



Fall 2017

The Good The Bad and the Ugly



Greetings from the Sterett Association

Fall, as the picture suggests, is a time for a gentle turning of the seasons and a fantastic display of Nature's beauty.

However, if we are going to display a picture of this 2017 season, we must also display the parts of Nature that have adversely impacted many of our shipmates and friends.



We hope any losses you may have suffered from Harvey, Irma or the fires in the north and in California have been restricted to material things only.

For those affected, the road back may be long but it does bring you home again.



Sterett Web Site

The Sterett Web site is still up. However, it has not been updated for several months.

After we lost our previous webmaster, we decided to upgrade the site to the WordPress architecture.

The site is currently undergoing conversion and will be completed soon. WordPress will allow for smoother, easier updates and data uploading.

Our thanks to John Badeau for taking on this difficult upgrade.

Our Honorary Shipmates

At each of our reunions, we have had some number of Vietnamese refugees in attendance who were rescued at sea by Sterett back in 1982 - 1983.

Because of the internet, Facebook and social media in general, many of the rescued Vietnamese have made contact with Sterett once again.

It's sometimes difficult for those who served in the Navy to understand just how big an impact we had on the lives of the people who risked everything to escape the communist regime in Vietnam.

Their lives started over when Sterett encountered their boat.

One of our honorary shipmates, **Khoi Tong**, who was at the Nashville reunion with her sister **Duong**, wrote her story of survival when she was in college. She won an award for the story.

Her story is too lengthy for the newsletter. I am providing some excerpts here so we may all get a sense of the emotional pendulum the "boat people" experienced when they escaped Vietnam in overcrowded and unseaworthy boats:

The time was 1983. The mid-July night started placidly. Our small boat, full of people trying to escape the Vietnamese Communist regime, had reached the international waters for nearly 24 hours. Having gotten used to the pungent odor on the boat and feeling more alert, I squeezed my legs, trying to give a little more room for my younger sister scrunching by my side, unconscious from seasickness. As the sky changing from dark gray to pitch black, I quietly prayed for our safety. Thank heavens, the sea was calm. The boat had stopped jerking; it glided smoothly with only light bobbing up and down with the waves. Noise of children crying, adults moaning and swearing gradually quieted down as the exhausted crowd drifted into sleep...

I must have fallen asleep for a while because I was startled awake by a sense of total panic. The steersman was urging his crew to spread a big canvas over the boat compartment where people were huddling close. "Light off! All light off!" ordered the steersman. The only lantern in the engine room was extinguished, and all was black.

I strained my ears to make sense of the whispers. After several minutes, I figured out that our ship had fallen prey to a Thai pirate ship. We were running for our lives, rushing into the blinding black of the pathless sea. The steersman ordered everyone to keep absolute silence. Crying babies were immediately muffled; the only noise echoing in our terrifying existence was the roaring sound from the engines of the pirate ship. I must have been too young, too naive and full of hope, or my feelings must have been numb down, because I wasn't panic. I sat motionless, blank minded, as if I was disconnected from the eighty nine frightened souls crouching in the smothering darkness. As I gasped for air, I just felt a slight relief with the thought that my unconscious sister was probably not feeling the nearly unbearable suffocation. I kept telling myself "hang on, hang on." I prayed to God, Jesus, Buddha, begging all holy powers to save our lives.



For the whole night our boat zigzagged in front of the pirate, barely dodged the grasp of Death. Then dawn came. Rays of sunlight swept away darkness, our only protection. The steersman cursed in despair as the pirate ship quickly closed in behind us. Then, I heard him swore again, but with a hint of surprise and relief:

- *Damn, looks like they are leaving, eh?*

The canvas was split open to let in some air, and through that crack a thumb-sized fish jumped in and landed right next to me. I tried to look out, but from my seat on the floor, I could only see a small patch of the dawning sky.

Suddenly a man in the engine room shouted:

- *A ship! A big ship! Overthere!*
- *What kind of ship? Please, God, don't let it be a Soviet ship!*

It was as if we had been reborn. People rose and looked, but I could not make out anything from a dot in the distance. We held on to the hope at the horizon, and we hurried toward that ship. It also seemed to move toward us as it quickly grew larger and larger...

I would never forget that moment. Not for the rest of my life.

A man sitting atop the engine cabin cried out in trembling voice:

- *I saw it! It's American flag!*

Streams of tears rolled down his weathered face. The tiny boat lurched as everybody stood up. We were allowed to live!

And just so, I met the best of America before actually setting foot on American land. I arrived in America with a few dollars and some old clothes, but I had a big asset - a deep appreciation for a land so rich in compassion and a desire to live a life worthy of my family's sacrifice and the blessings handed to us by 'God messengers' on the US Navy ship.

I can still feel being in a shock of awe, looking at the American flag waving in the bluest sky of the Pacific Ocean, and wondering what would have happened to us had the ship came just a few hours late on that fateful morning...



Time went by...

I have grown up and realized that I do not have to choose between my birthland Vietnam and my homeland America. I love the United States of America, as it has adopted and nurtured me. The tree-of-me have grown and bear sweet fruits, and America does not mind my sharing those fruits with my motherland. I don't have to choose between the the two countries like a salmon must pick the river or the sea. The American spirit always encourages people to contribute to a better world, and I will do just so. I will - by one way or another - pass on the opportunities that were given to me. Hopefully my effort will add a brick to the path of changes so that one day Vietnamese people will no longer have to pay with their own lives or dignity for a chance to freedom.

I love Vietnam – the place where I came to this life, and America – the place where I were nurtured to grow into a responsible and loving world citizen. Occasionally I'd try to analyze my feelings. For Vietnam, it's love, and for America, it's gratitude. Then I wondered, is it really so or actually the other way around? Finally, I chuckled and settled with myself. For, I realized, affection does not need labeling or classification.

Thank you Khoi for sharing your story with us. It's nice to know that we made a difference in people's lives.

I will post the entire story on the web site when it is available for updating.

DDG 104

Welcome home USS Sterett (DDG 104)!

The Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer returned to San Diego on Monday, 28 August from its seven-month deployment in support of maritime security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region where it operated under Commander, U.S. Third Fleet's command and control.

BZ



New Chiefs

Congratulations to Sterett's 5 new Chief Petty Officers. Well done.



Yokosuka Today

Larry Motz, one of our Officers at Large, made a recent trip to Asia and visited Yokosuka, Japan, Sterett's home port 1968 – 1970.

Most 7th Fleet sailors have been to Yokosuka on one or numerous several occasions. Yokosuka was a great port visit back in the day for stocking up on electronics at A-33 before heading back to the States.



Yokosuka has changed over the years.
 Larry submitted the following:

Last July I made a trip to Japan, one of my stops was in Yokosuka. Yokosuka has changed since we were there in the 60's and 70's. Here are some pictures comparing Yokosuka in 1969 to today. What really surprised me was Yokosuka outside the main gate. Yokosuka today is a modern, clean, and beautiful city. Japan has changed a lot in ways I did not expect. Gone are the three wheel trucks and carts, there are still motorcycles and bicycles but you do not see nearly as many of them. The Japanese have gotten more prosperous and now drive cars and pickup trucks and vans. No more cheap taxis. Even the food has changed. Many of the soba dishes have more meat in them. Now that the yen is about equal to the dollar, a bowl of soba is between \$8 and \$12 dollars. When I left Japan in 1970 there were no subways in Tokyo, they now go everywhere in and around Tokyo. Lots more trains, they are very efficient. The Japanese are still friendly, helpful, and polite. It was a wonderful visit and I would go back anytime.

Here's a few before and after pictures of "The Honch":



USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



Main Gate Today



Larry outside SRF Yokosuka



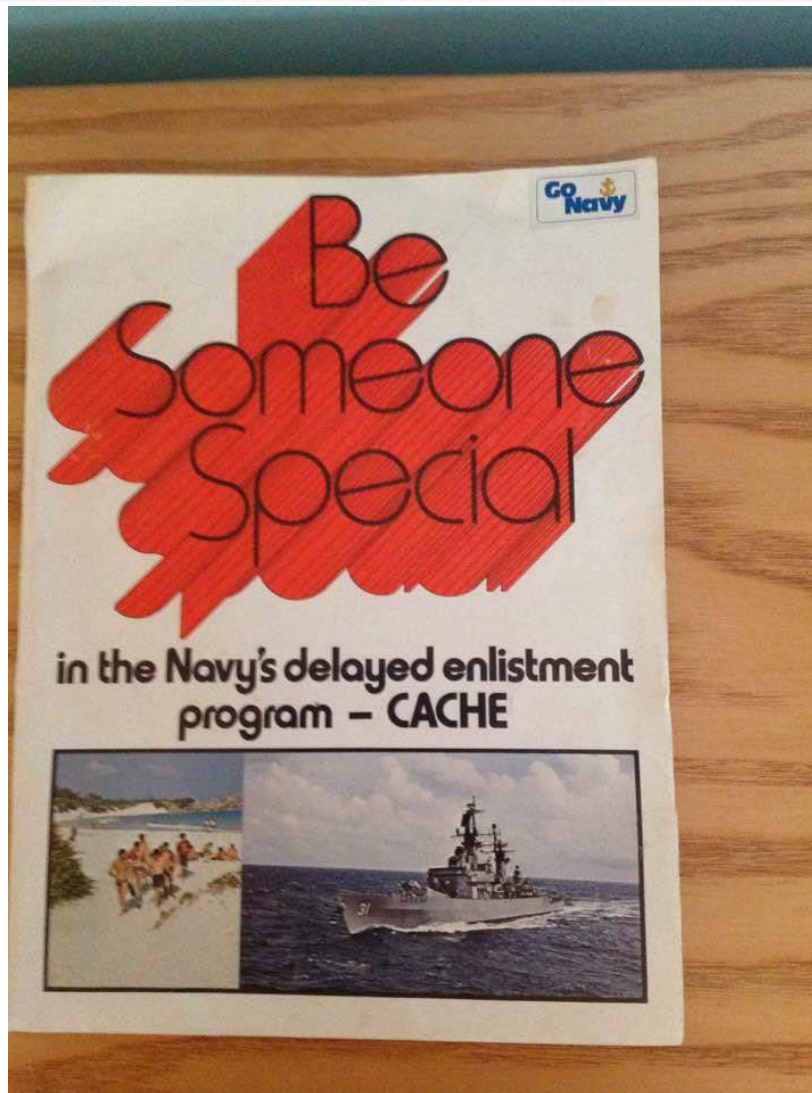
Site of the Club Alliance Enlisted Men's Club

Thanks for sharing Larry

Here's a little gem sent to us by **Mike Farnett**:

"The first time I went down to the recruiting station I was given this folder for my paperwork. It was fate I was on the Sterett as you can see by the picture".

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



Our Under Appreciated Treasurer

On a couple of occasions these past few months I have been guilty of forgetting to publically mention our treasurer, Don Hageman. I didn't mention him at the reunion when announcing the Association Board members nor did I include him in the previous newsletter.

I apologize for that. I, as much or more than anyone, know how valuable Don is to our Association. He is simply the oil that makes this Association run smoothly.

Thanks for all you do.



Sterett Commemorative Plaque Dedication

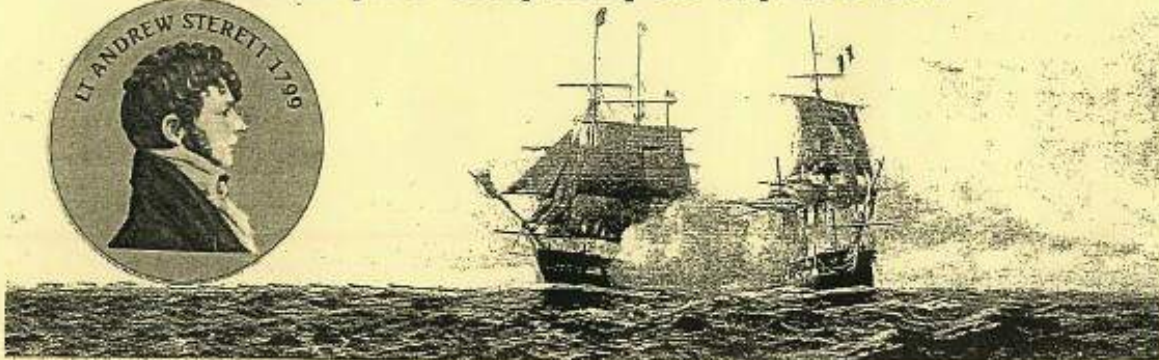
Those who attended the Nashville reunion saw the commemorative plaque which was commissioned by Debbie Sterett. The USS Sterett Ships plaque will be dedicated at the US Navy Memorial on **Friday, 17 November 2017 at 1100.**

You are invited to attend the dedication ceremony, which will be followed by lunch.

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF ALL WHO SERVED
USS STERETT SHIPS
DD-27/DD-407/DLG/CG-31/DDG-104



You are cordially invited to attend the

Commemorative Plaque Dedication Ceremony

On Friday, the seventeenth day of November two thousand and seventeen

at eleven o'clock a.m.

*Underway at the United States Navy Memorial
701 Pennsylvania Avenue NW - Suite 123
Washington, D.C. 20004-2608*

R.S.V.P. by 31 October 17

*Lunch after ceremony at noon—see
enclosure for details*

*Deborah A. Sterett
217-243-6173 or 217-719-0323*

A replica of the Plaque mounted on wood may be purchased by contacting Ms. Lesley Rubinger, Director—Plaque Program, at the above address, or by phone at 1-800-821-8892, ext 718, or by email at lrubinger@navymemorial.org. She will be able to provide you with further details and cost.

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



Navy Memorial Lunch Order Form

Lunches are \$16.00 per person

Lunch includes sandwich, chips, cookie, and soda or water

Please mark desired quantities below:

Sandwich	White Bread	Wheat Bread
Turkey Breast		
Smoked Ham		
Meatball		
Roast Beef		
Italian		
A Wreck		
Mediterranean		
Grilled Chicken & Cheddar		
Chicken Salad		
Tuna Salad		
Pizza Sandwich		

Chips	Qty
Plain	
BBQ	
Sunchips	
Baked Lays	

Cookie	Qty
Oatmeal Chocolate Chip	
Sugar	
Chocolate Brownie	

Total Number of Lunches _____

Email Address: _____

If you are planning on attending the luncheon, please complete this form in regard to the number of individuals who will attend and their choices. Send this and a check made out to: USS STERETT Dedication

*Return check and luncheon order by 31 October 17 to: Deborah A. Sterett
6 Harmony Drive
Jacksonville, IL 62650
(Don't forget to R.S.V.P. even if you don't attend the luncheon!)*

Thank you!

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



Sandwich Options:

Turkey Breast
With Swiss Cheese

Smoked Ham
With Swiss Cheese

Meatball
Marinara Sauce & Provolone
Cheese

Roast Beef
Thin Sliced Angus Beef
and Provolone Cheese

Italian
Capicola, Mortadella,
Pepperoni, Salami & Provolone
Cheese

A Wreck®
Salami, Roast Beef,
Turkey, Ham & Swiss Cheese

Mediterranean
Zippy Hummus, Feta, Artichoke
Hearts, Crispy Cukes and
Roasted Red Peppers

Grilled Chicken & Cheddar
Hand-Sliced Chicken Breast with
Cheddar Cheese

Chicken Salad
With Provolone Cheese

Tuna Salad
100% Albacore with Swiss
Cheese

Pizza Sandwich
Pepperoni, Meatball, Capicola,
Marinara Sauce, Provolone
Cheese, Mushrooms & Italian
Seasoning

If you're attending, please copy and print out the Lunch Order form and send to Debbie Sterett at the indicated address.

Thank you Debbie, for honoring the Sterett ships.

Contacting Sterett Shipmates

Years ago, shipmates' email addresses and other contact information was available through the website. This policy was changed because of the dangers of ID theft and the proliferation of spam email. It is the policy of the Sterett Association not to publically share contact information of our members without their permission.

However, getting in touch with an old Sterett shipmate is still relatively easy.

If you contact an Association officer, we'll first determine if the person you wish to contact has provided his contact data. We will then initiate an email similar to the following:

The Sterett Association received an email from an old Sterett shipmate of yours that would like to get in touch with you, (name here). We have your email address from the Sterett Association files. It is our policy not to provide contact information without permission. XXXX has asked me to give you his email address as a first step in establishing contact:



Hopefully, this email address will result in an exchange of messages between shipmates. Our Master Members database contains close to 1000 names of shipmates who, at one time, were members. The contact info we have may not be reliable as the majority are not current.

Lifetime Membership

The following shipmates and friends of Sterett have joined the elite list of Sterett Association Life Members. We thank them for their generosity and support.

Frank Ames	Gary Montgomery
Joe Anders	Larry Motz
Eugene Bailey	Randy Norton
Chuck Bond	Tim Page
George Cline	Lien Phan
Mike Cornforth	Mike Smith
Fred Cross	Debbie Sterett
Andy Cucchiara	Larry Sullivan
Dennis Dean	Trey Johnson
Liennhu Doan	Dr. Le Trieu Phung
Clayton Flowers	Wayne McBrian
Ed Fox	Dale Hilliard
James Gross	Jim Bolton
Steve Hayes	Mark Beaulieu
Tom Jacobsmeyer	Ken Hager
John King	Ron Malcolm

A Lifetime Members web page will be maintained at: http://www.sterett.net/life_members.html
(Not current)

To become a Lifetime Member (or to update your regular dues), visit <http://www.sterett.net/paypal.htm>
Select a quantity of 10 for Lifetime payment if Lifetime is not a listed option.

Sterett Passings

The following Sterett shipmates have crossed the bar:

GMM1 Rafael Otero
86-88

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



DD 27 (1916-18)



DD 497 (1955-1965)



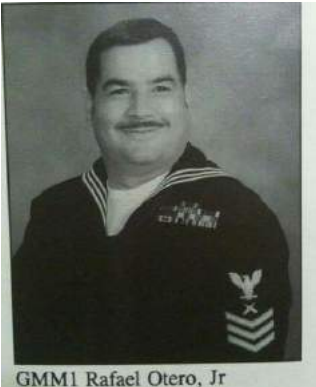
DLG 31 (1967-75)



CG 31 (1975-80)



DDG 104 (Commissioned 2000)



GMM1 Rafael Otero, Jr

Capt. Thomas Blount
CO 90 - 92



BTCM Robert "Mac" McGuire
67-69



BMCS Clovis Mac McKee
67-69

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



GMGC Thomas Michael "Red" Spatz
86-88



QM2 Henry Frazier
81-84



2019 Reunion



Planning for the 2019 Sterett reunion is underway. In fact, Joe Gaughan, our reunion area coordinator, started working on the 2019 reunion before most of us were home from Nashville. Well done.

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

19 – 22 September, 2019

We anticipate having a signed contract this week with the following hotel:

Marriott Jacksonville



You can check out the Marriott here: <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/jaxfl-jacksonville-marriott/>

You'll be happy to know the room rate for the reunion will be **\$92** (+tax & fees).

This is a great rate that should be attractive to many shipmates across the country.

It's never too early so start planning now to join your shipmates in Jacksonville.

We will provide hotel reservation information as we move towards the Jacksonville event.

We want to break the 200 guest mark in Jacksonville. Get in touch with some shipmates and encourage them to attend.

Watch future newsletters and the web site for more information as it becomes available.

Ships Store



We have been unable to update our web site with the new Sterett polo shirts that are now available. These polo shirts were introduced at the Nashville reunion and were well received. They are available in both DLG and CG variants.

Our store custodian, Duffy Groener has created a temporary web site so the polo shirt and our other items can be made available.

If you are interested in ordering a polo shirt and/or any store item, please visit:

<https://squareup.com/store/uss-sterett-association>

To order an item from this web site, simply click on the item(s) and it will be added to your shopping cart.



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

For the Sterett Association:

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



DD-27 (1916-18)



DD-497 (1935-1945)



DLG-31 (1947-75)



CG-31 (1975-86)



DDG-104 (Commissioned 2000)

Steve Hayes