



The Jerseyman



**Issue # 24
October 21, 2002**

**THE JERSEYMAN
Friendly Fire...**

Inside this issue:

December 18, 1944...

On this date, Task Force 38 consisted of 7 Essex Class Carriers, 6 Light Carriers, 8 Battleships, 4 Heavy Cruisers, 11 Light Cruisers, and 50 Destroyers. Also steaming with the Task Force, was an attending fuel group of 12 fleet oilers, 3 fleet tugs, 5 Destroyers, 10 Destroyer escorts and 5 escort carriers carrying replacement planes... and all were steaming into "Typhoon Cobra"...

Within a 3 hour period, Destroyers *USS Hull*, *USS Monaghan* and *USS Spence* capsized and were lost. Over one hundred planes were destroyed or washed over the side from the Light Carriers. Destroyers reported rolling in arcs of 100 degrees... One of the Destroyer Escorts recorded a single roll of 72 degrees... at the end of the worst storm in US Naval history, the ships were spread out over an area of 50 to 60 miles....

December 23, 1944...

Five days later, *USS New Jersey* and the battered ships of TF 38 put into Ulithi atoll. After surviving Typhoon Cobra, *USS New Jersey* was now suddenly hit by friendly fire...

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(Source: "History of US Naval Operations in World War II" by Adm. Samuel Eliot Morison)



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**To contact
The Jerseyman,
logon to
www.ussnewjersey.com**

Now Hear This! In their own words...***USS New Jersey* crewman Donald "Frenchy" Gervais — Korean War...**

"I enlisted in the navy in New London and took my physical in Springfield Mass - April 1950. Then went on to boot training in Great Lakes Illinois. I attended fire control school in Anacostia, Virginia for three months and asked for sea duty. I was fortunate to be assigned to the USS New Jersey. I served on the NJ from October 1950 till my discharge in April 1954. I was discharged as a gunner's mate second class, and served in 5 inch mount # three during our first tour to Korea in 1951 . When I made third class gunners mate I was transferred to sixteen inch turret # three, and served in that gun for our second tour to Korea in 1953.

My berthing, while in the fifth division, was on the starboard side on the main deck next to the porthole. I was the trainer in mount 53 and was the one who had the trigger on my hand wheels to fire the gun unless we were in auto-matic and the firing was done by fire control in Sky One. That was good duty as I enjoyed working on the guns. The 5 inch guns had a very loud crack when they were fired, and were pretty accurate. When in turret three my sleeping quarters were below the mess hall two decks below the main deck... I didn't like that as much as we were closer to the screws and in rough seas it was quite noisy as the screws sometimes came out of the water.

When in turret number three, I was in the powder room for a few months but we were rotated as that was a very trying assignment. My next job was on the shell deck which was much better as we had fresh air 'to breath, not like in the powder rooms which were shut tight and no ventilation was allowed to prevent an explosion from the fumes of the powder bags. My time on the Jersey was something I will never forget. It was a good experience and I really grew up and learned to take care of myself in those four years. I made some good friends that I'm still friends with today, over 50 years later. You never forget friends that you were in action with, never!!

The food was very good even if we were at sea for a long deployment. We missed the fresh vegetables and fresh milk but I never complained as we had good cooks and bakers. The coffee was atrocious at times but that was because we made our own in the turret and I don't think the pot ever got washed out or cooled down. We only added more coffee grounds and more water occasionally, and had to use canned milk. I haven't used canned milk since, and the sight of it in the store is enough to turn my tummy. We spent many hours in the guns during general quarters and condition two, and it was nice to meet up with some of the men that were with us back then when we had our reunion aboard the ship last month. It brought back many memories, some good and some sad. As you can see by my picture I've aged 50 years but the memories are as vivid as they were back then...

I wish every young man could experience the navy life like I did and they would probably appreciate the good things in life that all take for granted just a little bit more. Another thing I'll never forget nor will any sailor who experienced it, is the awesome fire power of the mighty 16 inch guns. The roar, the concussion, the recoil, the flames shooting out of the barrels, etc. It's something that can't be explained but has be experienced, to fully understand. I'm glad that I had the chance to be a Battleship sailor and got to sail on a dreadnaught because those days are now gone. I also want to take my hat off to the tin can sailors, as they are also a special elite group who really know what rough seas are like...

Donald "Frenchy" Gervais

Danielson, CT - October 2002"

Battleship Development... “Lexington Class” - Battlecruisers”...

Issue #23 of *The Jerseyman* began the discussion of Battleship Development with *Alaska* Class “Large Cruisers.” . Designated CB-1 through CB-6, the *Alaska* Class was ordered in mid-year 1940, and were designed for functions **between** existing Cruisers and Battleships.

Larger “*Lexington* Class” battlecruisers, were designated as CC-1 through CC-6, and ordered in 1916. As history shows, no “*Lexington*” class battlecruisers were ever built—all 6 were cancelled. However, two of the hulls originally laid down as battlecruisers, were re-designated to become *USS Lexington* (CV-2), and *USS Saratoga* (CV-3). The narrow 105’6” beam of the original *Lexington* battlecruiser design made them ideal for passage through the Panama Canal...

CLASS—LEXINGTON
Displacement 41,000 Tons
Length 888’ Width 105’6”
Armament 8 x 8”/55, 12 x 5”/25AA
90 Aircraft
Armor 7” belt, 2” Decks
Machinery 180,000 SHP;
G.E. Turbines with electric drive
4 Screws
Speed - 34 knots
Crew - 2122

Authorized completion as an aircraft carrier 1 July 1922;
Launched 3 October 1925
 (Source: Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)



USS Lexington, USS Saratoga, USS Langley - Ca. 1930



The battlecruiser hulls of Aircraft Carriers *USS Lexington*, and *USS Saratoga* = 888’ Length, 105’6” beam, and 41,000 tons displacement. *USS Langley* originally laid down as *USS Jupiter* (AC-3) a “Collier” - coaling ship.

Friendly fire incident aboard *USS New Jersey* -

A sailor that remembers this incident very clearly was Shipfitter 2/C Ken Loewecke, shown in photo... Ken now lives in Rockford, Illinois and was just heading out for a few days of Muskie fishing when *The Jerseyman* was able to reach him at home. We asked Ken what he remembered... **“The picture you are looking at is not how I remember it. I was walking about 30 feet away when it hit, and the dud round went completely through the deck. It hit close to mid-**



ships back aft, and between the catapults and 20mm guns. What you see in the picture is probably a 5” gun casing to show the trajec-

tory angle of the round. When it went through, it hit a sailor in the foot, and we heard that he lost his foot. I don’t remember that we ever did identify the ship that fired the round, but there were some destroyers doing firing practice at the time off of Ulithi. The sailor was a seaman, and I think he was part of the Gunnery Division... It was the Gunnery Officer that went down and carried the dud topside. He just threw it right over the side. I can also remember clearly that the Gunnery Officer’s hair turned completely white within just a few days of this happening.”

Ken Loewecke served aboard *USS New Jersey* for 34 months, and was assigned to the ship right out of boot camp. It was also Ken that was given the job of welding a 3 x 3 foot steel plate into the deck to cover the hole from the dud round... Ken and his family visited the ship last year and he is shown here standing at the exact spot of the dud hit from 58 years ago. After Ken spoke with *The Jerseyman*, he mailed us these photos, and also the phone number for the sailor that was hit by the round...

Seaman 2/c Bob Clower. Bob (photo shown below) and his wife now live in Carrollton, Georgia and his memories of what happened follow... **“I was assigned to “L” Div. (Lookout), and my GQ station was as a lookout in the crow’s nest. We had just anchored off Ulithi, and I was assigned mess duty. I had just finished steaming all the chow trays and laid down under a blower on the mess deck and fell asleep. When the dud hit, it came right through the deck and either the round or a piece of the deck hit the instep of my foot. I also got hit by some other shrapnel probably from the cap on the dud...**

They took me to the hospital ship *USS Relief* for 7 days, and then on to the hospital at Guadalcanal for more surgery. Then to the Admiralty Islands, Pearl Harbor, Vallejo, California, and finally to the hospital at Dublin, Georgia. I spent 33 months in therapy, and have had a limp ever since... they wanted to put me in for the Purple Heart but I said no... this wasn’t enemy fire...”

Editor’s note:

One of the “perks” as Writer/Editor of *The Jerseyman* is that you get to hear first hand, the history and intense pride shared by sailors of the “Great Generation,” and from those that served in the conflicts that followed World War 2. Many more stories are still to follow in *The Jerseyman* from those who served on, and along side of *USS New Jersey* (BB 62)...

Tom



Remember these? Navy Pay Chits...

From WW2 and into the mid-1950's, US Navy men would stand in long lines every month at ship and shore station disbursing offices waiting to get paid. When you finally got to the barred window, there was an ink-pad for fingerprints to be added to your already filled-out pay chits... From the pay office, the next line was usually to buy a carton of sea-store cigarettes for 50 cents (WW2), or 90 cents (1950's)... Not that any of us smoke anymore, but have you checked out the cost of a carton of cigarettes lately?

Netscape® users—Having trouble with *The Jerseyman* in Adobe® Acrobat?

Netscape problems...

Recently we have been advised that *The Jerseyman* was “crashing” on some computers using Netscape as their browser. We have contacted Adobe, and it was suggested that we advise Netscape users of the following:

1. Ensure that you have downloaded the latest version of Adobe Acrobat reader V 5.0. (Please note that *The Jerseyman* has been configured to open older versions of Adobe Reader back to Version 4.0... we recommend that V 5.0 be used.)
2. If Netscape users go into Adobe Acrobat Reader's “Edit”, “Preferences”, and “Options,” you can DESELECT (uncheck) “Display PDF in Browser”, and also (uncheck) “Check browser setting when starting Acrobat.” (Hopefully this will help reduce the crashing problems.) *The Jerseyman* will try to accommodate

“Volunteer shipmates are available to help you resolve your computer issues...”

All Hands, but with the wide range and ages of computers, we will probably run into some isolated problems. Please keep *The Jerseyman* informed... we will try to put you in contact with several volunteer shipmates that are available to help you resolve your computer issues—either by phone or online. A lot of talent is available in our USS New Jersey volunteer force...

The Jerseyman—put one in the mail?

If you know a USS New Jersey veteran that is without access to a computer, you may want to keep him informed and send a copy or two of *The Jerseyman*. An envelope is not required...

The Jerseyman can be folded and taped (From the Post Office - “they should never be stapled”) and 6 sheets mailed for only 37 cents.

Jerseyman issues up to 11 sheets would cost 60 cents...

Our goal is to keep All Hands informed on a regular basis by *The Jerseyman*.

To help us do this, please send one on to a shipmate...

Help wanted...**Librarians wanted...**

The Curatorial Department is seeking five Asst. Volunteer Librarians. The positions are to establish and run the Battleship New Jersey

Research Library planned for the ship's original library space area.

Flexible days and hours. Typically requiring no more than one six hour shift per week. Responsibilities include assisting in opening and closing the library Monday-Saturday from 1000-1600; sorting the books, periodicals, and primary resource materials; checking in and out books, issuing new library cards, etc.,

Please contact:

Curatorial Office Assistant
Dan Soldano
856-966-1652

6 Exhibit Assistants Needed

Positions are currently available for six Volunteer Exhibit Assistants to work with the Curator in maintaining and improving the battleship's existing and future compartment displays and formal exhibit spaces.

Successful candidates will form three two-man teams and dedicate one six hour shift per week. Responsibilities include cleaning exhibit cases; rotating, replacing and changing out displayed artifacts; establishing or maintaining existing and new display areas, etc.

Flexible hours, typically requiring only one full day once a week. Please contact the Curatorial Office Assistant, Mr. Dan Soldano, at 856-966-1652 Ext. 201 to set up an interview.

**EDUCATION
OFFICERS
SOUGHT**

The Curatorial Dept. seeks former teachers, administrators and other education professionals to help run the Battleship New Jersey's growing primary, secondary and teacher education programs.

Areas of concentration are history, math, science and technology. Flexible hours and work both on-ship and in schools.

Please contact the Curatorial Office Assistant, Dan Soldano, at 856-966-1652, Ext. 201 to arrange an interview.

**Artifact Registrars
Needed...**

Four Volunteer Artifact Registrars are needed to assist the Artifacts Manager, Mr. Bob Walters, in cataloging & accessioning the Battleship New Jersey's growing artifact collection. Duties include identifying, cataloging and accessioning onboard artifact items. Sewing, penmanship skills helpful.

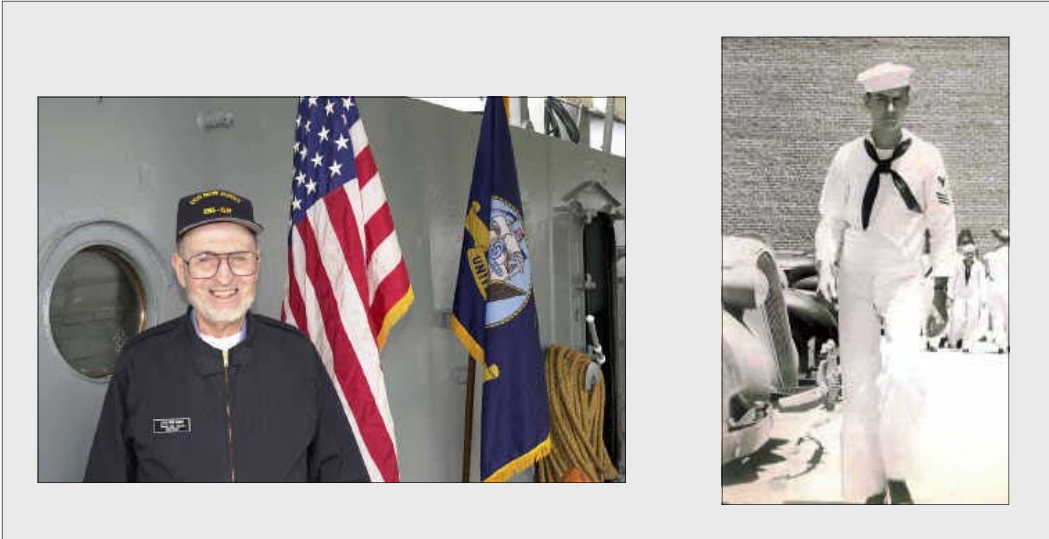
Please contact
Bob Walters
in the Curator's Office
at 856-966-1652, Ext. 202.

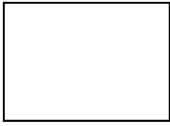
The volunteer crew of *USS New Jersey*..

**Volunteer BM3 (Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class)
Ed Kolbe
USS Warrick (AKA 89) 1948—1956
CWO3 Batswain's Mate US Coast Guard Reserve 1976—1991**



**Volunteer ETM 1st Class
(Electronics Technician's Mate)
George Hunt
USS Chara (AKA 58)
LCC (Landing Craft, Control Boat) 1943—1946**





Battleship New Jersey (BB 62)
The Jerseyman
is on the web!
Logon to:
www.ussnewjersey.com
