



# Frank E. Evans Footlocker Talk

Newsletter  
Volume 2 Issue 2  
April. – June. 2007

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ahoy Shipmates,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Officers of the Association, we send our best wishes to everyone.

**Plans are underway for our reunion this year in Excelsior Springs, Missouri October 4, 5 & 6.** Please mark your calendar now and come and enjoy the changing of the leaves. We only hope Mother Nature will ensure the leaves don't turn early, or worse yet, fall before we arrive. We shared our concerns with the hotel management about a number of items that will help us to have a better reunion from last year. The Hotel is working on the solution for transportation to and from the airport. The USS Caldwell DD-605 will conduct their reunion the same week as ours but will end before the weekend. They have a very small number of members and have asked to join forces one evening. We have accepted their invitation for the Thursday night buffet. Included in the evening event will be some entertainment we know you will enjoy.

The Washington Cemetery has expressed their deepest thanks and appreciation for the Association's donation to the cemetery.

The construction of the flag pole and plaque is complete and as of this newsletter the Cemetery is planning to install the plaque as soon as the weather shows signs that winter is over. This is one of the first in a series of plaques dedicated to all men who served on board the USS Frank E. Evans. My personal thanks to everyone for your donations and patience while we get our memorial programs in place and underway.



Just to let you know that we are listening to our members; we reviewed the three suggested locations from our last reunion and have selected Charleston South Carolina for our 2008 reunion. As we have indicated in the past we will firm up the hotel location and dates in 2008 and provide you all the information at the annual business meeting in 2007 in Excelsior Springs, MO.

We look forward to hearing how you and your family are doing, drop us a note, take care and may God bless each and every one of you.

## **UPDATE ON GERRY HEMPHILL**

Gerry Hemphill and her family would like to sincerely thank everyone for their prayers, emails, letters, and support. Gerry has a fantastic doctor who has specialized in ALS for over 30 years. Recently, Gerry's doctor confirmed that her ALS is only affecting her brain stem at this time; however, in time, it will likely affect her spinal cord as well. The rate of progression varies for everyone afflicted with ALS, so Gerry's future remains uncertain. Gerry and her family remain positive and thankful for all the encouragement provided by members of the Association. For more information on ALS, visit <http://www.alsa.org/>.

**REFLECTING BACK**  
**BY THOMAS MCMILLAN**

Hi, I received the Frank E. newsletter this morning and wanted to say thanks. It was so special as Chief King was a good friend as well as my leading PO when I left the Evans. We played ball together for the ship in Long Beach and spent a few months at sea together when he took over for Frank Hernandez.

I was telling my wife, Patricia, after reading the newsletter, about a time when we were refueling in rough seas. I was standing in the middle of a rope on the helo deck when all of a sudden the ships pulled apart and the weak link broke, the rope began reeling back across through the block on deck and the rope whipped around me; King whipped out his knife and jumped on the rope cutting me free. He kept me from being pulled into the block which would have caused serious damage to my body. Lucky for me King was always there I learned a lot from this great guy.

I was on the USS Proteus, a sub tender, when I heard about the collision. Most of the Proteus crew knew I had served on ships named Evans, the Frank E Evans DD 754 and the USS Evans DE 1043. It was quite a shock to read the message traffic received that morning. I was kept informed as each message was received. All I could think about was my former shipmates in harms way. I felt helpless sitting on a tender so far away. Since I had a top secret clearance I was given access to all messages. Somewhere I have a folder with those classified messages that were never supposed to have left the ship, oh well, I was a Boatswain Mate, and from Texas, so yes, I did break a rule or two during my Naval excursion.

I had just turned 21, had taken my 2nd class test when I was told I was the designee to take over the rear deck division. This was a difficult time dealing with the overwhelming task of taking on a very large responsibility, at a young age, limited experience and now finding out about my lost shipmates. I wondered about the ones that made it and how they were faring. My Mom called me the next morning wanting to hear my voice and confirm I was not on the Evans. The Navy had to give her my ship's phone number to cool her heels, nothing like a Mother to stir up things. A call to the deck of the watch post my Momma was a little embarrassing especially for the Boatswain Mate in charge of the aft part of the ship.

I am in a battle at this time with the Big C, it is why I had to miss last years reunion. Just recently I was tested for a new drug and entered into a program, so far so good, I just completed my second series of the drug and preliminary results have been positive, this is so awesome it is hard to describe, when you turn your life over to God awesome things can happen. Just like King being there with a sharp knife so may years ago.....nuff said!



**INITIATION PARTY OF  
BOATSWAIN MATE CHIEF  
WILLIE LEE KING**

Note: When Tom saw this photo it brought back all kinds of special memories. Thanks Tom for the article. You too can send us your stories so we can share with the rest of the Members

The unknown name in the Jan - Feb newsletter is Chief MMCM Charles Wright.

**THE VIRTUAL VIETNAM ARCHIVE**  
**ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE FINDING ITEMS IN THE VIETNAM ARCHIVE?**

The Virtual Vietnam Archive holds many historical items related to the USS Frank E Evans DD-754. Currently there are over 1500 "items" in storage. The items are classified as Documents, Images, Oral History, "Finding Aid", Audio, Maps, Moving Image, Museum Object, Microfilm, Periodical, or Computer Media. Many can be viewed on-line. To date, the 1500+ items are in the following collections.

The steps to take to make use of the Virtual Vietnam Archive.

1. Go to the Virtual Vietnam Web-site - [www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/](http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/)
2. Click on the lower left side of the page: Search the Vietnam Archive (White area)
3. In the space where it says "Collection Title," type in the collection name, for example, J C Campbell
4. Click on: Start Search (Left side, top of page) [This is not instant]
5. Click on: Display Search Results (Left side, mid page) [This is not instant]
6. Scroll down and select the record you want to review.

(Steps 4 and 5 may take more or less time depending on the size of the file.)

**COLLECTION TITLES**

Adams, Ken E.	Huber, Chuck	Salmon, Nelson D.
Bezotte, Nathan	Jenkins, John	Searle, Don
Brown, Charles	Kerr, Fern T.	Sheets, Michael
Burke, Richard	Kiehler, Eldon	Simonsen, Glen
Campbell, J. C.	Kozman, Anthony	Sullivan, William
Christensen, Cato	Kraus, Stephen	Tidd, Emmett Admiral
Crinigan, Richard	Legg, Doug	USMC Vietnam War Documents
Cuzzupe, Larry	Lenz, Carl	USS Frank E Evans Association
Druckemiller, Jack	Lockwood, Robert	Vaughn, Ron
Duhe, Peter	Macayan, Mike & Susie	Verrone, Richard Burks
Ernst, Ray A.	Mann, Joe Bob	Vietnam Center
Ferrick, Will	Moore Kirkland, Joann	Walsh, Michael K.
Fien, Jerome	Norton, Ken	Ward, Paul
Guyer, Steven Allen	O'Brien, Michael	Wilson, Charles E.
Harton, Bud	Olson Fortune, Janet	Winston, Robert
Hemphill, Gerry	Pike, Douglas	Winterflood, Graham
Higginbottom, Harold	Reilly, Larry	
Howard, William E.	Robinson, Leon	

**FINAL SAILING ORDERS**  
**"LEST WE FORGET"**

Vern Dale Robling SN1 (45-46)  
Vincennes, Indiana.  
Deceased September 15, 2004

May we never forget the Ship, the Men, and those who paid the ultimate price in service aboard the USS Frank E. Evans DD-754.

## 1300 OPERATION WIGWAM

Operation Wigwam consisted of a single nuclear detonation, conducted 400 - 500 miles SW of San Diego, California (about 29 Deg N, 126 Deg W) on May 14 1955. It was a deep water test, -2,000 ft (the ocean is 16,000 feet deep at that point) to investigate the vulnerability of submarines to deep nuclear weapons, and the feasibility of using depth bombs in combat (there was considerable concern about problems with surface contamination). The test device was a B-7 (Mk-90) Betty depth bomb that was suspended by a 2000 ft cable from a barge. The dry weight of the bomb was 8250 lb, 5700 lb when submerged.



**Depth Bomb Test**



USS TAWASA (AFT-92)  
**USS TAWASA AFT-92**

6800 personnel on 30 ships, including **USS FRANK E EVANS (DD 754)**, participated in Wigwam. A 6 mile tow-line connected the fleet tug, USS TAWASA (AFT-92) and the shot barge. Suspended from this line at varying distances from the barge were three "Squaws," sub-scale submarine like pressure hulls equipped with instruments and cameras.

The USS TAWASA (AFT-92) would, in 1969, tow the aft end of USS FRANK E EVANS (DD 754) on its last voyage from the scene of the Melbourne - Evans incident, to Subic Bay, PI.)

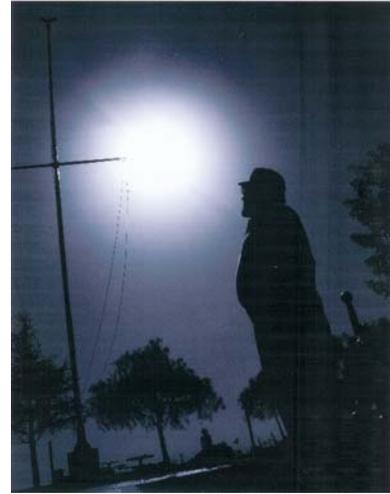
## IN THE NEWS...PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS

The Patriot Guard Riders is an organization whose sole mission is to show their sincere respect for our fallen heroes, their families, and their communities and Shield the mourning family and their friends from interruptions created by any protestor or group of protestors. Their motto is..."Standing for Those Who Stood for Us." The Patriot Guard Riders are comprised of a nationwide network of motorcycle riders and groups of people who have joined together to make appearances at funerals, send offs, and welcome homes. You don't have to have a motorcycle to join, just a patriotic heart.

Many of the riders are not veterans, in fact, but rather individuals who believe in gathering together to pay respect to those who serve in our armed forces. Riders are coordinated by regional and state captains, and they only appear upon request by a family member. They also appear at veteran events, hospital functions, memorial services, and rallies. To learn more about this fantastic organization, to view the photo gallery for your state, or to inquire about the no-cost membership, visit <http://www.patriotguard.org/>. The only prerequisite is **Respect**.

## THE LIGHT SHINES BRIGHT AT THE NAVY LONG BEACH MEMORIAL

This picture was recently taken by Harold and Betty Higginbottom's grandson at the Long Beach Navy Memorial. Higgie stands at attention besides the Frank E. Evans memorial saluting and paying respect to our Lost 74, always remember they died in the Vietnam War. Each year on the anniversary of the collision several of the local Association Members and friends conduct a ceremony to pay tribute to our fallen brothers. If you are in the area, please take the time to stop by and see the memorial. It was constructed by the city of Long Beach and the "Friends of the Navy" along with a supporting contribution from the USS Frank E. Evans Association.



## USS FRANK E. EVANS SAILORS TAKE TO THE SEA ONCE AGAIN

Carnival cruise lines enjoyed the high spirited group from the USS Frank E Evans on a cruise from Jacksonville Florida to Key West and Nassau in February this year. The idea was launched by Pete Peters in late 2006. Why not try a cruise and see what it is like to not stand watch, trice up you rack, or sweep the ship down forward and aft. Basically why not go on a cruise where you're on liberty 24 hours a day.



Top Row (Left to Right)

Steve Kraus, John Gamber, Bob Mason, Pete Peters  
Dennis Rice, Jerry Simoneit & Joe Mulitsch

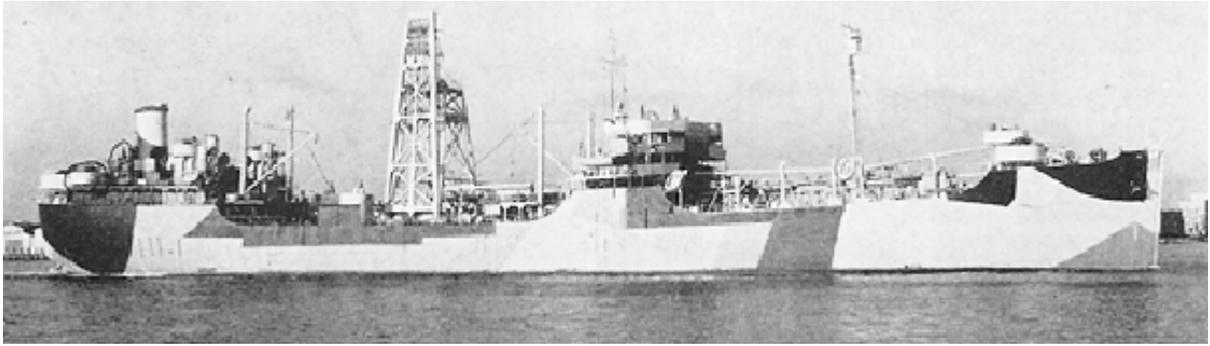
Bottom Row (Left to Right)

Donna Kraus, Afrose Gamber, Dixie Mason,  
Karen Peters, Susie Rice, Donna Simoneit Debbie Mulitsch

The trip was originally offered as a tin can sailors cruise then turned into a Veterans cruise. By far the USS Frank E. Evans was the single most represented military organization on the cruise. We had the opportunity to tell "Our Story" to a lot of interested parties. Who knows maybe one of them will make the right contact at the right time and action will take place to get the names on the Vietnam Wall.

**Nassau, Bahamas**





### **USS Niobrara (AO-72)**

Niobrara was laid down 29 June 1942 by Bethlehem Steel Co., Sparrows Point, Md.. In March 1944 she was altered at Norfolk for Pacific service, and sailed from the Panama Canal for Pearl Harbor, and Kwajalein where she fueled transports bound for the Marianas invasions begun in June 1944.

Niobrara served as station tanker at Eniwetok until July then operated from the base fueling ships at sea, thus enabling carrier task forces to roam the western Pacific and the Philippine Sea without interrupting their strikes to return to port. On 1 October she arrived in Kossol Roads, Palau, to serve as station tanker for smaller combatants patrolling during the assault and occupation of the Palau, then for forces preparing for the return to the Philippines. On 8 January 1945 she herself proceeded to Leyte, then into the South China Sea to fuel TF 38, then attacking the China coast. During the next two months, she served at Ulithi and Saipan fueling ships for the Iwo Jima invasion and preparing for the Okinawa campaign. She sailed 26 March from Ulithi for Okinawa, and after refueling 5th Fleet striking units at sea closed Hagushi Beach 5 April to fuel radar picket destroyers.

**USS FRANK E EVANS (DD-754) sailed in company with USS NIOBRARA (AO-72) on 14 July and 23-26 July 1945.**

Air and submarine alerts, as well as gunfire close ashore, required expert seamanship to refuel ships alongside while maneuvering to protect the ship. She continued to support ships patrolling off Okinawa and carrier striking forces until the end of the war. Niobrara entered Tokyo Bay 30 August to witness the surrender, and after three months occupation duty, sailed for Guam, where she aided in salvage work.

On 10 December she sailed for the Panama Canal and the east coast, along which she operated until decommissioning 24 September 1946. She lay in reserve at Philadelphia until re-commissioning 5 February 1951 for three years service with the Atlantic Fleet along the east coast in the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean. On 13 June 1954 she arrived in San Diego to join the Pacific Fleet's operations until decommissioning 30 November 1954.

Niobrara received 4 battle stars for World War II service.

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW! SHIPS REUNION  
OCTOBER 4, 5 & 6 EXCELSIOR SPRINGS, MISSOURI**