

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



Spring/Summer, 2012

Greetings from the Sterett Association

Here's an update on some of the Sterett happenings since our last Newsletter.

DDG 104

The newest Sterett is continuing to uphold the long legacy of outstanding performance by US Navy ships with the Sterett name.

The DDG 104 is currently on her second deployment and is part of the Abraham Lincoln Battle Group.

Back in December, Sterett and the battle group were highlighted in world news when they transited the Strait of Hormuz, following threats by Iran to close the Strait and prevent US Navy ships from making the transit. Sterett led the battle group through the strait.



The destroyer USS Sterett escorts the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln during a transit through the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday.

A Record of Excellence

In early February the following announcement was made:

"USS STERETT, At Sea (NNS) -- Commander, Naval Surface Forces announced guided-missile destroyer USS Sterett (DDG 104) is the winner of the 2011 Battle Effectiveness (Battle "E") Award for Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 9, Feb. 27.

This is the second consecutive year Sterett has been awarded the Battle "E." The Battle "E" is awarded annually to surface ships meeting high standards of excellence in all mission areas and recognizes superior operational performance across all warfare areas over the course of the



calendar year. Sterett was one of just ten surface ships to win the Battle "E" for exceptional performance during both 2010 and 2011.”

Congratulations to CDR McDaniel, Sterett CO and the entire crew for their outstanding achievement.

Giving Back

No doubt, many Sterett veterans give of their time in service to their communities, doing volunteer work and helping those in need.

Two Sterett veterans have gone beyond the norm and have dedicated their lives to helping those in need.

Although reluctant to put themselves in the spotlight, shipmates **Mert Garrison** and **Bob Young** agreed to provide some insight about what they do and how they help those less fortunate.

Mert Garrison

The U.S. Navy was my first introduction to people of other countries, and the Philippines was the first country I was stationed at after “A” School. I guess I didn’t realize at the time that I would become involved with helping the poor.

Around 2004 I noticed an ad (where I saw it I don’t recall) for an organization called Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (CFCA) www.cfcausa.org. I read that I could sponsor a child in a developing country for, at that time, \$25 per month. This money would help provide food, clothing, education, medical, and other benefits for a child. I figured that I could afford \$25 per month so I sent off an inquiry and asked for a child.

A few weeks later I received a package with a folder that included a picture and family profile of a young boy in Guatemala. I got my payments started and wrote one letter and didn’t think much more about it. Then, one day, I got a letter from him thanking me for becoming his sponsor and what it would mean to him and his family. This got me interested in going on a Mission Awareness Trip (MAT) to Guatemala to meet him in person. On CFCA’s website they describe a Mission Awareness Trip as:

“Our trips are in-depth immersion experiences that will introduce you to your friend and bring you face to face with the realities of CFCA families. You travel not as a tourist, but as an honored guest and friend of the local people.”

After retiring from the Navy I think I never lost the bug to travel. When I made a pilgrimage to The Holy Land in 2005 I knew I was hooked again. So, in 2006, I decided to make a trip to Guatemala. As a side note, I had picked up another sponsorship for a girl in Nicaragua. The trip to Guatemala was amazing and I looked at it as another type of pilgrimage. Meeting Manuel and his family was great. He and his family are of Mayan decent and I needed two translators because they spoke an Indian dialect. Manuel spoke Quiché and Spanish. We spent a wonderful day together and exchanged gifts. When it came time for Manuel and his family to leave we

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gathered to say goodbye. I thought that I would not get emotional but I did. It was an amazing experience.

The remaining days of the trip we spent visiting homes, families, and projects. This gave us an insight into what living conditions were like for the people living there.

This trip got me hooked to go visit my other sponsored child in Nicaragua. This was also a great experience and I eventually ended up sponsoring five more children. I have managed to visit two of those children (in Honduras and another in Nicaragua). I am leaving in two days to visit my sponsored child in the Philippines. The last time I was in the Philippines was in 1987 while onboard the USS Horne CG-30. I had left the USS Sterett in 1984, went to Mare Island, CA, then to USS Horne and retired from the Navy in September 1989.



Helping children in other countries has been very rewarding for me and I have been successful in encouraging others to sponsor as well.

Merton Garrison, DS1, USN, Retired

Bob Young

Bob lives and works in Chang Mai Province in Thailand with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a global humanitarian organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, following Christ's example of being a voice for, serving, and partnering with those in need regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, political or religious affiliation. Our mission is to work with people in poverty and distress to create positive change and justice, through empowering partnerships and responsible action. ADRA Thailand is part of the ADRA Network, with a presence in 125 countries (see www.adra.org for details of operations worldwide).

In 1997 the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) granted ADRA general consultative status.

Financially, each ADRA office in the network, including ADRA Thailand, operates independently. ADRA Thailand receives grants and funds from donors around the world and is accountable to Thailand tax, auditing, aid and NGO (non-government organization) policies and legal requirements.

As part of a global network, each ADRA office works under a similar vision, mission and belief statement. There is a uniform method for the planning, approval and implementation of projects and there is a desire to achieve 'best practice' in all activities.

ADRA Thailand was established in the early 1980s and began programs mainly in assisting refugees from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar with health care and basic human needs. The program expanded to include marginalized rural Thai people outside the refugee camps and development projects began alongside relief assistance projects.

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ADRA serves people without regard to their ethnic, political or religious association. It simply helps people in need, especially those most vulnerable such as women, children, and the elderly.

Networking is essential for the success of ADRA Thailand's programs. Through networking together with local Thai Government, other NGOs and village communities, ADRA has been able to make small changes in the people of rural Thailand's life.

ADRA Thailand has over 180 employees who are serving the communities both in the northern regions of Thailand and along the Thailand / Myanmar border. Our programs are outlined as follows:

Attainment of Migrant Women's Rights and Entitlements (AMWRE)

ADRA Thailand and ADRA-UK are partnering to reduce the vulnerability of migrant women workers in and around Mae Sot, Tak Province, Thailand. The project's purpose is to improve registered migrant women workers' knowledge of- and access to- their legal entitlements, including basic health care, safe labor conditions, fair compensation, and documented registration.

The Integrated Area Development Program (IADP)

This program helps marginalized communities to develop self-sustaining strategies to improve their quality of life and subsequently, lower the risk of these communities to human trafficking. The program is in place in Chiang Rai Province, Northern Thailand, in the Mae Tam and Mae Yang Min valleys. Here, 15 villages are being assisted with developing gravity fed water systems, Sanitation and sewage structures (latrines), Youth leadership development activities, land registration, credit union establishment, citizenship registration, local health care community based programs and finally; Agriculture assistance and new farming methods along with environmental protection awareness.

Keep Girls Safe

ADRA Thailand's Keep Girls Safe project (KGS) aims to work on trafficking prevention of girls (mainly hill-tribe girls) and offers a safe house/shelter opportunity for those girls where prevention comes too late and who are in urgent need for a safe place to stay. Many of them have no mother and/or father anymore. The shelter is located in Chiang Rai city and the KGS community oriented prevention activities are conducted among communities within districts of Chiang Rai province. These trafficking prevention activities are including community awareness raising and capacity building for community members and village leaders, Peer Educator trainings for young girls, establishment of girls clubs at schools plus out-reach activities for awareness raising in target communities, introducing a 'watch dog' system in communities as an early warning system, networking with partner organizations and working with local authorities to help establishing or improving systems and policies that will ensure proper trafficking prevention and enforces child protection in the concerned districts and communities.

Short Bio: After my tour on the USS Sterett CG-31, I was stationed at Naval Security Group Detachment. Subic Bay, 1982 – 1985; USS Reuben James Pre-commissioning Unit and USS Reuben James FFG-57; 1985 – 1991; VF-126 (NAS Miramar); 1991-1993; USS Blue Ridge LCC-19, 1993 – 1997; CVW-5 (USS Independence CV-62 Kittyhawk CV-63). I retired while stationed at CVW-5 in 2001 as an OSC(SW) .



Thank you Mert and Bob for your dedication in helping those in need.

Sterett Binnacle List

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Some status updates on Sterett shipmates who have suffered medical issues. Please keep them in your prayers.

George Cline



DLG 31 Plankowner George Cline suffered a severe stroke on February 5th which left him paralyzed on his left side. Those that know George will not be surprised to know that he has been battling back and making steady improvement. According to the last update I received, George is eating regular food and continuing to make progress.

George's progress slowed down in March but with a change of facilities, things have started to turn around and he is again making good progress.

We wish George and his wife Dotty well and look forward to seeing them in Branson at the next reunion. You can check on George's progress by visiting this web site:

<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/ChiefCline/journal>

Jim Botkin



DD 407 crewman and WWII veteran Jim Botkin is recovering from a bout of pneumonia.

Latest update:

"Jim's recovery from pneumonia is going quite slowly. We now have oxygen available in our home 24/7. His Doctor says his recovery is slow due to his age. He will be 90 in August. His goal at this time is the National Reunion of the Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans in Washington, D.C. in August. They will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the first landings on Guadalcanal on

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August 7, 1942.

We are also giving thoughts to the next Sterett Reunion in Branson, MO. I have relatives who live in northern Arkansas, about 60 miles south of Branson, so this would be a dual purpose trip.”

Our best wishes to Jim in his battle with pneumonia.

Facebook

We realize many of our members are not Facebook subscribers but FB has become a great source for Sterett discussion and personal pictures. There are many Sterett veterans from across her service life that have popped up and shared their memories. There are three FB groups for Sterett, two for the 31 and a group dedicated to the DDG 104. From the discussions I have seen, I am optimistic that the Branson reunion will be very well attended, with many attending for the first time.

Some samplings of pictures that have popped up:



Honcho in Yokosuka



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DD 27 (1910-19)



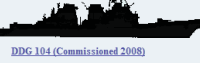
DD 407 (1939-1945)



DLG 31 (1967-75)



CG 31 (1975-94)



DDG 104 (Commissioned 2008)

Subic Party

Subic Main Gate



Victoria Peak, Hong Kong

The Sterett Facebook groups can be located here:

USS Sterett: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/15927790465/>

USS Sterett CG-31: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/205983540038/>

DDG 104: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/USSSterett>

Our Vice President, John King is not someone who sits at home idling his time away. Here's a little insight into how John spends some of his off time.

THE KING OF CARNIVAL

For me it all began with my camera and the Internet. The Internet, because the St. Barth forum, sbhonline.com, "introduced" me to a fellow Virginian by the name of Tim Thornton... A part-time resident of the island, Tim was staying in his Vitet home and riding around the island on his bike. One of his friends, and supplier of propane gas, was the organizer of a troupe in the carnival parade and was seeking both a little financial support and a photographer. Enter the camera to photograph the troupe Rhum et Gingembre as they made their way through the streets of Gustavia for the 2005 Carnival. While this wasn't my first Carnival (I believe 2000 was my first), it was the first one where I experienced all the work, planning, and execution on a personal level. I delivered CDs chock full of images to Pascal and Béthany Gumbs and my connection was firmly cemented to them and to Carnival. The next year during the costume construction phase—beginning in August and lasting until just hours before the parade—Pascal reached out to me over email and asked that I search the Internet for a critical trim element: 60 yards of rhinestone trim. A New York friend was able to locate the trim in the garment district and using Pascal's DSL account, quickly deliver it in time for the parade. This was a game changer for me. When I arrived on the island a few days before Carnival, Pascal asked me to come over to the seamstress's home for a fitting. Fitting I said? I was in: In the parade and in the troupe for the next five years of wonderful colors and marvelous feathers. Red and Gold. Green and Yellow. Blue and Pink... with wings! My favorite: Orange, and finally a deep Purple. Finally, because after ten years of parades where 98% of the construction is borne by 2% of the participants and fundraising the annual \$6,000 for supplies is a never-ending chore, Pascal and Béthany decided to take a hiatus for a few years. It was a pleasure and privilege for this American to be on the inside of this unique island celebration. From helping source supplies from all over the world, to Sunday evening rehearsals, and last minute glue gun application, I was able to see the island from a completely different perspective. Unlike the many other Mari Gras celebrations around the world,

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the St. Barth Carnival remains a family-friendly and family-participatory one. Most of the troupes have three generations of beautiful dancers feathered and smiling as they prance through the demanding routines. The "boy's" job — we were outnumbered about 8 to 1 — was to be "road guards," giving the ladies the space they needed to dance. That and drink a little rum punch as we watched admiringly. Then there was the Sunday after Carnival. Sitting on beach at Pascal's Lorient home and enjoying a meal together. Toasting the success of yet another great Carnival. Oh, and reviewing all my photos on my Mac. Here's To Carnival!



John King – Secure in his gender!!

Branson Reunion

Yours truly and Shipmate Ralph Camp will be attending a Military Reunion Planning Conference in August. The conference is hosted by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and is designed to assist military reunion planners. I am looking forward to this event and also to getting things started in making arrangements for the Sterett Reunion scheduled for October 11-13, 2013.

Reunion information will be published on the Sterett web site as it becomes available.

Mini Reunion

A few of the CG 31 Subic era CIC gang had a weekend get together in Atlantic City last month. All had a good time and looked at it as a tune up for Branson. Ron Malcolm, Rich Acton, Evan Mickel, Andy Cuuciara, Barry Vitez (not pictured) and yours truly put a big dent in the bar stock.



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Web Site

The transition to a new host and the redesign of the Sterett Association web site has been completed. Please make a habit of checking it from time to time, especially as we close in on the reunion.

The web address for the site is <http://www.sterett.net/>

The Sterett Association welcomes any and all input from its members and supporters. Please don't hesitate to submit items of interest for inclusion in our web site or our newsletters, including pictures. We want to hear from you.

Membership Dues:

The Sterett Association is only possible with the support of its members. Like any organization, there are costs involved in maintaining it.

Membership dues have fallen off since the Biloxi reunion. Keep in mind that a current membership is required to attend the Sterett reunions and also to purchase items from the Ship's Store.

Dues are \$20 annually. Please continue to support *YOUR* Association by bringing your dues up to date. Visit the web site for information on the multiple forms of payment.

See you in Branson.

For the Sterett Association:

Steve Hayes