

PAWCATUCK PILOT

Volume 17 Issue 1

December 2009

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS PAWCATUCK AO-108



Points of Special Interest

- **Dave Willis shares news with all of you in his Coordinator's Column as the cover story.**
- **Holiday Greetings from Mark McPherson are on page two.**
- **Learn about the Pawcatuck Memorial in Pawcatuck, CT in the article on page three.**
- **Four new members for the roster are found in Welcome Mat on page four. Send them a greeting.**
- **Ruby VanDyke shares some news about projects taken on by some of the wives of the Pawcatuck shipmates. See page three under "News Worth Sharing."**
- **We continue with Thomas Blood's Memoirs on page four.**

COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

Shipmates and family members of the USS Pawcatuck AO-108,

Hello again from sunny Surprise, Arizona. First and foremost Jan and I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This year has gone by very fast and many things have happened since our last reunion in Baltimore/DC area back the end of April. Those of you who joined us at our reunion may remember I told you that my second grandson had gone in the Navy and was at boot-camp at Great Lakes. On the 10th June my daughter and husband and I flew to Chicago and stayed close to the airport. On Thursday the 11th my granddaughter flew in from Austin, TX, but was three hours late. We

then rented a car and drove to Great Lakes. We had reservations at the Navy Lodge. Real nice rooms and then got up early on the 12th and took a cab to the Recruit Training Base and observed the graduation of 697 sailors. What a sight, and they all did a great job! My grandson stayed at GL for hospital corpsman school. He then came home for leave and is now presently at Fort Sam Houston, TX for 12 weeks of orthopedic school. He has his orders and will be going to San Diego, CA and be stationed at the Balboa Naval Hospital for four years. I will include his address if anybody wants to send him a Christmas card. I am sure he would appreciate hearing from any of you.

Now back to what else has happened. The end of June I found out I had a cyst on my neck right at the T-shirt line. It was removed the 15th of July and it was a little large. Just over 2 inches long. No cancer was found. Then the usual man thing and found out no cancer there. So I am learning getting old can be a pain.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you in San Antonio next May 4th to the 7th. I hope we have a good crowd. This will be our 18th annual reunion. I already have a color guard from one of the high schools in the area. They are a Navy Jr. ROTC at the school.

I am also trying to get a famous NBA star to join us. I will let you know if that

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happens.

We will welcome all of you at 1630 on Tues the 4th of May. We will again have our annual meeting right after we welcome everybody. Then on Wed the 5th we will have our memorial service at 2000. The rest of the schedule will come out later.

Good news that there will be a memorial placed in Pawcatuck, CT in the future at their veterans' park. The memorial will be to honor our ship. The cost is being taken care of by the construction company that is

doing a make over at the park.

So please come and join your shipmates and family members for our next reunion. I look forward to seeing everybody next year.

Yours,
David Willis

Here is address for my grandson if any of you would like to send him a greeting for the Christmas season.

Caleb D. Bryant USN
2250 Stanley RD Unit 181
Fort Sam Houston, TX
28234-6402

HOLIDAY GREETING FROM McPHERSON

Ahoy Shipmates and members of the PAWCATUCK Family,

The holiday season is upon us, I hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving and your family is looking forward to the Grand Miracle arriving on December 25th. Let us all remember the true meaning of Christmas, the Christ child, for he is but a humble servant of the One that was, that is and that will be. Let us be like the Shepard's – bend the knee – bow down to worship him, our LORD, our GOD.

In the Buckeye State, the weather has been mild for this time of the year. During the past several weeks we have been in the mid 40's, however, I will never fear because soon it will be getting cold and snow will be falling.

I have been so blessed these past 11 months to work for Lutheran Social Service of Central Ohio Mobile Food Pantry. For those who do not know what this is, it is an organization, whereby we deliver food to those families in southern Ohio countries, 4 times a month. The food pantry serves 500 families a month, in Lawrence and Gallia counties, where during the past 3 years, 50 to 60 food pantries in those areas were forced to shut their doors. During this period we have provided food to over 5,000 families, which have received over 100,000 pounds of food. We are able to provide HOPE and ease the HUNGER in the two counties. As the Manager of the Mobile Food Pantry, my spirit has been touched so many times, by the out pouring of our clients' acts of kindness and love to the Mobile Food Pantry, but also for each other, as they struggle to provide for their families. Let us all take

time during not only this season but all year long to serve our fellow men. I encourage you to assist the food pantries and other agencies in your area, with the worthwhile service that is provide to those who are less fortunate. If you would like to learn more about the LLSCO Mobile Food Pantry, please visit our web site www.lssco.org and follow the link to Mobile Food Pantry.

The roundup for the USS PAWCATUCK reunion this year, will be held in San Antonio, Texas, beginning 4 MAY 2010, at 1200 Hours. I hope your calendars are marked and you are planning on being there. As always, try to contact a shipmate and invite them to join us.

During this year's reunion, we will again renew friendships and establish new friendships, hear stories of our time aboard our ship, as is the case each year. We have located several new members to add to the list of the PAWCATUCK Family. Hopefully, some of these new members will be able to attend the reunion this year.

A wonderful and early Christmas gift has been presented to our ship, in the form of a plaque and memorial, located in the Veterans Memorial Park, in Pawcatuck, Ct. The memorial and plaque, has been donated by the construction company that was hired to re-do the park. We will be notified when the dedication will take place, and just as soon as we find out, the information will be shared with the PAWCATUCK family. It would be great if some of the members who live in area could attend the dedication to represent our ship.

In closing, my wife Shirley and I, wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mark McPherson
Assist Reunion Coordinator

MEMORIAL IN CT

The pictures at the top of page one in this newsletter are pictures of a memorial with two plaques attached. This project came about starting early last spring. The commander of the VFW Post in Pawcatuck, CT, e-mailed me as he had seen our web site. To make a long story short, I asked him if the people back there would be willing to raise money for a memorial there in Pawcatuck, CT.

This memorial was paid for by the contractor who was doing some work at a park and it was installed last Saturday, the 28th of November this year. As of this date, Dec 1st, I do not have a date for its dedication. So this will probably happen before our next reunion.

I look back over the years and I feel now that our ship is given credit for the service she performed and all the shipmates who served on board—from the date of the laying of the keel, which was on March 3, 1945, until the ship was commissioned on May 10, 1946, and taken out of service on Sept. 21, 1991, and then when she was scrapped back in 2005/06. The Post Office in Pawcatuck, CT also has pictures of the ship. So, if you live in the area of Connecticut, take a drive and stop and take a look and remember your time on our ship.

From what I can find out, the park is on South Broad St by a bridge. Any questions please call or e-mail me at 623-214-9835 or dwshs53@aol.com.

Dave Willis



Monument being put into place at CT



WELCOME MAT

The following shipmates have been located recently. Welcome aboard. We hope to see you at the reunion and that you will take an active part in the association. We welcome:

Charles Swanson
(1964-65) SA 2nd Div
1202 Jackson Blvd
Rochester, IN 46975
574-224-2319

Robert Diehl (1969-73) MM2
13073 23rd Ave N
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
561-626-8107
ibdrtdiehl@aol.com

Ronald Warren
(1958-59) MMFN M Div
1844 Starks Cir
Lafayette, IN 47909
765-807-6125
captainronw57@aol.com

Phil Scheeler
WT2 Boiler Room
6556 East Quaker St
Orchard Park, NY 14127
716-662-9844
philxlois@yahoo.com

Correction from 06/09
Harry Buckley (1956-59) EM2 Eng
340 Asbury Station Rd
Swedesboro, NJ 08085
856-467-2794
hbuck1215@hotmail.com

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"Our Reunions Work So You Don't Have To"



TAPS

The Pawcatuck Pilot has learned of the following deaths since the last newsletter. Our deepest sympathy goes to the families and friends of the deceased. Anyone who knows or learns of a shipmate's death, you are requested to notify the newsletter so that person can be listed in TAPS and also on the Honor Roll at the next reunion.

Walter Green
Died June 7, 2009

Nicholas Tallerico
Died September 1997

William Hollett
(1956-59) BMSN 1st & 2nd Div
Died June 6, 2009

Jeder Waddell
(1966-69) CWO Deck
Died May 4, 2009

Waddell, Jeder P. "Jay"
Mr. Jeder P. "Jay" Waddell of Panama City, Fla., passed away Monday, May 4, 2009 at his residence.

Born in Jacksonville, Fla., he moved to Panama City in 1993 from Chattanooga, Tenn. Mr Waddell served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War as a member of the United States Navy. He also was a member of the VFW Fort Walton Post, Fleet Reserve Association 346 and the Retired Officers Association. Mr. Waddell was the manufacturing manager for Magic Chef, in charge of shipping.

He is survived by three sons, two daughters, and one granddaughter. Also surviving are two sisters, one niece and one half-brother.

NEWS WORTH SHARING

At our reunion this past April, the Pawcatuck wives took on a project for the next 12 months. Each month, a volunteer searches "AnySailor.com" and chooses a current service member to be the recipient of a care package. They have a list of items they need or want. (One Marine said he would give \$20.00 for a bag of potato chips). We then gather those items and send the package to the Any Sailor contact, who then shares the contents with his unit.

One of our wives has gone way beyond her duty. Elizabeth Jordan works with the 4-H Club in Shreveport, LA. Her 4-Hers have joined with us to make this project a roaring success. These young Americans have gathered enough supplies to fill and ship 11 boxes to the young men and women serving our country. Now that is something to be proud of. THANK YOU—Shreveport 4-Hers for your help. We are so proud of you. I know you have brought much joy to those receiving your packages.

Ruby VanDyke

Financial Statement

Balance after 06/09	\$1100.33
Received since 06/09	\$90.00
Available for 12/09	\$1190.33
Funds used for 12/09 issue	-\$119.79
Balance remaining for 03/10 issue	\$1070.54

The Pilot is mailed **only to those who have returned the coupon to receive it by postal mail**. Those with e-mail may access the newsletter on the internet at www.mlrsinc.com/pawcatuck. Please continue to contribute \$5.00 for the publication of the newsletter. Send contributions to ML&RS, Inc at address to the left.

MEMOIRS OF A SNIPE ABOARD USS PAWCATUCK AO-108 1945-1950

BY THOMAS M. BLOOD, USN, PLANKOWNER
USS PAWCATUCK

Are We Having Fun Yet?

When it came time to do our job, (fueling) especially at sea, we really shined. There was lots to do by everyone aboard, from the bridge down to the lowest fireman. Truly an all hands involvement. I always admired the deck crew, if you did not know your job, and keep your wits about you, you could lose your life, your shipmate, or even the ship. One of the toughest positions must have been the winch man. These main cargo winches were reciprocating steam, which are by no means the smoothest peace of equipment in the world. Operated by long levers, they could not be stopped dead center, and had a forward-reversing lever, levers to engage the paws that locked in the capstan or cable drum, in addition to the brake and safety. Picture that with 300+ feet of cable tying a ship port and starboard, fueling under way, even under the best of sea conditions. When 2 ships are sailing close abeam, there is a point when a ventura effect is created trying to draw the 2 ships together. Hence the story of "Iron Mike and fueling at sea." Sound powered phones are used to communicate between the oil kings and orders coming down from the bridge, this you can imagine, is even more complex with 3 ships.

Must Be A Safer Way To Make A Living

A case in point: Once we had a carrier to port and a can to starboard. Things seemed to be going smoothly, and the Captain, under these conditions, would use Iron Mike (Auto Pilot). The gyro would send a correction signal after the course was set through a tube amplifier. These signals were generated by selsyn generators which in turn would drive selsyn motors and wound up operating a "telamotor" which in turn operated a steam valve, which drove a reciprocating steam engine, that turned a quadrant

connected to the rudder. Fighting the helm under normal conditions takes a very skilled helmsman, and is very fatiguing, hence the use of Iron Mike.

About half way through the operation, one of the amplifier tubes blew, and the 108 took a hard turn toward the Can. You talk about the "stuff" hitting the fan! Lines and hoses snapped like over stretched rubber bands and the Can kicked up her heels and was clear in minutes. The good part was that no one was hurt, and we didn't head for the carrier. The carrier could have never cleared in time and I hated to think of plowing into anything that big with a load of "av" gas, which, by the way, we were also pumping.

There was also a time while filling a cruiser, their oil king wasn't on the ball and her vents started spewing Bunker C and literally filled up the Captain's gig. In their haste to stop the flow of oil, they slammed the gate valve closed. This resulted in a huge bubble forming on their side just before it burst. Talk about a bunch of unhappy campers! It takes months to clean that stuff up, especially off white paint and out of wood bilges. You never really get rid of the smell.

The 108 was one of the first all-welded steel hulls. She was double hulled which gave her additional protection during war time or if she was hulled. Most folks unfamiliar with tankers don't realize that the main aft tanks carried Bunker C, which, by the way, is so thick it has to be heated in order to pump it, mid-ship tanks carried diesel, and the forward tanks held aviation gasoline. Then in our ammo lockers we had the ordnance necessary to protect ourselves while the fleet was off protecting each other.

Q. What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?

A. Old!

One of the things they taught us in boot camp was how to swim through burning Bunker C in the North Atlantic. What you were supposed to do was take a deep breath of this hot air, filled with burning oil fumes, dive under, swim as far as you could underwater, and keep repeating this process until you were clear of the area. Now this oil, "Bunker C", was the consistency of cold molasses even on a hot day, and in the cold North Atlantic, it was more like Asphalt just before it sets up. Remember, this stuff comes pretty close to the bottom of the petro-chemical chain, and still has a heck of a lot of "nasties" left in it. It would be enough to send the average green-peacer into environmental overload. You couldn't perform this swimming maneuver with a life jacket on, but I suppose the Red Cross was waiting on the outside perimeter with hot coffee, donuts and a chit to sign, deducting same from your pay if you managed to survive. Of course, they could always bill your survivors. I decided that I would head for the Salvation Army, an outfit which practiced what they preached. By the way, if you have never dipped yourself in the North Atlantic, then go down to your local wine merchant who has one of those liquid wine coolers that's big enough to immerse yourself in and do so. Then consider that the water under you is up to 5 miles deep and you have some idea of what lies ahead. Prepare to shake hands with Davy Jones. "And the men made 7 and 20 dishes for the big Jack Sharks and little fishes." John Masefield.

To be continued in future issues

**2010 USS PAWCATUCK
REUNION
MAY 3—6
SAN ANTONIO, TX
EL TROPICANO HOTEL**