
USS Compton Organization

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The Compton at war

Battleship Cove:

By Joe Napoli

This summer I had the opportunity to visit the museum ships at Battleship Cove in Fall River, Mass. I live in New Jersey so I don't make the trip often enough. My last visit was with my Compton shipmates during our Warwick reunion.

I remember taking my children to Battleship Cove during the 70's. They loved it as much as I did. My latest visit was with my family which included a son and little grandson. And we all loved the day. Kids, especially boys, really like touring the ships and playing in the gun mounts. It brought back memories for both my son and I. My grandson can't wait to go back again. I showed him, on the Joseph P. Kennedy, where my bunk was on the Compton. I wish we had more time to spend on the ships.

My membership in the Tin Can Sailors saved me \$30 on the admission costs. Both Tin Can Sailor and a guest get in for free. A short while later I received a letter, from the Tin Can Sailors, asking for donations to support the museum ships. It was a fund raising letter sent to all Tin Can Sailors. Realizing how important these ships are to our children, grandchildren and hopefully great grand children, I sent my admission savings to the TCS as a donation. Our Association supports the Tin Can Sailors and Naval museum ships and we hope individual members do the same.

On the Tin Can Sailors site, www.destroyers.org, they have a video narrated by former destroyer man Ernest Borgnine. To see the video click on the "Save our Ships" tab on the left side of the page.

Appearing in the video is a Compton shipmate, "Plank owner" William Rader, who is a volunteer at Battleship Cove. During our Warwick reunion trip to Battleship Cove Bill gave several of us a guided tour of the Kennedy.

(Joe Napoli and Matthew in picture insert)

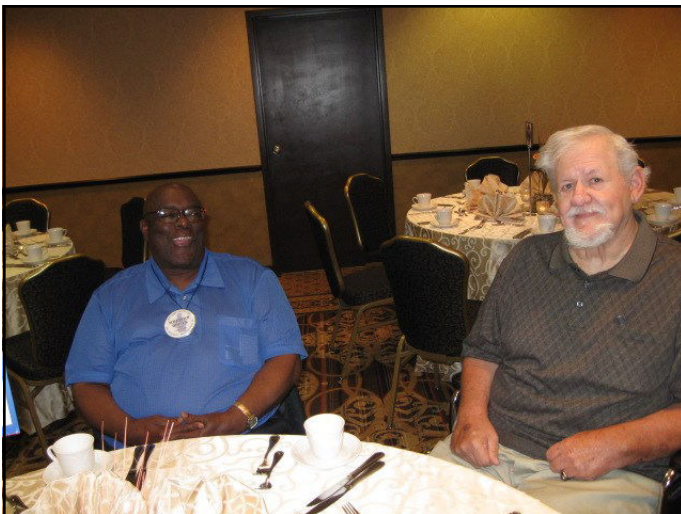


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Email: jblair@cpvabeach.com.

I happened to stumble on your site and I am the son of T.H. Morton who was CO of COMPTON in the 40s. I am very certain that you have the dates of his tour incorrect. He had command from 1947 to 1949. From 1945 to 1947 he was with the Military Staff Group with ADM Kelly Turner at the United Nations in NYC.

My dad remained a great friend with an EM named Carl Miller who served as his driver when they had duty in Palestine as part of the UN peacekeeping force. Carl later had duty in Annapolis and got his pilots license and ended up having a great career flying with American Airlines. They remained lifelong friends. Carl recalled many stories about the ship and my dad. One story that involved me was my mother's favorite. She was a British war bride. I do recall having lunch in the wardroom when they were in Newport. This had to be 1949 when I was two. Evidently some JO asked me whether I took a bath or a "Bah-th" . I replied that I took neither, I took a shower. Carl had the duty on the quarter deck the night before my dad's change of command. Dad came aboard in civies, a brown tweed suit, to look around. Carl asked him who he was, and dad said the new CO and asked for a coffee. Carl was uneasy since they had no clean mugs by the coffee urn. Dad reached into the bucket that held all the unwashed used mugs and cleaned one with his handkerchief saying this one would do fine. Carl reckoned that he was going to be an ok skipper from that point on. When dad left the ship the chiefs gave him a gold pocket watch that he used a treasured for the rest of his life. On the back it was engraved "To an esteemed commander". COMPTON was dad's first command at sea. He was a destroyerman.

Email sent to Joe Napoli from John Morton, son of T.H. Morton



Two "old salts" swapping sea stories
Herman White and Ron Moody

Good news for the last "Sumner class" destroyer

USS LAFFEY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, SONNY WALKER, REPORTS:The USS Laffey **will** be returning to Patriots Point. The bad news is... due to United States Coast Guard Regulations, we will not be allowed to ride her home. But at least she will be back at Patriots Point and opened to the Public and continue to be a stunning part of the maritime museum! The USS Laffey is going to be put where the Submarine Clamagore is now. They are putting the submarine where the Ingham was, and the LAFFEY will now be front and center for all to see. This operation will take a few days to complete. They have to remove a section of the pier, pull the submarine out, and pull the Laffey back into that berth. This means cutting all power, water, internet connections, and sewer connections to the Yorktown. This will shut down Patriots Point during this period. People will be allowed to watch from the shore.

“Witnessing the Republicans and the Democrats bicker over the U.S. debt is like watching two drunks argue over a bar bill on the Titanic.”

Kentucky Statesman

2012 Annual Reunion Form; Virginia Beach

Member's Name _____

Spouse/guest _____

Rank/Rate _____ Years aboard _____ to _____

Please enter above info as you would want it on your name tag.

Number in Party _____ (Print additional names on rear of form if necessary.)

Meal Selection: Beef _____ Chicken _____ (@ \$50 per person)

Number taking tour _____ (@\$90 per person) Total Amount enclosed _____

Mail form and check to: USS Compton Assn., PO Box 6621, Monroe Twp., NJ, 08831-6621.

Make check out to USS Compton Assn. Please respond by March 31.

Virginia Beach Tour/Show

Our tour this year will be a little different. We will leave the hotel, by motor coach busses, at 3:00 in the afternoon on Saturday.

We will have a riding tour of Norfolk which will include a stop at a famous 50's era drive, Doumar's, where we will get an ice cream treat. Than it's off to the MacArthur Memorial after which we will go to MacArthur Center for Dinner. The meal is not included in the tour so that we would be able to keep the total cost down. Several restaurants are in the area and I am sure you will find one to meet your taste.

After dinner we will go to the Norfolk Scope Arena to see the 7:30 PM performance of the Virginia International Tattoo show. We will sit in premium \$50 seats so we will have a good view of the show. After the show we will return to the hotel, by motor coach bus, we should arrive about 10:30 PM. The cost of the tour/show is \$90 per person.

Compton Obituary—Joseph G. Kral, SN 1953-1957 died July 24, 2011. He resided in Poland Ohio

The origin of the pre-flight airplane check list...

On October 30, 1935, at Wright Air Field in Dayton , Ohio , the U.S. Army Air Corps held a flight competition for airplane manufacturers vying to build its next-generation long-range bomber. It wasn't supposed to be much of a competition. In early evaluations, the Boeing Corporation's gleaming aluminum-alloy Model 299 had trounced the designs of Martin and Douglas. Boeing's plane could carry five times as many bombs as the Army had requested; it could fly faster than previous bombers, and almost twice as far.

A Seattle newspaperman who had glimpsed the plane called it the "flying fortress," and the name stuck. The flight "competition," according to the military historian Phillip Meilinger, was regarded as a mere formality. The Army planned to order at least sixty-five of the aircraft .

A small crowd of Army brass and manufacturing executives watched as the Model 299 test plane taxied onto the runway. It was sleek and impressive, with a hundred-and-three-foot wingspan and four engines jutting out from the wings, rather than the usual two. The plane roared down the tarmac, lifted off smoothly and climbed sharply to three hundred feet. Then it stalled, turned on one wing and crashed in a fiery explosion. Two of the five crew members died, including the pilot, Major Ployer P. Hill (thus Hill AFB , Ogden , UT).

An investigation revealed that nothing mechanical had gone wrong. The crash had been due to "pilot error," the report said. Substantially more complex than previous aircraft, the new plane required the pilot to attend to the four engines, a retractable landing gear, new wing flaps, electric trim tabs that needed adjustment to maintain control at different airspeeds, and constant-speed propellers whose pitch had to be regulated with hydraulic controls, among other features.

While doing all this, Hill had forgotten to release a new locking mechanism on the elevator and rudder controls. The Boeing model was deemed, as a newspaper put it, "too much airplane for one man to fly." The Army Air Corps declared Douglas 's smaller design the winner. Boeing nearly went bankrupt.

Still, the Army purchased a few aircraft from Boeing as test planes, and some insiders remained convinced that the aircraft was flyable. So a group of test pilots got together and considered what to do.

They could have required Model 299 pilots to undergo more training. But it was hard to imagine having more experience and expertise than Major Hill, who had been the U.S. Army Air Corps' Chief of Flight Testing. Instead, they came up with an ingeniously simple approach: they created a pilot's checklist, with step-by-step checks for takeoff, flight, landing, and taxiing. Its mere existence indicated how far aeronautics had advanced.

In the early years of flight, getting an aircraft into the air might have been nerve-racking, but it was hardly complex. Using a checklist for takeoff would no more have occurred to a pilot than to a driver backing a car out of the garage... But this new plane was too complicated to be left to the memory of any pilot, however expert

With the checklist in hand, the pilots went on to fly the Model 299 a total of 18 million miles without one accident. The Army ultimately ordered almost thirteen thousand of the aircraft, which it dubbed the B-17. And, because flying the behemoth was now possible, the Army gained a decisive air advantage in the Second World War which enabled its devastating bombing campaign across Nazi Germany.

USS Compton DD 705

Association Reunion
April 29 – May 2, 2011 Tyson Corner, VA

Annual Business Meeting
May 1, 2011 Crowne Plaza Hotel

- I. Presentation of the Flags.
- II. 9:08 President Jack Heidecker officially opens the meeting.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Gerry Pierce
- IV. Invocation: Given by Association Chaplin Charlie Jakob
- V. Business Items:
 1. Jack Heidecker said we are searching for the whereabouts of the Compton bell.
 2. The Compton plaque was made available for viewing. It was borrowed from the Washington Navy Yard.
 3. President Heidecker stated that the Association was now incorporated. It costs \$250.00 a year. This protects association officers from possible suits.
 4. Reading of the minutes from Warwick, RI business meeting by Sec. Michael Taylor
 5. Introduction of Officers
 6. Treasurer's Report by Joe Napoli
 - i. Try to maintain a balance of \$5,000.00
 7. Next year's Reunion Report by Joe Napoli
 - i. Will be in Virginia Beach, VA. Reunion will be highlighted by the International Tattoo. Joe also explained the process of getting a hotel with everything we desire. It will be held in the Crowne Plaza in Virginia Beach the last weekend in April. If anyone wishes to stay over on Monday there is a tour of Williamsburg available at a good rate.
 - ii. Joe also discussed and described the difficulty of having raffles and guest speakers at our banquets.
 - iii. Future Reunions: Executive Committee decided to look at Chicago and Buffalo for 2013. Branson, Avalon, Nashville, and several other previous reunion sites were mentioned in regard for long range reunions.
 - iv. Sickness Report: Lou Raione had kidney transplant. Doc Eames lost sight in his left eye.
 - v. Joe reported that Compton jackets can be ordered with a 15% discount. Information will be in the next newsletter.
 - vi. Joe reported that over 300 names were read in yesterday's Compton memorial service. We lost four association members during the last year. They were Vernon Duke, Jack Overla, David Davis and Lewis Fugate.
8. First Reunion Shipments were introduced
 - i. Neal Franc
 - ii. Bill Roughly
 - iii. Frank Caccioppoli
9. Co – Founder Bud Foley was introduced.
10. Barry Marple – Our Webmaster was introduced. He is retired from the Navy. He gave an enjoyable talk about his Vietnam experiences in the South China Sea. Our Website won an award this past year.
11. Jack Heidecker wants pictures from Navy days sent to him for the Newsletter.
12. By acclimation our present officers were reinstated for the next year.
13. Closing prayer giving by President Jack Heidecker.
14. Meeting adjourned.

Mike Taylor—Secretary USS Compton Association

Compton Association dues are \$20.00 per year—if you received an envelope with this Newsletter—they are now due or due within a short period... Look for the hand written date, on your address label... That date is when it expired or shortly will expire...

Howdy Gents,

Thought I'd send this photo along as Fred (picture below) and I have never made it to one of the Compton reunions. Fred and I served on the Compton as young officers when she was a reserve training ship home-ported at the South Annex in Boston, MA during the 1969-1970 timeframe. We had some interesting adventures while living aboard the ship to say the least. Some of our Gitmo exercises still make me laugh. No one prepared either of us for what to expect. On one of the first days we were there I was the OOD as we left the harbor to play war games. One of the observers came up to me and said "torpedo bearing 030 degrees off the starboard bow". Not knowing it was a drill, I looked off in that direction and replied that I did not see any torpedo coming our way. You can only begin to imagine how much grief I took with that response.

Fred Gilbertson is the fellow on the left in the photo taken in my Fort Collins CO backyard during May of 2011. He lives in Williamsburg VA. Fred was a Ltjg by the time he left the ship late 1970. I am the guy in the vest and was also a Ltjg upon being discharged from the Navy on July 30, 1970. I served as the DCA and R-Division Officer. In trying to figure out exactly what role Fred played on board the Compton, I came across the following description which seems to fit even though I don't recall ever hearing the term applied to an officer.

SHIP'S BOATSWAIN

In the U.S. Navy the ship's boatswain is an officer who assists the first lieutenant by supervising the deck force in the execution of major seamanship functions and the maintenance of topside gear. The ship's boatswain supervises cargo handling and inspects and maintains rigging and deck gear. His duties also include supervising, anchoring, mooring, fueling, towing, transferring of personnel and cargo, and the operation and maintenance of ship's boats. The ship's boatswain is in charge of what the Navy deems "unusual" seamanship operations such as retrieving target drones, and also schedules training for deck division personnel. Another key duty of the ship's boatswain is supervision of the maintenance of "abandon ship" equipment and instruction in "abandon ship" techniques

Best Regards,

Dave Doughty
Compton sailor from April, 1969 through July, 1970

