

# LST534 Newsletter

January/February/March 2002

Volume 5 , Issue 1

## Onto Rugged Shores: Voyage of LST534 A Model for Classroom Study

It is with extreme pride that I tell you about what is happening with our little documentary on the voyage of LST534. The entire show is now online, on the Internet, and is being used as a lesson plan for high school students. I have always believed one of the greatest gifts one can give is to teach someone else something, anything. But that is where you can really make an impact. Think about the impact we are making on high school students today!

The Museum of Broadcast Communications Education Department contacted me about 6 months ago to get permission to use the tape in their history lessons online.

I immediately signed the release with a smile because I assumed they might use one clip, or segment. I vowed to check it out sometime and see what they used. Well, to my surprise and utter thrill, I am reproducing for you now, just what they did.

You can find this at [www.museum.tv/education](http://www.museum.tv/education). Or search the Museum of Broadcast Communications, go to education, then to World War II. There are 4 titles to choose from, LST534

being one of them. You can actually view the entire show at this point. The text information reads:

**Applicable Grade levels:** 9-12

**Subject Keywords:**

Social Studies  
Language Arts  
Science

**Time required:**

46 minutes to view film

**Copyright/Producer:**

National Audio Video, 1999

**MBC Tape Number :** TV7614

**Learning Objective:**

- Students will gain understanding of World War II
- Students will gain appreciation for the seamen who fought the war on the water
- Students will see the marks left by war in the veterans.
- Students will learn the lasting effects of war.

**Background Information:** The LST534 was one of the nation's most famous and powerful warships. It is one of 1,000 warships used in World War II. Preservation of the ships has been nonexistent, thus memories of the seamen are historically valuable.

The LST534 combed the shores of Normandy to Okinawa. It weathered typhoons, submarine attacks and air warfare. The great-grandfather of battleships sustained its final blow on November 2, 1945. All men were transferred or discharged.

**Documentary Summary:** The documentary takes a close look at one of the greatest warships of all time – the LST534. The flat-bottomed boat rolled into many enemy beaches during World War II with 119 American naval soldiers. This documentary tells the story of the LST534 with the voices of those who were assigned to military duty on the infamous vessel. The film chronicles the history of the ship as well as personal remembrances of naval seamen on the ship. Film clips of World War II are spliced into sequences of war commentary by Howard K. Smith.

**Standards:** Standards met according to Chicago Public School academic standards, located at <http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Standards/CAS/as.html>:

- State Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.
- Chicago Public Schools:

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CASA, CASB

- State Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.
- Learning Standard A: Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation
- State Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society and emphasis on the United States.

## Suggested Study Guide, essay questions and activities:

1. What happened to the employees of the Evansville Shipyard?
2. How was the Evansville Shipyard employee shortage solved?
3. What role did the Ohio River have in World War II?
4. In 1943, the 534 was christened by whom?
5. Identify Harold Makinster
6. Identify John Medeiros
7. Identify Norris Long
8. Identify Joe Szymanski
9. Identify Jim Sarres
10. Identify Alex Fielder
11. Identify Angelo Cumella
12. Identify Larry Gray
13. Describe living quarters on the ship.
14. Where was the 534 on June 6, 1944 and what did it do there?
15. When stationed in London, what were foods chosen most by seamen?
16. When did the 534 crew see blood in the water?
17. In December, 1944 the LST was sent back to US and in 1945, it was outfitted for the South Pacific.

Were Naval soldiers eager to board once again?

18. What stunt was initiated by the crew when they crossed the International Date Line?
19. Okinawa was known for Suicide Planes. Explain what they were and why they were so dangerous.
20. The tears in the eyes of those men interviewed were indications of great feeling about the war or about the ship. Discuss which and tell why.

## Docufest fun folder:

- Draw or paint the 534 warship.
- Assemble a model of the 534 warship.
- Invite the Navy office to send a representative to speak on water warfare.

## Essay:

- The LST534 battled man and nature. Which of the two do you think posed the greater conflict and why? 300 words
- During the typhoon, 534 was described as a "matchbox in water." Explain why and describe the conditions both inside and outside their ship.

## Talk Show:

Select 6 of the veterans from the LST534. Match each with a student. Select a host. After students have researched the LST534, have them produce their own talk show focusing on the LST534.

## Bibliography:

Encyclopedia of Television, Museum of Broadcast Communications, Horace Newcomb, Published by Fitzroy-Dearborn, 1997.

*Citizen Soldiers*, Steven Ambrose, Simon & Schuster, 0684015; Notable historian, Steven Ambrose, takes an in-depth look at the soldiers who fought World War II from the beaches of Normandy to the Battle of the Bulge.

*The Good War*, Studs Terkel, Norton, 15643436: Poignant World War II letters to and from American soldiers at home and overseas.

*The Greatest Generation*, Tom Brokaw, Random House, 0375502025: News anchor Tom Brokaw researched and recorded compelling war stories of World War II veterans and their families.

*Greatest Generation Speaks*, Tom Brokaw, Random House, 03755039: More personal reflections by the heroes and heroines of World War II.



I think I walked on air for several days. I think all of you should puff up and walk on air too, and be proud that the Museum of Broadcast Communications deemed your story good enough to use as a lesson plan. Wow!

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## Wonders Never Cease— Status of LST534 Shipmates

It was January 2, 2002. The phone rang. A gentleman introduced himself as Allan Shirks. And he wanted to know if I was looking for him! Yes, I said if your father is Walter Allan Shirks who was the youngest member of the LST534 crew, at 13 years old. Remember how Captain Olson made a special stop in Norfolk when coming back from Europe just to disembark Shirks only to have him meet up with the ship again in New York!

I couldn't think fast enough to tell Allan Shirks all the many stories we want to tell him about his Dad.

What happened to Shirks? He re-joined the Navy in 1951 and was assigned to the USS Choral Sea as a Boatswain mate. He had a medical discharge in the late 50's and moved to California. He passed away in 1971. He was married Pauline who now lives in Tennessee.

You can reach his son Allan Shirks at 802-365-7135.

Go ahead and call. I know some of you can tell Allan the stories much better than I can.

As we hung up, I thanked him for starting our New Year off with a bang!



## NEWS

### **Reunion in St. Louis**

The US LST Association is holding their annual convention in St. Louis, Missouri.

The LST534 reunion will take place during the US LST Convention.

I plan on arriving Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup> and departing Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our hospitality

suite will be open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Please plan to attend. We will have a great time and maybe some of our newly found shipmates will make it this year.

If you need information about the hotel or registration contact the US LST Association at 1-800-228-5870

## In Memoriam

We have lost two more of our shipmates.

### **Cecil George Cowart (1916-2000).**

Mr. Cowart was a cook on board LST534. He was married to Margaret for 26 years. They had one daughter Cecilia, who lives with her family in Lake Wales, Florida. Cecil later remarried and moved to South Carolina.

Margaret encouraged Cecil to write his war memoirs. I'll see if maybe we can get a copy to post on the website. Cecilia has two sons, both served in the US Navy.

### **Harold "Bud" Whitney (1918-2001)**

The following obituary is submitted by his wife Eve.

If Tears Could Build A Stairway,  
And Memories A Lane,  
I'd Walk Right Up to Heaven  
And Bring You Home Again

He had unique empathy for all aspects of nature and enjoyed hunting, fishing and gardening. He carried on a 100 year legacy of hand carving game bird decoys as did his father and grandfather before him. Bud is survived by his wife Eve, sons Nathan McMinn and Blaine Whitney, daughters June Cormier and Lancey Wheaton, and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. His dry Maine humor, wisdom and loving support will be missed by all.

In Loving Memory of  
Harold "Bud" Whitney

## BIRTHDAYS

### **February 3**

William Dox, S2c (Y)  
443 South Main St  
P O Box 756  
Massena, NY 13662

### **March 14**

Salvatore Logano, S2c  
101 High Street  
P.O. Box 144  
Portland, CT 06480-1656

### **March 26**

Willie Gunn, Y2c  
105 Bull Street  
Swainsboro, GA 30401

### **April 1**

Angelo Cumella, S1c (SK)  
11 Freeport Circle  
Toms River, NJ 08757

### **April 14**

Alex Fielder, Lt (sg)  
5950 Ambassador Drive  
Fairfield, OH 45014

### **May 17**

Duncan Robey, MoMM3c  
8301 Tieton Drive #87  
Yakima, WA 98908

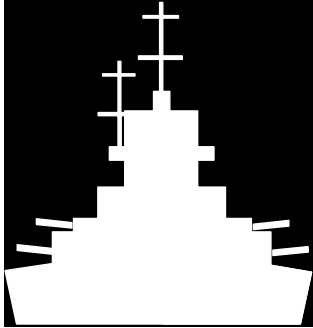
### **May 17**

Jim Miller, Phm1c  
1452 S. Ellsworth Road #2211  
Mesa, AZ 85208

### **May 19**

Alpheus A. Deville, S1c  
50 Deville Cutoff Rd  
Deville, LA 71328

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

Out of the mouths of babes comes the Dead Cat Test, a true story :

A kindergarten pupil told his teacher he'd found a cat in the ditch on the way to school. "Did it follow you to school?", asked the teacher.

"No it was dead", she was informed.

"How do you know?", she asked.

"Because I pissed in his ear and it didn't move", said the child innocently.

"You did WHAT?!?", the teacher squealed in surprise.

"You know," explained the boy, "I leaned over and went 'pssst' and he didn't move."

*Contributed by Carol Gallegos*

### NAUTICAL TERMS

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

*Contributed by Willie Gunn.*

**S.P.** —Shore Patrol

**Shore Patrol**—Certain Petty Officers authorized to maintain order on shore

**Uniform of the Day**—The uniform designated by the C.O. for the day.

**Editor and Comments:**

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