

\*\*\*\*\*



The Compton at war

USS Compton Organization

Jack Heidecker – President  
54 Mt Top Court, Hazleton PA 18202  
570 450-5545  
[Jack555@ptd.net](mailto:Jack555@ptd.net)

Bud Foley – Vice President  
4440 Nottingham Way,  
Hamilton Sq, NJ 08690  
609 586-3574  
[acffaf@aol.com](mailto:acffaf@aol.com)

Joe Napoli – GM/Treasurer  
129 Mallard Dr. Monroe Twp, NJ 08831  
609 409-7678  
[jsnap29@verizon.net](mailto:jsnap29@verizon.net)

Mike Taylor – Secretary  
PO Box 148, Elizabeth WVA 26143  
304 275-8995

Rev. Joseph Farry - Chaplin  
1138 Sanderling Drive  
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068  
614 863-6727  
[jwfarry@aol.com](mailto:jwfarry@aol.com)

Joe Bonaventura - East Region Officer  
760 Linden Ave., Pennel PA 19047  
215 757-6220  
[bjopa29@aol.com](mailto:bjopa29@aol.com)

Bob Ott - North Region Officer  
3404 Dickens Rd – Blasdell NY 14219  
716 826-2535  
[reott\\_1999@yahoo.com](mailto:reott_1999@yahoo.com)

Paul Woodbury – South Region Officer  
3603 Pin Oak Court  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410  
561 626-1093  
[pjwoodbury@bellsouth.net](mailto:pjwoodbury@bellsouth.net)

Jim McKelva – West Region Officer  
412 S Fielder Road  
Arlington TX 76013-1751  
817 792-3273  
[jasmck@shcglobal.net](mailto:jasmck@shcglobal.net)

Maurice Rickard, Sr. – Editor/Publisher  
Jack Heidecker – Assistant

All correspondence for the Newsletter should be sent to:

Maurice Rickard, Sr. 412 884-7136  
3841 Lawnview Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15227  
[dd705rick@libcom.com](mailto:dd705rick@libcom.com)

Letter from the President:

Shipmates, in a few weeks, we will have the opportunity to renew friendships and share memories of years past.

In honor of the Compton Association's 20th Anniversary, we will provide the Charleston attendees with a special pewter memento of the USS Compton DD705. This gift along with a visit to the last remaining Sumner class destroyer, the USS Laffley DD724 will make this reunion—a very special time.

I am looking forward to spending time, with my shipmates, who honored our country with their service to the Compton—See you in Charleston!!!

Jack Heidecker



This pewter replica of the USS Compton DD705 will be given to all member attendees at the Charleston reunion.

Charleston Reunion Update:

This is the last newsletter prior to our 20<sup>th</sup> reunion which will be held in Charleston, SC from Tuesday April 28 thru Thursday April 30. Please see our last newsletter or our website for details.

Things are progressing on schedule and everything is all set. The DJ has been selected for the banquet, and, of course, the dress is casual. This year we will have a format which will again allow us to have a raffle so please bring small gifts to be used as prizes. The Tin Can Sailors organization also contributes items for the raffle.

The tour to Patriot's Point, to visit the museum Naval ships, tour Historic Charleston and have lunch (included in the price) on the USS Yorktown, will last a full day. If you are a member of the Tin Can Sailors you can deduct \$11 from the cost of the tour. The discount only applies to the member, not the guest. I am glad to see that shipmates, who are TCS members, who have already sent in tour money, have applied the discount.

Tour and banquet money have to be sent to our treasurer, at the Compton post office box address, prior to the deadline which is April 1. Both fees can be included in one check. Please don't wait for the last minute, we have to order name tags and make final banquet arrangements prior to the reunion.

You have to call the hotel, the Country Inn & Conference Center, at 800-334-6660 to make your room reservation. That deadline is also April 1. After that date, you are not guaranteed the Compton Reunion rate of \$84.00 per night.

Reunion dates: April 28,2009 to April 30, 2009.



The Capozziello's—Ed & Nancy. Eddie is telling a "war" story to Ron Erwin...



Jim McKelva and Len Ashline. Jim thinks he remembers that sailor from the Bluebird Club in Naples!!!



Willie Thompson-guarding the refreshments or waiting for "Harvie" ???



Bob DiMonte and Linda Beckstrom!!! Cool and Quiet?? Wanna Bet!!!!

**“USS Laffey: Attacked Off Okinawa in World War II “.** In the last issue of the newsletter, November 2008 Issue #51, I began the story of the USS Laffey that had been sent to me by President Jack Heidecker. The article was written by Dale P. Harper and originally appeared in the March 1998 issue of World War II magazine. This is a continuation of that account.

*“Monday morning began quietly on radar picket station No. 1. The whole crew was able to eat breakfast without any interruptions from the enemy. Then, at 8:25 a.m., the radar operator reported a solid cluster of pips too numerous to count approaching at 17,000 yards. It was a group of 165 kamikazes and 150 other enemy aircraft coming in fast from the north. The fighter-director team's two officers requested more help from CAP. They were informed that fighters would be sent to intercept the huge onrushing formation, but it would take time for the CAP planes to arrive in the area. Meanwhile, Laffey and her two support craft would have to deal with the enemy on their own.*

*At 8:30 a.m., four Aichi D34 'Val' dive bombers broke off from the oncoming group and headed for Laffey, which was steaming along at flank speed. Two came in from the bow and two from the stern in a coordinated attack. Becton ordered hard left rudder, bringing the destroyer broadside to the planes, and the two forward 5-inch guns downed two of the Vals at about 3,000 yards. The stern 5-inch gun shot down the third kamikaze, and the 20mm and 40mm mounts downed the fourth with an assist from the gunners on LCS 51.*

*There was no time to rejoice over that success, however, because two more attackers, Yokosuka D4Y 'Judy' dive bombers were coming in fast—one from the starboard beam and one from the port beam. When the Judy on the starboard side got within range of the 20mm and 40mm guns, it was torn apart by converging fire and crashed into the sea. The gunners' attention then shifted to port to assist with the second Judy, as it came in bobbing and weaving. The Japanese pilot strafed the ship, peppering the superstructure and wounding several men. The 20mm and 40mm guns finally downed the plane about 50 yards out, but just before hitting the water, the pilot released a bomb that sent shrapnel flying everywhere, wounding several more men and knocking others off their feet. The explosion also knocked out the SG radar, which was needed to detect low-flying aircraft.*

*The next attacker, another Val, came streaking in on the port beam. All three 5-inch guns opened fire, and as the plane came closer, the 20mm and 40mm mounts joined in. It looked as if the pilot was aiming to slam into the aft 5-inch gun, but he came in just a bit high and only grazed the top of it before smashing into the sea off the starboard side, killing one man in the gun crew. The eighth attacker, a Judy, came skimming in low over the water on the starboard beam. The 20mm and 40mm guns were hitting the plane, and finally, after a hit in the gas tank, the Judy burst into a fireball and crashed into the sea. Laffey's crewmen felt as if they had been battling the enemy for hours, but it was only 8:42, just 12 minutes since the attacks had started.*

*There was a respite of about three minutes before the next attacker, another Val, came boring in off the port bow. The port side guns raked the plane, which shuddered and twisted but kept coming, even as gasoline poured from one wing tank. The pilot cleared the port side 20mm and 40mm mounts and crashed into the 20mm mounts amidships, killing three gunners before sliding into the sea. Flaming gasoline was everywhere, and black smoke engulfed the area. Two 40mm mounts were wrecked and out of operation, as were two 20mm mounts.*

*The ammunition racks around the gun tubs were filled with clips of shells, which were in danger of exploding due to the heat. Damage-control crewmen began to heave the clips over the side of the ship. Some of them were so hot that the men had to protect their hands with rags. As some of the ammunition exploded and blew holes in the deck, flaming gasoline poured into the magazine below. Fortunately, the*

ammo was packed in metal cans that resisted the heat until a damage-control party arrived and hosed down the containers, thereby avoiding disaster.

Communications were knocked out in the forward engine room, but that did not present a problem for the moment. The engineers decided to adjust the ship's speed according to the sound of the gunfire they heard. If it was loud and fast, they would increase the speed. A more immediate problem was the smoke and fumes being sucked into the engine rooms by the ventilators. Machinist's mate John Michel, in the aft engine room, shut down the supply fans. The temperature soon reached 130 degrees and kept climbing as Michel worked his way through the dense smoke, located the controls for the exhaust fans and turned them on. The smoke began to clear and the temperature began to fall. Knowing that the smoke would undoubtedly attract more kamikazes, Becton reduced the ship's speed to avoid fanning the flames.

Just as the crew was beginning to get the situation under control, two more kamikazes, both Vals, struck. One came in from astern low and fast, just a few feet above the water. The gunners of the three after 20mm mounts hit him with accurate fire, and parts of the plane broke off, but the pilot kept boring in. He plowed through the three mounts, killing the gun crews, and rammed into a 5-inch gun. The bomb he was carrying exploded, causing the plane to disintegrate and throwing gun captain Larry Delewski clear of danger. Fortunately, he was unhurt. Another man was blown overboard, but he was picked up by LCS 51, along with another crewman who had gone overboard earlier.

Flaming gasoline covered Laffey's fantail and aft gun mount, sending more black smoke billowing into the air. The fires threatened a magazine below the mount, so firefighters flooded it, preventing an explosion that could have torn the ship apart. The situation was about to get worse, however, because the 11<sup>th</sup> kamikaze came crashing aboard at almost the same spot. That plane's bomb wiped out the mount's gun crew and wounded several others. The damage-control parties had no time to take a breather.

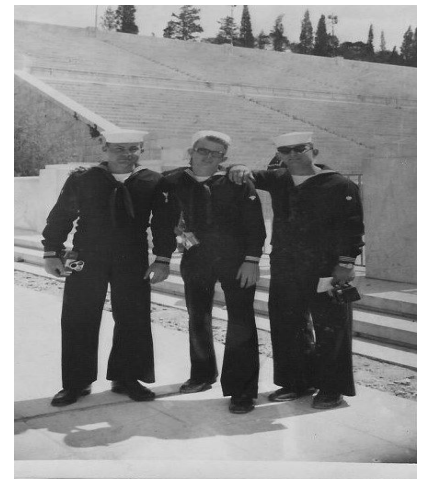
About two minutes later, another Val came gliding in from astern, probably because the guns were out of commission there. The pilot dropped his bomb and sped away. The bomb detonated on the stern just above the Laffey's propeller, severing the electrical cables and hydraulic lines that controlled the ship's rudder mechanism. The rudder jammed at 26 degrees left, and the ship began to steam in a circle, still able to maintain speed but without control. Although crewmen began to work on it at once, their efforts were fruitless. The rudder was jammed tight and could not be moved." (To be continued)

### **Items from the Internet.**

In the November issue, I had also published the story of **Edward John Morris** from an interview that was conducted on July 11, 2007. I had found it on the Internet. The following concludes that story.

**A Famous Commander** The destroyer squadron Ed served with was called Desron 12. For a time, the commander of the squadron was John Bulkeley. Commander Bulkeley had earned the Medal of Honor in WWII in the Philippines and was also famous as John F. Kennedy's PT boat squadron commander and the person who evacuated General MacArthur from the Philippines before it fell at the beginning of WWII. Ed said Bulkeley spent a lot of time on the Davis and he saw him a lot. He was one of the most likeable and down to earth people he had ever met. He'd come to the electrical shop and just shoot the breeze with the men. He was closer to the men than any captain he ever served under. He was a sailor in every sense of the word.

**Testing the Soviets** After the Berlin Wall went up in 1961, the USS Davis became the first US warship to enter Istanbul and the Black Sea since WWII. Once the Davis passed into the Black Sea, Ed said it looked like a cornfield with periscopes sticking up out of the water. Three Russian destroyers approached and the Davis ran up their battle colors. With the crew at battle quarters, Ed was able to watch the action from a hatch at his battle station. Ed didn't think the Russians would fire because the US 6<sup>th</sup> fleet was backing them up out in the Mediterranean. The Davis visited a few Turkish ports and then left after about a week.



Athens-1962 Med cruise:  
Webb EM3  
Markham ICFN  
Pearson EMFN with  
Brownie Hawkeye camera



Another result of the Berlin Wall was that ED had a year tacked onto his enlistment. When the Bay of Pigs invasion took place, in April of 1961, another year had been tacked on then as well. During the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba, the Davis was off shore waiting to help, but at the last minute, was told to stand down. This was very disappointing to the crew who had hoped to help in the invasion. They were so close: men up on the bridge of the ship could see movement on the beach through field glasses.

**A New Assignment** Ed was responsible for six to ten men on the Davis. Ed was at the rank of First Class, but then a Chief (the rank above) transferred on board so Ed knew that he was going to go somewhere. He ended up being transferred to the **USS Compton (DD-705)** which was another ship in their destroyer squadron. The Compton was a WWII era ship, without air conditioning and had not been well maintained. The Navy had also begun to take in draftees and Ed had to work with them which was not a positive experience. It was during his year on the Compton that Ed began to think he would not serve 20 years in the Navy.

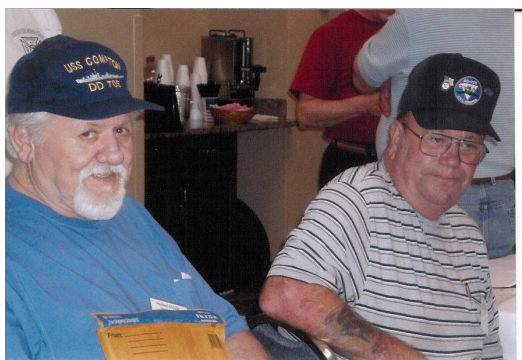
The squadron was getting ready to go to the Mediterranean and Ed made it clear that he was not going to serve another enlistment so he was transferred to the USS Hazelwood. This ship made the Compton look good. It was in bad shape, was full of draftees, and the officers were not very good. This sealed it for Ed, it was time to get out. In Ed's opinion, the Navy had begun to go down hill; they were behaving in a democratic way which is not the way to run a Navy.

Ed did have the opportunity to apply for the position of a patrol boat captain in Vietnam, but word came back that this was not a very safe position. So Ed was discharged in May of 1962. He remembers waiting for the bus as he was leaving Newport, RI in uniform with his discharge papers. Another First Class walked by who had three hash marks on his uniform (each hash mark means four years of service). Ed was also First Class, but only had one hash mark (he had at one point been the youngest First Class Petty Officer in the Navy). The older sailor looked at all of this with Ed holding his discharge papers and acted like he wanted to say something, but just kept walking.

Re-adjusting to civilian life was not difficult although Ed remembers that he had to be sure to 'smooth the edges off a little bit' now that he was dealing with civilians. Ed didn't regret his decision to join the Navy, but didn't regret getting out either. He said he went into the Navy as a boy and came out a man.. It was the best experience of his life. Ed feels that the time spent serving your country in the service is relatively short. In terms of how you live your life, it is probably the most important tbit' now that he was dealing with civilians. Ed didn't regret his decision to join the Navy, but didn't regret getting out either. He said he went into the Navy as a boy and came out a man.. It was the best experience of his life. Ed feels that the time spent serving your country in the service is relatively short. In terms of how you live your life, it is probably the most important thing outside of your religion that you can imagine.

**(Editor's Note:** Are there any of our members who remember this man, Edward John Morris ? If so, please send your recollections to me.)

Rick Rickard



Talk about the term “ Old Salt”  
Here are a pair of real “Old Salts”  
Ron Moody and Vern Duke!!!  
Note: Ron is now minus his wheelchair  
and is progressing nicely...



Rich Gentile and Johnny Cupp  
When was the last time Rich  
paid this much attention to anything?

On 12-29-08, I found the following item on the Internet concerning **Peter Cunningham**. It had appeared in the Vermont Health Care Association's publication called "The Manor Messenger" Fall 2008 and was written by William F. Coslett:

*"Peter is a graduate of Yale University and its Medical School. He entered the Navy in 1951, a Lieutenant (a 'two striper') Medical Officer on the **USS Compton** in the Mediterranean Sea. During his 21 month career, Peter also worked in the Naval Hospital in Newport, Rhode Island. After his Naval career, he practiced medicine in Guilford, CT and 'delivered many babies' ! Dr. Cunningham comes to us from Johnson, Vermont.*

On December 29, 2008, I also found the following article pertaining to **John Emanuel Knox**. It came from the Nubian Brothers Association and reads as follows: "John is the second of six children born to the late Elmer and Credulous Knox on July 18, 1947 in Yonkers, New York. He attended Public School #6, Longfellow Junior High and is a Gorton High School graduate in the class of 1965. At Gorton High School, he was involved in many extracurricular activities such as: a member of the 1964 City Champion Junior Varsity Football Team; ran Cross Country Track and played in the Marching Band. John enlisted into the US Navy after graduation and completed basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Base in North Chicago, IL. He was assigned to Active Duty aboard the **USS Compton** in Boston, MA. where he served for the next 3 years traveling with the Sixth Fleet during the Vietnam Campaign. John remained in the US Naval Reserve after active duty and returned to Yonkers to work and continue his educational pursuit.

*He worked for Gestetner Corporation in Yonkers as a Repair & Supply Salesman before being transferred to Boston, MA. as their Senior Sales Account Representative. He attended Newbury College in Boston for his Associates in Business Degree which led him to the promotion of Regional Sales Associate for Gestetner Corporation.*

*In 1972, upon completion of his Naval Reserve Status, John received his Honorable Discharge with the rank of Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class (Damage Control Specialist). John moved to Chicago in 1974 to be the Sales Manager of his brother Eugene's Office Supply Company where he worked for many years. He has continued his sales profession over the last 30 years working for companies such as: Pitney-Bowes; Roadway Package Systems and, for the last 10 years, with DHL Worldwide Express.*

*John is married and living in Homewood, IL. with his wife Rosalind and they have one daughter, one step-daughter and two grandsons. He is a member of Martin Temple AME Zion Church in Chicago and serves as Boy Scout Leader & Director of Scouting Programs. His hobbies are fishing, camping, jogging and tennis. John remains a life member of the Samuel H. Dow American Legion Post in Yonkers, NY. His spiritual belief is: 'If you can help somebody along the way, then your living will not be in vain.' "* **(Editor's Note**" Do any of our members remember this man?)

**USS Schenectady (LST-1185)** There is a web site for this ship that gives the biography of her first four Commanding Officers. The fourth Commander was **Michael H.V. Nolan**. His biography reads as follows:

*"Commander Michael H.V. Nolan, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Nolan, was born in Toledo, Ohio on October 19, 1936. He is a graduate of Cathedral Preparatory School, Erie, Pa. and attended Holy Cross College, Worcester, Ma. where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1958. In 1972, he earned a Master of Arts in Human Behavior from United States International University. Commander Nolan was commissioned an Ensign in the regular Navy through the NROTC Program in 1959. From 1959 to 1964, he served on destroyers **USS Compton (DD-705)** and **USS Taussig (DD-746)** as damage control assistant, Engineering Officer, Operations Officer and Navigator. In 1964, he was assigned to the NROTC Unit at Princeton University as an instructor of engineering and leadership. This assignment was followed by a tour as Commanding Officer **USS Churchill County (LST -583)**. Commander Nolan then had a tour of duty on the staff of the Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam in 1968-69. This tour was followed by an assignment to the staff of Commander Amphibious Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. In 1971, he reported to the **USS Peoria (LST-1183)** as Executive Officer. He returned to the Amphibious Force Staff in November 1972 as the equal opportunity assistant to the Force Commander. Upon establishment of the Naval Surface Force in January 1975, he retained the same assignment. On the nineteenth of July 1975, Commander Nolan assumed Command of the **USS Schenectady (LST-1185)**. Commander Nolan has been awarded the Bronze Star, Navy Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. He is married to the former Linda Marie Tripp of San Diego, Ca. They have three sons." **(Editor's Note:** The **USS Schenectady** was the seventh ship of the Newport Class of Tank Landing Ships. Her home port was San Diego, Ca. She was Commissioned on June 13, 1970 and Decommissioned on December 15, 1993 and Stricken from the Navy List of Ships on July 13, 2001. On November 23, 2004, she was destroyed when the Pacific Air Forces conducted "Operation Resultant Fury" that was a three day, \$10 million demonstration designed to showcase the first-ever use of satellite guided J-series weapons to sink multiple moving targets. This was carried out by B-52 bombers from Guam.)*

**A "Veteran", whether active duty, discharged or reserve—is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to the "United States of America" for an amount of "up to and including their life". That is honor and there are way too many people, in this country today, who no longer understand that fact**

**Newspaper Article** On July 15, 2008, I had clipped an article from the New York Times that I thought would be of interest to the membership. It is titled: **“One More Battle for a Vintage Warship”** and it was written by Marc Lacey and Walter R. Baranger. Although it concerns a Fletcher Class Destroyer rather than a Sumner Class like the Compton, I thought it worthwhile to publish in the newsletter. The article reads as follows: *“Lazaro Cardenas. Mexico. In its glory days, the United States Navy destroyer **John Rodgers** was among the most decorated warships of World War II. Now, hull rusting and big guns whitened by bird droppings, the abandoned destroyer finds itself in what could be its final battle, one that could turn the historic ship into a museum or, alternatively, a heap of scrap.*

*The John Rodgers was one of the 175 Fletcher-class destroyers, which shepherded aircraft carriers and provided withering cover fire during amphibious landings. During two and a half years in the Pacific, it fought in the Philippines and at Kwajalein Atoll, Guam, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. It steamed into Tokyo Bay in September 1945, having earned 12 battle stars without, remarkably, losing a single sailor.*

*The Fletcher destroyers were a swift breed that each carried nearly 300 sailors unto war. While many of the ships suffered heavy losses from kamikaze attacks late in the war, most ended up in scrap yards in the decades after peace was achieved. Only five survive today –four as museums (in Buffalo; Baton Rouge, LA.; Boston; and Greece) and the John Rodgers, which is tethered to a dock in this city, about 150 miles up the coast from Acapulco. Mexican officials want it removed forthwith.*

*After the John Rodgers was retired in 1946, the Navy lent it to Mexico, which re-christened it the Cuitlahuac. Mexico eventually bought it outright and deployed it on patrols, including hunts for narcotic traffickers. That ended in July 2001. Then, along came Ward Brewer II, 45, an American entrepreneur who drafted a plan after 9/11 to recycle World War II-era ships as floating command posts during disasters in the United States. Mr. Brewer's disaster plan never won the backing of the United States government, but he persuaded the Mexicans to issue a presidential decree in 2006 turning over the John Rodgers to his nonprofit company, the Beauchamp Tower Corporation. He proposed that the John Rodgers be based in Mobile Bay, in Alabama, as a floating museum, but be available as a communications and logistics center should disaster strike.*

*First, though, the ship would have to voyage home, which has proved a tricky task. 'We ran into a number of issues.' Mr. Brewer said in a telephone interview last week. He managed in August 2006 to persuade a Texas towing company to haul the John Rodgers through the Panama Canal to Mobile. Veterans of the John Rodgers, dwindling in numbers as years pass, planned to have a reunion in October 2006 to coincide with its arrival at Mobile Bay. The ship proved a no-show. And the venerable destroyer, unscathed in war, found itself in an international legal battle.*

*John Bergene, who owns the towing company E.J. Ventures, said that on Labor Day weekend in 2006, he hired a crew of five, bought fuel and dispatched a tow ship to Mexico. At the last moment, he said, Mr. Brewer called to say a down payment on towing fees would be delayed until after the holiday. The money never arrived, but Mr. Brewer provided bank references sufficient for Mr. Bergene to proceed--'against my better judgment,' he said in a telephone interview from the Netherlands.*

*Then, he went to Mexico, only to find that Mr. Brewer was stalling, Mr. Bergene said. 'He said Wednesday you'll get your money, and then Thursday and then Friday,' Mr. Bergene recounted. 'Finally I said we're not going anywhere until I get my money.' After a month and a half, Mr. Bergene said, he found another towing job and sailed away.*

*Mr. Brewer contends that the towing fiasco resulted from a series of misunderstandings with Mr. Bergene and the Mexican government. Still, Mr. Bergene won a federal court judgment of nearly \$800,000 against Mr. Brewer and Beauchamp Tower. Unable to collect, he has a lien on the John Rodgers. 'It's hurt me badly, and it's hurt a lot of people badly, and it's made the Mexican government look like fools,' Mr. Bergene said. 'The Mexican government needs to go after Ward.' The Mexican authorities may do just that. They say they have been infinitely patient. They say Mr. Brewer initially told them that after having the John Rodgers removed from a Mexican naval base, he would store the 376-foot vessel at a nearby granary pier for a week or so. It has been there more than 18 months. Port officials said they were consulting lawyers and making plans to seize the ship and sell it for scrap.*

*'The hurricane season is coming and it's a danger for all of us,' said Samuel Fonseca, head of the grain port here. 'If they can't move it from this port, we have to see what we can do.' Even if the ship is scrapped, the fate most of the Fletcher destroyers have met, it probably will not yield enough to cover all the debt associated with it, Mexican officials say. Besides the \$800,000 court judgment, Mexican officials say Mr. Brewer owes as much as \$1 million in fines and other fees from the ship's long stay in Mexico. Beauchamp Tower's tax return put its gross income last year at less than \$25,000.*

*Transforming old warships into museums typically costs more, sometimes millions of dollars more, than many veterans groups imagine. The obsolete vessels are floating asbestos mines, full of assorted solvents, fuels and other toxins as well. And their guns, though long silent, worry the United States government, which seeks assurances that they are licensed or disabled.*

*The challenges do not stop there. Spare parts are a problem. Crew members who know the vessels are dying off. Then there is insurance, constant painting, naval architect's fees and assorted permits. On top of all that, the cost of towing the*

John Rodgers home has ballooned with soaring fuel prices. What was originally a \$350,000 job, Mr. Bergene said, would cost about \$500,000.

Then, there is the condition of the John Rodgers itself. Long neglected, it is showing wear. Rust is building up, and wind is tearing away at the deck where American sailors helped wage some of the Pacific war's greatest battles. 'I used to go on deck and watch everything going on,' said Gerry Fried, 91, a former Navy radio operator now living in Scottsdale, Ariz. Recalling the fighting on the Japanese coast, he added, 'It was very exciting when the ship pulled into Suruga Wan and shelled the shore.' Some who served on the ship are resigned to never seeing the John Rodgers again. 'I'd like to see it brought back to the States, of course, but it seems to be headed to scrap yards,' said David Carnell, 87, of Wilmington, NC., who was a young officer aboard the John Rodgers in 1945.

Mr. Brewer, though, remains ever the optimist. The other day, he said in a telephone interview from Florida that deals were in the works, plans being made, delicate discussions taking place. The destroyer would be on its way to the United States by month's end, he said. Later, he said that could slip to August, at the latest. 'We're planning to move it out of there,' Mr. Brewer said, urging that no article on the John Rodgers be published until his deal was done. 'I can't go into any details.' "

**(Editor's Note:** This ship was the second vessel named for three members of the Rodgers family who served in the Navy from the War of 1812 to WW I. She was Commissioned Feb. 9, 1943; Decommissioned May 25, 1946; Struck from the Navy List of Ships on May 1, 1968; transferred to Mexico [sold "as is"]; Decommissioned by Mexico in 2001; and, finally, struck from their Navy list July 16, 2001. The Mexican Navy gave her the name Cuitlahuac in honor of the second-to-last Aztec emperor. The first ship to bear the John Rodgers name was a Lighthouse Tender as part of the Lighthouse Service run by the Navy from 1917 to 1919. The third ship to bear the name John Rodgers was DD-983, a Spruance class destroyer. She was Commissioned July 14, 1979; Decommissioned September 4, 1998; struck from the Navy list of ships on September 4, 1998; and scrapped and dismantled on December 30, 2006.)

**Items from Members** **Charles McDonald** (SK 3/C Sept. 1954 to Apr. 1956) of Reading, MA. sent me a DVD titled: "The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors". It is a very interesting story of how a vastly outmatched U.S. Naval force defeated two Japanese battleships in a Pacific campaign during WW 2. It is a product of the History Channel.

**New Member** **MMCS James S. Warren USN (Ret.)** of Lakeville, MA. Jim had been a MM 1/C on the DD-705 from August 1965 to August 1966. He had filled out the "Application Form" on our web site on Nov. 26, 2008 and our material was sent to him. He joined the Association on Dec, 18, 2008.

**Returned from Sick Bay** **Jack Hunold** (BMSN Jan. 1951 to Sept. 1954) of Glenolden, PA. We were happy to hear that Jack is home and recovering well from a bout with pneumonia that had him in the hospital for a couple of weeks in December. A subsequent infection put him back in the hospital but he is doing fine now.

**E-Mail Information** Since the last issue of the newsletter, there have been a number of e-mail address changes. They are as follows: 1. **Joe Napoli** had changed his address to: [jsnap29@verizon.net](mailto:jsnap29@verizon.net). I had been able to make that change in the E-Mail Directory for November 2008 but had been unable to show it in the Committee column of that issue. 2. **Bob Haines** has changed his address once again. It is now: [bob705@verizon.net](mailto:bob705@verizon.net). 3. **Steven Bednarz** now has : [bednarz\\_steven@att.net](mailto:bednarz_steven@att.net). Please note that he is using an underscore mark (not a hyphen) between Bednarz and Steven. 4. **Paul Wardrobe** now has: [7uppaul@comcast.net](mailto:7uppaul@comcast.net). 5. **Charles Gray** now has: [graychristine73@yahoo.com](mailto:graychristine73@yahoo.com). In addition to the above changes in e-mail addresses, we have a new one for Jim Warren (mentioned in this newsletter as a new mem-

### **In Memoriam**

The USS Compton Association was informed by **Byron Strayer** (MM 3/C Feb. 1960 to Feb. 1963) of Newport, PA. that his wife, **Jean Strayer**, passed away on October 31, 2008. Many of the Association members remember Jean as she and Byron attended seven of our reunions over the years. Both were at our reunion in Branson, MO. in April 2008. Byron gave us permission to publish Jean's obituary in this issue of the newsletter (slightly edited). It reads as follows: " *Jean Davison Strayer of Saville Township, Newport, went home to be with her Lord on October 31, 2008. She was born March 11, 1941, the daughter of Lucille Cree Davison and the late Francis J. Davison, Jr. Also surviving are her husband of 47 years, Byron C. Strayer; son, Daniel S. Strayer and companion Sandra Stilp of Duncannon; daughter, Cathy Houseman and husband Kevin of Newport; foster daughter, Kathy Graham and husband Bret of Newville; grandson, Michael J. Strayer and companion Melissa Woodruff; granddaughters, Heather and Samantha Houseman; brother, Francis J. Davison, Jr. and wife Yvonne of Hummelstown; special friend and cousin, Sandra Barish and husband, Leonard of Sullivan, IN.; multiple nieces and nephews. Jean was a 1959 graduate of Susquenita High School. She attended the former Perdix Chapel—the last 40 years she spent attending and working at the Newport Assembly of God Church. She worked in the day care, moni-*

tored at Perry Christian Academy, and taught 4 and 5 year olds in the children's church, and was a leader with the Missionettes. Thank you to the parents who allowed her to influence their children in following the Lord. She enjoyed traveling, especially their trips to the USS Compton Association yearly reunions. She also enjoyed shopping with her friends and was an avid Penn State fan." The USS Compton Association offers its condolences to Byron and his family on their great loss.

I found the following obituary for **Ray Terrill** on the Internet . He was not an Association member but served, during World War 2 on two ships including the USS Compton. The obituary appeared in the Grand Island, Nebraska Independent newspaper. It reads as follows (slightly edited) : "Ray Terrill, of Grand Island died Thursday, Oct. 16, 2008, at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Grand Island. Mr. Terrill was born April 7, 1921, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, to John and Margaret Elizabeth Terrill. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lillian Terrill. Survivors of the immediate family include a son and daughter-in-law, Thomas and Judi Terrill of Grand Island; a daughter and son-in-law, Kathleen and Donald Lyons of Grand Island' a brother and sister-in-law, Robert 'Bob' and Alice Terrill of Lincoln; and two sisters, Bonnie Bahe of Lincoln and Helen Lutz of Gillette, WY. The family moved in 1922 to Exeter, where he attended the Exeter Public Schools, graduating in 1938. He enlisted in the United States Navy in 1942 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He served on the USS Susan B. Anthony on D-Day and later, the **USS Compton** on V-Day. He received his honorable discharge on Dec. 28, 1945.

He was united in marriage to Lillian Ruth Helmers. The couple lived in Polk for one year. He worked as an auto mechanic until they moved to Grand Island in 1947. While in Grand Island, he was employed as a machinist for the Sidles Company until 1956, then went to work for the City of Grand Island at the Pine Street station. In 1957, he was employed at Burdick Station and later at the Platte Generating Station. He worked as an operator and in the power plant maintenance department for eight years before becoming power plant superintendent and production superintendent. He retired in 1982.

He enjoyed gardening, rummage and yard sales, building things for his grandchildren and Nebraska football. Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his family. He was also preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Claude and Frank Terrill; and sisters, Shirley Starr and Dorothy Saum."

#### **News about Newport, RI.**

In the New York Times issue of January 24, 2009, was the following article written by Ariana Green titled: "**In Rhode Island, Hoping a Tall Ship Can Help a Sagging Economy**". It reads as follows: "Among the luxury yachts and commercial fishing boats in this city's famous harbor rests a giant steel hull that officials hope will be an economic engine in troubled times. As Rhode Island struggles with one of the nation's highest unemployment rates, city and state officials hope that turning the hull into a tall ship will create jobs, attract tourists and spur interest in the state's maritime history.

Tall Ships Rhode Island, a non-profit group based here, bought the hull last year for \$339,000 from a group in Canada that could not afford to finish building a replica of an 1812 ship. The tall ship will be named the Oliver Hazard Perry, after the naval hero of the War of 1812 who was born in Rhode Island.

The ship, which is expected to set sail in 2011, will be a reproduction of a square-rigged warship with three masts. At 207 feet long and 13 stories tall, it will be the nation's largest tall ship besides the Eagle, a Coast Guard bark, said Capt. Richard Bailey, who will command the Oliver Hazard Perry.

Gov. Donald L. Carcieri has been urging Rhode Islanders to consider working in the marine industry, long a staple of the state's cultural identity and economy. A recent report by the Rhode Island Marine Trade Association showed 450 job vacancies in the field and estimated that the state would need to fill 2,400 maritime jobs in the next 5 to 10 years.

Considering the state's 10 percent unemployment rate, the vacancies are striking. But such jobs are highly specialized. 'You need a significant amount of technical knowledge,' said Dennis Nixon, a dean of the University of Rhode Island who helped found the International Marina Institute, 'because some of the boats built in Rhode Island are among the most sophisticated in the world.'

After the design phase, the Oliver Hazard Perry will be transferred to a commercial shipyard to finish construction. The project is expected to cost almost \$5 million, said Bart Dunbar, chairman of Tall Ships Rhode Island and president of the Bowen's Wharf Company, which owns a lot of harbor side property. So far, about a third of the money has been raised through contributions from Bowen's Wharf, individuals and corporations like Bank Newport, which contributed \$25,000.

Mr. Dunbar said he expected that the organization would get up to \$2 million in a bank loan. \$500,000 in federal grants and donated equipment in exchange for sponsorships. Mr. Dunbar said he hoped the remaining costs would be covered by private gifts.

When the American Sail Training Association first published its directory of tall ships in 1990, there were about half as many as there are today. In the last few years, several states have undertaken tall ships projects: Michigan launched the Friends Good Will; South Carolina, the Spirit of Carolina; and Virginia, the Spirit of Virginia.

'Today, cities realize they benefit from having a flagship for their community,' said Timothy Walker, who teaches maritime history at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. 'It's a way to be really visible and make an impression that can travel. It can literally fly the flag for a community.'

But, Jeff Bolster, a professor of maritime history at the University of New Hampshire, said officials should not overestimate the economic contribution a ship project would make. 'A vessel of this scale is not going to be a huge help to the ailing economy,' Mr. Bolster said. 'It has a modest operating budget, so it alone can't solve the state's fiscal problems in a major way.'

Newport's ship is scheduled to spend at least 40 weeks a year at sea, with port calls in New England, Canada, the Great Lakes and the Caribbean. It will ferry day passengers, as well as groups of high school and college students on educational excursions. It will spend the rest of the year docked in Newport, which pleases local businesses. 'I run a company that is highly dependent on high-quality tourism coming to Newport, and I think a ship like this really adds to the historic allure and the maritime appeal,' said Paul O'Reilly, chief executive of the Newport Harbor Corporation, a local hospitality company. 'We cannot compete with large convention hotels, so our special niche is our maritime history.' "