


The Compton at war



Commissioned November 4 1944
Decommissioned—September 27 1972

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Compton Corner

I’m hoping and praying that all, in our Compton family, are well and staying safe.

As we navigate through the year 2020, we look forward to better times. One of those better times is our upcoming 2021 reunion. New York State has progressed into phase four, allowing most business to open. I am still in the process of contracting for our tour and other services, that we require.

The hotel will be the Embassy Suites, 86 Congress St. in downtown Saratoga Springs, New York. (518) 290-9090. The dates are **May 3 thru 6th, 2021** and the rate is **\$149.00**.

I should have all the costs and will complete our registration form by the November newsletter. When completed, I will post it on our WEB site. We will adhere to the same format, as past reunions. Monday, registration, Tuesday, tour, and Wednesday, Business meeting and Banquet.

This Pandemic has caused many of us to alter our lifestyles, we will have to adjust our daily activities for many months ahead. We need to stay safe and follow the recommended guidelines, I am not sure how reunion 2021 will look like. Whatever it looks like, I know it will be great, to once again, be with our fellow shipmates.

I recently saw the movie “Greyhound” with Tom Hanks, it’s about a Fletcher class destroyer. I enjoyed it and highly recommend it. Every Tin Can Sailor will enjoy this film.

In closing, I urge each of you to stay safe. And may God protect and watch over you and our families, may he also place his hand on all the men and women who serve this great Nation.

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...



Jim Garman

Hi Joe and Jack,
Well, interesting reminiscences about those two big events.

I was on Compton from 2/62 to 1/65 and participated in both of those events.

I am in the process of writing about my three years on the Compton as part of an overall personal biography (for my grandchildren). So far I have written 237 pages (!) and I am up to age 26! (things you do when you are housebound to keep sane!) Anyway I am finishing writing about the 3 years aboard with about 5 months to go in my "career" there and I am on page 74!

So I summarized the Missile Crisis and the Costa Rica trip here for you to use as you see fit. Summarize it if you want to. Just note that there are three pages in the attachment; the third is a photograph, the only one I have from Costa Rica.

Have fun reminiscing; I really enjoyed reading about YOUR memories. It might take a couple of minutes to download this.

All the best to shipmates, I remember well!

Jim Garman

USS Compton in Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) (Summary)

By Jim Garman

We were in the Boston Naval Shipyard, as things unfolded. We had arrived on 6 October and on the 15th we were put into drydock. We got out on the 30th. I remember coming back to the ship from a Celtics game on the 22nd (when President Kennedy went on TV). All kinds of panic. Then sea trials.

We got underway for Earle NJ for ammo (5 November). Going under Sagamore Bridge in the (Cape Cod) Canal, a workman up on the canal shouted: "See you in Cuba!"

We then left Earle (6 Nov) and went back to Newport. Under way from Newport on the 12th. To join Task Group 83.4 (with Lake Champlain +6 DD) "somewhere in the Atlantic". We ended up in the Windward Passage patrolling. Became part of Task Group 136.2.

We went to GQ a lot. One time when the Boatswain's Mate forgot to say: "This is a drill!" we tracked a very large contact on the radar. As it got closer it turned out to be the USS Salem, (Heavy Cruiser).

On 19 November we saw a Russian merchant freighter the (ANACREON) in route Cuba with general cargo.

Our objective, in case of an invasion, was to provide gunfire support at Havana.

20 November, we were detached and headed to Mayport arriving that night. 26 November left Mayport and to Charleston SC. 30 November u/w Charleston-4 December arrived Newport.

(One of the interesting scenes in both Mayport and Charleston was seeing the Marines on liberty in their fatigues. They had been detached so fast they didn't have time to pack!)

The Costa Rica “Invasion” (March 1963) (A Summary)

By Jim Garman

We were under way from Newport on 2 March 63. President Kennedy was scheduled to give a speech in San Jose, capital of Costa Rica, arriving 18 March. There were some rumors of a possible revolution breaking out sparked by his visit.

The Compton with 2 other DD’s and a carrier were deployed on the Caribbean side of the country—near the port of Puerto Limon. Three other DD’s went through the Canal and patrolled the Pacific coast with the Thetis Bay.

Our objective was to “show the flag” to show the US was interested in that country as we had been with all the Central American countries since Teddy Roosevelt’s day. A monotonous assignment.

We brought on board by HELO two members of the Costa Rican “Guardia Civil” so that any intervention would be in the name of the Costa Rican government. Only one officer onboard could speak Spanish: ME!
(I had 5 years of Spanish in high school and college). So I was their interpreter....and were they ever seasick! They were bunked in the Chief’s quarters and we didn’t see much of them.

We did launch the motor whale boat with fishing poles and beer—as was said. We were at 9 degrees north latitude and in spite of it being nice to be in the tropics in March, it was HOT! In the 90s all day and night! We had a beard-growing contest and since I shaved every three days, I didn’t win!

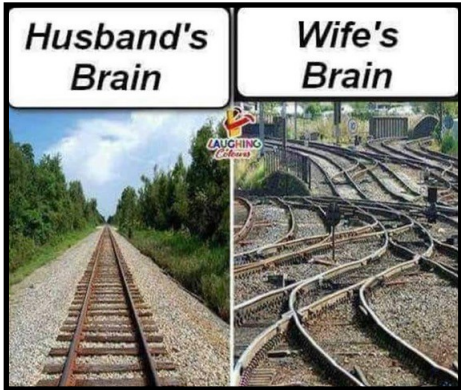
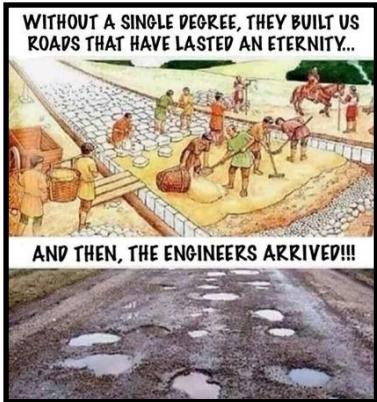
Crisis over! No revolution! And we departed on the 21st and headed for San Juan for a week of liberty! Back to Newport by 4 April.



“HELO” Arrival of the “Guardia Civil”
Costa Ricans

1. to r. Tinker, Peterson, Costa Rican Guest
Francisco, O’Hare, BMC Patton, (unhooking
The line) and Schultz

Goodies from the Internet



CHILDHOOD INJURIES:
FELL OFF MY BIKE
FELL OUT OF A TREE
TWISTED MY ANKLE

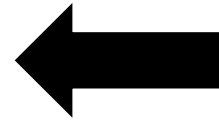
ADULT INJURIES:
SLEPT WRONG
SAT DOWN TOO LONG
SNEEZED TOO HARD

I really don't mind getting older, but my body is taking it badly.

I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes... She hugged me.

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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**Sigward Pohl—Honorary
Compton Association Member**

Sigward—a member of the German Naval Academy was assigned to the USS Compton during the 1962 Med Cruise as a midshipman from that academy. He has attended a few Compton Association reunions. Sigward with his wife Birgit then did some traveling adventures in the USA.

These are some photos of the various ships he was assigned to or sailed with after his graduation and thirty years of service to the Federal German Navy.



Federal German Navy—D179 Zerstoror 5
The former USS Dyson DD572



Federal German Navy—D172 Zerstoror 3
The former USS Wadsworth DD516



Koln—F220, type 124
Sachsen Class Frigate



Zerstoror 5 D179 (Z5)
At gunnery practice

Hospital Ships



After that beautiful picture of the USNS Comfort AH20 passing the Statue of Liberty on its aid and assistance to New York City... We looked into the history of these special ships.



The United States Navy has two active duty hospital ships currently on duty. AH 20 Comfort is home ported on the East Coast in Norfolk VA and the AH 19 Mercy (below) home ported in San Diego, CA.

Our first modern era navy hospital ship is the USS Relief AH1 (shown below). Its keel was laid on June 4, 1917 and it was commissioned in 1920. The Relief served on active duty through WW2.



USS Solace—AH5
2nd Commissioned Hospital Ship



USS Mercy AH5
Active Duty—San Diego

Hospital ships can be traced back to ancient times. The Athenian Navy had a ship named the “Therapia” and the Roman Navy The “Aesculapius”. Interpretation of both of these names translate into some form of medical aid and indicate they were hospital ships. The British listing of a ship assigned a medical or hospital ship is the HMS Goodwill. It is listed as accompanying a British squadron in the Mediterranean Sea 1609 and housing the sick.

Compton Donations—April 1 2020 to June 30 2020
 Bill Judge, Gerry Pierce, Joe Brielmann, Happy Nehring, Joe Nowakowski,
 Raymond Greeley, Pritt Rebanel (through Sigward Pohl).



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

Obituaries: USS Compton DD705



Richard Marx, USS Compton (1956), passed April 19, 2020 in Syracuse NY at 83 years of age. He was a resident of Skaneateles NY. Mr. Marx served on the Compton during its last pass through the Suez Canal at the beginning of the Suez Crisis. After his Honorable Discharge in 1957 he then spend the majority of his work career with the General Electric Company.



Jack Henderson, Chief Master Sgt., US Air Force (?????), born 10/10/1929 passed 02/08/2020 in Jacksonville, Arkansas. Jack was an active Compton Association member serving on the DD705 in 1948—during the ship’s Palestine Patrol. He then left his naval service to join the US Air Force and served thirty active years until his retirement.



Walter Farmer, MM2, November 1950—April 1951 passed on April 5, 2020 in Yorkville NY. Walter was born on July 8, 1931 in Utica NY. He was very proud of his active service on the USS Compton and continued his connection with our ship, as an active member of our Compton Association. A donation in his name will be made to TCS,



John Robert Vantine, Fire Control technician, born March 18, 1939 and passed on April 25, 2020. in Fletcher, OK. John served on the USS Compton, Charles R Ware and the Willis A Lee during his naval career from January 1958 to May 11, 1962. After his Honorable Discharge he worked at various military bases as a electronics technician.



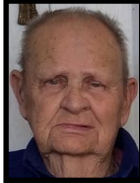
Robert “Bob” Chiesa, RM3, 1962 Med Cruise, Bob was born on February 9, 1941 and passed on June 6, 2020 in Mobile, Al. He was involved with the “Beach Jumper Unit” a special electronic warfare device, being tested, during that cruise. He was an active Compton Association member and a \$50.00 donation, in his name, will be made to “Tin Can Sailors”.

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...

Additional—Obituaries USS Compton DD705



Harold “Bud” Ellison, Captain passed March 7, 2020 in Crystal River, FL at 99 years old. Bud was born June 16, 1920 in Corning NY, He received an appointment to the US Naval Academy and graduated from there in 1941. Ensign Ellison was assigned to the USS Calhoun during the war and survived its sinking. During his 30 year career his service he was assigned to various ships, including the USS Compton. Captain Ellison retired in 1972.



Lester George “Les” Green, 1953—passed on November 9, 2019 in Butler PA. at 85 years of age. Les was born on September 28, 1934. He was President/Owner of G & E Mechanical Contractors who served the Tri-State area and at times, special projects, throughout the United States. Mr. Green was also actively involved with the Boy Scouts of America serving the youth in the Butler area as a Scout Master.



James Nicol Williams, RM, 1944 Born June 22, 1925, passed December 8, 2019 in Bay City, Ohio at 94 years of age. Jim was another Compton sailor who was on the ship during its active participation during the war. From his timeline on the Compton, it looks like he was on duty during the Kamikaze attack on the ship. He was not an active member on the Compton Association. But, he is a very active brother of any sailor who served on our ship



Michael J “Mike” Como, April 29, 1941—December 24, 2019, West Chesterfield, Vermont. He is listed as a naval veteran serving from 1960-1964 and onboard the Willis A Lee DW4 during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He left the navy and then re-enlisted in 1968 and was assigned to the USS Compton and the USS Damato DD871. Mike finally transferred into the US Air Force and served until his honorable discharge in 1978.



Herb Sellers, EM2. (June 1925—December 1945) passed in Riverside CA. Herb attended many Compton reunions and was the highlight during those times—dancing the evening away. He traveled, via train, from California to wherever our reunion was located. This was a very time consuming trip. This picture is from our Tampa FL reunion. Herb was a very loyal Compton Association member and a donation to Tin Can Sailors was made in his memory, Check the antidote below.

A little antidote from Herb Sellers, at a recent reunion.

Herb was on the ship in 1945 when the Compton was attacked by a Japanese suicide plane. Herb said the Captain complained about his gunnery crews being not very good with their accuracy. However, when the Jap Betty Bomber started its suicide run, they blew it out of the sky on their first salvo. I also ask him where he was during this episode—on the other side of the ship as safe as possible, he replied.

Rest in Peace fellow shipmate!

