

LST 534 Newsletter

September 2005—Special Reunion Edition

Volume 8 , Issue 4

LST 534 Reunion Recap

The 9th Annual LST 534 Reunion was held August 21-25, 2005 in Norfolk, VA.

We had 9 shipmates in attendance:

Oscar Cress
Andy Cumella
Bill Dox
Larry Gray
Willie Gunn
Norris Long
Luther Lyles
Johnny Medeiros
Albert Straka

Our oldest in attendance was Norris Long, at 94.5 years. Our youngest in attendance was Norris' great-grandbuddy, Julian Marcellin-Little at 4 years.

Our keynote speaker was Stephen (Steve) St. Laurent, son of shipfitter 2nd Class, Steve St. Laurent. It was great to have Steve join us this year. Steve is a stand up comedian, so you can imagine the fun he added to the scene. Thanks, Steve!

My dad's grandson, Diego Alvers, lit our candle and Steve St. Laurent led us in prayer.

We had a quick business meeting, then watched the reunion tape from last year. While we signed postcards, we played past reunion tapes and reminisced over all the good times we've had at the reunions.

Game night again proved to be very lively. Our new game this year was "The Newlywed Game" renamed "The Oldywed Game." We had 6 couples and it was quite funny to see how these couples knew each other (or didn't) after some 60 years or so of marriage. Larry and Opal Gray won the prize!

Kids and adults together played the oven mitt game. It was the loudest oven mitt game in the history of our reunions, and quite fun.

Of course, we topped off game night with our traditional ice cream sundaes.

Tuesday, we toured Norfolk. This included going aboard the Battleship Wisconsin. We watched a film about the history of the ship, then walked the decks. It was most impressive. LSTs were 328 feet long (about

the size of a football field) and carried approximately 120 crew. The Wisconsin is 3 football fields long and had a crew to 2,100! It remains in the inactive fleet of the US Navy at this time.

We also visited Virginia Beach and the Cape Henry lighthouse, built in 1791. Some of us climbed to the top of the lighthouse, over 100 steps! A special treat at Virginia Beach was watching a large school of dolphins in the Chesapeake Bay playing and splashing.

Wednesday morning we reconvened in the hospitality room to discuss our Time Capsule idea. After a fun and lively discussion, we decided upon the following:

- ◆ Housing—Housing is critical when you do a time capsule. Many people think to bury it but that is not a good idea. Think of some place that will be around for a long, long, time—like a museum. (See Time Capsule)
- ◆ Sealing—we want to seal the time capsule in a sealing ceremony on June 6, 2006.

- ♦ Opening—we want the time capsule opened on the 100th Anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 2044.

The mission of the time capsule is to be educational in design for those who open it. Therefore, personal stories of life on board LST 534 plus pictures or memorabilia from the ship are ideas for its content. I plan to put the transcripts of the interviews I did, plus a copy of “Onto Rugged Shores: Voyage of LST 534” inside.

Be thinking of what you would want your kids or grandkids to know about your time on board LST 534. (See related column)

The annual banquet was Wednesday evening and we again enjoyed Andy and Rose Cumella’s tomatoes and mozzarella. It’s my personal favorite! Thanks goes out to Rose and Andy for making the banquet dinner delicious.

Our candle was blown out by Norris Long and his great-grandchildren, Arianne and Julian.

Thanks to everyone who came and contributed in many ways to the fun and excitement of our reunion. I’m grateful to you all.

Other Reunion Events

The LST 534 Crew spearheaded by Yeoman 2c Willie D. Gunn, presented me with a tribute of our time together. It is a mounted model of an LST about 1/300th of scale. It has 2 LCVPs, 4 40mm

gun tubs and 2 20mm gun tubs. And it has a German Zero plane on approach to the starboard side, moments away from impact. You can really feel the tension in this re-creation of the kamikaze attack. There is a plaque applied that has the names of all the shipmates involved in the reunions over the years. And the bars from all the medals my Dad received are also mounted. All of Willie’s handiwork will live on for many years. Thanks to Willie and all the crew for their loving memorial.

Decorations

How many of you know how we decorated our suite each year at the reunion? Its really amazing. Our shipmates and their wives do it all. We have fishnets, balloons, anchors, ship’s wheels, portholes, crepe paper, a huge American flag, and our reunion banner. Our banner measures about 2 feet high by 5 or 6 feet long. It was made and donated by John Wilson, Jr., the son of Johnny Wilson, EM2c.

We always have a table filled with informative items—the deck logs, the ship’s organizational structure, and each of the newsletters since the beginning of time. :))

Also on display are some of the awards we won for the documentary. Our room is always festive with lots of excitement going on inside.

The Time Capsule

The legacy of LST534 will now

live on, in the form of a time capsule. We had a very important discussion at the reunion about the elements that go into the making of a time capsule. Here’s a look at what we learned.

Time Capsule 101:

Theme

The best part of any time capsule is the thought and preparation that goes into it. That’s what each of you need to do now. Think about what mementos you have from the ship and your time on board. You may have items that you want to keep in your family.

Traditionally, a time capsule provides a “snapshot” of a certain time in history. Our capsule will focus on the life of the LST534 and who brought the LST534 to life—YOU, its crew! So our time capsule will focus on you. In some cases you may want to write your story, or what you remember most, or who your best buddy was, or what was the most frightening experience.

Container

Choosing a container is also very important. It has to be air tight, fire retardant and water resistant. The size of the container will depend on the items sent in. Once I have gathered all the items, I will be able to select the most appropriate container.

ALL items MUST be sent to me BEFORE March 1, 2006. So get ready to assemble your part of history!

Sealing

We plan to have a “Sealing Ceremony” to seal the time capsule on June 6th, 2006 at the Evansville Museum in Evansville, Indiana. The LST534 was built at the shipyard in Evansville, so it is only appropriate that its memory should live on there. Tom Lonnberg, curator of the Evansville Museum has agreed to host our time capsule and even make it a part of the permanent collection that ensures it won't get “lost” in the basement. It will be followed in their database. This is really great news! Let's make the museum proud.

Documentation

Documenting the contents is critical and I will assume responsibility for that. We can actually register the time capsule with the International Time Capsule Society.

Opening

The shipmates at the reunion decided the opening date to be the 100th Anniversary of D-Day, or June 6, 2044. How thrilling—close your eyes for a minute and think about the people in your life that will be around in 2044 and can witness history being made when our LST534 Time Capsule is opened! Will your children be there, with your grandchildren? Will you tell the history teacher at the local school, who will follow this lesson of history?

Purpose

Why do we do this time capsule? When we open it, the contents should be an educational lesson in history. Think about this. What would you want to tell the

future generations about life on board the LST534? Here's your opportunity. I am honored to be your archivist. Let's make this something really special.

Send letters, items, stories or whatever to me at this address:

Linda Alvers
250 West 49th Street
Suite 401
New York, NY 10019

**Certified mail with return receipt requested.

You have until March 2006, but I suggest you start NOW.

Calendars

My sister, Cindy Alvers Arlantino and her husband Reggie, last year committed to making 2006 calendars. They debuted at the opening of our reunion to thunderous applause.

They collected pictures all year, with the help of Willie Gunn, Y2c. Willie sent out letters with instructions. My sister and I are Ms. February and my Mom is Miss June. We had a lot of fun thinking about what we would do. Cindy and I went to a costume store here in New York City and searched around for something nautical and not too sexy. My mom, on the other hand, said “This is a calendar and my only chance to be Miss June—I'm going all out!” You'll have to buy a calendar to see Miss June with your own eyes!

An order form is inserted. These are great Christmas gifts. Order

early so they will get to you by then. Get one of each the men's (“The Brave Gaters of LST534”) and the women's (“The Sexy Ladies of LST534”). This is definitely a once in a lifetime experience. (And yes, I will buy one of each to put in the time capsule)

Magnets

We send a big thank you to Marie Kingsbury LaFlower (Lyle Kingsbury's daughter) for donating the “Willie Gunn Ship Drawing Magnets.”

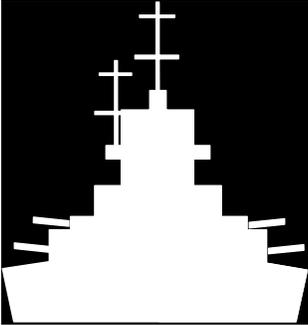
Reunion Tapes

How many of you know that we video tape the reunion every year and edit it into a 45-50 minute show? They are so entertaining to watch, not to mention a bit educational. There is usually a theme attached to each year.

For example, last year, Andy Cumella declared early on that someone stole some of his tomatoes that he brings each year to make his famous tomato/mozzarella dish at the banquet. So Matthew Wachsmann, videographer and S1c, asked us all throughout the meeting, “Who stole the tomatoes?” Or one year, we were joined by a woman attending the reunion who was alone. So Rose Cumella went all around the restaurant recruiting a “husband in waiting” for our new friend, Virginia.

Each reunion tape is available to buy for \$10 or rent for \$8 plus shipping of \$3. Call Carol at 1-800-373-2952 for information.

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LST534

LST534 Newsletter

Just for Fun

Men are like Chocolate Bars...Sweet, smooth & they usually head right for your hips!

(Taken from the internet)

Just for Fun is a column meaning just that – FUN.

In memory of Jim Sarres, who contributed to this column until his passing.

Men are like...

Weather...Nothing can be done to change them.

Government Bonds....They take sooooo long to mature.

Mascara....They usually run at the first sight of emotion.

Commercials...You can't believe a word they say.

And last but certainly not least....

Nautical Terms:

In memory of James Richard Drew who contributed to this column until his passing. Contributed by Willie Gunn.

Deck Ape: Seaman working on deck force

Captain's Mast: Enlisted men appear before the Captain for minor offenses.

Editor and Comments:
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