

LST534

Documentary Newsletter

July, 1998

Volume 1, Issue 4

ODDS AND ENDS

The answer is... 26.
What is the question...
See page 2.

LST534
Reunion
Sept 4-5,
Washington,
DC

Need more clues?

We have a host/narrator for the documentary - a most impressive figure.

Look for clues and see if you can figure out who he is.



Update by Linda Alvers, RN, MSN

One of the most anticipated trips taken by me and Matt is the one I will tell you about in this issue. We literally went from coast to coast of this beautiful country.

It was Thursday, April 16th and I met Matt at LaGuardia airport in New York. You should have seen the two of us and about 13 pieces of luggage!

Our first stop was Humboldt, Iowa to visit Mr. Louis Stockdale, 1st Lt., Atlantic Theatre. We encountered thunderstorms enroute and consequently arrived in Des Moines about 10:00 pm. It was after midnight when we checked into our hotel rooms in Humboldt, which is about 1 1/2 hours north of Des Moines, Iowa.

Early Friday morning while Matt was putting all of our gear back into the rental car, he knocked on my door and asked me if I was ready. I answered "Yes. I'm just calling Mr. Stockdale to check in." Matt laughed and said "Oh, he's waiting for you." Mr. Stockdale didn't answer, so I figured I would wait a few minutes and call one more time. As I sat there on the side of the bed, waiting, Matt came back and started laughing at me. He looked me straight in the face and said,

"I'm not kidding, Linda, Mr. Stockdale is waiting for you outside this motel!"

Needless to say, we were so excited to meet each other. Mr. Stockdale and his friend, Arlene, surprised us and took us to breakfast.

It was a great way to start the interview. He was full of stories and being right up there under Capt. Olson and Exec. Officer French, they were pretty juicy ones. He fondly remembers the amusing side of the war. He and his buddies joke about him being a "90 day wonder". Mr. Stockdale is a big guy - and I kept thinking what it must have been like taking orders from this big tall officer from Iowa!

After the war, he returned to Iowa. When I asked him what he really loved in life, he said "HOGS!". Me and Arlene poked him (ha). After the interview, while Matt was wrapping up, Mr. Stockdale drove me all around the Iowa Countryside - showing me his land, the farm and his friends. We finished our visit with Mr. Stockdale and Arlene treating us to lunch - Midwestern style. We left them around 1:00 pm to head back to the airport. It was hard to say goodbye. That night we flew from Des Moines to Portland, Oregon. It was Saturday morning. Matt

went for a run and I exercised before meeting for breakfast at 7:30 am. By 8:30 we were packed up and headed north to Longview, Washington. I was particularly excited about this interview because Harold Makinster, Signalman 1c, met his lovely wife Rita - where? - in Evansville, Indiana when he went there to board the LST534. I sat Harold and Rita down and we all re-lived the romance of that first meeting and their WWII love affair, the letters, the shenanigans, the love, the fears and the joys.

The highlight of the interview was Harold showing us the US Flag from D-Day that flew on the LST534 as they invaded Normandy. There wasn't a dry eye to be found. Even Matt was taken aback by this incredible historic moment in the life of the LST534.

Harold told us that all of his letters and memorabilia was in his sea bag which was left in the attic of their very first house.

**CONTINUED ON
PAGE TWO**



CLUE

Anchorman

**UPDATE CONTINUED
FROM PAGE ONE**

So after lunch, Matt, me, Harold and Rita, went on a search for the house. Matt and I made a promise to Harold that if we found the house, we would videotape the whole thing. Harold made me promise that I would knock on the door to explain this whole story to the current resident!

P.S. We never did find their first house!

Harold had a little shutter thing from signalman school that he used to learn the signals for the lights. Now, you know that I asked him to signal 'LST534' with it. And he did with absolutely NO hesitation. We laughed – it's like riding a bike – once you learn, you don't forget.

We left the Makinsters, around 5:30 pm. I told Rita that we should leave before we moved in.

Saturday night we drove from Longview, Washington to Cascade Locks, Oregon.

Sunday morning was spectacular. We were in the Great Gorge of the Pacific Northwest, sitting on the banks of the Columbia River. It was really one of the most beautiful sights we had ever seen.

Duncan Robey, MoMM3c arrived at 11:00 am and what a thrill to meet him. Unlike Ed Overstake who said he loved the Navy, Duncan talked about the conflict he felt over war versus supporting your country. He said it has been interesting for me to come into his life and force him to relive and revisit his feelings. We had a great discussion and it will lend a necessary element to the storyline of the LST534.

Duncan was on the LST534 for 23 months in both the European and Pacific Theaters. He talked a lot about the difference in him and his best friend on board, Norris Long. He said Norris drank beer and he didn't – so he always gave his beer to Norris. In return, he would eat all of the banana splits.

He was happy to say how grateful he is to John Shipe. It was right after the kamikazi attack hit, the LST534 was showing signs of sinking in the bay, and Duncan was trapped down in the bilges. That story had us all in tears. You'll have to watch the documentary to see what happened!

Duncan brought a lot of pictures and memorabilia and taught me quite a bit about the construction of the LST.

I was honored that Duncan chose to be interviewed. Not everyone loves war and what it represents. It was a real conflict for this 18 year old kid who didn't want to go to fight the war, but couldn't take the pressure by staying back. It took supreme courage for Duncan Robey to share his views with us – probably the same inner courage that took him back to enlist in the US Navy even after he had been rejected once. What a man.

We said goodbye to Duncan Robey around 2:30 pm and packed up the car. Since our flight was out of Portland Sunday night at 11:00 pm we decided to "tour" around the Gorge area for a few hours. We saw some breathtaking waterfalls. Matt decided he was going to bring his wife, Sara, to the Pacific Northwest!

We arrived home on Monday happy for the experiences we had just gone through. Thank you all! It changed my life for the good.

Next issue, I'll tell you about our trip to Evansville, Indiana – birthplace of the LST534.

CLUE



**World War II
Correspondent**

Get Well Wishes

***John Shipe**
3916 Boyds Bridge Pike
Holston Health Care
Room 204B
Knoxville, TN 37914

***Dick Drew**
290 Semicircle Drive
Demorest, GA 30535

***John Cain**
536 Barbados Street
Norristown, PA 19401

**Question: How many trips did the LST534
make across the English Channel**

26

**My Latest and Greatest Idea
A TIME CAPSULE**

What better way to capture the spirit of the USS LST534? I'll tell you more about it in the August issue, but think about coming to the reunion and recording your own voice on tape to be dropped into the time capsule. Think about what you would want people to see and hear 100 years from now about your experience on the LST534.

NAME THAT

DOCUMENTARY

War Isn't Over

When It's Over

↔
A Salute to the

LST534

↔
The Mighty

534 History

of an LST

↔
LST534

Pride and

Honor

↔
Between Land

and Sea The

LST534

Track that Ship

The LST534 reached Southampton, England on April 16, 1944. It sailed to the Isle of Wight, then on to Plymouth, England, then Portland and Harwich. During this time, drills were going on – fire drills, abandon ship drills, General Quarters drills, etc. The ship went out into the Stour River for practice firing drills. Darkened ship condition was maintained throughout. The LST534 moved to hard dock for loading on June 2nd. It finished loading and the ship was “sealed” on June 3rd at 1500.

From D-Day to December 1st, the LST534 made 26 trips across the English Channel. It left for New York on December 26, 1944 and stopped off in Norfolk overnight before arriving in New York Harbor on January 14, 1945. The LST534 moored at Bethlehem Steel Company for repairs. On February 19, 1945, Capt. George B. Olson was relieved of command by Lt. Richard. J. French.

LST534 Reunion September 4-5, 1998

Plans are beginning to take shape for the LST534 reunion. Some of the activities we will have include:



The video interviews we have been gathering will be showing for the entire meeting. Come watch your buddies remember their LST534 service.



The administrative deck logs will be available for browsing.



The Documentary will be shown Saturday night, September 5th. We will have a cocktail party before the viewing – this will be the first time anyone has seen the show.



Meet and greet each other.



Group picture, Saturday, early evening.

Sign up for the US LST Association meeting for \$40.00 and attend the LST534 reunion for free.

You will have to get a hotel room. The reunion is at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC phone – 202-737-1234.

For details regarding the US LST Association call Linda Gunjak at 1-800-228-5870.

For details regarding the LST534 reunion call Linda Alvers at 1-800-237-1224.

Birthdays

August 11

Larry Gray, F1c
101 Forrest Hill Drive
Taylors, SC 29687

August 12

Robert A. Goldsmith,
MoMM3c
95 Shepherd Drive
Wakefield, RI 02879

August 16

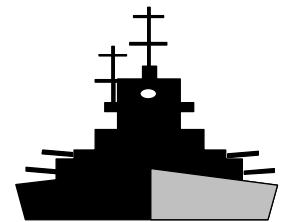
Joseph H. Blackburn, S2c
4206 Deer Run Drive
Knoxville, TN 37912

Luther Curtis Lyles, S2c
2407 Reynolds Road
Wauchula, FL 33873

Eddie B. King, Jr., S2c
4036 Ben Hill Road
Lithia Springs, GA
30057

Can you believe we have three shipmates born on the same day in August?

Their years are 1923, 1925, and 1926.

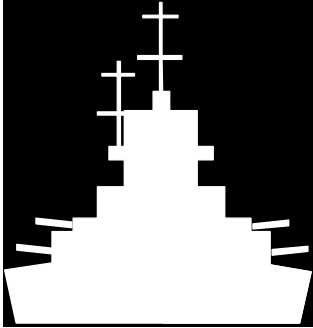


CLUE

Moderated the famous 1960 Kennedy Nixon debate.



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LST534

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JUST FOR FUN

Just for Fun
Is a column meaning just that FUN. Jim Sarres has graciously volunteered to keep this column going. We all know how Judge Sarres can keep us laughing!
Thanks Jim.

Jokes From Jim

I made a killing on the stock market today. I killed my stockbroker.

I went on a rice diet for 30 days. I didn't lose any weight, but I did my own laundry.

Mister to Waitress: Do you have frog legs?
Waitress: Yes
Mister: Then hop into the kitchen and bring me a hamburger.


Nautical Terms

By James Richard Drew

Turn To: means everybody works

Scullery: means to clean up all the utensils by the mess cooks.

CLUE

 The only newsman to ever address Congress.



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