

LST534 Newsletter

September/October, 1999

Volume II, Issue 5

1999 LST534 Reunion

The Second Annual LST534 Reunion was held August 30 - 31 in San Diego, California at the sprawling Town and Country Hotel. We had the reunion alongside the USLST Association Annual Convention so everyone could network with everyone else. And that's just what happened. Thanks goes out to Linda Gunjak who provided the LST534 with a special room set aside for our hospitality suite.

The reunion committee consisted of myself, Rose Cumella, Cindy Zarate, Weston Zarate and Tom Cummings. I have to thank Rose for her diligence before and during the reunion. Rose tirelessly called many of you to remind you of the reunion and invite you to attend. Cindy Alvers-Zarate, my sister, was responsible for decorations and game night, which was Sunday evening. Weston, my nephew & Cindy's 11-year-old son, helped load & unload and decorate in between swimming. Tom was in charge of all video, video taping and the website.

We opened the LST534 reunion with the candle lighting and prayer service dedicated to our deceased shipmates. My mother lit the candle, and I went through a roster of shipmates that have passed away since I began this project:

Henry Norman Alvers

Johnny Wilson

Joe Syzmanski

John Shipe

Jack Cain

Ira Leonard

Earl Lego

James Richard Drew

and from the shipyard,

Roman Ritzert.

We then prayed for other deceased shipmates that we have located. Some of you don't know that in March 1999, my Mom and I sent out about 150 letters to the Navy Personnel Department requesting their assistance in finding the remaining crew of the LST534. About three weeks before the reunion, I received 109 of the letters back indicating the person's date of death. I read through the letters, as we are all

interested in the whereabouts or status of our shipmates.

Sunday during the day we watched tapes, welcomed two newly found shipmates and their wives - Jim Miller, Phm1c & his wife Sandy and Robert Mitchell, MoMM2c and his wife Alice. It was fun to go over pictures, look at the memorabilia and get to know each other again. Also attending were: Oscar Cress, GMC3c and Helen, Andy S1c (SK) and Rose Cumella, William Dox, S2C(Y), Frank Frame, S1c and Evelyn, Alex Fielder, Lt (jg), Norris Long, QM2c, Duncan Robey, MoMM3c and Carole.

Sunday evening was game night. Cindy did an incredible job of providing first class entertainment. Never to be beat was the one, the only, LST Bingo. It was just super. Instead of B5, it would be B Nautical, or N41 would be N Howard K. Smith. Thanks to Cindy for the hours of work involved and the everlasting memories. The night was complete with food, prizes, and lots of laughs.

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Monday we showed the documentary twice during the day to other LST crewmembers. We also had the opportunity to have Dave Kunsy, an LSTer, present his tape and lecture on his experiences on board an LST in the Vietnam War. Thanks to Dave for sharing with us. We had a computer available and Tom gave a website demonstration to those interested.

Monday evening we had our formal dinner and group picture. After dinner we all shared our experiences as a result of the documentary. We laughed, we cried, and we took deep pleasure in being together. We all went back to the suite after dinner to take down the decorations. We asked Jim Miller, Phm1c to blow out the candle. Our candle burned continuously for 36 hours. May our deceased shipmates rest in peace.

I want to thank all in attendance for helping decorate and even sticking around to help clean up and ship out. Also, a great big thank you goes to John Wilson, Jr. for the LST534 banner that so gracefully hung on our porch.

The Second Annual LST534 Reunion will go down as a huge success with lots of fun and laughter!

Save your pennies NOW, so you can join us next year!

Birthdays

September 16

Alfred Ellis, F1c
28910 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185-1829

September 18

Donald Sabin, S1c
92 University Avenue
Providence, RI 02906

October 1

Robert Ware, GM3c
2602 Darwood Court
Mobile, AL 36605

October 2

Emmett Cull, F2c
P.O. Box 1885
Portolla, CA 96122

October 4

Leo F. Wilson, Lt (jg)
5 Malvern Road
Norwood, MA 02062

October 27

Johnny Medeiros, Cox
1363 Northeast 56th Street
Ocala, FL 34479

October 31

Oscar Cress, GMC3c
224 Northwest Monroe Circle
North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

November 8

Fred Maddix, S1c
124 Forrest Circle
Glen St. Mary, FL 32040

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
145 Northeast 31st Street
Oak Island, NC 28465

Get Well Wishes

If you need to be on the get well list, please call Linda at 1-800-237-1224.

Larry Lord, Lt (jg)
4215 Sotol Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88011

Don Sabin, S1c
92 University Ave.
Providence, RI 02910

Garfield E. Walker
c/o Mrs. Walker
3010 N. Hickory
Mishawaka, IN 46545

Alfred Ellis is now home and recovering. He thanks us all for the get well wishes.

Please send them encouraging words when you have a minute to do so. It means a lot.

News of the Crew

Here's a really great story.

Leroy Spencer Graham, MOMM2 went into an Army/Navy surplus store one Monday morning in Chicago where he lives. The guy behind the counter asked him if he was a veteran. After some discussion, Mr. Graham told him he served in the Navy on an LST. The man proceeded to tell him about a TV show he had watched the night before about an LST. "This LST534 went to Europe, was in the Normandy invasion, and then went over to Okinawa and got hit by a kamikaze plane." "Yeah," said Mr. Graham, "the LST534 got hit by a kamikaze pilot." The man said "oh you saw that show too." And Mr. Graham said "No, I was on the LST534." Needless to say both men were surprised at what the other one was saying.

Several other of our shipmates have been located by the letters I sent to the Navy Department. They got the letter which instructs them to either call me or write me. I've heard from six (6) of our shipmates from the letters:

Wayne Jens, Lt (jg)
Larry Lord, Lt (jg)
Robert Mitchell, MOMM2c
Sammy Porter, S2c
Stephen G. St. Laurent, SF2c
Garfield E. Walker, S2c

Mr. Jens contacted me and was thrilled to learn of how much the LST534 family has come together and grown. He saw the documentary at the 102nd birthday celebration of his mother and many family members.

Bob Mitchell and his wife came to the reunion! What a thrill for all of us to welcome a newly found shipmate to the reunion. Bob and Alice live in Hawthorne, California and since that was so close to San Diego, they drove down.

Stephen G. St. Laurent told me he was a ship's fitter and therefore knew a lot of the shipmates.

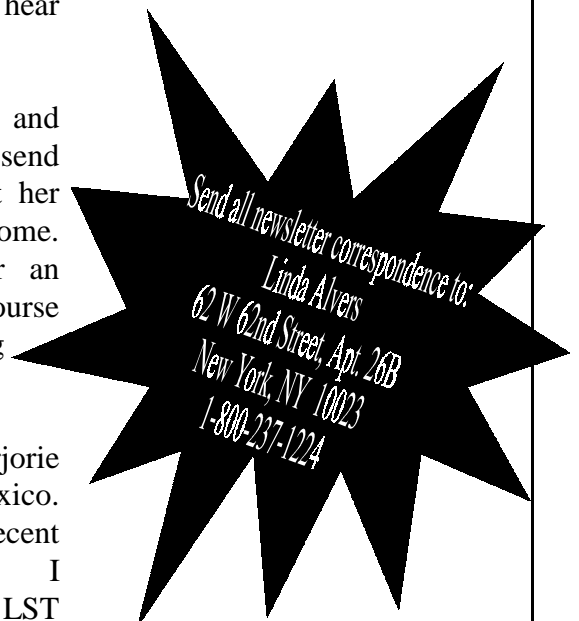
Sammie Porter lives in Oklahoma City. I have sent him a packet and I am waiting to hear back from him.

Garfield E. Walker is ill and Mrs. Walker was so kind to send me a letter explaining that her husband was in a nursing home. I will send Mrs. Walker an information packet and of course keep them on our mailing list.

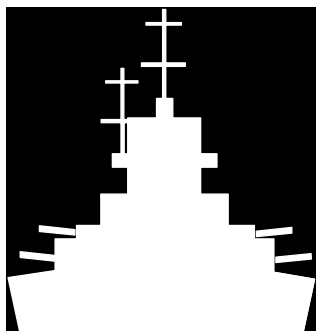
Larry Lord and his wife Marjorie live in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I came home from the recent reunion two days early. I couldn't even stay for the LST

Association final evening banquet; I had to get back to work. In my mailbox was a letter from Larry Lord. He said he had major surgery and was rehabilitating. I phoned back to the reunion in San Diego and told Rose and Andy Cumella. The word went around to our group. When Frank and Evelyn Frame left San Diego to go home to Jal, New Mexico, they stopped in Las Cruces and visited Larry and his wife. They watched the documentary, looked at Frank's pictures, and all of Frank's LST534 stuff. It was a great visit for both families.

So, as you can see, our LST534 family is getting bigger. I am still trying to locate more shipmates I believe to be alive and just waiting to be found.



LST534 Newsletter
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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 By Jim

I marvel at how my wife can thread
a needle.

I grit my teeth when she tries to put
the car in the garage.

Dad, I'm 16 now, so please treat me
like an adult.

Okay, here's the phone bill.

Mother to daughter - "Alright, I'll
tell you about sex.

It leads to housework."

Nautical Terms

In memory of James Richard Drew who
contributed to this column until his passing.

Easting Down - the long route to
Australia via the Cape of Good Hope.

Father - the Commanding Officer or
Captain.

Figure-head - carved figure often
human or animal, fixed on the stem
just beneath the bowsprit.