

# LST534 Newsletter

October/November/December 2001

Volume 4, Issue 4

## Freedom Under Attack

September 11th, 2001 changed how we, as Americans, conduct our lives. It has made us aware of our vulnerabilities. It has made us realize PEACE has a price tag attached. It has made us realize we have to fight for freedom, as many of you did.

People have asked me where I was when the World Trade Center was attacked, and how it feels living in New York. This is my story...

As a registered nurse, I have a duty to help out whenever I can. In a crisis, all doctors and nurses do that. In the immediate hours following the horrific incidents in lower Manhattan, we all thought we would be taking care of thousands of wounded patients. And we were ready. Ready to triage. Ready to treat. But no patients came. It soon hit everyone that most people perished, not survived.

Manhattan reacted with incredible sadness. Our hearts were heavy. But so were yours. As the news came in, we learned of the many firefighters lost (over 300), of the many police officers lost (over 100), of the many passengers on board those four flights that were victims (almost 300) and of the many ordinary citizens who worked and visited the Twin Towers who were innocent victims (over 5,000). Then it hit us—this was an attack on the world. Every nation that celebrates freedom. We were individually and collectively attacked.

The mood in Manhattan is of somber reality. We must go on. We must fight back. We must be smart. We must be patient. We must be kind. We must have faith. We must celebrate our freedom, as we support all those who help us protect it. We must show our colors proudly.

United We Stand

## LST325 Documentary

"The Return of LST325" will be shown on Veterans Day— November 11, 2001

7:00 pm Eastern Time

6:00 pm Central Time

5:00 pm Mountain Time

7:00 pm Pacific Time

The History Channel

Mark Your Calendars and tell all your friends and relatives to tune in!

# LST534 Newsletter

## REUNION UPDATE

Our LST534 reunion was definitely impacted by events in my life. First, I am very involved in the restoration of the US LST Ship Memorial's own LST325. Not only am I producing the documentary, I am chairperson of the Steering Committee which helps with fundraising and public relations.

On Monday, September 10th, I asked my sister to send all of the LST534 decorations to the Adam's Mark Hotel in Mobile. Cindy thankfully stores our supplies in her garage. She called the shipping company to do a pickup on September 11th. As the nation shut down, our supplies were grounded.

Eleven of our shipmates attended:

Norris Long

Duncan Robey

Albert Straka and his daughter

Monica

Luther Lyles

Willie Gunn and his wife, Marty

Frank Frame and his wife, Evelyn

Larry Gray and his wife, Opal

Andy Cumella and his wife, Rose

Oscar Cress and his wife, Helen

Jim Miller and his wife, Sandy

Marian Alvers, my Mom

Matthew Wachsmann, videographer

Shailee Upadhyaya, Linda's  
assistant

Ron Pobuda

Thursday was a free day to visit the LST325 and the USS Alabama.

Friday, many of the group joined a tour to the D-Day Museum. This turned out to be a very long day. They left for New Orleans about 8:30 am and arrived back at the hotel in Mobile about 8:00 pm. A

worthwhile trip. They learned about the Higgins boats, found our bricks, and got to see videos about WWII.

Saturday morning we gathered to officially open our LST534 reunion. We lit our candle and Oscar Cress led the group in prayer. We enjoyed breakfast and had a catch up period where we learned what has been going on with everyone since last year.

At 11:00 am, Jack Niedermair, addressed our group. Jack's father is John Niedermair, a Naval Architect and designer of many, many, many ships during his lifetime. But one of his most proudest accomplishments was the landing ship tank, or LST. This ship took one year from design to the first one being launched. It's a remarkable story. I am grateful to Jack Niedermair for sharing his stories with us about his father, his mother, life with a famous naval architect and some insights into the strategy of war.

Jack had watched our documentary, "Onto Rugged Shores" and even had questions of his own to ask these tried and true veterans. It was a wonderful experience.

I was honored this year with a plaque, presented to me by Willie and Marty Gunn. This framed piece will hang proudly in my gallery of pictures and pride. It is Winston Churchill's famous quote, "Sometimes I think the whole war depends on some damned thing called an LST." This was painted by Willie's son, Timothy Gunn. Thanks to Willie, Marty and Timothy.

We were also surprised to have one of our own shipmates pop in for a visit. Robert Ware, GM3c and his wife, Louise, live in Mobile. When Johnny Medeiros reminded us that the Wares were close by, we called them and prompted them to drop by. And they did. It was really, really neat. Robert was surprised to see some of his old buddies and just like we did, he began to remember stories from the past. Louise made us all laugh and we decided Rose Cumella finally met her match. Robert and Louise must plan on attending our reunion next year!

We all attended the Memorial Service on Sunday morning. We had our group picture taken right after that. Sunday evening we enjoyed the LST Association banquet.

The highlight of the banquet, in addition to seeing everyone "all dolled up", was Rose and Andy's tomatoes. I think I could live on those tomatoes. There were enough to go around and made our dinner memorable. Oh yes, my Mom won one of the ladies auxiliary raffle tickets—Go Marian!

I blew our candle out Sunday night and prayed for Peace on Earth.



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## IN MEMORIUM

Louis R. Stockdale, Lt.(jg), passed away on August 16, 2001 after battling stomach cancer. I received a letter from Mr. Stockdale along about January or so and he explained to me that he was diagnosed with cancer and was not going to take chemotherapy. He said, "Linda, I am 84 years old and have lived a long life. Do not be sad when I go."

Mr. Stockdale was so involved in livestock. He was a partner in the Iowa Livestock Auction and we often talked about the price of cattle and beef commodities. He enjoyed following the industry even though he had retired from farming.

I personally will miss Mr. Stockdale. I promise to keep in touch with Arlene and keep her on our mailing list.

May Louis R. Stockdale rest in peace.

It is sad to tell you we also lost Mr. Spencer James, R/M3C. Spencer and his wife Helen live in Poughkeepsie, NY. Across the street from where Spencer lived at 40 Fulton is the house Spencer grew up in. So he never wandered very far from the neighborhood.

Helen informed me that Spencer died very peacefully on Sunday morning, October 7, 2001. They had been married for 40 years. Spencer had heart disease and had broken his ankle the last week of August. With the cast on, he couldn't do his mandatory heart exercises. This may have had an effect on his overall health.

Spencer had a lot of interests. I called him one day in the middle of the summer and said, "Hi - what are

you doing?" He said "I'm taking Helen for a ride in the convertible."

That pretty much sums up the spirit of Spencer James. In loving memory.



## NEWS & INFORMATION

At our reunion each year, we always sign a post card to our shipmates that could not be with us. Bernelle Ellis called me shortly after receiving theirs to tell me that Alfred received the post card, read all the names and smiled. She thanks the group for making a difference in Alfred's life!

## BIRTHDAYS

October 27  
Johnny Medeiros, Cox  
c/o Sheila Sexton  
1505 NE 55th Street  
Ocala, FL 34479

October 31  
Oscar Cress, GMC3c  
9841 41st Street North  
Pinellas Park, FL 33782

November 8  
Fred Maddix, S1c  
7798 Forest Circle  
Glen St. Mary, FL 32040

November 11  
Albert Straka  
643 Foothill Road  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

November 20  
Calvin Hesse, F1c  
5045 Highway 956  
Weiner, AR 72479

November 27  
George Popham, S1c  
6575 Juniper Drive  
Missoula, MT 59802

December 5  
Norris Long, QM2c  
101 Northeast 58th Street  
Oak Island, NC 28465

December 20  
Wayne Jens Lt (jg)  
1220 Weld Azalea Point  
Seneca, SC 29678

December 25  
William Ayers  
221 Westwood Avenue  
Jackson, TN 38301

January 4  
Edgar Overstake, SM2c  
2170 Americas Blvd. South #49  
Clearwater, FL 34623

January 14  
Frank Frame, S1c  
P.O. Box 1017  
Jal, NM 88252

January 30  
Stephen G. St. Laurent  
10054 Hayward Road  
Spring Hill, FL 34608

## FAR and WIDE

In the wake of September 11th, I received a fax from a family in Belgium.

Her name is Betty Denis. We met Betty and her children in Normandy at the museum at Arromanche.

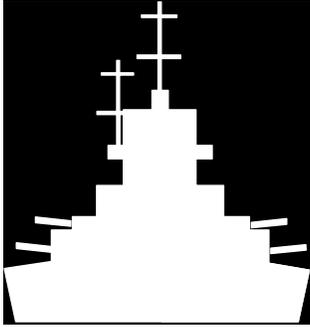
Betty was so appreciative of the veterans and openly thanked Norris, Andy and Paul for their support in WWII.

We now keep in touch with Betty and she faxed me a concerned note saying she hoped we were all safe after the attacks.

Betty's address is Chaussee de Wervicq, No. 406, 7780 Comines, Belgium. I know she would love hearing from you.

Drop her a line. Postage is eighty cents to send her a letter.

LST534 Newsletter  
250 West 49th Street  
Suite 401  
New York, New York 10019



LST534



## LST534 Newsletter

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.

### JUST for FUN

This issue's joke is submitted by my  
nephew, Bud Tibbetts.

Q: What is the difference  
between broccoli and  
boogers?

A: Kids won't eat broccoli.

Editor and Comments:  
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### Nautical Terms

*In honor of our dear departed shipmate,  
James Richard Drew, Nautical terms remains  
a column in our newsletter. Willie Gunn has  
now stepped in to help nurture this column.  
Thanks Willie.*

Over the Hill: AWOL

AWOL: Absent without leave

# Happy Veterans Day