
Hestla, Charles W.
Hickman, Tony
Hicks, Vernon
Hinson, William
Hol, Dennis A.
Houghton, Donald
Howell, Larry T.
Huber, Ewald
Huckaby, Fuller O.
Hulon, Jack
Hunenbe, Robert L.
Hunt, John P.
Irvin, Herbert E.
Isaacs, Reuben E.
Isenberg, Emil
Janssen, Howard J.
Jennings, Samuel S.
Jepson, Darrell
Johns, Elwood
Johnson, Dan
Johnson, Michael E.
Kading, Robert J.
Kalina, Joseph L.
Kauk, Keith
Kermicle, Harlin R.
Ketchersid, Lloyd R.
Klemm, Floyd P.
Kodesch, Charles
Koelle, Benjamin
Kress, Edward
Kvidera, Larry T.
Ladner, Winston
Ladson, Ulmer
Landon, Neal F.
Lanapkin, Gerald T.
Larsen, Don
Lattiner, George
Leat, William
Ledbetter, Robert L.
Linton, Raymond
Lociero, Joseph
Lohman, Gayle A.
Long, Ronald F.
Loudermilk, John D.
Lund, Larry Thomas
Macayan, Florentin
MacDonald, Paul J.
Maceri, Angelo
Machon, Elton
Magbuhut, Severino
Maphet, Steve
Martin, James R.
McCook, Warren
McCracken, Harry
McCullough, Don
McDougal, Robert
McFadden, William
McNary, Michael
Mckay, Verlon
McMahon, Walter S.
Miller, Clarence
Milligan, Delester R.
Moen, Robert
Morison, Joe
Morrit, Etrall
Murphy, Calvan H.
Murray, James L.
Nelson, Larry A.
Newell, Darrell K.
Nolle, Lester
Olaveson, James L.
Oleson, Ken
Osoito, Ricardo T.
Page, Roy "Gene"
Pankonien, William
Papa, John (Jack)
Parkin, Arthur
Peerson, Jack
Pinder, Marcel
Pinzon, Alfredo J.
Pitts, John W.
Poisson, Conrad
Porter, Cdr. Mell
Porteous, Joseph
Powers, Reginald
Proulx, Ronald
Provost, Don
Puckett, Nathan
Rabun, Cdm. Floyd
Redfield, Russ
Rein, Randall W.
Reink, Robert
Rettig, Ivan Joe
Rhodes, Donald
Richardson, Ray
Rigdon, Charles E.
Rudd, Malcolm T.
Rumley, William
Russell, Wayne
Ryan, Randall M.
Sanders, Clark
Sandsor, Morgan
Sanover, Edward
Sapp, William C.
Savel, Jr., John J.
Schaaf, Donald T.
Scharnhorst, Fred
Scholly, Victor K.
Schounte, George
Sculi, Claudio
Sicilia, Louis
SilverRyder, Wm.
Sitton, David
Smith, Ray
Smith, Jimmie
Smith, Richard L.
Smith, Tommy B.
Spruce, Edward
Starke, Martin
Staubs, William
Stelzig, Delbert

We’re beginning 2009 with lots of anticipation about our newly elected president and our economy. People are wondering what is in store for our future. John 16:33 Jesus says, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” If we remember that the ultimate victory has already been won, we can claim the peace of Christ in the most troublesome time. We need to pray for our leaders and nation this year. Pray that they will hear the word of God and allow Him to work through them. We look forward to another year and thank God for our blessings. We’re so grateful for our Whetstone family and thank you for your prayers for both of us as we underwent surgery this past year. You are warmly appreciated.

So let us look at 2009 as a blessing and remember; Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. Happy New Year!

Chaplain Mary Watson
RM3 (60-63)
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 whomever 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.

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Treasurer’s Report

December 31, 2008

Balance on Hand 7/01/2008 
(After Charleston Reunion) $2,627.79

Income:
Dues, Ship Store Items and Donations $1,400.00 Total Income $4,027.79

Expenses:
Newsletter (July & October) $1,282.15
Ship Store Items 260.00
Miscellaneous 91.73
Memorials 100.00
Reunion DVD’s & Mailing 200.00*
Petty Cash 200.00**

Additional Reunion Expense 569.00 Total Expenses $2,702.88

Balance on Hand 12/31/2008 $1,324.91

* DVDs created by John Worman & mailed
** Petty Cash Fund for Postage, etc. ($161.54 on hand in Petty Cash)

Come gather round me lads and I’ll tell you a thing or two about the way we ran the Navy in nineteen forty-two. When wooden ships and iron men were barely out of sight, I am going to give you some facts just to set the record right. We wore the ole bell bottoms, with a flat hat on our head, and we always hit the sack at night. W e never “went to bed.” Our uniforms were worn ashore, and we were mighty proud. Never thought of wearing civvies, in fact they were not allowed. Now, when a ship puts out to sea, I’ll tell you so, it hurts! When suddenly you notice that half the crew’s wearing skirts. And it’s hard for me to imagine, a female boatswains mate, stopping on the Quarter deck to make sure her stockings are straight. What happened to the kiwi brush, and the old saltwater bath? Holy stoning decks at night, cause you stirred old Bosn’s wrath? We always had our gedunk sted and lots of pogey bait. And it always took a hitch or two, just to make a rate. In your seabag all your skivvies, were neatly stopped and rolled. And the blankets on your sack had better have a three-inch fold. Your little ditty bag, it is hard to believe just how much it held, and you wouldn’t go ashore with pants that hadn’t been spiked and belled. We had scullery maids and succotash and good old S.O. And when you felt like topping off, you headed for the mess. Oh, we had our belly robbers, but there weren’t too many gripees. For the deck apes were never hungry and there were no starring snipes. Now, you never hear of Davey Jones, Shellbacks or Polliwogs, and you never splice the mainbrace to receive your daily grog. Now you never have to dog a watch or stand the main event. You even tie your lines today; back in my time they were bent. We were all two-fisted drinkers and no one thought you sinned, if you staggered back aboard your ship, three sheets to the wind. And with just a couple hours of sleep you regained your usual luster, Bright and iron men were barely out of sight, I am mighty proud. Never thought of wearing our uniforms were worn ashore, and we were barely out of sight, I am mighty proud. Never thought of wearing Our uniforms were worn ashore, and we were barely out of sight, I am mighty proud. Never thought of wearing Our uniforms were worn ashore, and we were barely out of sight, I am mighty proud. Never thought of wearing
Greetings from Marion and Kay Goble. Bill contacted us and asked that we submit an article in his place this newsletter as he felt many would like to know what we are doing and how we are working behind the scenes with the Association.

This past year has been rewarding. The reunion in Charleston was memorable and we were able to meet up with many friends that we have met through the years, as well as meet new shipmates. Even though our group was smaller than normal, we had a great time sharing sea stories and reminiscing. We think all enjoyed the time together and the trips put together by Chuck and Everett. We are looking forward to our time together in Astoria, Oregon in 2010 and meeting up with everyone once again.

It is great to know that since the first reunion in 1996 in Las Vegas, our Association is still strong and we all look forward to the reunions and meeting up with shipmates throughout the United States. Time passes quickly, the older we get, but the reunions keep us grounded to the times of service and the friendships we made. Even though every day aboard was not the greatest, there were many days that were rewarding and a time we will never forget. Many of us grew up in the Navy and are now better men because of the time we served and the commitment we gave. May God Bless each and everyone of you in 2009. And are now better men because of the time we served and the commitment we gave. May God Bless each and everyone of you in 2009.

As we all look back to the years aboard, let us never forget our time of service and the friendships we made. Even though every day aboard was not the greatest, there were many days that were rewarding and a time we will never forget. Many of us grew up in the Navy and are now better men because of the time we served and the commitment we gave. May God Bless each and everyone of you in 2009. We hope to see you in 2010 in Astoria, Oregon.

Marion and Kay Goble

This past September, we attended a mini-reunion in North Myrtle Beach, NC with Joe Kirby, Charles Pierce and Floyd Pennal. We had a wonderful time reminiscing, sharing stories, sitting on the beach, drinking lots of coffee, as well as a few spirits, and looking over the Atlantic.

There is a Navy connection when we get together, regardless of the years aboard, and remembering the times of service. Regardless of when we served, we all remember our commitment to the “Stone” and how that time aboard influenced our lives.

(TAPS from page 1)

At a military funeral, a reservist with no experience playing the instrument might be told to hold a bugle with a speaker and recording planted inside. After the volleys go off, the reservist stealthily pushes a button to cue the recording.

Most families aren't told the song is a recording. They are simply pleased it is played so perfectly. A botched rendition can disrupt the solemnity of the memorial.

These facts and feelings converge on the grounds of the national cemetery each day, compacted into a song lasting about 45 seconds.

For Marin, playing taps is both pressure and patriotic responsibility. He said he only has two goals when he plays the 24 notes:

"To make it smooth and make it sweet."

Marin just wanted to pursue his love for music when he picked up his first trumpet 13 years ago. He nicknamed it "Barbara," an adolescent's tribute to the girl he longed to kiss.

He took Barbara with him when he joined the National Guard's band in 2001. In 2005, Innes asked him to become a soloist. The horn gained an even greater purpose.

It was about three years after Congress blessed the use of recorded versions of taps at funerals. Veterans were being buried to sounds from a boom box.

"It's tough," said Mike Nacincik, a spokesman for the Veteran's Affairs National Cemetery Administration. "But there just aren't a lot of people playing the bugle out there."

Just last month, the Pennsylvania Legislature passed a measure urging students to learn how to play taps. In Missouri, the governor directed its National Guard to do all it can to find more players.

National networks such as Bugles Across America sprouted to put military personnel in touch with buglers. Professional trumpeters offer their time, and some ask for pay. But there's an inescapable authenticity to having someone in the military play the song.

Marin agreed immediately. He thought the obligation might be once or twice a month. As of July, he has played taps at about 500 Florida funerals.

The first time was the worst. It was at the Star of David Cemetery in North Lauderdale.

He tried to remain as calm as possible. The volleys were shot. Then his time came.

He cracked.

So, then he'd try different styles to make it perfect. Shorter notes here, longer notes there. He tried using an actual bugle, but the sound wasn't as majestic.

"I started to get how to play taps when I began to empathize more with the family," he said.

"It is the breaking point of the funeral. A lot of the
Ed Freeman

You're an 18 or 19 year old kid. You're critically wounded, and dying in the jungle in the Ia Drang Valley, 11-14-1965. LZ Xray, Vietnam. Your Infantry Unit is outnumbered 8 - 1, and the enemy fire is so intense, from 100 or 200 yards away, that your own Infantry Commander has ordered the Medi-Vac helicopters to stop coming in.

You're lying there, listening to the enemy machine guns, and you know you're not getting out. Your family is 1/2 way around the world, 12,000 miles away, and you'll never see them again. As the world starts to fade in and out, you know this is the day.

Then, over the machine gun noise, you faintly hear that sound of a helicopter, and you look up to see a Huey, but it doesn't seem real, because no Medi-Vac markings are on it.

Ed Freeman is coming for you. He's not Medi-Vac, so it's not his job, but he's flying his Huey down into the machine gun fire, after the Medi-Vacs were ordered not to come.

He's coming anyway.

And he drops it in, and sits there in the machine gun fire, as they load 2 or 3 of you on board.

Then he flies you up and out through the gunfire, to the Doctors and Nurses.

And, he kept coming back...... 13 more times..... and took about 30 of you and your buddies out, who would never have gotten out.

Medal of Honor Recipient Ed Freeman died last Wednesday at the age of 80, in Boise, ID......May God rest his soul.....

Frank Feldman

A guy walks out to the street and catches a taxi just going by.

He gets into the taxi, and the Cabbie says, 'Perfect timing. You're just like Frank.'

Passenger: 'Who?'

Cabbie: 'Frank Feldman. He's a guy who did everything right all the time. Like my coming along when you needed a cab, things happened like that to Frank Feldman every single time.'

Passenger: 'There are always a few clouds over everybody.'

Cabbie: 'Not Frank Feldman. He was a terrific athlete. He could have won the tennis Grand-Slam. He could golf with the pros. He sang like an opera baritone, danced like a Broadway star and you should have heard him play the piano. He was an amazing guy.'

Passenger: 'Sounds like he was something really special.'

Cabbie: 'There's more... He had a memory like a computer. He remembered everybody's birthday. He knew all about wine, which foods to order and which fork to eat them with. He could fix anything. Not like me. I change a fuse, and the whole street blacks out. But Frank Feldman, he could do everything right'

Passenger: 'Wow, some guy then.'

Cabbie: 'He always knew the quickest way to go in traffic and avoid traffic jams. Not like me, I always seem to get stuck in them. But Frank, he never made a mistake, and he really knew how to treat a woman and make her feel good. He would never answer her back, even if she was in the wrong; and his clothing was always immaculate, shoes highly polished too - He was the perfect man! He never made a mistake. No one could ever measure up to Frank Feldman.'

Passenger: 'An amazing fellow. How did you meet him?'

Cabbie: 'Well, I never actually met Frank, he died. I married his widow.'

That time, Marin thought about the Soldier in the coffin, whose life was lost too soon. He never knew him -- to this day, can't even remember his name.

He used the song to thank the young Soldier for what he did.

After the funeral, the family thanked the bugler for what he did.

On most days, only a handful of people wait for him.

Before he goes out, he flexes his cheek muscles. He stands to the side, while the family focuses on the flag-draped coffin in front of them.

In 45 seconds, Marin's taps rises and falls, like life itself. He starts with a note that is low and husky. Then, it is loud and regal, dangling in the air with the tremble of an opera singer. It fades with a melody like it first began, softly melting into silence.

There's a pause. Then, the sound of cicadas.

The bugler waits for no applause. He doesn't stick around for any appreciation. As the family mourns, Marin just slips the horn under his arm and marches away.

Expression of thanks

Over time, that empathy became easy and automatic. The families come and go. Some express thanks. Others won't find him. During the service, his cap hangs low over his eyes.

But it is this anonymous man who provides the soundtrack for this intensely personal moment, the bridge between a Soldier and his service to the country. In so many ways, he and those mourning are connected. And in so many, they are not at all.

Marin is most fazed when playing for a Soldier killed in action, in either Iraq or Afghanistan. He has done six of those funerals.

His first was at a service in Orlando. As he peered over the site, he saw masses of people. There were politicians and high-ranking officials.

He marched, took a deep breath and blew his trumpet. There was silence. Then, the sound of sniffles.
Cemetery Guard Duty

I just wanted to get the day over with and go down to Smokey's. Sneaking a look at my watch, I saw the time, 1655. Five minutes to go before the cemetery gates are closed for the day. Full dress was hot in the August sun. Oklahoma summertime was as bad as ever—the heat and humidity at the same level—both too high.

I saw the car pull into the drive, '69 or '70 model Cadillac Deville, looked factory-new. It pulled into the parking lot at a snail's pace. An old woman got out so slow I thought she was paralyzed; she had a cane and a sheaf of flowers—about four or five bunches as best I could tell.

I couldn't help myself. The thought came unwanted, and left a slightly bitter taste: 'She's going to spend an hour, and for this old soldier, my hip hurts like hell and I'm ready to get out of here right now!' But for this day, my duty was to assist anyone coming in.

Kevin would lock the 'In' gate and if I could hurry the old biddy along, we might make it to Smokey's in time.

I broke post attention. My hip made gritty noises when I took the first step and the pain went up a notch. I must have made a real military sight: middle-aged man with a small pot gut and half a limp, in marine full-dress uniform, which had lost its razor crease about thirty minutes after I began the watch at the cemetery.

I stopped in front of her, halfway up the walk. She looked up at me with an old woman's squint.

'Ma'am, may I assist you in any way?'

She took long enough to answer.

'Yes, son. Can you carry these flowers? I seem to be moving a tad slow these days.'

'My pleasure, ma'am.' Well, it wasn't too much of a lie. She looked again. 'Marine, where were you stationed?'

'Vietnam, ma'am. Ground-pounder. '69 to '71.'

She looked at me closer. 'Wounded in action, I see. Well done, marine. I'll be as quick as I can.'

I lied a little bigger: 'No hurry, ma'am.'

She smiled and winked at me. 'Son, I'm 85-years-old and I can tell a lie from a long way off. Let's get this done. Might be the last time I can do this. My name's Joanne Wieserman, and I've a few marines I'd like to see one more time.'

'Yes, ma'am. At your service.'

She headed for the World War I section, stopping at a stone. She picked one of the flowers out of my arm and laid it on top of the stone. She murmured something I couldn't quite make out. The name on the marble was Donald S. Davidson, USMC: France 1918.

She turned away and made a straight line for the World War II section, stopping at one stone. I saw a tear slowly tracking its way down her cheek. She put a bunch on a stone; the name was Stephen X. Davidson, USMC, 1943.

She went up the row a ways and laid another bunch on a stone, Stanley J. Wieserman, USMC, 1944.

She paused for a second. 'Two more, son, and we'll be done' I almost didn't say anything, but, 'Yes, ma'am. Take your time.'

She looked confused. 'Where's the Vietnam section, son? I seem to have lost my way.'

I pointed with my chin. 'That way, ma'am.'

'Ooh!' she chuckled quietly. 'Son, me and old age ain't too friendly.'

She headed down the walk I'd pointed at. She stopped at a couple of stones before she found the ones she wanted. She placed a bunch on Larry Wieserman, USMC, 1968, and the last on Darrel Wieserman, USMC, 1970. She stood there and murmured a few words I still couldn't make out.

'OK, son, I'm finished. Get me back to my car and you can go home.'

'Yes, ma'am.' If I may ask, were those your kinfolk?'

She paused.

'Yes, Donald Davidson was my father, Stephen was my uncle, Stanley was my husband, Larry and Darrel were our sons. All killed in action, all marines.'

She stopped. Whether she had finished, or couldn't finish, I don't know. She made her way to her car, slowly and painfully.

I waited for a polite distance to come between us and then double timed it over to Kevin, waiting by the car.

'Get to the 'Out' gate quick. I have something I've got to do.'

Kevin started to say something, but saw the look I gave him. He broke the rules to get us there down the service road. We beat her. She hadn't made it around the rotunda yet.

'Kevin, stand at attention next to the gatepost. Follow my lead.' I humped it across the drive to the other post.

When the Cadillac came puttering around from the hedges and began the short straight traverse to the gate, I called in my best gunny's voice: 'TehenHut! Present Haaaarm!'

I have to hand it to Kevin; he never blinked an eye—full dress attention and a salute that would make his DI proud.

She drove through that gate with two old worn-out soldiers giving her a send-off she deserved, for service rendered to her country, and for knowing duty, honor and sacrifice.

I am not sure, but I think I saw a salute returned from that Cadillac.

Instead of 'The End,' just think of 'Taps.'

As a final thought on my part, let me share a favorite prayer: 'Lord, keep our servicemen and women safe, whether they serve at home or overseas. Hold them in your loving hands and protect them as they protect us.'
Information
If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed, if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed.
~Mark Twain~

Army’s Deal with Sears Angers Murtha

CHICAGO -- U.S. Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., said he was less than thrilled the U.S. Army had licensed a clothing store to sell 1st Infantry Division insignia.

Sears said last week it had reached an agreement with the Army and would begin a line of All American Army Brand clothing for men, women and boys, Crain's Business Journal reported.

The licensing fee is to go toward programs that benefit army personnel and their families, Crain's reported.

But, Murtha, chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, said he was "astounded" the Army had made a deal, Crain's reported.

"That patch is to be worn by only people who served in the 1st Division. What right does the Army have to sell our patch?" Charles Horner, a retired Army officer who works for Murtha, told Crain's.

Sears declined to comment on Murtha's reaction. But, an Army representative said "strong brand identification through retail sales of products potentially can enhance the Army's recruiting efforts and the public's general goodwill toward the Army and its activities," Crain's reported Tuesday.

Dumb Kid?

A young boy enters a barber shop and the barber whispers to his customer, "This is the dumbest kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you."

The barber puts a dollar bill in one hand and two quarters in the other, then calls the boy over and asks, "Which do you want, son?" The boy takes the quarters and leaves.

"What did I tell you?" said the barber. "That kid never learns!"

Later, when the customer leaves, he sees the same young boy coming out of the ice cream store. "Hey son, may I ask you a question? Why did you take the quarters instead of the dollar bill?"

The boy licked his cone and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game's over!"

Senior Moment

The irate customer calling the newspaper office loudly demanded to know where her Sunday edition was.

"Ma'am," said the employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until Sunday."

There was quite a pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition. "I'll bet that's why no one was in church today too."

Last Survivor of HMS Hood Dies at 85

LONDON - Ted Briggs, the last survivor of the World War II sinking of British battle cruiser HMS Hood, has died, his naval association said Sunday. He was 85.

Briggs died Saturday in a hospital in Portsmouth, southern England, HMS Hood Association Chairman Peter Heys said.

Briggs was one of only three seamen among the 1,418-strong crew to survive an attack by the German battleship Bismarck on May 24, 1941.

A salvo from the Bismarck hit the Hood during the Battle of the Denmark Strait and the magazine exploded, tearing the ship in half. It sank within three minutes.

Briggs, an 18-year-old signalman, later described how he had been sucked under by the sinking ship before being propelled to the surface, where he saw HMS Hood disappearing below the waves.

"I turned and swam as best I could in water 4 inches thick with oil and managed to get on one of the small rafts she carried, of which there were a large number floating around," he wrote in an account posted on the HMS Hood Association's Web site. "When I turned again she had gone and there was a fire on the water where her bows had been."

Briggs said he saw two other survivors, Midshipman William Dundas and Able Seaman Bob Tilburn, on rafts nearby. "There was not another soul to be seen," he wrote.

The trio were picked up by a British destroyer three hours later. Dundas died in 1965, Tilburn in 1995.

The sinking of the flagship of the British Home Fleet, and the heavy loss of life, shocked a country proud of its naval might. Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered that the Bismarck be hunted down and destroyed. The German ship was pursued by British forces and sunk on May 27, with the loss of almost 2,000 of its 2,200-strong crew.

In 2001, the wreckage of the Hood was found, almost 10,000 feet below the ocean's surface between Greenland and Iceland. Briggs helped lay a plaque on the underwater wreckage, which was designated an official war grave by the British government.

Television producer Rob White, who was with Briggs for the ceremony, said he was a man of "great modesty."

"If you said 'you're a hero,' he used to say 'I was not a hero, I was a survivor,'" White said. "He felt he had to embody that loss and sacrifice and he did in an unassuming manner."

Briggs remained in the navy until 1973. He is survived by his wife, Clare. Funeral details were not immediately available.

Don't Confuse the News with the Truth
The New Navy

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Congress plans to review a Navy proposal that would give sailors up to three years off to pursue other interests while they keep their health benefits and receive a monthly stipend.

The sailors would determine what to do with their time off, such as pursuing an education or caring for an ill family member, said Lt. Stephanie Miller, a spokeswoman for the Navy's Diversity and Women's Policy Directorate for the Chief of Naval Personnel.

Upon returning to active duty, those sailors -- who would retain their rank -- would be required to serve two months for every month they took off, she said.

“They are interested to see how we make it work before they implement their own programs,” Miller said.

All sailors are eligible for the program, and the Navy is putting together an instruction telling sailors how they can apply, she said.

The proposal would be part of the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act, which Congress expects to vote on this September, according to the Navy.

If approved, the Navy would launch a pilot program in February involving 20 officers and 20 enlisted sailors per year for three years, for a total of 120 sailors, according to the Navy.

Miller said the Navy decided to limit the number of participants in the pilot program to better monitor those involved, and because the sailors likely would come from undermanned communities.

The Navy has learned that sailors in such undermanned communities are not responding to financial retention incentives, but they are interested in other incentives, she said.

Participants would transfer to the Individual Ready Reserve for up to three years, during which time they would not deploy, Miller said.

Their only responsibility would be to muster once a year for drug testing and to make sure they are physically fit, she said.

During their time in the IRR, sailors would keep their commissary privileges and receive a monthly stipend equal to one-fifteenth of their basic pay, Miller said.

“What we really see is the best benefit of the program is maintaining the health-care benefits for you and your family,” she said.

The time sailors spend in the IRR would not count as time in service or time in grade, Miller said.

Sailors also would have their rank frozen while they are in the IRR, and their date of rank will be moved up to compensate for their time off, Miller said.

For example, a sailor who received a commission or date of advancement in 2001 and took two years off would compete for promotion with those who were commissioned or received advancement in 2003, she said.

At the end of the three-year pilot program, the Navy will decide whether to make the program permanent, Miller said.

“This program has the full support of DOD, and will serve as a demonstration project for all services,” a recent Navywide message said.

But it is too early to tell whether the Navy program could be extended to the Marine Corps if it is approved, a Corps spokesman said Tuesday.

“Since this is a ‘demonstration project’ we wouldn’t be able to provide anything for you, until the Navy fully discovers the advantages/disadvantages resulting from this pilot program,” said Maj. Jay Delarosa in an e-mail.

Army spokeswoman Lt. Col. Anne Edgecomb said it would be “speculative” to say what the likelihood is that the Army would adopt the program.

The Air Force does not have a program similar to the Navy’s proposal, said Air Force spokesman Capt. Michael R. Andrews.

As for whether the Air Force could adopt such a program, “We are aware of the Navy’s proposal and will follow its development very closely -- it has great potential to benefit all the services,” Andrews said in an e-mail.

France Honors Last WWI Doughboy

The last surviving American Soldier of World War I, 107-year-old Frank Buckles, has been named an officer of the French Legion of Honor, and paid tribute to all the "real heroes."

Buckles, who was an ambulance driver, arrived in France at the age of 16 in 1917, even though the legal age to join up was 21.

"I'm just a representative of the veterans of the war. I'm surprised to be the last. It's more than I deserve. The real heroes were all gone," Buckles said at a ceremony in the French embassy in Washington.

The French state secretary for defense and veterans Jean-Marie Bockel, thanked him for his service.

"Though your their last representative, we pay a solemn tribute to the heroic sacrifice of all these American children," he said.

"Today France remembers and honors all those American Soldiers who perished in 1918 to give back to France its freedom," Bockel said, adding his country would never "forget the blood spilled by the children of America."

"Frank Buckles, today all of us are the children of that American century. All of us are your grandchildren."

The last French soldier to serve in World War I, Lazare Ponticelli, died earlier this year aged 110 just as Europe was marking the 90th anniversary of the armistice which ended the Great War.

On January 1 the last German World War I veteran Erich Kaestner died at the age of 107.

Buckles, who lives in West Virginia, also fought in World War II when he was captured and spent three years in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. In 1999 he was made a knight of the French Legion of Honor by then president Jacques Chirac.
At the Top

WASHINGTON - Ann E. Dunwoody, after 33 years in the Army, ascended Friday to a peak never before reached by a woman in the U.S. military: four-star general.

At an emotional promotion ceremony, Dunwoody looked back on her years in uniform, said it was a credit to the Army - and a great surprise to her - that she would make history in a male-dominated military.

"Thirty-three years after I took the oath as a second lieutenant, I have to tell you this is not exactly how I envisioned my life unfolding," she told a standing-room-only auditorium. "Even as a young kid, all I ever wanted to do was teach physical education and raise a family.

Related Video:

"It was clear to me that my Army experience was just going to be a two-year detour en route to my fitness profession," she added. "So when asked, 'Ann, did you ever think you were going to be a general officer, to say nothing about a four-star?' I say, 'Not in my wildest dreams.'"

She added: "There is no one more surprised than I - except, of course, my husband. You know what they say, 'Behind every successful woman there is an astonished man.'"

Dunwoody hails from a family of military men dating back to the 1800s. Her father, 89-year-old Hal Dunwoody - a decorated veteran of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam - was in the audience, along with the service chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, plus the Joint Chiefs chairman, Adm. Mike Mullen.

Dunwoody, whose husband, Craig Brotchie, served for 26 years in the Air Force, choked up at times during a speech in which she said she only recently realized how much her accomplishment means to others.

"This promotion has taken me back in time like no other event in my entire life," she said. "And I didn't appreciate the enormity of the events until tidal waves of cards, letters, and e-mails started coming my way.

"And I've heard from men and women, from every branch of service, from every region of our country, and every corner of the world. I've heard from moms and dads who see this promotion as a beacon of home for their own daughters and after affirmation that anything is possible through hard work and commitment."

In addition, she said, there were comments from women veterans "who just wanted to say congratulations" or "thanks."

Later Friday, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia - her birthplace - Dunwoody was being sworn in as commander of the Army Materiel Command, responsible for equipping, outfitting and arming all soldiers. Just five months ago, she became the first female deputy commander there.

Dunwoody, 55, has made it clear that she feels no need for special acclaim for her historic achievement.

"The recognition makes her a little bit uncomfortable from the standpoint of the gender aspect - that we're making a big deal (that) she is the first female general officer," Bryan Whitman, a Pentagon spokesman, said Thursday in announcing that Defense Secretary Robert Gates would attend her promotion ceremony.

When she was nominated by President George W. Bush in June for promotion to four-star rank, Dunwoody issued a statement saying she was humbled.

"This nomination only reaffirms what I have known to be true about the military throughout my career - that the doors continue to open for men and women in uniform," she said at the time.

Her nomination was confirmed by the Senate in July.

There are 21 female general officers in the Army - all but four at the one-star rank of brigadier. It was not until 1970 that the Army had its first one-star: Anna Mae Hays, chief of the Army Nurse Corps.

Women now make up about 14 percent of the active-duty Army and are allowed to serve in a wide variety of assignments. They are still excluded from units designed primarily to engage in direct combat, such as infantry and tank units, but their opportunities have expanded over the past two decades.

Dunwoody received her Army commission after graduating from the State University of New York in 1975.

Her first assignment was to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, as supply platoon leader in June 1976, and she remained at Fort Sill in various positions until she was sent to quartermaster officer school at Fort Lee, Virginia, in July 1980. She later served in Germany and Saudi Arabia.

After graduating from the Command and General Staff College in 1987, she was assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where she became the 82nd Airborne Division's first female battalion commander.

She has numerous decorations, including the Distinguished Service Medal and Defense Superior Service Medal.

Name Please?

The Chief noticed a new seaman one day and barked at him to get over here.

"What is your name?" was the first thing the Chief asked the new guy.

'John,' the new guy replied.

The Chief scowled, 'Look, I don't know what kind of bleeding-heart, liberal ass stuff they're teaching Sailors in boot camp today, but I don't call anyone by their first name. It breeds familiarity and that leads to a breakdown in authority. I refer to my Sailors by their last name only - Smith, Jones, Baker - that's all. I am to be referred to only as Chief. Do I make myself clear?'

Aye, aye, Chief!'

'Good! Now that we got that straight, what is your last name?'

The new guy sighed and said, 'Darling. My name is John Darling, Chief!'

'Okay --- John, here's what I want you to do.'
Ships that Won't Sail

"No more amphib excuses" reads the headline of a recent editorial in Navy Times newspaper. The editorial went on to enumerate some of the problems being encountered by the Navy's new amphibious ships of the San Antonio (LPD 17) class.

After a construction period that lasted twice as long as planned, and cost twice as much as originally budgeted, the San Antonio was belatedly placed in commission on 14 January 2006.

But the ship was not ready for service and, after two and a half years of being "fixed," the San Antonio was to deploy with an amphibious group. But on the eve of her August sailing it was discovered that there were problems with the stern gate to her docking well, where LCU landing craft and AAV amphibian assault vehicles are carried and discharged.

After additional work was performed the ship was able to deploy two days later.

Still, the San Antonio probably goes down in Navy history as having taken the longest time on record from being placed in commission to first deployment. This is amazing when one considers that the LPDs are basically "transport ships" with docking wells and helicopter decks. The Navy has been building docking well ships since the early 1940s, with the first, the USS Ashland (LSD 1), completed in 1943.

The new LPDs have relatively simple and basic systems -- no high-tech radars, no sonar, no advanced missiles, no nuclear propulsion, no advanced electronic warfare systems. Okay. As the Navy Times editorial of 8 September pointed out, the Navy and industry spokesmen "repeatedly have given the same excuse: You will always have issues with the first ship of a class."

That is not a true statement -- look at the intervals between being placed in commission and the first deployment of the first U.S. nuclear-propelled submarine, the Nautilus (SSN 571); the first Polaris submarine, the George Washington (SSBN 598); the first nuclear surface warship, the Long Beach (CGN 9); the first Aegis warship, the Ticonderoga (CG 47); and many other high-tech lead ships.

Now the second ship of the San Antonio class, the USS New Orleans (LPD 18), has been found to suffer from a long list of problems. That ship, also behind schedule and far over cost, was commissioned on 5 March 2007 -- a year and a half ago. The recent report of a Navy inspection team concludes that the ship "cannot support embarked troops, cargo or landing craft," and was deemed "degraded in her ability to conduct sustained combat operations."

These ships were built by Northrop Grumman Ship Systems at Avondale, Louisiana. An additional ship, the Mesa Verde (LPD 19), was commissioned on 15 December 2007, and several more are under construction at the yard.

By accepting these ships the Navy has taken responsibility away from the shipbuilder to pay for fixing these massive problems. Beyond these issues, the basic design of the LPD 17 must also be questioned. Compared to the Navy's previous LPD class of 12 ships completed from 1965 to 1971, the San Antonio class is one-third larger (24,900 tons compared to 16,585 tons), but has minimal improvements in troop, vehicle, and landing craft capacities, with a slight increase in speed.

Coupled with the delays and major cost increases in the Navy's littoral combat ship (LCS) program, and the Navy's continued confusion and changes in the DDG 1000 advanced destroyer program, the credibility of the Navy's shipbuilding efforts must be questioned. When addressed in the broad context of the shrinking size of the fleet and the expected reductions in shipbuilding budgets, the situation should be considered critical, with the LPD program a major factor in that judgment.

Regulation Haircut

I was reading a news group forum and the subject came up about sailors having a shaved head. Some sailors liked doing it as it’s a very low maintenance way to take care of your hair.

It turns out some commands, mostly schools, prohibit that style of hair. Perhaps because of gangs or whatever, they won’t allow it.

As I was reading the comments I thought of the “Shellback” initiation we went through on the Whetstone in 1962. Part of the initiation ceremony included a “proper” pollywog haircut. As there were quite a few of us, the quality of the haircut was low, but the quantity of hair removed was high (mostly off the top).

I still remember BT-3 Roger Nuttbrock’s hair. It was a real mess on top, but the sides were unscathed. Roger simply shaved the top of his head, but left the sides alone. I couldn’t believe it! Here was a 18 year old that could have passed for 45! If he would have left it alone he could have bought beer in any joint in the US or Japan.

Alas! He shaved it all off the next day.
Navy Confirms Sunken Sub is Grunion

PEARL HARBOR - Commander, Submarine Forces Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC), Rear Adm. Douglas McAneny announced today that a sunken vessel off the coast of the Aleutian Islands is in fact the World War II submarine USS Grunion (SS 216).

"I am honored to announce that, with records and information provided by the Abele family and assistance from the Naval Historical Center, USS Grunion has been located," said McAneny. "We are very grateful to the family of Grunion's Commanding Officer Lt. Cmdr. Mannert L. Abele for providing the underwater video footage and pictures that allowed us to make this determination. We also appreciate the efforts of the USS Cod Submarine Memorial for their assistance in this matter. We hope this announcement will help to give closure to the families of the 70 crewmen of Grunion."

The submarine Grunion arrived at Pearl Harbor on June 20, 1942. The vessel completed pre-patrol training before departing on its first war patrol June 30. Grunion's commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Abele, was ordered to proceed to the Aleutian Islands and patrol westward from Attu on routes between the Aleutians and the Japanese Empire. On July 10, Grunion was reassigned to the area north of Kiska. Over the next 20 days, the submarine reported firing on an enemy destroyer, sinking three destroyer-type vessels, and attacking unidentified enemy ships near Kiska.

Grunion's last transmission was received on July 30, 1942. The submarine reported heavy antisubmarine activity at the entrance to Kiska, and that it had 10 torpedoes remaining forward. On the same day, Grunion was directed to return to Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base. There was no contact or sighting of the submarine after July 30, and on August 16, Grunion was reported lost.

Abele was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for heroism. A destroyer, USS Mannert L. Abele (DD 733), was commissioned in his honor, and was later lost in action off Okinawa in 1945. Japanese anti-submarine attack data recorded no attack in the Aleutian area at the time of Grunion's disappearance, so the submarine's fate remained an unsolved mystery for more than 60 years.

After discovering information on the internet in 2002 that helped pinpoint USS Grunion's possible location, the sons of Grunion's commanding officer, Bruce, Brad, and John Abele, began working on a plan to find the submarine. In August 2006, a team of side scan sonar experts hired by the brothers located a target near Kiska almost a mile below the ocean's surface. A second expedition in August 2007 using a high definition camera on a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) yielded video footage and high resolution photos of the wreckage of a U.S. fleet submarine.

"This discovery has come about through a stream of seemingly improbable events; it's like we won the lottery 10 times in a row," said Bruce Abele, eldest son of Grunion's commanding officer. "It is so dramatic to see the underwater photo and be certain it was in fact Grunion; not only is this announcement important for the families of the crew members, it's also important for the Navy and the country."

The Abele brothers then contacted the USS Cod Submarine Memorial for assistance in identifying the wreckage. The vessel is lying at a depth of about 3,200 feet. Very cold water and lack of significant currents has preserved much of the wreckage.

Dr. John Fakan, director of the USS Cod Submarine Memorial, remarked about the importance of having an unmodified example in USS Cod, a fellow Gato-class submarine, in identifying the wreckage of USS Grunion.

"USS Grunion and USS Cod shared the same blueprints," he said. "It is very gratifying for me and my crew to help with the identification of the submarine."

With the information provided by the Abele family and the USS Cod Submarine Memorial, COMSUBPAC and the Naval Historical Center examined the evidence and historical records and determined that the submarine found at the reported position could only be USS Grunion.

According to Bruce's brother John Abele, those responsible for contributing to this discovery included historians and engineers from the United States, Australia, Israel and Japan. Of particular note was the involvement of Japanese naval architect Yutaka Iwasaki, who provided information critical to pinpointing the location of the submarine.

Bruce and John's brother, retired Lt. Brad Abele, who recently passed away, also played a significant role in the find. As his brother John explained, "Brad's experience as a Naval aviator helped a great deal by helping us to plot the strategy for the discovery."

Unfortunately, the cause of Grunion's sinking remains a mystery. No matter what the cause, the end result was the loss of all hands. As the Naval Historical Center noted, "no amount of analysis or speculation will change or alter the fact that families lost fathers, husbands, uncles and brothers... the Navy and the nation will always be grateful for their service and their sacrifice."

Former Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz once said, "When I assumed command of the Pacific Fleet on 31 December 1941 our submarines were already operating against the enemy, the only units of the Fleet that could come to grips with the Japanese for months to come. It was to the Submarine Force that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of great peril."

By the end of World War II, submarines had made more than 1,600 war patrols. Pacific Fleet submarines like Grunion accounted for more than half of all enemy shipping sunk during the war. The cost of this success was heavy: 52 U.S. Pacific Fleet submarines were lost, and more than 3,500 submariners remain on "eternal patrol."

(Webmasters Note: The USS Cod Submarine Memorial is located in Cleveland, Ohio. I have visited her several times.)
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 ship-store@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, XL, XXL) $20.00
- Jackets (S, M, L, XL, XXL) $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

**CORRECTION**

John, something is amiss.

The newsletter says, "Cdr. Porter replaced Captain Robert Ahern who was laid up with a broken arm in June 1957."

CDR Ahern was my first CO in late 1957 (when you were on board as well, I think). I remember him well because the Disbursing Officer, LTJG Don Parchence, SC, USNR, named him "All Astern Ahern" because he was somewhat timid in shiphandling. So he was still there in June 1957.

If I remember correctly, CDR Ahern did break his leg, not his arm, later, when I was on the staff of COMPHIBRON THREE. He was replaced temporarily by the Staff Operations Officer, CDR J. W. Barden.

I don't remember the name of the officer who relieved CDR Ahern permanently, but it wasn't Porter. COMPHIBRON THREE once scheduled Whetstone to get underway for Independent Steaming Exercises, but she didn't. The Commodore sent our CDR Barden to Whetstone to find out why. The explanation of the CO, whose name I can't remember, was, "I didn't want to get underway." I suspect this was a cover-up for the Whetstone administration who missed the requirement to get underway. In any event, that was the end of that CO's career. But, realistically, nobody assigned to command an LSD in those days could expect promotion.

Grant Carson

Later assigned to command an LSD, and, against all odds, promoted to Captain

(I missed all this fun.. I came aboard the Whetstone in December, 1960 and remained there until the last of February 1964.) John

(Cdr. Ahern was replaced by Cdr. Grey or Gray.) (Also, check ‘57 Cruise Book.) D. A. Vydra, RD2 Webmaster