


The Compton at war



Commissioned November 4 1944
Decommissioned—September 27 1972

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“Compton Newsletter”

COMPTON CORNER 2020, The year the earth stood still.

As we prepare for another day of self quarantine, we have to ask, “What Happened” The world has never experienced anything like this Pandemic, in modern times. CORVID-19, has and continues to disrupt our lives. We MUST follow the advice of our medical community; social distancing, good hygiene, and wearing of face masks.

The cancellation of our 2020 reunion, in Saratoga, was a mild inconvenience compared to the illness and deaths this Virus has caused, not only to the United States, but the entire planet. Be patient, this will pass, we will soon be together.

I am in the process of rescheduling reunion 2020. The Embassy suites will still be our reunion Hotel In Saratoga, NY. The dates will be April 19-21, 2021. Due to lay offs, and closings, I am unable to renegotiate our tour and Banquet. As soon as I can, we will pass this information along with the new costs. Stay Tuned.

I know many of us are disappointed we will not have a 2020 reunion, but we are safe and healthy and still able to look forward to better times. I urge all of us to Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, and Stay Strong.

In closing, May God Bless those that are manning the front lines against this Virus and putting themselves at risk. May He also continue to Bless the Men and Women of the United States Military who continue to place God and Country first.

Fraternally,
Bob DiMonte



The “Compton Newsletter” is available in color—on our below WEB site Webmaster, Phil Prekel has posted 43 past newsletters from February 2009 to the present on our below listed Internet Website...



Sigward Pohl Collection

Not the Compton but, a good idea of the average day, at sea, for a destroyer sailor.

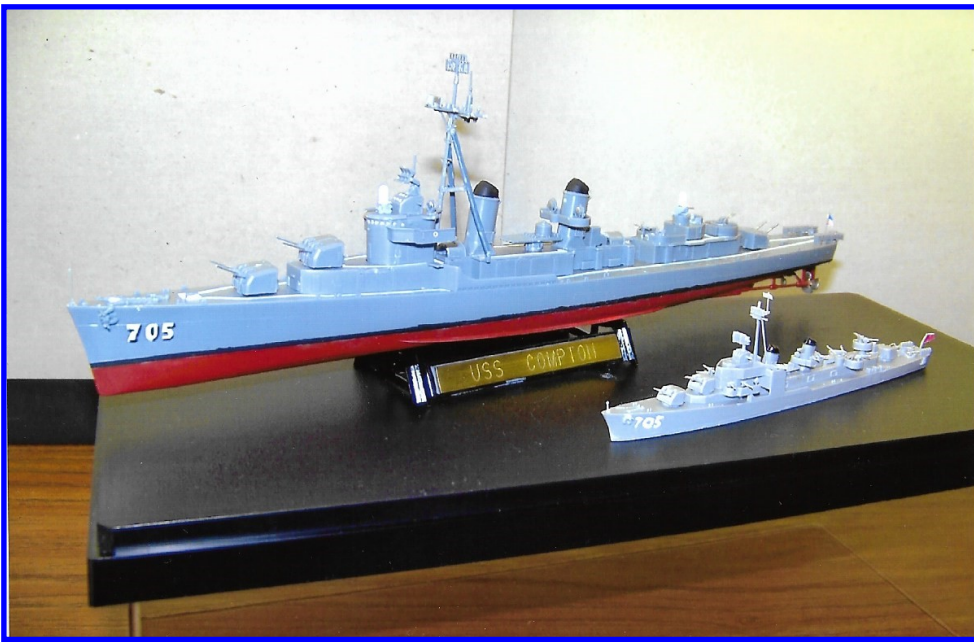
If conditions were a little bit rougher—do you think that sailor in the upper left would be out there hanging on the lifeline?

Snail Mail! Joe Napoli Treasurer

In March of this year, 2020, I received a dues check from a shipmate. I processed the check, entering it in my records and deposited it in our Compton account at the bank. As always, I sent a letter of receipt to the shipmate. Shortly after I received an email from the shipmate stating that a mistake must have been made, he said he had not recently sent in any dues. When I process a dues check I enter it in two separate computer programs and print the name on the actual deposit slip. I could not comprehend how such a mistake could be made. I went to the bank and got a photocopy of the check.

It turns out that the check, that was deposited, was in fact from the shipmate. The date however was May of 2018! As it turned out the shipmate had sent a dues check in in 2018 which I never received. At that time he wrote a second check believing the original check was lost in the mail.

The check I received in March of 2020 was mailed to me in May of 2018!
And that is why they call it “Snail Mail”.



Received letter and pictures from Compton Association Member—Dell Masse (1964) from South Burlington, Vermont
A beautiful model of the USS Compton DD705 built by Mr. Masse. Dell worked at General Electric for forty some years and help build the the GE—Close in Weapon System. The Compton never had this system installed but, Dell, with his GE expertise, installed this system in this DD705 model.



What does a former Compton sailor do for recreation?
They buy a sailboat and go sailing!!!

Fellow Compton sailors: please send me your pictures from your days on our ship.
I promise to send them back the very next day, after I receive those special memories.

Jack Heidecker
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Cuban Missile Crisis
By Joe Napoli

The Compton did, in fact, participate in operations during the Cuban crisis. The last issue of the Tin Can Sailors magazine will, once again, bring up questions by our shipmates as to why we received no credit for our actions. Numerous ships were identified, in an article, as qualifying for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Compton was not one of them.

The reason we did not qualify for the medal, from past research, may be that we did not serve in the crisis area for 30 consecutive days. This matter has been a concern of our shipmates and has been discussed at past reunions. Our research showed, from official Navy records, that we were in dry dock at the Boston Navy Yard during the early period of the actual blockade.

As a Radarman, during that period of time and working in CIC (Combat Information Center) aboard the Compton, I was usually aware of our location and operational status. Of course, my recollections could be influenced by loss of memory over the years, but I can recall some basic events.

We were a part of the actual blockade. We did not have a patrol sector participating in the company of other ships. We did, however, actively engage in activities in the area of Cuba, some of which were prior and during actual blockade being announced as I recall. We, while off the coast of Florida, relieved another destroyer that was following a passenger liner. The Compton followed the ship, within visual view, it was a large white vessel I clearly remember, until it entered Havana Harbor. Evidently our government wanted to confirm that the ship did in fact go to Cuba.

I also recall, at another time, while just miles off the coast of Cuba, being at general quarters. My duty station was manning the ECM equipment, (electronic Counter Measures) that gear could pick up radar signals from other sources. The equipment indicated we were targeted by a Russian fire control radar coming from the direction of Cuba. The radar was, most likely, from coastal artillery. I notified the CIC officer, but I don't recall any action taken in that regard to that threat.

Also burned into my memory was entering the Mayport, Florida, Naval base at the time of the Cuban Crisis. The reason it stands out is that we entered port during the night. Prior to that, during my time on the Compton, we had always entered port during daylight. We visited Mayport during our Jacksonville reunion and that also refreshed memories of that event. When daylight arrived I observed barbed wire and gun emplacements set up on the docks. Two aircraft carriers were also in port and the rumor was that we were to be part of the Cuban invasion task force. Thankfully an invasion never took place.

We did not qualify for a medal, but we can be proud of the part we played.

At a later period, another service we provided was patrolling off the coast of Costa Rica while President Kennedy met with leaders of the South American countries. I am sure many shipmates will remember that detail. We patrolled a stretch of coast, perhaps 10 miles, in the company of several other destroyers. An aircraft carrier stood further offshore and provided surveillance by aircraft. Notable about that detail was the fact that, to relieve the boredom, a benefit was provided for the crew. At the beginning of our leg of patrol the motor whaleboat was outfitted with fishing poles and a case of beer. Several crewmen were placed on the boat and when the Compton returned from the cycle of the tour the crewmen were replaced as was the case of beer.

Note from Jack Heidecker: I was also on the Compton, during this crisis and remember that the Compton went to General Quarters on a real and not a "This is a drill" basis. We were doing multiple practice GQ drills and failing to make the "all ready for action" status in the required 1 minute.

Joe told me he was on the radar scope and detected a unknown plane racing toward our ship. A real GQ was then activated. Two things I remember: we were at "ready action station" in about 50 seconds (This is "not a drill" does adds speed)

Turns out, it was our own fighter jet buzzing our ship at about 200 feet!!

I was assigned on the Forward Damage Control Team and was stationed outside the ship when the jet zoomed over and scared the crap out of the DC team.

Another memory: Jack Heidecker

During the Costa Rica operation, our ship was at sea for an extended period of time. The outside of the ship's paint was looking bad. We were then ordered to refresh and re-paint the Compton "while at sea" so as not to embarrass President Kennedy during this meeting.

Being the ship was at sea and we only had time to paint the starboard and stern areas and keep the repainted sides toward the president's carrier during our at sea guard duty.

The painting was an all "not on duty" ship personnel—those including me a "snipe" became a painter.

The props were shut down and the ship was bobbing big time, due to no forward ship motion. I was assigned the stern section with 2 other "volunteers" in these shark infested waters. I kept my eyes on the water more than what I was painting, I then saw a dark shape below us in the water and hollered "SHARK" which all the water side painters— then scrambled to safety.

While looking for the beast while safely topside—I saw the dark shape of one of the non-moving propellers bobbing up and down below my painting area.

I never admitted my, shark story, until now.

US Navy Responds to COVID19 Virus



Compton Donations—January 1, 2020 to March 31, 2020
 Charles Mackay, Ed Brimo, Jack O’Neil, Frederick Brown, John MacDougall, Charles Elliott,
 Thomas Lockman, Eugene Grabowski, Willie Thompson



**"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
 A VETERAN DIED TODAY."**

Obituaries: USS Compton DD705



Michael Close, RM3, June 1957—June 1959—passed November 22, 2017 in Glenview, Illinois at 83 years of age. He was a retired Cook County Judge. He was an active Compton Association member and attended a few reunions the last being Charleston in 2009. As an active association member a donation in his honor was made to Tin Can Sailors.



Allen A. Dorn Sr passed on October 25, 2019 in Kiel Wisconsin. He is listed as serving on the Compton during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Al was also assigned to the USS Murray on duty in the Vietnam arena during that conflict, He was honorable discharged in June 1969 receiving five decorative medals.



Luther Carlise SK2, 1961-1964 passed on February 5, 2020 in Wendell NC. He was an active Compton Association member and attended many reunions. Luther after his US Navy service finished his many years of government service with the US Postal Service. As an active Compton Association member a donation in his honor will be made to Tin Can Sailors.



John H “Champ” Smith passed on March 24, 2020, at 84 years of age, in West York, Pennsylvania. Our association has no official records of Mr. Smith, In obituary from the “York Sunday News” He was listed as being onboard the USS Iowa, USS Baltimore and the USS Compton and was also was a Golden Gloves boxer. Thus, the nickname “Champ”.

Annual USS Compton Association dues are \$20.00 per year. If you received an envelope with this newsletter - the dues are due now or will be due within a short period of time...look for the hand written date on your address label. This is the date when your membership has expired or will soon expire...