



67th Edition



The Rolling Stone



Feb 2015

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The Rolling Stone is a Triennial 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.

The 5 Craziest War Stores (All Happened On the Same Ship USS William D. Porter (DD-579)

Do you ever get sick of hearing about "the greatest generation"? For over 60 years now, it's been all "they survived the Depression" this and "they defeated the Nazis" that and "they never looked stupid in hats." Well, not everything the heroes of the 20th century did

For example, the USS William D. The Willie Dee) pidest ship ever were people, this kid who ate paste then almost by accident. So this ship's service *actly* the way it been a hastily



Sandler comedy, we're not exaggerating. We're talking about a ship that:

was pitch perfect. WWII destroyer Porter (nicknamed was easily the stu-launched. If ships one would be the off a stick. and killed the president when we say that played out in *ex*-would if it had scripted Adam

#5. Wrecked a Friendly Ship Just Pulling Out of Port

The USS William D. Porter's completely ridiculous career as a warship began with an important escort mission. What could go wrong? Well, they came fairly close to accidentally blowing up the president, so there's that. But the problems started before they even left port. The destroyer was specifically commissioned to serve as an escort for larger boats. So in November of 1943, the William D. Porter was, as its first mission, to escort the battleship USS Iowa across the Atlantic Ocean to an important summit in Iran. "Why would a battleship need to go to a political summit?" you're probably asking. " It can't even talk." The answer is that the president of the United States, the Secretary of State and the joint chiefs of staff were on the Iowa, and they had a secret appointment with Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill. So it was a big deal. The USS William D. Porter was only one of the ships in the convoy that was going to get them there. There was only one problem: The Porter was staffed with the cast of *Police Academy*.

The trouble started before the boat even left the dock. Specifically, someone forgot to raise the anchor up all the way, and as they backed out ever so slowly, they dragged the anchor along the moored deck of her sister ship. Picture an anchor scraping along railings, lifeboats and thousands of dollars' worth of war shit like a

(Continued on page 4)

Deceased Shipmates



TAPS
the sun,
From the
lakes,
the hills
From the
sky
All is well,

The names below are received from family and confirmed. Please advise if you know of anyone that may have passed that we need to add to our database of deceased shipmates

Note: Due to the length of our deceased shipmate list, we are no longer printing the complete list in the newsletter. If you would like a complete list, please contact Kay Goble at marion-goble@comcast.net.

We have been notified of the passing of the following shipmates since the October 2014 newsletter was published:

Hank Bussey SM 1960-62
Melvin P. Kuehn BT 1963-66

ATTENTION

We need your help! We would appreciate any articles that you might send about your time aboard the USS Whetstone that we could publish in the newsletter.

Articles from men that actually served aboard the USS Whetstone, sharing stories, whether funny, serious or just day-to-day operations are great reminders of days aboard the ship.

Your input would be beneficial in helping prepare a newsletter that is interesting to all.

We know there are some great stories out there! Please send them.

Marion and Kay

Note from:

**Henry J. Rausch, Jr.
MACM(AC)USN-Ret
(HM2 on Whetstone 1960)**

Received the most recent "Rolling Stone" and looking forward to the Nashville reunion. Have attended 2 reunions in Nashville. There are many things to do in Nashville, The USS Coral Sea Reunion offered an early dinner cruise on SS General Jackson, Grand Ole Opry and Jack Daniels Distillery tour at reasonable prices.

With regard to our article on the "Corn Fleet Navy" Hank said "the planes the aviators flew mostly came out of NAS Glenview, IL, approximately 30/35 miles NW of Chicago. He was stationed there from 1955 to 1958. In 1968-1969, he was stationed aboard the USS Ester. The Navy acquired her when WWII started and like the Wolverine & Sable, converted her to an Amphibian Command Ship. She had been a combination passenger/cargo ship. When the Navy acquired her, they had a shipyard coat & place steel sheeting around the super structural main deck and above. The Ward Room (former dining salon) still had the wooden mahogany stairs. On the superstructure, the outside had regular portholes, but on the inside were pull down windows. A lot of other amenities were still on her in the late 1960s.

We appreciate Hank's input as one who knew what the "Corn Fleet Navy" was.

(Letter received 11/05/14)



The Chaplain's Corner

Greetings Shipmates.

Here we are in 2015, I hope you are enjoying each day to the fullest. Jane and I are enjoying warmer than usual weather in Nebraska. Each warm day is a day closer to spring and away from the cold and snow.

We are attending a bible study group studying the beatitudes, with the world being in so much turmoil, I especially enjoy this one: "Blessed are the Peacemakers". I find peace in the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

"Lord, make a channel of Thy peace that, where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that, where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that, where there is error, I may bring truth; that, where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that, where there is despair, I may bring hope; that, where there are shadows, I may bring light; that, where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted, to understand than to be understood; to love than to be loved; for it is by forgetting self that one finds; it is forgiving that one is forgiven; it is by dying that one awakens to eternal life."

May we all be comforted and encouraged by this prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

May God bless our Whetstone family.

Chaplain Marv Watson
(RM 3, 60-63)

Voluntary Dues

Again, we **thank you** to all for your contributions (i.e., dues, donations and purchasing ship store items). Your support helps publish "The Rolling Stone," maintains the Website and assists with reunion events. Dues are \$25.00 a year, are tax deductible, and are **voluntary**. All dues are applied for one year (using date of check as beginning point (i.e., 01/01/15 check applies until 01/01/16). Dues received to date for 2015 are listed below. An asterisk designates additional year (s) paid. 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 (mariongoble@comcast.net). Please make checks payable to: **USS Whetstone Association.**

Please use this list as your receipt.

Anderson, Robert*
Barrett, Marvin
Bell, Charles*
Berry, Dewey*
Bisping, Neil A.
Blenkhorn, Charles W.
Boren, Ben

Brannigan, Christopher
Buchanan, Kenneth
Cickavage, Joseph J.
Coakley, Bill
Coatsworth, Robert J.
Coldren, Wayne
Conover, Jan*
Corpuz, Bernardo
Cox, Millard A.
Dewalt, Gary B.*
Dinda, Gerald F.
Doerr, Gary T.
Driskell, Fred L.
Dunn, Jim
Durnil, Allen L.
Edney, Edward L.
Edwards, Homer
Fox, Sebastian

Frans, Jack
Fraser, Douglas
Fry, Stephen
Fulghem, Richard
Goble, Marion
Gordon, Eddie
Gross, Richard
Grubb, Jack*
Hager, Robert
Hall, Charles
Halvorson, Gunnard*
Hammons, Willis
Haynes, Earl R.
Holleman, Jimmy
Hoover, Fred
Johnson, Merrill
Jones, Dale
Julian, Fred

Keen, Charles*
Kirby, Joe*
Klebacher, Gene*
Kuchynka, Ed
Lanphear, George B.
Lee, Romaine
Leopold, Vince
Maness, Jack
McClellan, G. A.
McCray, David
McDowell, Allen
McNitt, Russell*
Meismer, J. C.
Mezzanotti, Paul D.
Michels, James E.
Mitchell, Burley*
Moore, Lane
Myers, Warren*

Pearson, Ray
Peters, Lester
Piersee, Charles
Pilgreen, Vince
Raymie, Jerry D.
Reid, James P.
Remington, Richard
Richey, Albert D.
Richter, Herbert
Sandwich, Larry*
Savala, Manuel
Savoie, Donald
Seaton, Walter
Sharkey, Robert L.
Skelley Jr., Daniel
Smith, Donald
Smith, Harry J.
Stanford, Roy

Stergeos, Jim
Stief, Bernard D.
Sylvester, Kim
Ward, Everett*
Watson, Marvin*
Widrig, Lewis
Wilson, Buddy L.
Zordich, John

**Thank You
Shipmates!**



Greetings from Your President



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all members and family of the Whetstone Crew. I know that this is the time of year when many of us make those silly new year resolutions. But did you know the one you can break with out going back on your word. Thats right, you guessed it. I 's(Dieting / Losing Weight) As you get older (face it we all are) the weight doesn't come off of you like the ads you see on TV. It's sort of like trying to put tooth paste back in the tube, forget about it.

As you can see Miss Kay and Marion have everything under control, did you expect anything less? We have almost two full years to plan for Nashville. Again for all the members who have not joined the group at a reunion you just don't know what you are missing out on. It truly is the time to join former shipmates and their partners on this one.

If you have a computer punch up Nashville and you will see it has a lot to offer. Also you may get lucky and meet up with that guy who fifty years ago left the ship owing you ten bucks, don't forget the interest he owes on it.

Ship Mates that's about it for now. God Bless and Support Our Troops

Bill Coakley
USN 1958- 1962

coked up toddler in a candy store. Picture the looks on the faces of the newbie sailors as they watched it happen (a) on their first day on the job and (b) on the way to meet the President.. The captain of the Porter, Wilfred Walter, issued a quick apology, looked at his watch and realized he really needed to meet up with the USS Iowa for their escort mission. So he said, "Well, we'll catch you later, dude!" and left, leaving the U.S. Navy with the mess. But, hey, beginners' nerves, right? How much worse could things get from there? Much, Much worse.

#4. Nearly Blew Up the President's Boat With a Depth Charge ...

Twenty-four hours after the anchor-scrape incident, the Porter meekly took its place alongside the rest of the convoy, no doubt with her metaphorical head hanging and her shame glasses on. The journey across the Atlantic would take eight days, and the ships would pass through U-boat-infested waters during wartime, so it was critical that the boats keep up with training and maneuvers on the journey. For example, in a real-live battle situation, if a submarine got too close, it was the destroyer's job to drop depth charges (just huge bombs that sink down and blow up next to the submerged sub). So, one of the drills that the Porter was tasked with was sending out *fake* depth charges for practice.

You can tell where this train wreck is heading, can't you? Yes, the geniuses on the Willie Dee never got around to disarming their anti-submarine weapons. And on November 12, a live depth charge just *fell* off the deck. Fell. As in it kind of rolled off, into the ocean, within killing distance of the President of the United States. And it exploded. And that was when shit got real. As you can imagine, the sonar on every ship in the convoy started ringing like the world was ending, because clearly there was an enemy boat within firing range. In addition to trying to track the phantom Nazi down, the ships also began executing evasive maneuvers, which means they were tasked with getting the hell out of the line of fire. Surely the Axis powers had intelligence on the secret mission and were after them, knowing that FDR was on board.

Just as the captain probably got ready to wheel FDR over the deck in a mercy killing, everyone got a message from the Porter. They did it. The Willie Dee was actually fortunate that the bomb had sunk a ways before detonating; otherwise their entire stern would have blown off. Blown off! But we're going to take a wild guess and presume no one was counting their lucky stars at the moment when they had to make that call. And then, because every single man on the Willie Dee had made a deal with the devil and lost, a freak wave hit the boat, knocking one guy overboard (he was never found) and flooding the boiler room. This resulted in a loss of power, which put the William D. Failure even further behind the rest of the convoy. If it had been us, we would have just quietly turned tail and slipped on back to the States. But they didn't. Even though Admiral Ernest King, who was in charge of the convoy (and getting sick of the problems and hourly damage reports from the Willie Dee), personally radioed Captain Walter, telling him to cut the shit out and start acting properly. Walter *vowed* to "improve his ship's performance." But of course he didn't, otherwise this list wouldn't exist.

#3. ... Then Accidentally Launched a Torpedo at the President's Boat

So by this point, everyone on the mission was understandably a little skittish. So FDR himself takes the initiative of asking the crew of the Iowa to demonstrate that they could defend themselves if someone other than the idiots at the back of the convoy tried to attack them; specifically, to defend itself if the Iowa were under attack from the air. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he probably imagined the Porter was capable of flying, and he wanted to be ready.

The way this particular drill worked was that the Iowa would release balloons that served as targets for anti-aircraft guns. Fair enough. Until some of the balloons drifted over to the Porter and *someone* (Captain Walter) thought it was time for redemption. So he ordered his crew to fire on any balloons

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An obituary for Navy Tradition (USN, retired) — 1775-2013:

In a press release from Washington D.C., the Navy Department announced the death of Navy Tradition today after a long illness.

Navy Tradition was born into a world of turmoil and revolution in 1775. Starting with nothing as a child, Navy Tradition evolved to become an essential part of the most powerful Navy the world had ever seen. He was present when James Lawrence ordered “Don’t give up the ship” as he lay mortally wounded on the deck of the Chesapeake. He witnessed cannon balls bouncing off the copper-shielded sides of the USS Constitution, “Old Ironsides.”

He fought pirates off the Barbary Coast and suffered with his shipmates on the battleship Arizona during the attack at Pearl Harbor. He fought his way across the Pacific with Nimitz and saw MacArthur fulfill his promise to return to the Philippines. Navy Tradition was there when sailors fought bravely to save the frigate Stark after it was hit by a cruise missile and witnessed the launch of Tomahawk missiles from the battleship Missouri at the outset of Desert Storm.

Through all the strife, good times and bad, Navy Tradition was there to support his shipmates and give a balance to the misery that sometimes accompanied a life at sea. Be the nation at peace or at war, Navy Tradition made sure that we always remembered we were sailors.

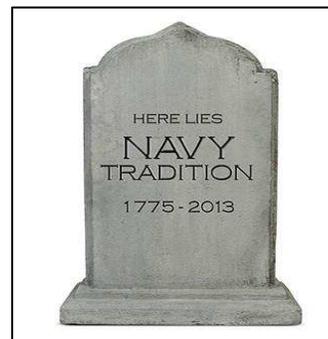
He made sure that promotions were celebrated with an appropriate “wetting down”; crows, dolphins and wings were tacked on as a sign of respect from those already so celebrated; chiefs were promoted in solemn ceremony after being “initiated” by their fellow brethren; and only those worthy were allowed to earn the title “shellback.”

But in his later years, Navy Tradition was unable to fight the cancer of political correctness. He tired as his beloved Navy went from providing rations of rum to its sailors to conducting Breathalyzer tests on the brow. He weakened as he saw “Going into harm’s way” turn into “Cover your backside,” and as “Wooden ships and iron men” morphed into “U.S. Navy, Inc.”

A lifelong friend of Navy Tradition recalled a crossing-the-equator ceremony during World War II: “ I had to eat a cherry out of the belly button of the fattest sailor on the ship. It was disgusting. But for that few minutes, it took our minds off the war and to this day it is one of my greatest memories.”

In lieu of flowers, the family of Navy Tradition has asked that all sailors who have earned their shellback and drunk their dolphins; who remember sore arms from where their crows were tacked on and were sent on a search for “relative bearing grease” or a length of “water line”; who’ve been through chiefs’ initiation or answered ship’s call in a bar fight in some exotic port of call, to raise a toast one more time and remember Navy Tradition in his youth and grandeur.

Fair winds and following seas, Shipmate. You will be missed.



missed by the Iowa's gunners. That part went fine. Then, feeling cocky, he ordered a practice firing of their torpedoes. And the practice target would be the Iowa. Oh, yes. You know what's about to happen. They announced "Fire one!" and the first fake torpedo was fake-fired. "Fire two!" and the second fake torpedo was fake fired. "Fire three!" and a swooshing sound was heard. The crew watched in horror as an actual torpedo left the tube and made a beeline for the Iowa and the President of the United States. Remember that this boarded it, and even then the whole deal was hush-hush. They were at war, after all. And all it would be a secret mission -- no one knew the President of the United States would be on the USS Iowa until he took to sabotage the trip would be one slip-up to the wrong person. Which was why the convoy was supposed to exercise radio silence. Now, there are occasions when you have to break radio silence, like if for instance something even worse than being discovered by the enemy will happen if you don't. You'd think that "just shot a torpedo at the president" would be one of those times when you have to break the rule for the greater good. Not according to the braincases on the Porter. They decided radio silence trumped the life of their commander in chief and everyone else on board the ship, so they used light signals to warn the Iowa a torpedo was coming. Light signals. Like it was 1775 and they were at the Old North Church waiting for Paul Revere.

But they couldn't even get that part right. The signalman quickly told the Iowa that a torpedo was in the water ... except he said that it was going in the opposite direction. Realizing his mistake, the signalman tried again. This time he completely botched it and accidentally signaled to the Iowa. "We're going in reverse full speed." We wouldn't be surprised if the Iowa had a little party at that news. Finally, someone decided to break radio silence and ordered Iowa to turn right fast. After haggling over who was calling, the Iowa quickly obliged. Obviously the President was panicking, knowing that death could be on its way. Oh wait, no, Roosevelt asked to be rolled over to watch the torpedo action. His Secret Service agents then proceeded to pull their pistols to shoot the torpedo themselves if necessary. Luckily, the torpedo wound up missing the boat, thanks to the Iowa's sharp turn. This was about the point when Admiral King ordered the Porter to please leave the convoy, lest they try to assassinate the president again. So the crew followed orders and sailed to Bermuda, where they found themselves confronting armed Marines who were there to arrest them. *All* of them. It was the first time an entire Navy crew had been arrested.

#2. While in Exile, Fired a Shell at a Base Commander's House

There are worse places to face an inquiry than Bermuda, and after all the appropriate questions were answered, the captain and a few officers were sentenced to shore duty. It could have been much worse. The guy who forgot to disable the torpedo got hard labor, although his sentence was later reduced by Roosevelt himself. But obviously no one was going to let the Porter get anywhere near a high-profile mission ever again. So they sent them to the only campaign no one ever really cared about: Alaska. They got exiled to the Aleutian Island, with the U.S. Navy figuring they couldn't possibly screw anything up over there. There are practically *zero* presidents to assassinate in Alaska.

After surviving in the freezing cold for nearly a year with nary a disaster, everything was going well. Right up until they were about to leave for reassignment, that is. One of the sailors on board had gotten drunk and decided to give the big guns a whirl. Unfortunately for that sailor, the shell was steered by the powers of bad luck right into the base commander's front yard, exploding in his flower garden, obviously ruining the flowers and further demolishing what was left of the ship's reputation.

This would have been bad enough, except the sailor fired it while the commander had other officers and their wives over for a party.

By this point, the Porter was the latrine duty of the Navy -- serving on it was considered a punishment. But it was OK, because the war was drawing to a close and the ship was getting reassigned to the Pacific! She would finally have a real chance at redemption! That is, until it ...

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#1. Finally Sank in the Most Embarrassing Way Possible

By 1945, the ship's reputation had not improved. Her crew was often welcomed with the phrase "Don't shoot! We're Republicans!" and raucous laughter. Her reputation sank even lower after she riddled another sister ship with gunfire during the early stages of the Battle of Okinawa.

Finally, the Porter was stationed on the perimeter of the battle, where they were sure to not kill anyone. And they actually did alright out there. They used their anti-sub and anti-aircraft weapons correctly, avoided sinking allied ships, shot down five Japanese planes and never once attempted to assassinate the President. Not bad, all things considered. Being the USS William D. Porter, however, you know this fairy tale wouldn't last.

Among the enemy planes were wood and canvas bombers -- there was so little metal on the Japanese planes that they easily slipped past radar. So when this one plane aimed for a ship near the Porter, the Porter took evasive maneuvers. YAY! SUCCESS! FINALLY! The plane crashed into the ocean without exploding, and the high-five party began. What they didn't realize was that the kamikaze plane kept on its trajectory under water -- then exploded *beneath* the Willie Dee, with the force of the explosion lifting the destroyer smack out of the ocean. In other words, the ship was accidentally killed by an airplane that had already crashed.

THE LAUGHING LAMP

OLD IRONSIDES

The USS Constitution, Old Ironsides, as a combat vessel carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. However, let it be noted that according to her log:

“On July 22, 1798, the USS Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum.”

Her mission: “To destroy and harass English shipping.”

Making Jamaica on October 6, 1798 she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there November 12, 1798. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef, and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine. On November 18, 1798 she set sail for England. In the ensuing days, she defeated five British men-of-war, and captured and scuttled 12 English merchantmen, salvaging only the rum aboard each.

By January 26, 1799 her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of a single malt Scotch aboard by dawn. Then, she headed home.

The USS Constitution arrived in Boston on February 20, 1799 with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whisky and 38,600 gallons of stagnant water

GO NAVY!

USS WHETSTONE LSD-27

Korean War, 1950–1953

The North Korean assault on South Korea, hurled across the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, caused a drastic naval build-up. Many World War II-vintage men-of-war were taken out of reserve and activated for service. Accordingly, The USS Whetstone was recommissioned on December 2, 1950. During the Korean War, *Whetstone* proved her worth in support of UN operations in that war, conducting two deployments to Korean waters — first from April to November 1951 and second from December 1952 to the end of the hostilities in July 1953.

In the first deployment, she took part in the recovery of a Soviet-built MiG-15 fighter. On July 9, 1951, word was received in the upper echelons that a MiG had been downed in the shoal waters off the mouth of the Chongchon River. The initial plot proved inaccurate, however, and planes from the British aircraft carrier, HMS *Glory*, sighted the MiG a few miles offshore, 33 miles north of the estuary of the Taedong River.

"Risky and navigationally difficult" to reach, the site lay less than 10 minutes flight-time from enemy air bases. Nevertheless, the risks to be run seemed acceptable, especially in view of the fact that no MiGs had thus been available for inspection to see what made them "tick." The *Whetstone* loaded a special crane-equipped utility craft (LCU) at Inchon, the port at which the LSD had arrived, from Sasebo, Japan, on June 12 and sailed for Ch'o-do Island on July 19. The multinational effort proceeded apace, despite the initial grounding of the LCU on a sand bar and, by the evening of the 22nd, had proceeded to a successful conclusion. *Whetstone's* sister ship, USS *Epping Forest* took the LCU and its precious cargo aboard and sailed for Inchon.

The *Whetstone* remained in Korean waters, operating out of Sasebo, into September and returned again twice in November. She sailed for the United States on December 5th and reached San Diego, California, via Wake Island, two days before Christmas of 1951.

The dock landing ship remained at San Diego undergoing post-deployment availability until February 5, 1952, when she shifted to Port Hueneme. She operated locally in southern Californian waters, touching at San Diego, Aliso Canyon, Long Beach, San Pedro and Port Hueneme, into the summer of 1952. Visiting Bangor, Washington, from July 14 to October 7, the *Whetstone* departed that port on the latter day, bound for San Diego.

She lingered on the west coast until December 1, when she set sail for the western Pacific. Touching briefly at Pearl Harbor en route, The *Whetstone* reached Yokosuka, Japan, on December 22 and spent Christmas in that port before she shifted to Sasebo on the 28th, reaching her destination on the last day of the year 1952.

The *Whetstone* subsequently returned to Inchon two days into the new year, 1953, and remained there until the 8th, when she got underway to shift to Ch'o-do. The dock landing ship shuttled between Japan and Korean ports, frequenting Sasebo, Yokosuka, Wonsan, Inchon, Tokchok to Nagoya, and the operating areas off the western coast of Korea through the summer of 1953 and the armistice that ended hostilities temporarily in Korea.

The American Sniper

Ron Hnatovic received the following e-mail from a friend and checked out the details to confirm authenticity before sending to us . We believe that with the success of Chris Kyle's book and the move *American Sniper*, you might like to read about what the State of Texas did for one of its honorable sons.

Ron's friend said "Just finished Chris Kyle's book, which was a good first-hand account of life on the SEAL teams. It confirmed one of the things I heard early in the invasion of Iraq – that we found chemical weapons, but didn't announce it because the weapons were of French and German origin. (I also heard Russian origin, but Kyle didn't mention that). The friend sent this e-mail to Ron from a Seal 3 that attended the funeral."

"Chris Kyle was Derek's teammate through 10 years of training and battle. They both suffer/suffered from PTSD to some extent and took great care of each other because of it. 2006 in Ramadi was horrible for young men that never had any more aggressive physical contact with another human than on a Texas football field. They lost many friends. Chris became the armed services number #1 sniper of all time. Not something he was happy about, other than the fact that in so doing, he saved a lot of American lives.

Three years ago, his wife Taya asked him to leave the SEAL teams as he had a huge bounty on his head by Al Qaeda. He did and wrote the book "The American Sniper." 100% of the proceeds from the book went to two of the SEAL families who had lost their sons in Iraq. That was the kind of guy Chris was. He formed a company in Dallas to train military, police and I think firemen as far as protecting themselves in difficult situations. He also formed a foundation to work with military people suffering from PTSD. Chris was a giver, not a taker. He, along with a friend and neighbor, Chad Littlefield, were murdered trying to help a young man that had served six months in Iraq and claimed to have PTSD.

Now I need to tell you about all of the blessings.

Southwest Airlines flew in any SEAL and their family from any airport they flew into... free of

charge. The employees donated buddy passes and one lady worked for four days without much of a break to see that it happened. Volunteers were at both airports in Dallas to drive them to the hotel.

The Marriott Hotel reduced their rates to \$45 a night and cleared the hotel for only SEALs and family. The Midlothian, TX, Police Department paid the \$45 a night for each room. I would guess there were about 200 people staying at the hotel, 100 of them were SEALs. Two large buses were chartered (an unknown donor paid the bill) to transport people to the different events and they also had a few rental cars (donated). The police and secret service were on duty 24 hours during the stay at our hotel.

At the Kyle house, the Texas DPS parked a large motor home in front to block the view from reporters. It remained there the entire five days for the SEALs to congregate in and all to use the restroom so as not to have to go in the house. Taya, their two small children and both sets of parents were staying in the home. Only a hand full of SEALs went into the home as they had different duties and meetings were held sometimes on an hourly basis. It was a huge coordination of many different events and security. Derek was assigned to be a Pall Bearer, to escort Chris' body when it was transferred from the Midlothian Funeral Home to the Arlington Funeral Home, and to be with Taya. A tough job.

Taya seldom came out of her bedroom. The house was full with people from the church and other family members that would come each day to help. I spent one morning in a bedroom with Chris' mom and the next morning with Chad Littlefield's parents (the other man murdered with Chris). A tough job.

George W Bush and his wife Laura met and talked to everyone on the Seal Team one on one. They went behind closed doors with Taya for quite a while. They had prayer with us all. You can tell when people were sincere and caring.

(Continued on page 10)

Nolan Ryan sent his cooking team, a hug grill and lots of steaks, chicken and hamburgers. They set up in the front yard and fed people all day long including the 200 SEALs and their families. The next day a local BBQ restaurant set up a buffet in front of the house and fed all once again. Food was plentiful and all were taken care of. The family's church kept those inside the house well fed.

Jerry Jones, the man everyone loves to hate, was a rock star. He made sure that we all were taken care of. His wife and he were just making sure everyone was taken care of....Class... He donated the use of Cowboy Stadium for the services as it was determined that so many wanted to attend.

The charter buses transported us to the stadium on Monday at 10:30 am. Every car, bus, motorcycle was searched with bomb dogs and police. I am not sure if kooks were making threats trying to make a name for themselves or if so many SEALs in one place was a security risk, I don't know. We willingly obliged. No purses went into the stadium! We were taken to The Legends room high up and a large buffet was available. That was for about 300 people. We were growing. A Medal of Honor recipient was there, lots of secret service and police and Sarah Palin and her husband. She looked nice. This was a very formal military service.

The service started at 1:00 pm and when we were escorted onto the field I was shocked. We heard that about 10,000 people had come to attend also. They were seated in the stadium seats behind us. It was a beautiful and emotional service. The Bagpipe and drum corps were wonderful and the Texas A&M men's choir stood through the entire service and sang right at the end. We were all in tears.

The next day was the 200-mile procession from Midlothian, TX to Austin for burial. It was a cold, drizzly, windy day, but the people were out. We had dozens of police motorcycles riders, freedom riders, five chartered buses and lots of cars. You had to have a pass to be in the procession and still it was huge. Two helicopters circled the procession with snipers sitting out the side door for protection. It was the longest funeral procession ever in the state of Texas. People were everywhere. The entire route was shut down ahead of us. The people were lined up on the side of the road the entire way. Firemen were down on one knee. Police officers were holding their hats over their hearts, children waving flags, veterans saluting as we went by. Every bridge had fire trucks with large flags displayed from their tall ladders, people all along the entire 200 miles were standing in the cold weather. It was so heart-warming. Taya rode in the hearse with Chris' body so Derek rode the route with us. I was so grateful to have that time with him.

The service was at Texas National Cemetery. Very few are buried there and you have to apply to get in. It is like people from the Civil War, Medal of Honor winners, a few from the Alamo and all the historical people of Texas. It was a nice service and the Freedom Riders surrounded the outside of the entire cemetery to keep the crazy church people from Kansas that protest at military funerals away from us. Each SEAL put his Trident (metal SEAL badge) on the top of Chris' casket, one at a time. A lot hit it in with one blow. Derek was the only one to take four taps to put his in and it was almost like he was caressing it as he did it. Another tearful moment.

After the service Governor Rick Perry and his wife, Anita, invited us to the governor's mansion. She stood at the door, greeted each of us individually, and gave each of the SEALs a coin of Texas. She was a sincere, compassionate, and gracious hostess. We were able to tour the ground floor and then went into the garden for beverages and BBQ. So many of the Seal team guys said that after they get out they are moving to Texas. They remarked that they had never felt so much love and hospitality.

The charter buses then took the guys to the airport to catch their returning flights. Derek just now called and after a 20 hour flight he is back in his spot, in a dangerous land on the other side of the world, protecting America. We just wanted to share with you, the events of a quite emotional, but blessed week.

Punch-line: To this day, no one in the White House has every acknowledged Christ Kyle!"

JUST A SIMPLE SOLDIER
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A Note From
R. A. Remington
CWO/2 USN (Ret)
1956 - 1959 on Whetstone

With the recent typhoon disaster in the Philippines (2013), I got to thinking about some of my experiences in the Philippines. You may or may not have heard of the incident that most who witnessed it were a bit amused.

As the Whetstone crew members were still in the process of doubling up on coming along side the pier in Subic, a big black shiny Buick came down the pier and stopped by our gangway. Coming to a stop a Marine in full dress uniform stepped out and on saluting the colors and requesting to come aboard approached the quarter deck watch. Rather than asking for the Commanding Officer (Cdr. Raymond Wiggins), the Marine asked for one of our stewards. It seems the steward the Marine was seeking had previously served the Admiral in the car. Once the steward was located and on getting cleaned up, both he and the Marine took off in the shiny Buick with the Admiral. The steward ended up spending some time with the Admiral and was returned to the ship some time later by the Marine in the Buick.

Whether Cdr. Wiggins got to see the Admiral is unknown.

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
and he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done.
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, everyone.
And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
all his buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer, for ol' Bob has passed away,
and the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.
He won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife.
For he lived an ordinary, very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his way;
and the world won't note his passing; 'tho a Soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state.
While thousands note their passing, and proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories, from the time that they were young,
but the passing of a soldier, goes unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution, to the welfare of our land,
some jerk who breaks his promise, and cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife,
goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

The politician's stipend and the style in which he lives,
are sometimes disproportionate, to the service he gives.

While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
is paid off with a medal and perhaps a pension, small.

It's so easy to forget them, for it is so long ago,
that our Bob's and Jim's and Johnny's, went to battle, but we know.

It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,
who won for us the freedom, that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
would you really want some cop-out, with his ever waffling stand?

Or would you want a Soldier, who has sworn to defend,
his home, his kin, and Country, and would fight until the end?

He was just a common Soldier and his ranks are growing thin.
But his presence should remind us, we may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict, then we find the Soldier's part,
is to clean up all the troubles, that the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor, while he's here to hear the praise,
then at least let's give him homage, at the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline, in the paper that might say:

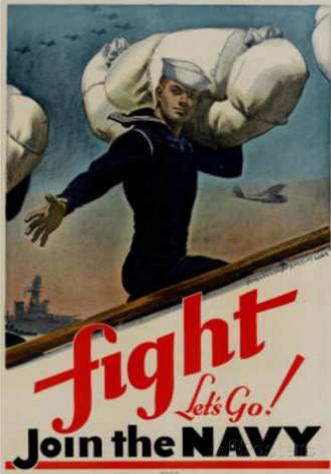


"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
FOR A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."



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Items for Sale:

Ball Caps (With Silhouette)	25.00
Cruise Books (57, 61,66,67/68 & 69)	20.00
DVD of Reunions	5.00
Golf Shirts (S,M,L,XL)	43.00
T-Shirts (S,M,L,XLG, XXL)	32.00
Jackets (S,M,LG,XLG)	57.00
Jackets (XXL & XXXL)	59.00
Yosemite Sam Patches	8.00
Zippo Knives w/Ship Silhouette	15.00
Zippo Lighters w/Ship Silhouette	15.00
Whetstone Picture on Canvas	25.00

Note: All Prices Include Shipping

SAVE THE DATE September 7 - 10, 2016 Whetstone Reunion Nashville, Tennessee

We have contracted with Gatherings Plus (Pam Brown, our Branson Reunion planner) to handle the next reunion in Nashville, Tennessee. Our group will meet at the Holiday Inn Opryland Airport which is slightly off Briley Parkway. The hotel is being renovated in 2015 and all rooms, restaurants, etc. will be updated prior to our reunion in 2016.

We have taken into consideration the vote at our Portland, Maine reunion to shorten our reunion to 3 days; however, by contracting with a planner, the reunion will remain from Wednesday thru Saturday with departure on Sunday morning, September 11, 2016. We appreciate your understanding of this decision as we believe a planner offers our best options in Nashville with regard to room rates, tours and handling the day-to-day items required during a reunion.

The Whetstone Officers