



# NEWSLETTER

Of the USS REID Reunion Group

Vol. 6 No. 2

May, 2002

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## SEPTEMBER REUNION

***IT'S CHICAGO THIS TIME !!***

**Arrive Thursday, September 26**  
**Check out Sunday, September 29**

President Gordon Seastrom has made the arrangements for activities, banquet, transportation and a nice hotel west of Chicago at reasonable rates. Now it is our turn to show support by making plans to come. Think about it, how many more chances to get together do you think you will have?

We will gather at the Amerisuites in Warrenville. The motel is just south of I88 and two miles north of Naperville. On the map, it looks about 10 to 15 miles southwest of O'Hare airport and about the same distance west of downtown Chicago. The motel will provide a hospitality room and Gordon assures us that the free continental breakfast is very good, with everything but eggs and bacon.

Here is the plan as Gordon has arranged it:

Thursday, September 26: Check in day at the AmeriSuites in Warrenville, Illinois.

Friday, September 27: 9:30 AM board bus for Navy Pier. This is a big activities center for Chicago with cafes, restaurants, shopping, IMAX theater, museums, recreational rides, taverns and departure point for rides on the lake. There will be an optional 2 hour lunch cruise on the lake.

Saturday, September 28: A men's business meeting in the morning. Send agenda suggestions to Gordon. In the afternoon there will be a short 4 mile ride to Cantigny, the former home of Robert McCormick of Chicago Tribune fame. There are many acres of beautiful formal gardens and a very fine military museum. In the evening we will have our buffet dinner at the motel.

Sunday, September 29: Check out by noon.



There used to be a lot of us. Where have all these young people gone?



# 2002 REUNION

Pack your bags and  
be ready for full  
body inspection  
at the airport.

Here are President  
Seastrom's orders for the  
day:

Things have pretty much been set in place for the next  
reunion. The only thing not in place as yet is having a  
good turn out. It is up to you.

### Registration:

AmeriSuites, 4305 Weaver Parkway,  
Warrenville, Illinois 60555  
Tel: 630-393-0400

Clip and send to:  
Gordon Seastrom  
522 Elm Street  
Batavia, Illinois 60510

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Driving? \_\_\_\_\_ Flying? \_\_\_\_\_

How Many Coming? \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Cruise? # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$36.12 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Send check made out to Gordon Seastrom)

This information is very important to make this  
all work. Please send early.

When Gordon hears from you, he will send you a  
more detailed letter. This information will have  
phone numbers to call about cabs or vans to get  
you to the motel if you are flying. Also driving  
directions for those who come by car.

**Questions? Call Gordon 630-879-7844**

The motel is collecting for and handling the whole  
package, except for the optional lunch cruise and airport  
transportation. Call 630-393-0400 to make your  
reservations. Be sure to mention USS REID REUNION  
for the discount package. Do not call the 800 number.

**Price:** \$349.05 couples; \$324.10 singles.

These prices include room for 3 nights, hospitality room,  
meeting room, transportation to/from Chicago on  
Friday, Sept. 27, transportation to/from Cantigny on  
Saturday, Sept. 28, the catered dinner banquet buffet on  
Saturday, taxes and tips.

**Reservations** must be made before August 29.  
Cancellations will be honored 7 days or more prior to  
Sept. 19. If you would like to arrive before Sept. 28 to  
visit or see other things in the area, the motel offers a  
rate of \$76.59 per room per night.

**Optional cruise.** The skyline view of Chicago from  
the lake is one of the best in the world [*according to  
booster Gordon.*] The cost is \$36.12 per person,  
including tax and gratuity. This is the only money that  
Gordon is handling. Send it to him on or before Aug. 9.

**Head Count.** Please send to Gordon the information  
requested on the form that appears on this page. **Please  
don't procrastinate. Do it now!!**

## From the USS Henley

[I received the following letter from Al Block of the  
USS HENLEY.]

Lois Childress sent me a copy of your February  
Newsletter for the USS REID. I thoroughly  
enjoyed the newsletter. I met Lois and Elmer  
through our both being members of the Pearl  
Harbor Survivors Association. I was on the USS  
West Virginia when it was sunk in Pearl Harbor  
on December 7<sup>th</sup> and three days later I was  
assigned to the USS Henley and was aboard her  
on that night off New Guinea.

Some time back I was State Chairman (PSHA)  
for Texas and Elmer was President of our chapter  
in Kerrville. Every time I visited the chapter at  
one of their meetings, before we could get started,

Elmer would make me tell how the USS Reid saved me. I told him I was sincerely grateful, but I just wished that they had picked me up earlier and not dropped so many depth charges on us. (Just kidding.)

In Gordon Seastrom's column he made mention of several Henley crew members approaching him

and thanking the Reid crew for saving us. I believe that I was one of those who talked to him.

Please give Gordon this information. Betty Anglen is in charge of all Henley affairs and may be reached at P.O. Box 3106 West First St., Hume, IL 61932 Tel: 217-887-2372. . . .

## NEWS FROM SHIPMATES

### Tom Blow

Orlando, FL

*Right after I put the February issue in the mail, I received a surprise call out of the blue from Tom Blow in Orlando. His son had contacted me some time ago on behalf of his father and I gave him some information to pass on. I didn't hear any more from either of them and forgot about it. Then came the surprise call.*

*I have sent him some back issues, the brochure and added his name to our mailing list. Since that call, Tom has sent information about himself. Tom writes, -*

I only found out this past month that there was a Reunion Group and would like to be considered a member. Enclosed is a check to cover your mailing and further contributions. Please let me know what are the annual dues.

I enclose a summary of my background. I reported aboard the REID the day after commissioning and transferred to the USS Owl (WWI minesweeper) about 1 June 1939.

I did have some interesting experiences which might be used in the Newsletter, but they seem like a "walk in the park" compared with what the survivors went through.

*[Tom sent his picture along with his resume which I have converted to narrative format.]*

Thomas C. Blow was born December 30, 1918, (in North Carolina?) where he graduated from New Bern High School in 1935. A few months later, on January 6, 1936, he joined the Navy. From boot camp he went to the Navy Communication School and was assigned to the USS REID, reporting aboard on November 3, 1936. He was assigned to the signal gang and remembers Atherton, DeForge, Hendon and Frenchie Manckia. He left the REID in 1938 as a Signalman 3/c. With the last name Blow, it was inevitable that he would be known as "Joe" Blow aboard ship.

Tom left the REID on June 1, 1939, transferring to the minesweeper USS OWL. When his 4 year enlistment was up early in 1940 he left the Navy and went to school to learn radio engineering. In early 1943, Tom got back into the military by joining the Coast Guard, mustering out again in February, 1946 as a Warrant Radio

Electrician.

As a civilian, Tom went on to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduating in 1948 with a bachelors degree in electrical engineering. After graduation, he joined the Navy Security Group/NSA and retired from that agency in 1973.



*(Tom Blow continued)*

Tom and his wife Shirley have six children. He lives in Orlando, FL 32819, at 6121 Marlberry Drive. His telephone number is 407-351-1436. Tom lists his hobbies as genealogy, Civil War buff and magic.

*[Please join us at our September reunion, Tom and Shirley, and bring along a trick or two. A more youthful picture of Tom appears on page 11, compliments of Mack Massa. - Ed.]*

## **Tony Fieri**

Rollings Hills Est., CA

*Tony wrote me a few months ago asking for copies of some material. When I sent the material, I included an unidentified picture I had taken at the FFG decommissioning and asked if it were his picture. Sure*



*enough it is. Tony joined the Navy in December, 1942 and reported aboard the REID in July, 1943. He was a MM 2/c and was wounded when the ship went down.*

*Tony replied with an update on what he's been doing in civilian life —*

Thank you very much for sending all that material. That is my picture that you sent.

I got paid off in San Pedro and went back to Norwood Park, Illinois. I had a coffee shop type restaurant for a short time. I got married and after that I started a plastic molding plant. I stayed at it until 1955 and then went to California. I built houses until 1968, then went back into the plastic molding business and stayed with it. My family still has it.

In the interim, we had four children and a wonderful life here in Rolling Hills, California. My wife and I are in our near eighties, both in good health.

I could go on and on with the details and experiences of our life. I would hope the rest of the Group have had the same pleasures.

## **Don Opp**

Sandusky, OH

The unknown sailor on page 6 of the February Newsletter looks like Thompson, the shipmate who slept through the smoke screen we laid down off Finchhafen, New Guinea. Either he wasn't reported missing from his GQ station, the 20 mm on the starboard side of #2 stack, or I missed him on one of my sweeps through the after compartments to wake up the heavy sleepers. I always told Thompson he would live ten years longer than the rest of us because he missed the excitement. He used to tell us of four course dinners he would make if he was a chef, which made me think he had some connection with a restaurant or catering business.

*[If it is Thompson, it must be Virgil Thompson who enlisted in October, 1942 and came aboard the REID in April 1943. He was a Yeoman 3/c and was lost when the ship went down in December 1944. The only other Thompson that I can find on any of the rosters is Clifford Thompson. Clifford was a plank owner on the 369 as a Fireman 1/c. He transferred off the REID sometime before 1940. He died in 1997. - Ed.]*

I recognized Emil Bralowski in the November Newsletter, but failed to write mostly because I was



Virgil Thompson, Y3/c?

sure many others would recognize him. He had the pleasant personality and great sense of humor that if you knew him, you would never forget him. Four of those five sailors in that picture were in the C and R gang. I don't recognize the shipmate on Lucent's left. I recall Emil Braloski always made a cup of coffee with cream in it in the evening and this cold cup of coffee was his wake up tonic in the morning.

Along with Chief Bos'n Kline and William Hughes, SF 3/c, I was transferred three months to the day before the REID was sunk. I ended up on a training carrier cruising Puget Sound.

One day during flight operations, the arresting gear cable broke out of the starboard side and the plane went off the flight deck. The cable fed through the tail hook until it got to the knob on the end and we were making a slow turn to the left to keep the plane from banging against the hull as it skimmed over the surface of the water. I was called up on the flight deck to cut the cable with a power velocity tool. The pilot was astride the fuselage waiting for the plane guard whale boat to pick him up. When they were clear of the plane, I cut the cable. These are braided cables and have a lot of give to them and I don't think that tool would have cut that cable if it hadn't been under a strain.

After the war we made one of those Magic Carpet runs and the returning soldiers slept in four tiered bunks on the forward hanger deck. One evening, after movies, someone went up in the Conflagration Center to turn on the hanger deck lights, but mistakenly flipped the hanger deck curtains and sprinklers and those soldiers got an unexpected drenching. The ship's laundry worked overtime drying out their gear and we worked overtime pumping out flooded compartments.

I was one of six in the carrier's pre-commissioning crew and the last one to leave it when it was laid up in mothballs along with 20 others in the 19<sup>th</sup> fleet in Tacoma, Washington.

## Butch Marriott

Los Alamos, CA

I've been contacting Bud Kautz. After leaving the REID, we were stuck in with the Marines at San Diego. Here we were jumping off towers and going on marches. I didn't know what was coming up, but when I found out, I finagled a transfer. Bud Kautz stayed. They made a commando out of him, complete with an automatic rifle and bandoleers of ammo. I had a picture of him as a commando, but I lost it. Ask Bud to send you that picture. *[How about it Bud? - Ed.]*



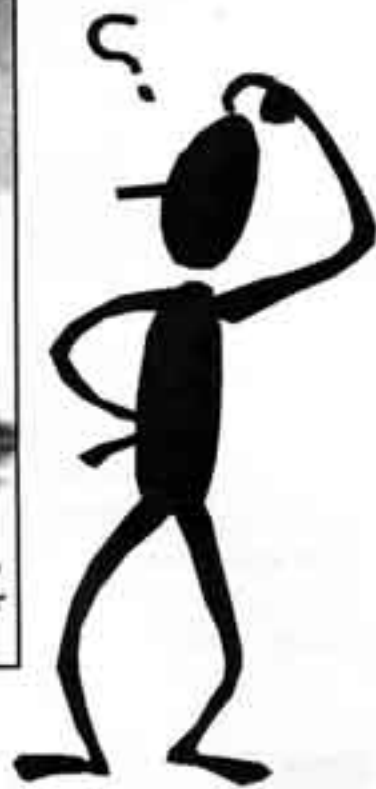
How about a smile, Butch?

Here's a snap of me.





Is this handsome dude the real Roland Williams? If so, who is the sailor on the other side of Tony Lucente?



Highlighting my duty in the REID in peace time was the good will cruise to Samoa, Sydney, Brisbane, Fiji and of course crossing the equator. Also, one story I always remember was told by SM2/c Harrison (Dagwood) DeForge about the Chief with the regulation parrot. I'm sure Frenchie Manckia remembers it too. [Story appears on page 10.]

Later, at the end of WWII, I was in Tokyo Bay and witnessed the Japanese surrender. I was on active duty for 28 years and later worked 13 more years for the Navy in civil service.

I met my wife Anne in Hawaii. We were married in San Francisco almost 59 years ago. We have been blessed with 4 sons and 8 grandchildren. I have had two heart attacks and cannot tolerate high altitudes. No flying on airplanes, of course.

[You haven't given us much information about yourself, John. I don't have your bio, either brief or extensive, but I do have some ship's rosters. According to those rosters, you enlisted in the Navy on August 30,

1939 and joined the REID as a Seaman 2/c on March 27, 1940. You moved up fast and by September, you were a SM3/c and DeForge was gone. That's all we have in the file. - Ed.]

## FROM THE LADIES

Dee Barber

Oakland, CA

"Travelin'" Dee Barber is on the move again. As we write, Dee is on a one month cruise through the WWII battle areas of the Pacific, starting in Japan and moving east. Her trip will take her to Yokohama, Hiroshima, Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guam, Honiara, Majuro, Midway to Hawaii. After various stops in Hawaii, Dee will return to San Francisco at the end of May.

Dee writes, "Your Newsletter is always so chatty and informative. Thank you for your serious efforts. The Reid men and women are good friends and wonderful people. You are helping to keep their stories alive. We all grieve for the ones who have gone before."

# Elmer Faulkner

Albany, OR

the "Price is Right" is on!!! He loves a good clean joke or funny cartoon and can strike up a conversation with anyone/anywhere.

*Elmer joined the Navy in January, 1942 and reported aboard the REID in October of that year. He has been on our mailing list for a great many years, but we haven't heard from him. Elmer's daughter, Marsha Holly, decided not to wait any longer. She sent in this note, picture and phone # 541-258-5969. Thank you Marsha.*

Elmer's job aboard the USS Reid 369 was Ships Cook 3<sup>rd</sup> class. But he was topside at his general quarters station manning a 20mm gun forward of the bridge on the day of the sinking. He has recalled the details of the sinking and rescue and his vivid memories of that day have not faded. All of us kids (4) are so proud of him and what he did in service to our country.

Elmer lives on land in Oregon's Willamette River valley that was first settled by his ancestors in the late 1800's. He is the oldest of his surviving siblings (has lost 3 older brothers) and at 84 years old he still gets around on his own fairly well. In his signature white sports cap, he is well recognized in the local community. Since his retirement from 35 years as a road grader operator, he keeps busy with flower gardening, bird feeding/watching and visiting his friends at the bowling alley. He quit bowling in the senior league a few years back but is a regular at the coffee counter. And we all know not to call him while



Elmer Faulkner is on the right. Who is the sailor on the left? That girl in the middle looks familiar. She was probably one of the most photographed ladies of her time.



I see Frenchie once in a while. Mostly we run across each other at one of the bases. I talked to him last night about his son. What a shocker.

It's great to get newsletters. It keeps me up with the remainder of the old timers.

I left the REID in August, 1941 to go to IC school. J.V. Swift and I were good friends. I met JV in San Diego 55 years later in 1996.

Enclosed is an old snapshot of Kolsum. He may like to see himself as he was years ago.

## Sea Stories

### A Bucket of Steam

*by Tom Blow*

When the REID left Brooklyn for a shakedown cruise to the Mediterranean in early 1937, I was a striker in the bridge gang. I had already received such impossible orders as "Fetch a bucket of steam from the boiler room," or "get a left handed monkey wrench from the machine ship." Finally though, the hazing tapered off and I thought there would be no more. That's when I was taken, but good.

I was on the bridge, backing up the port lookout with my glass when Mr. Terrel came over and told me to keep a sharp lookout as we were nearing Gibraltar.

"As you know," he said, "the Prudential Life Insurance Company has a large sign on top of the Rock. I'm sure you've seen it in their advertisements. That sign is an important navigational aid, so I want you to use your long glass, keep a sharp watch and tell me as soon as you see it."

I was duly impressed with this responsibility laid on me and during the next several hours I kept a diligent watch. But alas, no Prudential sign. It was some time afterward, with Gibraltar fading to our stern, that I overheard a chorus of chuckles coming from the pilot house and knew that I had been royally had.



**Hank Kolsom in his salad days**

Compliments of Walt Smudzin

THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE REGARDED AS MORAL LUMINARIES ARE THOSE WHO FORGO ORDINARY PLEASURES THEMSELVES AND FIND COMPENSATION IN INTERFERING WITH THE PLEASURE OF OTHERS.

- - - - Bertrand Russell

## **The Chief with the Regulation Parrot**

*by John Church*

A chief petty officer was approaching retirement after 30 years of active duty. The chief had never married and had never had shore duty. For 30 years he had transferred from ship to ship.

Early in his career he had obtained a pet parrot and always took it with him. In time the parrot became the most gung-ho regulation, all-Navy parrot that ever lived.

The chief had always dreamed of retiring and raising chickens. At last the great retirement day arrived and the chief and parrot moved to a small plot of land with a house and a hen house. In the hen house were black (Black Minorca) chickens and white (White Leghorn) chickens.

The first morning there, at 0500, the parrot held reveille! *"Reveille, reveille, rise and shine. Hit the deck. Sweepers man your brooms!"*

The chief was irate and yelled at the parrot, *"Belay that! I am retired now and don't have to get up at reveille."*

The next morning the parrot held reveille again and the chief was angry. *"You hold reveille once again on me and I am putting you out in the hen house with the chickens,"* he shouted to the parrot.

Well, the next morning, the parrot held reveille again and the chief grabbed the parrot and said, *"I told you!"* and put it in the hen house.

A short while later the chief was preparing breakfast when he heard a loud commotion from the hen house with screeching and squawking. The chief ran out, opened the door to the henhouse and saw that the black chickens had all their feathers plucked out.

*"What's going on in here?"* he yelled at the parrot. The parrot replied, *"Blankety blank, blank, when I say the uniform of the day is whites, I mean whites."*

## **New Destroyer Class**

Shipmates living in or near Navy towns like San Diego and Norfolk probably already know about the recent award of a government \$2.88 billion contract to design a new DD(X) destroyer. In fact Sandy Lehmkuhler, one of the FFG30 ladies, already is plotting strategy to have one of them named the REID.

According to information reported in the Wall Street Journal, the new destroyer will be "the centerpiece of a family of warships that will have smaller crews and more radar-evading capability and run on electricity instead of gasoline." 50 ships are included in the current plan with construction of the new vessels beginning in 2005.

The Journal continues, "The Navy envisions the DD(X) to eventually spawn a number of ships, including a cruiser that will be responsible for defending the fleet from incoming missiles and a smaller combat ship that will be able to get exceedingly close to an enemy's coast line."

## **Navy Museum Might Move**

I think it was Bill Pennington who sent me an article from the Washington Post covering the possibility that the Navy Museum might have to move. The Navy Museum has been on the grounds of the Washington Navy Yard since before the War Between the States. About 400,000 visitors come by in the course of a year. I expect many of you have visited there and have seen the beautiful models of warships from the past as well as the present.

The events of September 11 have raised questions about security. The Washington Navy Yard is the Navy's oldest shore establishment, dating from 1799. It now serves as headquarters for the Chief of Naval Operations.

# This and That

At the same time as Tom "Joe" Blow was aboard, there also was a Gerald Bowe. I wonder what his nickname was?

Speaking of names, I had trouble deciphering one or two of the names Mack Massa wrote on the picture taken in 1939 that was printed on the back page of the November, 2001 issue [see reprint below.] Mack corrected me on the name of the shipmate second from the left. It is Blow, not Lowe. Walter Lowe was a ship's carpenter aboard at the same time as Tom Blow. Lowe died many years ago. It is a pleasure to add a live Blow to our Reunion Group. I plead extenuating



Not Lowe, not Bowe,  
but Blow

circumstances on this one. The handwriting on the bottom of the picture left room for interpretation and I had no record of a shipmate named Blow at that time.

This reminds me of a name mixup I made in a column I wrote for the county newspaper many years ago. I was announcing the arrival of a new school superintendent

named White whom I mistakenly identified as Wright. I corrected the misprint in the next issue with the explanation, "White is right and Wright is wrong."

The last Newsletter sent to Gilbert



Bill Pennington & Frenchie visit last winter with Mrs. Callahan, who was recovering from a fall.

Brummels was returned with a new address - 114 North Portland Street, Coleridge, NE 68727-2000. Checking the records, I see that Brummels was a Boatswains Mate for about 3 years on the REID and was transferred a few months before the sinking. What's going on in your life, Gilbert? Send me a line or call.

Speaking of addresses, here are a few new e-mail addresses that have come in lately.

Mack Massa <MackK6JTJ1@juno.com>

Gordon Seastrom <seastrom@msn.com>

[Note the spelling]

Warren Law <warrenlaw1@attbi.com>

Frenchie Manckia <fjmanckia1@cox.net>

How about everyone with e-mail sending me a message so that I can collect the current addresses and print them in the next issue.

# USS REID FFG30

Slidell, LA

## Reid Senter

My family and I have moved from the beaches of Coronado, California to the swamps of southern Louisiana. I have been getting the newsletter sporadically since our move and just realized that I had not updated you. Our new address is 58427 Barkerding Drive, Slidell, LA 70460. We live across Lake Ponchartrain from New Orleans on 18 acres of mostly dry land situated on Bayou Liberty. It is a piece of property that my aunt and uncle had owned since the 1940's and where I spent a lot of my pre-Navy days cutting grass, raking pine needles or celebrating holidays. We call the place "Liberty Call," but I have found that my free time has dwindled considerably since I became the owner.

I am working at the Space and Naval Warfare System Command's Information Technology Center here in New Orleans as a program manager and as the "Senior Military Advisor." My offices are located right on the shores of Lake Ponchartrain.

In your February newsletter, I saw that you had requested articles on where your shipmates spent their day on 7 Dec 2001. Some of your readers may be interested in what was going on down here in New Orleans. The D-Day Museum opened its Pacific Theater wing of the museum and dedicated it on 7 Dec 2001. Former President Bush was on hand for the occasion. The next day on 8 Dec, we (the SPAWAR ITC) hosted a re-enactment of a Pacific theater island invasion, which was put on by the D-Day Museum.

Actors dressed as Japanese troops were dug in on the beaches next to our buildings. Numerous aircraft, including a B-25 and F-4 Corsairs, were strafing and bombing the Japanese positions. The Tora Tora Tora squadron of Japanese Zero aircraft (from Texas) engaged in simulated dogfights with the Corsairs. The Marines landed on the beaches (from a "Duck" and a Higgins Boat - many of which were built here in New Orleans and tested on Lake Ponchartrain) and of course, kicked butt, leaving the Japanese defenders lying in the

sand. We were expecting crowds of up to 20,000, but the weather was extremely foggy (probably not in keeping with the Pacific Island theme) and only about 5,000 showed up. The D-Day Museum had invited a number of Pearl Harbor survivors as their guests of honor and several were on hand.

It sounds like you and Doris had a fantastic trip out to Kauai - Karen and I got a vicarious thrill from reading the article, since we had been there several times ourselves in our younger, childless days.

I have many fond memories of your group from our days together out in San Diego and wish you all the best. Thank you for your efforts with the newsletter and for updating our address



**Megan Barnett and classmate, midshipmen at the Naval Academy, visit the Navy Memorial and our model in Washington. Megan is the daughter of Tom Barnett the first skipper of the FFG 30.**

USS REID REUNION GROUP  
c/o Len Gardner  
3 Cove Circle  
Palmyra, VA 22963

FIRST CLASS

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