

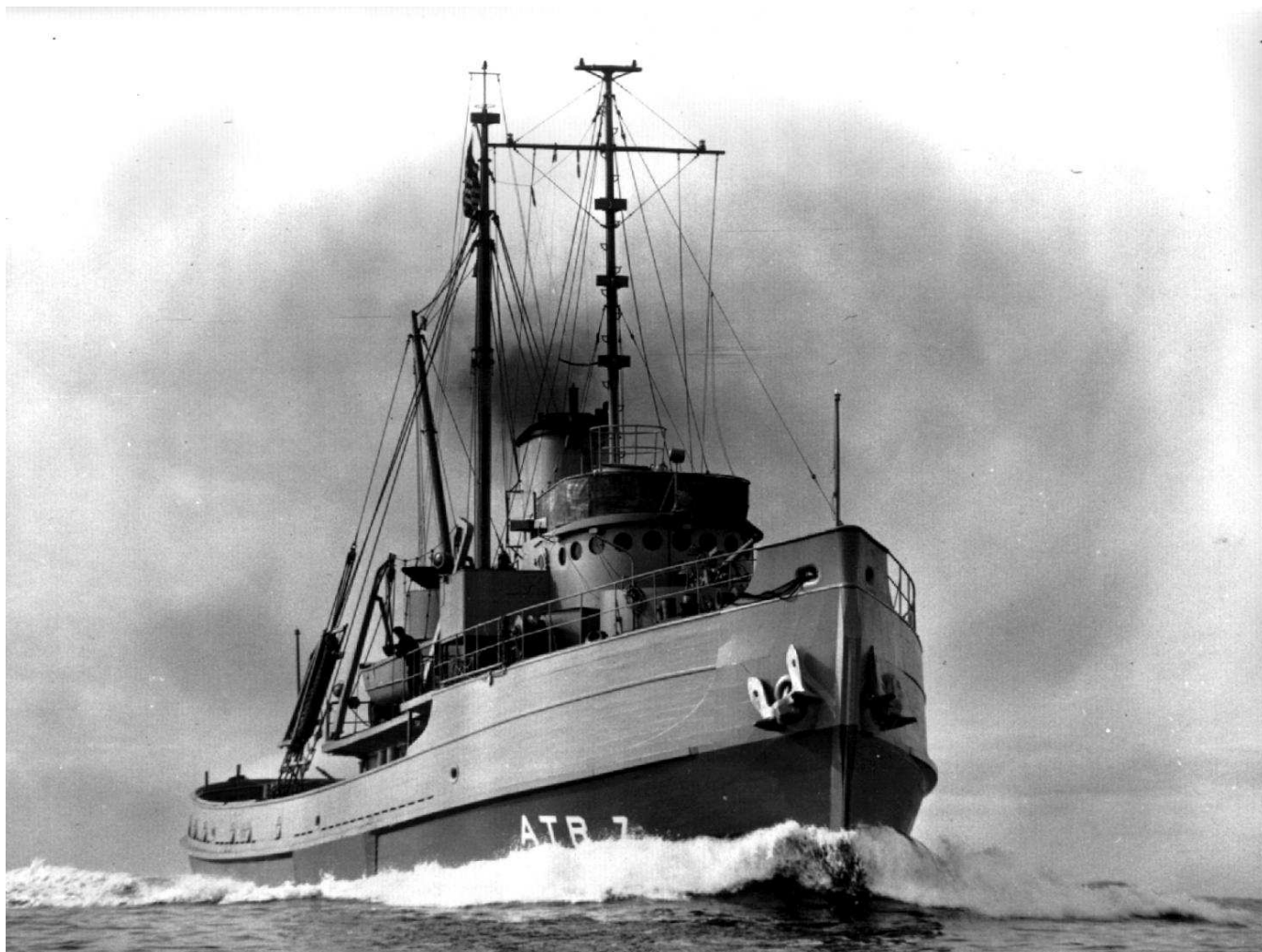
TOWLINE

April 2006

National Association of Fleet Tug Sailors

Inside

- ♦ Information on upcoming 17th Annual NAFTS Reunion
- ♦ Mactobi Memories
- ♦ Sinking of the Santa Maria
- ♦ The Basalt ARS
- ♦ Movie making in the 1950's
- ♦ ...and Much More!



ATR 7 during its trial runs in Boothbay Harbor Maine circa 1943-44. Scrapped in 1946 she had a short life.

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WWW.NAFTS.COM

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NAFTS is the National Association of Fleet Tug Sailors. A non-profit veteran's group made up of the men and women who served in the tugs and salvage ships of the United States Navy, Coast Guard, and Army any time since the first military tug was commissioned in the war between the States until the present.

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Towline Info.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FLEET TUG SAILORS

ATA ATF ATO ATR AT'S ARS ASR LT WATF WMEC YTB



DEDICATED TO ALL TUG & SALVAGE VESSEL SAILORS PAST & PRESENT

Standing Committee Chairmen**Historical***Neil Bjornsen***Law***Ralph Smith***Membership***Tom Thomas***Retail Sales***Harry Jaeger***Reunion***NAFTOURS Pres.***Towline***Rich Tetrault**Tom Thomas***Web Site***Tom Thomas**Rich Tetrault***NAFTS Membership**

Still only \$25.00/ year or join the "544" plan and get 5 years for the price of four!

Bring in a new member today.

As Before:

Big Thanks to *Charlie Thomas*
For the editing help!

Correction

Correction: In the last edition we incorrectly listed the date of the sinking of the USS Nauset (AT 89) on some pages. Nauset was sunk in 1943, not in 1944.

The editors regret the error.

Submit stories to:
Towline@NAFTS.com

Postal:

Rich Tetrault
Towline Material
216 Nesmith St. Suite 4
Lowell, MA 01852

Cover photograph: *ATR 7* The promised ATR/ATO edition is coming. The editors apologize to those that have given us their stories. Next issue, Promise!

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President's Corner

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Shipmates and Mates,

Once again, shipmates Rich Tetrault and Tom Thomas have assembled a great issue of TOWLINE for us. We are sorry the Postal Service takes so long to deliver the TOWLINE issues. It seems that each issue takes longer to arrive in our mailboxes. Perhaps this issue arrived quicker than the last one. Don't forget that each issue is made available at our great website, www.NAFTS.com. You will need your log-on and password to access it. Please send your stories and photos to TOWLINE. We need them to keep our magazine going. Also don't forget to send some photos to our website photo editor, Mike Turner.



We were saddened to hear that one of our founders has passed over the bar. George Kingston passed away at home in January. George would have been ninety in February. He was the organizer, president, chairman, and publicity man for NAFTS from its 1989 inception until 1999, when he chose to take a back seat role. We were blessed to have a leader with his energy and resources to bring an organization like ours to life. I, and many other shipmates, looked forward to joining George at the reunion hotel bar for a few drinks and many of George's war stories. A wonderful shipmate. We will miss him.

Harry and Shirley Jaeger, along with our contractor, Military Reunion Planners, have come up with an outstanding list of tours for the 2006 reunion. Also on the schedule is the world premier of the film "Tugs of War", by independent film maker Robin Williams. The film will be shown at our 2006 reunion banquet. Robin visited and interviewed many of our members to gain material for this film. He also visited our British counterpart organization, the Deep Sea Rescue Tugs, DSRTA.

We urge ship groups to plan their special activities for Friday evening at each NAFTS reunion. No other reunion activities are scheduled for Friday evenings to allow each ship group some time to do their "thing".

See you in San Mateo,
Dot says "Hi".

Notes From The Editors

Rich Tetrault & Tom Thomas

Email us at Towline@NAFTS.com

Send material to: Rich Tetrault 216 Nesmith St. Suite 4 Lowell MA 01852

Ahoy Tuggers!

Well, we'd like to thank all of you who wrote to compliment us on our first edition as Towline Editors. We appreciate your kind words. We'd also like to extend our thanks to our helpers, associate editors Bill Cowles and Rick Koenig for their assistance in pulling together this issue.

And one last thanks to those of you who sent in stories for future editions. Without the tugger tales sent in by our readers the TOWLINE would be meaningless. Thankfully, some of you have heeded our requests and sent us some fine material which we will use in the upcoming editions. We'd like to point out that our story selections are determined by the needs of the TOWLINE, but we also try to stick to the order in which we receive the tales from our members. So, if you sent us something and it hasn't been used yet, rest assured that we still have it and will use it in a future issue.

One other quick point. As we said in our last issue, Tom is a Snipe and Rich is a Boatswain-mate, so typing was never a part of our job descriptions. So, if there is any way that you can send your stories to us via email it makes things 1000% easier. We don't want to discourage anybody from sending us material through the regular old U.S. Mail. It's certainly acceptable and won't delay your story from being published, but text sent through email can simply be manipulated by us with our software and we don't have to re-type the whole shebang. Our Associate Editors took up the slack this issue and retyped a couple of stories for us. Thanks guys!

On a sadder note, NAFTS longtime charter member George Kingston has passed away. We are assembling material for a notice about George in the next edition.

This edition has some nice stories from our members. John Ackerman has written an informative tale about ARS construction during WWII. There's a nice story about life aboard Mactobi (ATF 105) and another tale about Lipan (ATF 85) and the filming of the movie "South Pacific", with three reports from crewmembers. Also, we have a Mataco (ATF 86) story about the sinking of the "Santa Maria" and we have a nice smattering of other articles for you.

Be sure to check out the info on the upcoming October NAFTS Reunion in San Mateo California. What a great way to combine an enjoyable fun-filled vacation, at a reasonable price, and also connect with your shipmates. A Two-fer.

Ok, mates, keep those cards and letters coming. You can contact us online at:

TOWLINE@NAFTS.com

You can call Tom for free with NAFTS 1-800 number (1-866 652-2038). He's out in Bend Oregon so try to guesstimate the Port Coast time when he'll be on watch. Rich can be reached at his home phone (978 459-5334) and he's in Lowell Massachusetts so he's using Starboard Coast time See you next edition.



P.S. We're looking for a member that has Microsoft Access database on their computer and would like to do some updating for us on the Smith list of ships. Any takers?

MOCTOBI MEMORIES

An EM's Tour Of Duty on an ATF
Spring 1976 to Feb 1981
By Jerry O'Connor

The article on the USS Quapaw by ET2 Joseph Siesel in the December 2003 issue of *Towline* inspired me to write about my tour of duty aboard the USS Moctobi about the same time.

Back in 1976 when the USS Moctobi (ATF-105) was home-ported and moored near the Naval Reserve Center in Everett, WA. There was no other Navy ship or activity in Everett. In the 1980s and 1990s, Everett's waterfront was built up for a major naval station, with plans for an aircraft carrier and several support ships based there. The crew of the Moctobi could not foresee that Everett would become a major naval station with many ships and support from active Navy and civilian personnel. Yet the Moctobi and crew were the center of naval activity in Everett from October 1976 to May 1980.

While the Moctobi was home-ported in Everett for just over 3 ½ years, we were referred to as "McHale's Navy." The nearest naval support facility was Sandpoint Naval Station in the 13th Naval District, some 20 miles south of Everett. This had been my duty station while I was on light duty recovering from a leg-knee injury. I checked with my detailer to find a billet on a ship in the district and found there were openings for an EM1 on an ATF and a minesweeper. I drove up to check out the ships and upon arrival found that the chief engineer on the Moctobi was a former crewmate of mine, Dick Schamp. He'd moved up from an MM1 when we served on USS Constellation (CVA-64) and was now a CWO. Even though I had served on the very same minesweeper that had an opening, I made an instant decision to request duty on the Moctobi and within a week I had re-

ported aboard as senior electrician's mate.

The ship got underway for sea duty for reserve training on weekends and a two-week tour a couple of times a year. The Moctobi also towed targets, barges, and mothballed or decommissioned ships. We increased our manpower for longer trips by using Navy Reservists. This made it easier on the full-time crew for the underway watch schedules.

I relieved EN2 Berry when I came aboard, and my first-class reserve electrician was Buzz Costa, who owned and operated Bee Electric in Everett. He taught me a lot about troubleshooting electrical systems. Buzz retired from the Reserves before the Moctobi shifted homeports to Long Beach, CA.

Moctobi did her yearly towing-salvage-firefighting training in 1978 near San Diego and Imperial Beach. We moored at 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego, which was a large, busy, and congested naval base. While there, we went aboard a mothballed fleet tug, USS Chimariko (ATF-154), to look her over and compare her to the Moctobi class tugs. Her Allis-Chalmers DC



Moctobi Crew manning the rail. Photo from Mike Turner.

electrical propulsion system was different from our Westinghouse system. She also had four smaller DC propulsion motors, whereas the Mochtobi class had one large 3,000 HP Westinghouse motor. Shortly after we went aboard the Chimariko, the tug was towed out to sea and used for firefighting training for the Mochtobi, USS Quapaw (ATF-110), and USS Takelma (ATF-113). The Mochtobi and another ATF also did salvage training by pulling the Chimariko off Imperial Beach. After completing this salvage exercise, we returned to Everett in 1978.

In February and March of 1979 we were in San Francisco and San Diego to tow a mothballed ship.

During the summer of 1979 we got underway for a two-week Naval Reserve training evolution in Puget Sound. We enjoyed the warmer summer temperatures and ports of call such as Port Townsend, Port Angeles, Port Hadlock, Blaine, India Island Naval Ammunition Depot, and Vancouver, B.C., Canada. While at India Island, the gunner's mates offloaded the ships ammunition and arms in preparation for our scheduled five-month overhaul in Marine Power Shipyard, Seattle.

The Anchor Tavern in Everett was one of the main hangouts for the crew while home-ported there, as it was for the longshoremen and crew



Mochtobi training on hulk of USS Chimariko. Photo taken from USS Quapaw ATF 110 and submitted by Joe Siesel.



ATF 105 Mochtobi with her beach gear rigged.

from the Foss tug boats. We had welcome home parties and potluck dinners there upon arriving back in port. We were always treated special there, and the crew gave the owners some good business. Mochtobi had a few Christmas parties at the American Legion and VFW halls. U.S. Senator "Scoop" Jackson lived in Everett and visited the Mochtobi several times.

I also remember the Everett Salty Days celebration in June. The younger crewmembers were into the disco scene that was popular at the time.

One notable thing was the floating logs that always surrounded the Mochtobi at the waterfront. Large ships from the Orient constantly loaded up with hemlock and Douglas fir logs and some of these inevitably managed to find their way into the waters. Smaller tugs would have to push the logs away from the Mochtobi when we had to get underway.

The ship and crew made the front page of the Everett Herald in the summer of 1979 when the port used our firefighting capabilities to help extinguish an intense fire in a paper storage building located on a pier made of creosote-treated timbers. We made use of the large deck nozzles to fight the fire for several hours before it was put out.

In May 1980 the ship and crew moved south to a



A crew member boards the training hulk while Quapaw and Moctobi operate their monitors.

new homeport at Long Beach California Naval Station where we became part of DESRON 37, a reserve squadron made up of older destroyers and our fleet tug. After this homeport change, we operated along the coast from San Francisco down to San Diego. Quapaw and Takelma were also home-ported at Long Beach, and we all moored at the same piers in Long Beach. Long Beach had been downsized to a Naval Support Activity until it was upgraded in 1980 to a full Naval Station with several ships home-ported there. That level of activity was the reason there were three fleet tugs stationed there.

Moctobi and sister ATFs went to Pearl Harbor Hawaii in 1980 for towing, salvage, and fire-fighting training. We moored at the Alpha Piers at the naval station near Hickham Air Force Base. (Ed. Note: Hickham was one of the key targets during the attack on Pearl Harbor at the start of WWII.) This was a homecoming of sorts since it was the same pier where these ships had been home-ported for many years.

The ship we used for firefighting and salvage training was the ex-USS Cree (ATF-84). The Cree had been damaged while towing targets for planes when a bomb missed its target and had enough speed to hit the forward gyro room just above the waterline. During our time in Hawaii, the Cree was beached near Pearl City for use in salvage exercises.

Some of the newer *ATFs at the Alpha Piers were built in the 1950s and we were interested to note that they had incorporated some engineering changes. They had 9000 HP dual direct drive diesels with variable pitch propellers, and reduction gears between the shaft and engines.

In late 1980 the Moctobi towed two ex-ATFs, the Ute and Lipan, from San Francisco to Naval Station Rodman, Panama for the Coast Guard. A USNS ATF from the Atlantic Fleet continued the tow through the canal to Curtis Bay, Maryland. The Moctobi earned a U.S. Coast Guard Unit Commendation for this month-long tow to the Panama Canal. We spent several weeks in December 1980 returning to Long Beach after dropping off this tow.

Shortly after this, I decided to return to civilian life in Everett, WA. I transferred off the Moctobi in February 1981 and left the Navy a short time later. But this was not the last time I'd see these ATFs. Around 1985 I discovered that the Moctobi, Quapaw and Takelma were moored in the mothball inactive fleet in Bremerton, WA. Sometime later private owners purchased two of the tugs and a South American Navy obtained another. As of this writing, the Moctobi and one sister ship were still afloat near Richmond, CA. They are not in use and their future looks bleak, with frequent pumping of the bilges necessary.

A few years ago I visited the Anchor Tavern in Everett again and noted that the picture of the Moctobi on the wall was gone.

I'd like to dedicate this story to the memory of BMCN Larry Catron who served on the Moctobi for two tours of duty, Feb 1974 to July 1975 and Aug 1976 to Aug 1979. He passed on in December 2003 in Stanwood, WA.

** Editors Note*

We believe Jerry meant to say "ATS" here.

NAFTS 2006 Reunion

San Mateo, CA ~ October 12-16, 2006

This is it – a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your shipmates in one of the most beautiful areas of the country. You'll be staying at the incredible San Mateo Marriott Hotel. Warm and sunny, San Mateo County on the San Francisco Peninsula is graced with natural scenic beauty and an incredible variety of activities that would be hard to match elsewhere. San Mateo County is the location of the San Francisco International Airport and is just 30 minutes away from downtown San Francisco. Picturesque Monterey, Yosemite and the Napa Valley wine country are also nearby. On the ocean side, one can participate in a unique elephant seal or whale watching adventure or stroll the miles of unspoiled beaches and magnificent redwoods. Historic mansions, museums, lighthouses and important landmarks of the county's fascinating past will delight history lovers. Gorgeous natural scenery, attractions, showplace homes and colorful fields and gardens offer a feast for the eyes.

The reunion officially runs from Thursday, October 12th through Monday, October 16th. We will be staying at the fabulous San Mateo Marriott which is located at 1770 South Amphlett Blvd., San Mateo, California 94402. (Do **NOT** book reservations on-line but use the 800 number below, else the NAFTS pricing will not apply). This full service hotel offers a fitness center, a heated pool, restaurant, espresso bar and room service. The room rate is just \$85 per night and includes a complimentary breakfast buffet in the California Grill (Limit of two per room). For those of you driving to the reunion, the hotel offers plenty of complimentary self parking. If you are flying into SFO the hotel has a free shuttle from 5:30 am–10:30 pm. Call them from the baggage claim area before you collect your luggage.

Please make your hotel reservations NOW by calling the hotel directly at **800-556-8972** from 7 am -11pm. When you call for reservations be sure to ask to be associated with the NAFTS Reunion group at the \$85 rate. Please keep in mind that because San Francisco is on Pacific Time, you may experience jet lag. Consider coming in a day or two early to adjust to the time change. Note that the Alcatraz tour is on the morning of the 12th. Flights returning eastward leave early in the day and then not again generally until late evening - make your plans accordingly. Group room rates should be honored 3 days prior and 2 days after the reunion.

It's very important that we get an idea how many are coming, so please book your hotel today! You may cancel your hotel room later and not be charged. Due to the popularity of this area the hotel may sell out – additional rooms will be more expensive. This room rate is valid until the rooms are gone or September 11th, whichever comes first. Ask the hotel for driving directions if needed. New this year – Reunion Reservations may also be made on-line with a credit card at: **www.NAFTS.com/ReunionIndex.htm**. A Reunion Roster will also be posted on this site as well as up to the minute changes and additional information.

We look forward to seeing you in San Mateo!

Reunion Event Information

Event A - Alcatraz & Fisherman's Wharf Tour: Thu. Oct 12th ~ 9-4 \$55.00/Person

Early birds will enjoy a visit to "the Rock" (www.nps.gov/alcatraz). Cruise over to the infamous and notorious former federal prison - home to the likes of Al Capone, George "Machine Gun" Kelly, and Robert "The Birdman" Stroud. The National Park Service presents a captioned orientation video with historical footage, self-guided walks, exhibits and Ranger-interpretive talks on topics such as "Famous Escapes." Also featured is an award-winning audio tour (not included in tour price) of the prison Cell House with actual interviews of former guards and inmates. To reach the Cell House, you must walk up a steep hill. A limited seating "tram" is available for wheelchair users and visitors with a mobility need who are unable to walk up the quarter mile, 12% grade hill. Along the way, you can stop and visit exhibits, see a variety of buildings that were used for various prison uses, and enjoy some of the most spectacular views of San Francisco and the Golden Gate. Cruising back to Fisherman's Wharf you will have 1 ¾ hours for lunch on your own and browsing, before returning to the hotel.

Welcome Reception: Thu. Oct 12th ~ 7pm Complimentary

Join your mates and kickoff the 2006 Reunion with beer/wine and light hors d'oeuvres.

Event B - San Francisco City Tour: Fri. Oct 13th ~ 9-4 \$45.00/Person

Relax as you start the day with a driver narrated riding city tour of all the famous sites of the City by the Bay. You'll see the Presidio overlooking San Francisco Bay and Alcatraz before crossing the spectacular Golden Gate Bridge to stop at Vista Point North. We stop atop Twin Peaks for a panoramic view and also famous Cliff House stopping for a seaside view of the Pacific Ocean. You will then have a some time to explore on your own to ride a Cable Car, see Fisherman's Wharf, Ghiradelli Square, etc. Lunch is on your own.

FRIDAY NIGHT Has Been Set Aside For Individual Ship Events. Watch NAFTS Website for updated postings.

Event C - USS Hornet Museum & Jack London Square: Sat. Oct 14th ~ 9-3 \$35.00/Person

The aircraft carrier USS Hornet is a national treasure, having participated in two of the greatest events of the 20th century – WWII and the Apollo 11 manned space mission. Now peacefully moored at historic Alameda Point on San Francisco Bay, the USS Hornet is a timeless memorial to those who defended our American values and to those who have pursued America's technological advancements. Whether its mission was projecting military might in times of war or supporting technological achievements in space exploration, the USS Hornet has maintained a "Heritage of Excellence" (www.uss-hornet.org).

For those that may desire less time visiting the ship (or not at all) you may opt to spend some of your time in the beautiful, vibrant waterfront area known as Jack London Square.

(www.jacklondonsquare.com) -one of the nation's most distinctive and the Bay Area's most beloved destinations - a dynamic destination buzzing with restaurants, shops, outdoor markets, entertainment, special events. Lunch is on your own. Our bus will make 2 shuttle runs for those on the Hornet to come to the Square for lunch.

NAFTS Board Meeting: Oct 14 ~ Evening *(Subject to change Watch NAFTS Web Site)*

NAFTS Business Meeting: Sun. Oct 15 ~ 8 am

The annual business meeting will take place in the Hospitality room.

Event D - Presidential Yacht Bay Cruise: Sun. Oct 15th ~ 10-4 \$60.00/Person

A narrated San Francisco Bay cruise is always nice but cruising on a presidential yacht is a rare opportunity. First built in 1934 as the 165 foot Coast Guard cutter Electra, then re-commissioned as a Navy ship the USS Potomac served as FDR's private presidential yacht. (www.usspotomac.org) Docents will be on board to interpret and demonstrate, while the Captain narrates the cruise itself. This is a private charter just for you! (This tour cannot operate without a minimum of 85 people – Lunch is on your own at Jack London Square. You'll have a little time for a quick bite before the cruise departs at noon.)

Banquet Dinner: Sun. Oct 15th ~ 5:30 pm \$35.00/

In the hotel Ballroom, cocktails start at 5:30 with dinner at 6:30. Make your dinner selection on your Reservation Form. Those failing to make a choice will be served chicken.

A special treat after dinner will be the movie premiere of "Mayday – Tugs of War."

Farewell Breakfast: Monday, October 16th ~ 8:00 am *(complimentary for hotel guest)*

Join us for a farewell breakfast in the *California Grill*. The buffet is complimentary for guests of the hotel. Last chance to say your goodbyes until next year in St Louis.

Tour Cancellation Insurance \$8.00

Protect yourself from unforeseen expenses caused by sickness, injury, medical emergency, or any other causes that impact your travel plans. This insurance enables a refund of Tour & Banquet expenses up until three (3) days before the start of your reunion. If you need to cancel – please call our office immediately (817-251-3551) for a cancellation number. If you have not purchased cancellation insurance all tour and meal money is non-refundable 6 weeks prior to the reunion.

Note: Due to the time zone change, jet lag is a major reality for those traveling from the east. Please consider coming in early (ex. Wednesday) to allow your body time to adjust. Tour and event times and schedule are subject to change. Please review the updated itinerary when you arrive at the reunion for finalized times.

NEW THIS YEAR: You may now make your Tour & Event reservations on-line using a credit card. Click on the Reunion button at **www.NAFTS.com** to find the link.

Johnny We hardly Knew Ye

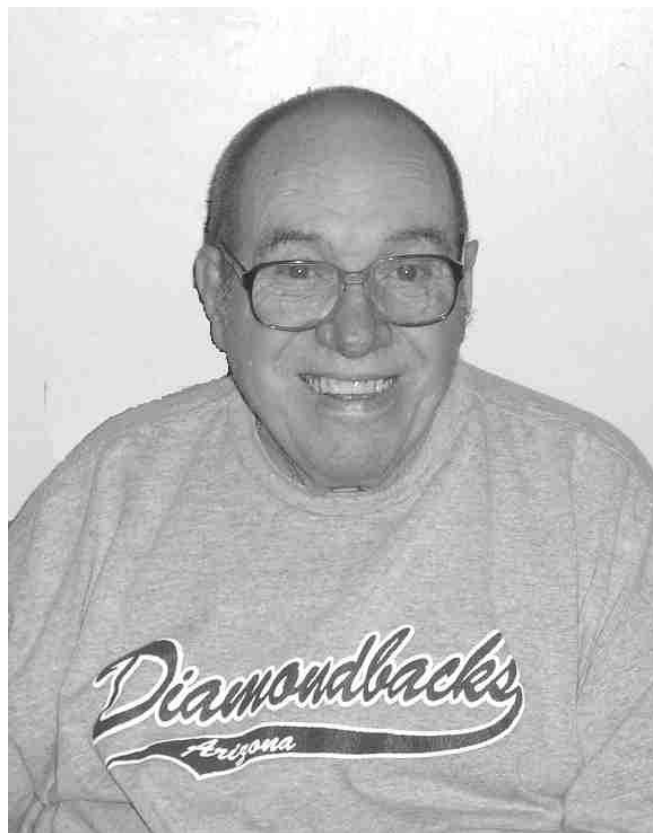
NAFTS lost some good friends recently and their passing was a shock to many of us. Long-time NAFTS official, George Kingston, will be highlighted in our next edition as we gather more information on him. We also lost Atakapajack. "Who is Atakapajack", you might ask? That's the Internet name used by NAFTS member John Wilson, of the USS Atakapa (ATF 149), who passed away just three days before Christmas on December 22nd. Jack's wife, Marnee, and his daughters, Jenny and Laura, have our deepest sympathies.

Salvage sailors are a special breed. Life aboard a small ship instills traits that some carry throughout their lives. We depended upon one another constantly and the act of lending a helping hand was second nature. Jack Wilson carried that trait throughout his life. He was always there to help, even if it was just a smile that you needed. Jack was very involved in re-uniting members of Atakapa and was a stalwart at NAFTS. When you emailed Atakapajack with a request you got a quick response with results.

We met Jack at the NAFTS San Diego Reunion in 2000. Jack rode a wheelchair. It was the only reunion Jack attended due to his health concerns. Medical issues could not suppress Jack's personality or drive. Jack had a stroke in 1988 but it didn't stop him. He was back at work when he was struck by a car a year later and it resulted in the amputation of his right leg. Then a year later he suffered a major heart attack that left him with just 25% of his heart functioning. In '91 he had another major stroke that left him paralyzed on his left side. Over the years he had a series of further strokes.

Despite his medical problems Jack was adamant that he was going to San Diego and his daughter, Laura, accompanied him. It was a true joy to meet Jack personally. His personality was ten feet tall. Laura summed up her thoughts of her dad in an email to us:

"My Dad was my rock, my faith in good and my desire to share with others. To give freely without need to receive and enjoy tremendously the simplicity of it all. I absolutely love life and always have a



great time living. I owe that to my Dad. He was so beautiful. He wore his spirit on his sleeve and never had to say a word. Yet somehow you always felt welcome, comfortable and happy around my Dad. The gleam in his eye was playful and devious enough to say hang on we're going for a ride and boy are we going to have fun!"

Jack's daughter, Jenny added these words in an email to us:

My father was my best friend and partner in crime. Even more though, he was my hero. The epitome of courage and strength in the face of adversity. No matter what the obstacle, my father pushed forward and gave everything that he had without complaint or question. His determination never ceased to amaze me and it was something that shined through in everything that he did. He was the most thoughtful and giving person I have ever known and he was always there with a smile and a quip when someone was feeling down.... he always put others before himself. I feel so very blessed and proud to be able to say that I am Jack's daughter. It is an honor, along with the love and memories, that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Jack was hard-core NAFTS. He loved this organization that put him back in touch with his Navy days. He had rediscovered a part of his life that he thought was forever gone. Again, in Laura's email, she detailed her father's feelings:

"When he found NAFTS he was so excited. He loved NAFTS. In fact going through his stuff I find that every other paper in the pile was something from NAFTS. He had articles around his office and we all had bumper stickers on our cars. In fact when the bumper stickers would fade he would make sure we had a new one on by putting it on himself. He absolutely loved the reunion in San Diego. If it wasn't for the DR telling him no flying he would have been at every one there after. By finding NAFTS and his shipmates from the Atakapa he had a new found pride and happiness about his time in the Navy. A big thank you to all at NAFTS for the happiness you brought to Dad's life. He really enjoyed you guys!



Smiling, Jack looks over the Shipstores at the NAFTS 2000 Reunion in San Diego.

Jack will be sadly missed by his family and his shipmates at NAFTS. He was an inspiration to all and a joy to know. His ship has sailed on, but in the following words written by a Bishop Brent many years ago we can find comfort.

A ship sails and I stand watching till she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says She is gone.

Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as large now as when I last saw her. Her diminished size and total loss from my sight is in me, not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at my side says she is gone there are others who are watching her coming over their horizon and other voices take up a glad shout There she comes!

That is what dying is. A horizon and just the limit of our sight. Lift us up, Oh Lord, that we may see further.



The Basalt ARS

In the last edition of TOWLINE we ran a photo story of an ARS tow from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to Yokosuka, Japan, submitted by NAFTS member Lt. Commander John Ackerman. John, who was skipper of the USS Conserver (ARS 39), also offered us an article on the venerable ARS design and its construction by "The Basalt Rock Company" of Napa California. How did a quarry that produced crushed stone and cement end up launching over two dozen WWII era salvage ships? Commander Ackerman was intrigued and researched the tale and sent us the following excellent story on the birth of the Basalt ARS.

The builders plaque read, "Constructed by Basalt Rock Company, Napa California." Napa, California, seems to me a very strange place to be building ships. That's what I thought when I reported aboard USS Conserver (ARS-39) in early May 1984. Why did a rock company end up building what many of us hold as being one of the best (if not the best) class of salvage ship ever produced by an American shipbuilder? It is a story of good old American resourcefulness, ingenuity, and the patriotic efforts of a large work force. The Basalt organization was proud of what it accomplished, and anyone who has ever served on an ARS built by Basalt will understand exactly how much pride went into their construction.

The story begins in 1923 in Napa, where Basalt was founded. The company produced crushed rock, used in road construction. Basalt also produced the concrete mixes that were used on the roads. The original operation was small. The company operated a small quarry, with 8 employees operating a small crusher. The rock was hand loaded onto a horse-drawn dump cart and delivered to the crusher, where it was processed and shipped to construction sites throughout California. Under the leadership of one Mr. Albert Streblow, the company's president from 1924 until his death in 1963, the company grew rapidly. In 1924, it was incorporated and named Basalt Rock Company. The name Basalt was

chosen because the rock was basalt and the deposit in the quarry was quite large. In 1930, Basalt expanded operations at its Napa facility by adding facilities for producing ready-mix and asphaltic concrete and concrete block. In the mid-1930s, Basalt began producing large stone materials, referred to as "rip-rap," which was used to provide riverbank protection throughout California. Rip-rap was also the main material for manufacturing jetties and breakwaters. Basalt provided material for the rock wall that formed Treasure Island, the breakwater at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, and the jetty at Alameda Naval Air Station to mention but a few.

The breakwater business presented a major logistics problem for Basalt because the rip-rap was quarried and processed in Napa, it needed to be transported down the Napa River to San Francisco and then on to the construction sites. The obvious answer was to use barges to transport the material, so Basalt built two wooden barges and purchased two tugboats to tow the barges down river. It soon became apparent that wooden barges, while suitable for the job, leaked badly and were damaged on the trips, resulting in high maintenance costs. To Mr. Streblow, the answer was obvious: steel barges were needed. Having no experience or manpower qualified to build steel barges; Basalt sought to contract the construction of the barges. Bids were received, but the price far exceeded what the company was willing to pay.



The Basalt Shipbuilding facilities immediately after WWII

Mr. Streblow decided that Basalt would build the steel replacement barges, and in 1938, the company purchased a plot of land adjacent to the quarry operations. On this land, Basalt built a very modest facility where it could construct the barges. A group of welders from the quarry maintenance shop and a few other technical and mechanical employees were transferred to the new barge building facility. These employees became the nucleus of what would soon become the shipbuilding division of Basalt Rock Company.

The barges did the job superbly. As a matter of fact, they were so successful that the U. S. Navy became aware of the company's accomplishment. Awareness soon turned to interest, which in turn produced a query to see if Basalt would be interested in building a number of ocean going cargo

barges for the Navy. Basalt was indeed interested, and submitted bids. The bids were approved and the contracts were awarded. Thus began a long and successful relationship with the navy.

After successfully executing the barge construction contract, the Navy once again approached Basalt with the comment, "You country boys have figured out how to produce a simple hull, now are you ready to graduate to self-propelled vessels?" One must remember that Napa in the late 1930s was primarily an agricultural area with a population of about 8000 people. Mr. Streblow replied with a resounding "Yes," and Basalt was on its way!

Drydocks and sea walls were constructed on the little barge construction site along with machine shops, a mold loft, and fabrication facilities.



An ARS under construction at Basalt.

The first two ships Basalt built were yard oilers (YOs), but not without some important lessons learned. Basalt had bid \$1 million each to build the ships, but it cost them \$2 million each. To put it in Al Streblow's words, "Lessons were being learned - the hard way!" Undaunted, the company pushed on and through experience, became more efficient at building self-propelled vessels.

Subsequently, two other vessel types were built at Basalt: mine layers and salvage ships, the ARS. The ARS became the predominant ship constructed by Basalt, and through hard work and dedication, Basalt became the lead yard for engineering of ARS vessels being built around the country. By the end of World War II, Basalt had built no less than 28 ARS type ships and was awarded several Army-Navy "E"s for excellence of war production. In addition to the 28 ARS types, Basalt also built a number of the British version (BARS) of the hull.

The ships were constructed in one of Basalt's three drydocks. The keels were laid in the docks and most of the materials were pre-fabricated in a mold loft and then moved to assembly areas. The assembled components were then transported to the drydock for final assembly.

The entire construction process took place in three basic phases. Phase one took place in the dock and produced the hull and superstructure.

Major propulsion machinery was installed during phase 1. The phase culminated with the ship being launched. The launching, with its appropriate pump and circumstance took place by flooding the dock and floating the ship off her keel blocks. Then the dock floodgates were opened and the ship was moved out of the dock to a berth at the quay wall where phase 2 began.

Phase 2 completed the construction process and partially outfitted the ship. A complete outfitting and sea trial couldn't take place because the maximum depth of the Napa River between Napa and Oakland was approximately 10 feet. A fully outfitted and loaded ARS drew about 14 feet! So the outfitting accomplished in phase 2 was limited to that which resulted in a ship draft of 10 feet or less. At this point, the ship was ready to be moved to San Francisco or Oakland for builders trials, final outfitting, acceptance, and commissioning, which heralded the beginning of Phase 3.

Using a shipyard crew Basalt's pilot, Captain



The birth of USS Conserver (ARS 39)

Harry Lent, would navigate the ship down the Napa River to a berth at pier 42 in San Francisco, where they would take on fuel and stores. Under the auspices of the Board of Inspection and Survey, the ship would undergo builder's trials in San Francisco Bay. When the builder's trials were completed, the ship berthed at the Naval Air Station Alameda, where final outfitting was completed. From there, the ship was commissioned into active service and began an intensive training and workup period before being sent to the operating theatres of World War II.



USS Bolster (ARS 38) on sea trials after Basalt construction



The Basalt facilities circa 1980

USS Grasp

Decommissioned

In case you missed it, the Navy has decommissioned one of its last surviving salvage ships, the USS Grasp (ARS 51). Grasp won't be cut up into razor blades just yet, however, and after an outfitting it will go back into service with the Military Sealift Command (MSC) to be operated by a much smaller civilian crew with a handful of Navy-types aboard. The following announcement is by Journalist 3rd Class Davis J. Anderson, Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic.

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) -- The rescue and salvage ship USS Grasp (ARS 51) was decommissioned after 20 years of service and transferred to Military Sealift Command (MSC) in a ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek Jan. 19.

Past and present crew members attended the 11 a.m. ceremony to say farewell to the ship.

"There's always a little bit of sadness at the end of a career," said Grasp's executive officer Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Chicoine, "at the same time, people are looking forward to the next part of their life."

As a U.S. Navy ship, Grasp had a crew of approximately 100 Sailors. As an MSC asset, the ship will now have a crew of 26 civilian mariners and four enlisted military personnel.

According to many on board, the relatively small crew enabled them to come together more so than on other ships.

"There's only about 100 Sailors here," said Gunner's Mate First Class (SW) Deshawn Carter, chief master at arms and weapons and force protection leading petty officer for the ship. "We just came off a six-month deployment," said Carter, "more than anything it's difficult to leave such a tight knit group."

Grasp's senior enlisted advisor, Master Chief Engineman (SW) Scott Sheldon, echoed this sentiment.

"It's a lot more personal here (aboard Grasp)," said Sheldon. "You get to know everybody. You have your agreements and disagreements."

"These last two-and-a-half years onboard Grasp have been the highlight of my career," said Cmdr. Brian Moum, Grasp's last commanding officer.

Following decommissioning, Grasp will enter an extensive maintenance period during which it will be converted for operation by the civilian mariners.

After the shipyard period, the ship will begin a training phase designed to provide the ship's civilian crew with experience operating with embarked military mobile diving and salvage units. Additional changes to the engineering plant and bridge equipment will allow operation by the smaller civilian crew.



USS Grasp (ARS 51) underway.

THE SINKING OF THE SANTA MARIA

NAFTS member Rudy Williamson (USS Mataco ATF 86 ~ 1947) sent us the following story about the sinking of the vessel, Santa Maria, and Mataco's involvement in the rescue. The story is a composite of articles from 1948 Guam News stories edited by *Bill Cowles* and *Rick Koenig*.

Bringing a tale of heroism at sea, and of a third mate who gave his life in saving another man, 14 battered and weary survivors of the Motorship Santa Maria were brought into Guam by the Navy Tug Mataco. Two men died in the tragic sinking.

The crashing of heavy seas over the converted yacht, carrying a cargo of Christmas liquor to Yokohama, washed men overboard and was described by the group, who had been picked out of the sea after their ship suddenly heeled over and went down Friday about 750 miles NE of Guam.

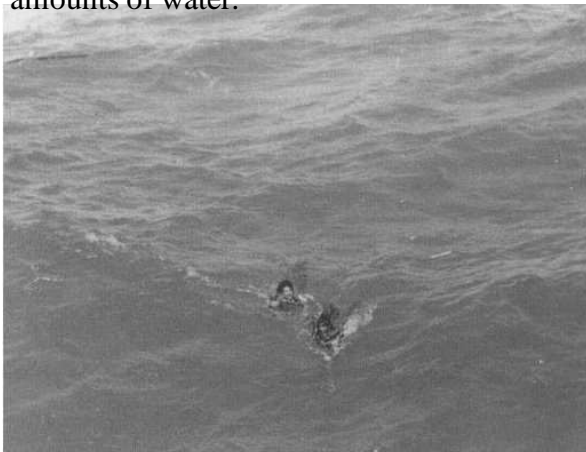
The Santa Maria first radioed for help and medical aid when it reported three crew members suffering fractures, and the ship filling with water faster than it could be pumped out. Planes from the 20th Air Force sped to the scene, hovering over the ship to give directions in case the crew was forced into the sea before rescue vessels arrived. Other planes took life rafts and boats.

The Navy transports, Breckenridge and President Jackson, sped to the scene, as did the Navy tug Mataco. The sinking came only a few minutes after Santa Maria radioed emergency repairs had been made by the crew and it was proceeding toward Guam at 8.5 knots, accompanied by the President Jackson and Mataco. The Breckenridge, enroute from Guam to San Francisco, resumed its course east.

Sinking of Santa Maria Described By Engineer Who Tells of Last Hour

An eye witness account of the events leading to the eventual sinking of Santa Maria was given by Nathaniel Estrada of Los Angeles in an exclusive interview Sunday with Guam news.

Second Engineer aboard the 180-foot converted pleasure yacht, Estrada told how the ship had radioed for medical aid after one of its crew members had been washed overboard and injured. The Santa Maria was proceeding to Guam at the time to take on supplies prior to sailing for Yokohama. Although winds were in the vicinity of 80 knots the seas were heavy and the ship was drawing large amounts of water.



Crewmembers in the water after the sinking of the Santa Maria.



Debris in the stormy water.

With arrival of the rescue ships Breckenridge, Pres. Jackson and the fleet tug Mataco, the Santa Maria was deemed operable enough to continue to Guam.

During the trip Estrada said he had just finished making a check of the engines and was on the main deck when he noticed a sharp list to port. Shortly a large wave washed him overboard. He managed to swim to a raft from which he saw the ship heel over on it's side and sink. Others aboard the stricken ship had meanwhile abandoned ship and were clinging to drums and debris in the choppy sea. They were rescued by the Mataco, Estrada was picked up by the USS President Jackson.

Heroic Action of 3rd Mate Aaron Tallaksen of Frosti Arendal, Norway

3rd mate, Aaron Tallaksen, 32, of Frosti Arendal, Norway had already been picked up from the stormy waters, and was safe aboard the tug Mataco. A net had been rigged over the stern of the tug for survivors to cling to until others were able to haul them aboard. One of these men, struggling in the water was unable to reach it. Tallaksen dove back in the water with a line, tied it around the exhausted man and signaled the crew of the tug to lift him aboard. Turning, he swam toward the net, and reached for it. As the tug rolled in the heavy seas, the net was lifted just out of Tallaksen's grasp. Rolling back, the stern of the tug struck Tallaksen on the head and forced him under the surface. He was not seen again.

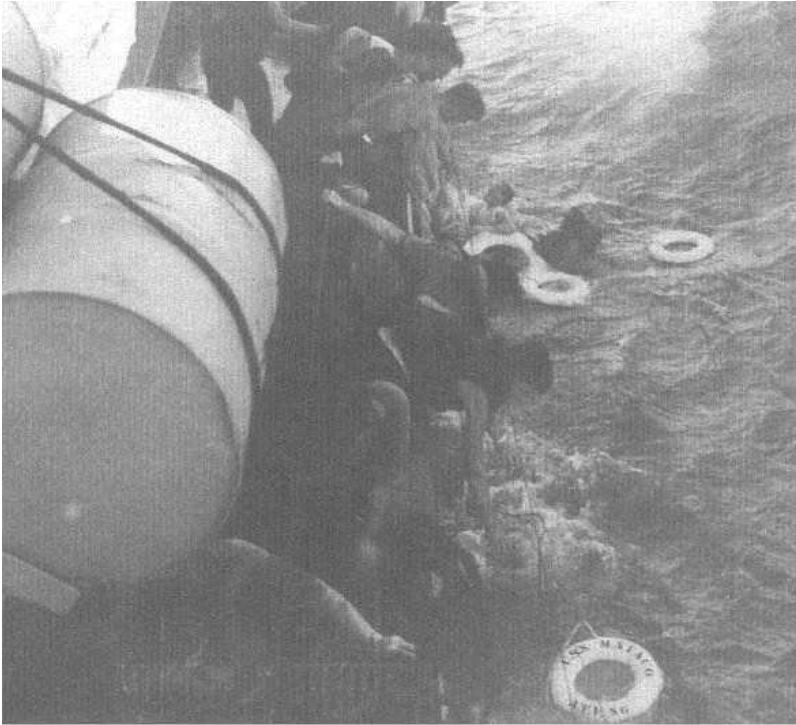


Three photos of the burial at sea of Santa Maria sailor Francisco Reyes. In the above photo "last words" are being given by Mataco's CO and the CO of the MV Santa Maria. The photo below shows Reyes body slipping into the sea.



Second Fatality Francisco Reyes

The other fatality was Francisco Reyes of Tijuana, Mexico. Earlier during the voyage, he sustained chest injuries while helping a crew member who had fallen overboard. When the Santa Maria foundered, he was washed over the side by waves, and managed to catch a piece of line hanging from a cleat. As the seas pounded the stricken Santa Maria, Reyes was dashed against the side of the vessel several times before he lost his grip on the line and fell into the sea. His body was recovered by the



crew of the Mataco and was given a burial at sea.

Cause of the sinking was attributed to the inability of the ships' pumps to discharge intruding water fast enough.

Sinking of the Santa Maria took to Davy Jones' locker the Christmas liquor supply of the Yokohama Officers Clubs, it was reported, as the vessel was carrying a large cargo of beer and whiskey destined for the Christmas celebrations.

Mataco rescuing more Santa Maria sailors in the photo above. Note the Mataco life preservers in the water.

Do you visit the members area of the NAFTS Website?

This area is accessed by clicking on the blue Members button found at the bottom of each page. It requires a username and password from "Spooky", the sites guardian. You can register on line for a password or simply e-mail Tom Thomas at Snipe@NAFTS.com and ask for access. Once there, members can list out other members by ship or several other sorts. You can download past Towlines and view statistics and membership health. Want more? Send Snipe an e-mail. If we can provide it, we will.

Website Ships Pictures

Mike Turner, the Web's picture poster, has continually updated the NAFTS Web site with new ships pictures. This is the most comprehensive collection of Tugger pictures there is! Visit the picture area today! A tremendous amount of work goes into this display. Mike is taking leave of absence from this job. We'll post a new address for submissions on the Web. Lets have a hand for Mike. He has been at it over 5 years!

The Movie Makers

Salvage ships get some strange missions sometimes. Some assignments took our sailors on long trips across the globe, through rough seas, to a foreign port. Every now and then they'd get a job that is quite different from a traditional naval mission. This story is one of those oddities and involves the ATF Lipan and its assignment to assist the film industry of Hollywood with the making of the movie "South Pacific", on a Hawaiian Island, back in 1957. NAFTS members Gary Luerding and John Lesjack, were shipmates back then and Gary assembled this tale about the event with some remarks from John. Lipan assisted the film crew and got to meet the stars of the movie, including Mitzi Gaynor, France Nuyen and the director, Josh Logan. Gary's tale begins with a tow to Kauai.

Back in 1957, the USS LIPAN (ATF-85) received orders to tow a barge of supplies to Kauai, where they were filming "South Pacific." As an eighteen year old seaman I figured the only way I'd get a glimpse of the filming was to sneak peeks over the gunnels, a chipping hammer in my hand, while under the affable yet discerning eyes of our boatswain's mates. But as luck would have it our crew were used as extras.



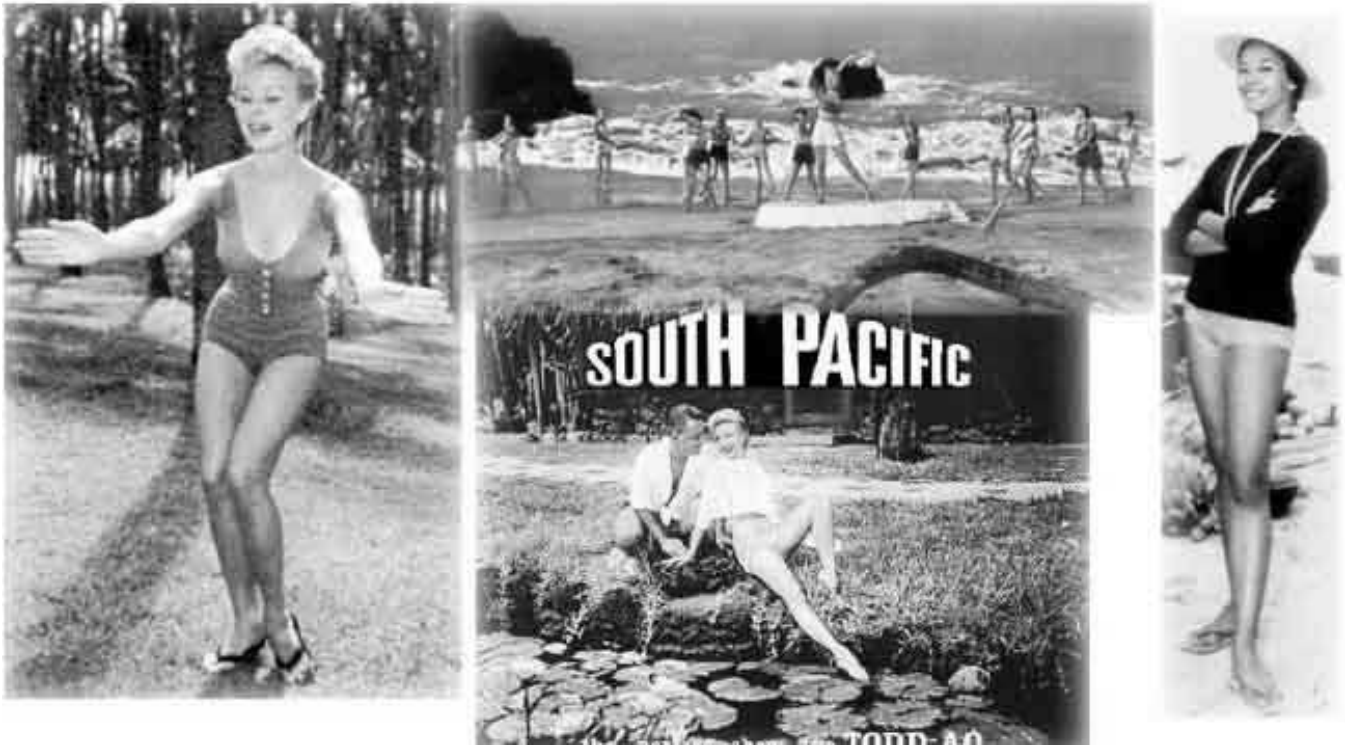
The lovely Mitzi Gaynor and Ensign Gelb.



Gary Luerding and France Nuyen. What a couple!

Kauai is a storybook beautiful island and this day was certainly no exception. We traipsed onto the set our eyes wide with awe and expectation. "Wow! We're gonna be in the MOVIES!" I heard one of the guys exclaim. Another shipmate (to be nameless) pulled me aside and said, "Hey, maybe I can get my big singing break here." Uh huh. He'd purchased the Broadway soundtrack of South Pacific and been practicing "Bali Ha'i" for the entire time we were underway. Never mind that it was sung by a woman. All I knew was I had a respite from being on the business end of a paint brush.

The first thing I saw was this tall lanky old guy who must have been close to sixty. (Hey I was only 18). He was wearing Captain's collar tabs and I gave him a smart salute. He looked at me



Mitzi Gaynor and France Nuyen from a publicity photo for the movie.

for a second and smirked. I found out later he was an actor. It was very confusing.

Of course all of us were looking for Mitzi Gaynor. Some of the guys had even gone and clipped pictures out of movie magazines and pasted them to their locker doors prior to the trip. Mitzi wasn't there. She flew back and forth from the main island when she was scheduled to shoot. Actually there wasn't any "famous" actors there at all and most of us were pretty disappointed.

Any dreams I may have had of "Hollywood glamour" were soon shattered after those few hours of movie making. For one thing the temperature hit 90 degrees and to make matters worse they were using huge klieg lights to light up the beach set. The Bali Ha'i song was into it's fourteenth take. (Maybe if John Kerr, aka Lt. Cable, had portrayed a sailor instead of a Marine it would have gone faster.) This was no fun, so I went exploring. I found an old home-made catamaran (if you could call it that). It was a piece of corrugated roofing folded into a boat, bow and stern nailed shut over a 1x4. A hand-line fishing rig lay on the makeshift seat. Fishing

sure beat standing under those hot lights, so I began paddling out to sea in the direction of some larger native boats and right into the frame of Bloody Mary singing and extolling the virtues of Bali Ha'i to Lt. Cable. All of a sudden Josh Logan, the director, waved frantically in my direction. I waved back. That's when I heard the expletives. And I thought sailors could cuss!

Some of the guys were hell bent to meet Mitzi and so they decided to sneak into and spend the night in her dressing room tent to maybe catch her in the morning. Of course they were caught by security and asked to leave. Lucky there wasn't any Shore Patrol there.

France Nuyen was an unknown at the time. I thought she was a regular native girl. Little did I know she was one of the stars of the movie even though she couldn't speak a word of English. Some "official" grabbed my arm and had me sit down next to her for a publicity shot. A bunch of other guys were ordered to do the same thing. A few months later that picture appeared in my home town paper.

Finally I got disgusted at the entire thing and just stayed aboard ship. Chipping paint was a relief to standing under those hot lights. To this day I regret it.

When the movie came out I took my future wife to see it. There, in living Todd A-O, were several of the Lipan crew mugging for the camera while everyone was singing "There's Nothing Like a Dame."

"Where are you, Gary?" Lynne said, resting her head on my shoulder.

"Uh, somewhere on the cutting room floor." I replied.



Left to right, Dale "Andy" Anderson, Sando Spino, Billy Joe Stephens, Fred Hill, Director Josh Logan and Harold Froze.

John Lesjack wrote the following words about The Movie

One day in late 1957, the Navy Department received a request for emergency action and immediately notified the USS Lipan (ATF 85) in Pearl Harbor, T.H. to standby. The Lipan, tied up across from the USS Arizona, received its orders during the middle of the night. The ship's skipper was at home, sleeping, but was awakened and apprised of the emergency. A few hours later, Captain Read had his ship underway. Destination: Hanalei Bay, Kauai, T.H.

April 2006

The situation: Ray Walston, an actor making a movie on Kauai, needed a motor whaleboat to complete his scene. The movie company had been using one on loan from the Navy, but that boat broke down and production came to a halt. The Lipan carried two boats--a 39 ft. motor whale boat and a 26 ft. motor launch.

The Navy Department had ordered the Lipan to allow the movie company to use either boat. Captain Read didn't like it, but he followed orders. "Sending a Navy ship to replace a boat!" The Captain muttered a lot during the 104 mile trip. "And for a musical!" Captain Read was so indignant over his orders that he refused to have anything to do with the movie. In fact, when Kauai was in sight, Captain Read ordered Ensign Martin J. Gelb to handle the shore detail.

"We spent three weeks in Hanalei Bay," remembered Mr. Gelb, from Miami Beach FL. "We had a lot of fun making the movie, 'South Pacific.'" "We received no payment," reminisced Sandy Spino, Oakville CT. "We were on loan to the movie company. But, mingling with the movie stars was my payment."

Participating in the movie was a life-changing experience for some of the crew, a hope for a break into show business for others and, of course, some sailors preferred to stay aboard ship chipping paint to standing around a movie set all day in 90 degree heat. However, they all remembered the few weeks during which they rubbed



George Lesko running the ship's boat to support the movie while Lipan sits at anchor in the background.



Lipan crew members Bob Douglas and Simon Sentanno with Mitzi Gaynor.

elbows with movie stars. "Singing with Mitzi Gaynor, Juanita Hall and Ray Walston was a great experience," said Curtis Roy, Chicago, IL. "It wasn't any break in show business, but it is still memorable today."

The USS Lipan, anchored in Hanalei Bay, enjoyed a magnificent view of a waterfall, a river flowing down the hillsides, palm trees along a beautiful sandy beach and the trade winds blowing across the bay. Port and starboard liberty had been established before they arrived that afternoon. Mr. Gelb supervised the lowering of both boats into the calm waters. The 39 ft. motor whale boat would be used in movie making. The motor launch would shuttle sailors to and from the little pier, all day long, beginning after breakfast.

Once ashore, sailors reported to the costume director who had the sailors change from government issue clothing to Hollywood's bright colored shirts, pants and hats. Film, in 1957, needed the brighter Hollywood blue clothing. Sailors changed back into regular uniform of the day clothing before returning to the ship for dinner. They did not keep the Hollywood clothing.

Dick Hendrix, Lake Oswego OR, was so enamoured with being on a movie set that when he left the navy six months later, he tried for a career in the movie business. He became an extra in "Paint Your Wagon", also directed by Josh

Logan and did a few walk-on parts in sitcoms during his career. He died at age 61 of complications from diabetes.

"Josh Logan and Ray Walston were very funny guys," said Sandy Spino. "One time, they went fishing in the bay and used a ragbag filled with beer for an anchor. Later, they invited Simon Sentanno and I to their party at the Holiday Inn. We had a great time, but we missed the bus back to the pier. We'd had a few too many drinks and slept them off in a field. Roosters woke us up. Luckily, we got a ride and made it back to the ship on time."

"A group of us were in the scene where Bloody Mary sang with John Kerr and they were looking at the island," said Ron Alexander, Paris IL. "We were supposed to whistle and look up, and we did. We were on screen for about five seconds." "The biggest deal," reminisced Bill Barker, Woodward OK "was the night a bunch of us stayed on the beach where beach scenes had been shot earlier that day. We tried to sleep in Mitzi Gaynor's dressing room, a very small building. We wanted to be sure we saw her in the morning. Of course, we made too much noise and the security guard ran us out right away."



On the left is Lipan crew member Curtis Roy with Mitzi Gaynor.

"I spent one day on that set," said Gary Luerding, O'Brien OR. "After Josh Logan chased me out of the lagoon, I stayed aboard ship. For a graduate of Princeton, the man had the vocabulary of an old salt!" "If you were in uniform," added Andy Anderson, "the folks on Kauai would pick you up and give you a ride and point out interesting places. Fred Hill left his camera in one car and the people brought it down to the pier and left it with Fred's shipmate. The Navy hadn't done any damage on that island, at that time."

"I was one of 16 sailors who carried the boat from one place to another," said Bob Douglas, Saranac Lake NY. "We carried it 14 times but, when I saw the movie, that scene had been cut out." "Much of our time was spent shooting the scene where Juanita Hall (Bloody Mary) sang "Bali Ha'i", remembered Martin Gelb. "The crew played extras and got a lot of footage. I never appeared on screen because John Kerr (Lt. Cable) and I were the only ones on the set wearing khaki and he was the star. However, when the Navy sent my picture with France Nuyen to my home town newspaper, they ran the article and stated, 'Gelb will be in the movie'."

"Shortly thereafter, I was home on leave and my family had a party for me. Aunts, uncles, cousins--everyone at the party kept telling me that I was great in the movie". At the end of their three week stay, Gelb and his crew hauled the boats out of the water, secured them aboard ship, and left the Garden Island. "South Pacific" was released to theaters January 1, 1958. Nominated for 7 Academy awards, it won an Oscar for Best sound. Josh Logan, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein co-wrote the story and had already won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1949 when the musical was a stage play. Golden Globe Awards were too numerous to list.

Immortal songs like "Some Enchanted Evening", "Bali Ha'i," and "I'm Going to Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair" won the hearts of millions of people forever. The movie was an immediate major financial and popular success. Mitzi Gaynor, Rosanno Brazzi, Juanita Hall, John Kerr and France Nuyen became household names. Other ambitious actors in the cast of "South Pacific" soon rose to stardom. Ron Ely became Tarzan in the first Tarzan TV series. Tom McLaughlin starred in the "Billy Jack" movies. The late Doug McClure starred in hundreds of movies and TV shows. James Stacey became the first professor on "Gilligan's Island," a regular for 6 years on "Ozzie and Harriet," and made many films, even after losing his left arm and leg in a motorcycle accident. Gabriel Martin starred in movies and TV shows.

Today we ask: Would "South Pacific" have been the movie it was without the assistance of the USS Lipan (ATF 85) and its motor whale boat? We all know the answer, don't we?

Reunion Facts

How many reunion's has NAFTS held? Here is a list of 'em all:

1990 Orlando FL	1997 Richmond VA	2004 San Antonio TX
1991 Santa Rosa CA	1998 Galveston TX	2005 Tampa FL
1992 Cleveland OH	1999 Danvers MA	
1993 Virginia Beach VA	2000 San Diego CA	
1994 Colorado Springs CO	2001 Chicago IL	
1995 Pensacola FL	2002 Arlington VA	
1996 Beaverton OR	2003 Seattle WA	

Membership Matters

Hello again shipmates,

Has Spring happened in your part of the country? It sure doesn't seem like it here in Bend, Oregon. This has been the snowiest, coldest winter I can remember and it isn't letting up.

544 Plan

More and More of you have been signing up for the NAFTS "544" membership plan. Five years for \$100 bucks. That's a year of free membership. It saves you money and it saves wear and tear on the Membership Secretary!

Dues Backlog

Many of you have noted that I have not sent out individual bills for dues. There are a few things that are changing here. Please help me out a bit by checking your dues date. It should be found on the Towline label. Not to worry, I will send out reminders soon to all that are not up to date. No one will be moved to inactive that has not been contacted. We're just suffering from a bit of system overload here. You can easily check it also by going to the Website under the membership button. Here you can also check that your address is up to snuff.

We are going to change the way we do dues reminders and membership cards next year. The present system just requires way to much time on the part of the membership guy. If anything at all goes wrong, particularly at the beginning of the year, that takes time away and everything comes unglued. President Rodger Dana and I are mulling over some changes here.

Have a great Spring mates,

Tom Thomas
Membership Guy



The Old Snipe

Thoughts from Chaplain Bob Campbell



I don't know about all of you, or as we say here in the south ya'll, but I'm getting really excited about the up coming reunion in San Mateo. My wife, Cindy, is even more excited than I am. She's already got two suitcases packed. We're looking forward to seeing all of you old friends and making some new friends and just enjoying the San Francisco Bay Area.

Ever since Tampa I've been thinking of those of you we got a chance to see and the good time we had with you. And, I've also been thinking about those folks who could not for one reason or another make the reunion in Tampa. There were actually more Californians in Tampa for the reunion than Floridians, go figure.

All this thinking brings to mind the parable of the Good Samaritan. You know the one about the fella who gets waylaid, beaten and robbed on his way to Jericho? The story says a couple of guys pass by the beaten guy before this Samaritan guy stops to help. The story doesn't say the two guys who passed by without helping were bad guys. In fact both of those guys were upstanding citizens but just too busy to get involved. The Samaritan guy, even though he wasn't well thought of, just sort of reacts to someone in need. My thought is, wouldn't it be great if we could just react like that; just because there is a need? So here's a bit of a challenge for all of you/ya'll. Over the next couple of months try to contact another member of NAFTS who lives near you. For those of you with a PC just look up the Towline mailing list with your own zip code and see if you can find some one near you that you DON'T know and give him a call. Ask how he is and prompt him about the reunion, if he is physically able to attend. If you don't have a computer maybe you've got a buddy who will do the look up for you.

Let me know how your contact works out. See you in San Mateo.

Bob Campbell, Chaplain
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In Memoriam

Albert Young, PHM 2/C

Albert Young, a founding member and early president of NAFTS, died Monday, February 6, in Canon City CO. In 1944 and 1945, Al served aboard the U.S.S. Jicarilla (ATF 104) as PHM 2/C. He had joined the Navy prior to WWII with six major campaigns in the Pacific, earning two battle stars and two Navy Letters of Commendation.

As founding member of NAFTS it was the custom in the early years of the organization that the host of the reunion for that year

would serve as NAFTS president. Al hosted the reunion in 1994 in Canon City CO. Al is survived by his wife of 49 years, Dorothy; sons, David, John, and Richard; a daughter Joanne Nehring and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great great-grandchildren.

Our love and prayers go out to Dorothy and their family. The men and women of NAFTS and especially his Jacarilla shipmates will miss Al.

CWO David P. Bundte USN Ret.

Dave Bundte passed away Friday, February 3rd at home, after a yearlong illness. He died on his 87th birthday. Dave was born in Idaho Falls ID on February 3, 1919 to Charles and Mary Bundte. He was the youngest of 12 children. He enlisted in the Navy in 1937. During WWII Bundte served aboard the battleship USS West Virginia (BB48) and the heavy cruiser USS Augusta (CA31).

Among the many ships on which he served during his career in the Navy were the tugs Hitchiti (ATF 103) from 1952 to 1957 and the Paiute (ATF 159) from 1963 to 1964. He retired from active duty in June of 1966 and moved to Florida in the early 1970's. Dave is survive by his wife, Marie. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Marie. Dave will be missed by not only his shipmates from the Hitchiti and the Paiutes but also the family of NAFTS.

CDR. George W. Kingston, USN Ret. Founding member of NAFTS, Cdr. George Kingston passed away in his sleep January 11 after a short illness. George would have been 90 in February. He entered the Navy as an enlisted man and went on to earn a commission. He was CO of ATR 50 from 1943 until 1946. He was also the CO of seven other ships including the U.S.S. Charles P. Cecil (DDR 835). After retiring from the Navy, George worked for more than 10 years in the private field. In retirement George continued his service to his country and his community. He was active in SCORE, the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, the Baldwin Heritage Museum, the American Red Cross and many other civic, veterans and service groups. George was particularly proud of his role in the founding of the National Association of Fleet Tug Sailors (NAFTS). His passing leaves many memories and a large void in our organization. A memorial mass for George was held at Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church, Foley AL on Tuesday January 17Th.

Cdr. Kingston is survived by his wife, Marion, son Skip and great grandson Patrick Walsh, as well as nieces and a nephew to whom he was devoted. The men and women of his NAFTS family will miss him.

EMCM Victor D. Fletcher, USN Ret.

We received word that Vic Fletcher passed away Friday, January 6 of a cerebral hemorrhage. Vic served aboard the U.S.S. Arikara, (ATF 98), from 1956-1959. He came aboard Arikara as an ICFN striker. He left the ship in 1958 to attend IC school at Great Lakes NTC and while there married his long time sweetheart, Shirley. Fletcher returned to Arikara in the spring of 1959 bringing Shirley with him to Hawaii. Their first child, Terry, was born shortly after the ship return from deployment. Their second son, Billy, was born a couple of years later. During his Naval career Vic was promoted to Electrician's Mate Master Chief, a rank achieved by only the very best. He served our country in the USN for more than 20 years. After retiring Vic and Shirley settled in Summerville S.C. In his retirement Vic did volunteer aboard the U.S.S. Yorktown Memorial in Charleston. His Arikara shipmates, Bob Hall and Rolan Conoley, have both shared moments of their long time friendship with Vic and Shirley. His wife, Shirley, and sons Terry and Bill survive Master Chief Fletcher. A memorial service was held for him at his church.

John E. (Jack) Wilson, Atakapa Jack

On Christmas Eve we received word that Jack Wilson, Atakapa Jack, died Thursday, December 22. Jack joined NAFTS on January 1, 1999. He served aboard the U.S.S. Atakapa (ATF 149) from 1956-1960 leaving her as QM3. Though bound to a wheel chair Jack was, as Tom Thomas described him, "lively and full of spunk". Jack made a huge impression on all who knew him. Several mates who met Jack at the reunion in San Diego in 2000 have sent notes of sadness to each other and to the family. He will be deeply missed by his NAFTS family. Jack is survived by his wife, Marjorie (Marnee), and daughters Laura and Jenny. He took great delight in the fact that Laura and Jenny were born on the same day 7 years apart. The family requests that in lieu of flowers any memorial tributes be made as contributions in Jack's name to the Christopher Reeve Foundation, American Heart Association or to NAFTS.

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#6	Coffee Mug	----		\$10.00	
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#8B	Adult Sweat Shirt, White Logo on Blue, SizeS, M, L, XL			\$24.00	
	Adult Sweat Shirt, White Logo on Blue, SizeXXL, XXXL			\$26.00	
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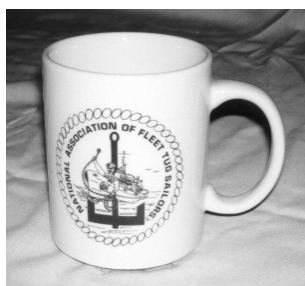
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