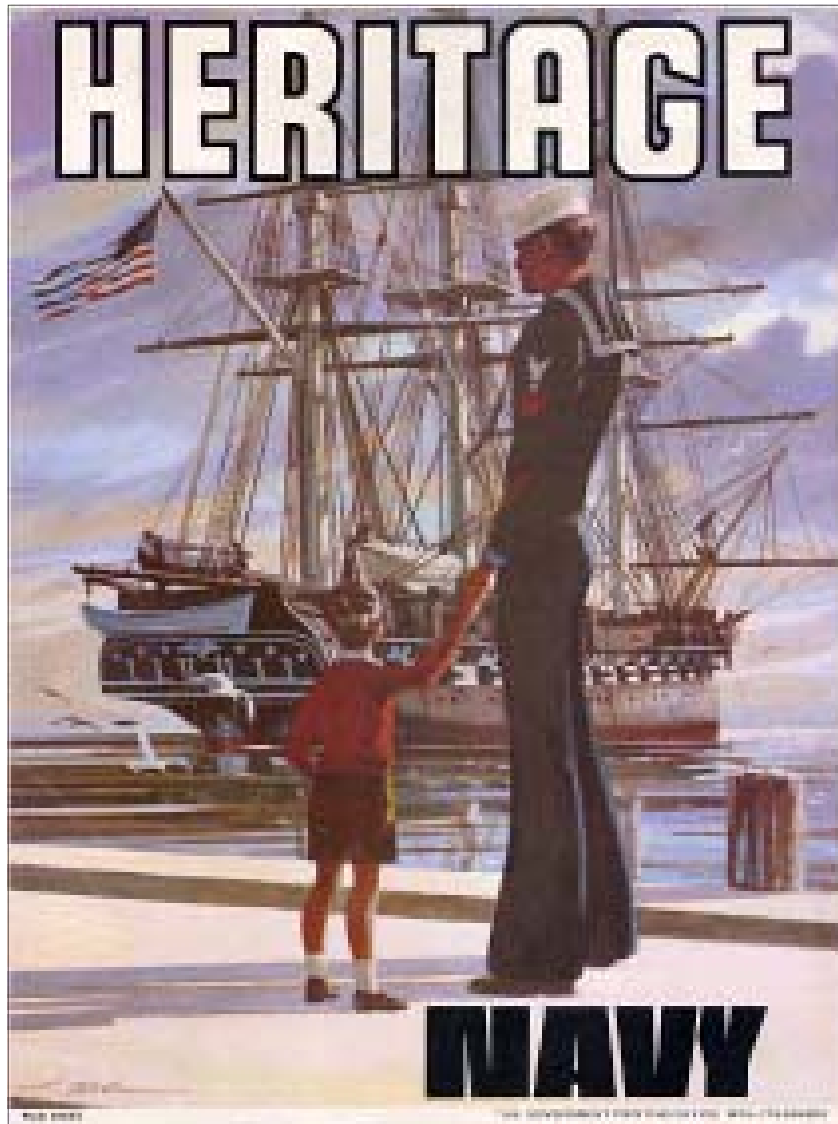




July  
2003

**JULY 4, 2003...**

*THE JERSEYMAN*



## The Jerseyman July 2003

**MAY 23, 1943 - MAY 23, 2003**

### **60TH ANNIVERSARY OF USS NEW JERSEY'S FIRST COMMISSIONING...**

There were hundreds of photos and videos taken of the historic USS New Jersey 60th anniversary event on May 23, 2003, and many have been offered to *The Jerseyman*. Photos were taken by our Audio Visual Manager, **Ebe Helm**, professionally processed by The Battleship New Jersey Sea Cadets, and added to by several ship's volunteers including **Andy Roppoli**, **Ted Roth**, **Ken Kersch** and others who anonymously dropped their great photos in *The Jerseyman* mailbox! Most of these photos have been forwarded on to Keynote Speaker **Captain Robert C Peniston**, and he has responded with a grateful thank you to the ship's event organizers, and to the Corps of Volunteers who have accomplished so much...**BZ and Well Done to all USS NEW JERSEY Volunteers - from Captain Peniston!**



ALL-REPTER—These Navy men from South Jersey are shown aboard the battleship USS New Jersey in Tokyo Bay. Front row, left to right: Carmen C. Colacci, fire controlman 1st class, Bridgeton, Camden; L. P. Reilly, seaman 1st class, 2nd Wright aviation, Bridgeton; M. R. Lawrence, seaman 1st class, West Plain, Audubon. Second row, left to right: Russell Collins, 2nd, Harrison; 1st class, South Jersey, Newark; Robert Collins, 2nd, South Jersey, Camden. Below, sailors are universally listed for the Navy as 60th Anniversary, Camden; John C. Atkins, seaman 1st class, Bridgeton; Robert Peniston, 1st class, 2nd, Bridgeton; and R. S. Westcott, seaman 1st class, Bridgeton.



On the 60th Anniversary of her first commissioning, the ship is once again manned by 7 New Jersey sailors who were also on deck 60 years ago! In the 60th event photo on the top right, and standing Left to Right are Plankowners: **John Horan**, and 2 **unidentified** plankowners. Seated Left to Right are Plankowners **Sam Kuncovich**, **Joe Hopkins**, **Russ Collins** and **Bob Westcott**.

The newspaper photo (top left,) was also taken aboard USS NEW JERSEY, and includes a group of 7 sailors, but it was taken in 1945 and this time in Tokyo Bay. All these crewmen were from the State of New Jersey. "Few of the South Jersey men aboard the battlegwagon knew their shipmates were from "the home state" until a Navy photographer assembled them for a picture." The men standing in the rear are: **Russ Collins** (Camden, *shown in both photos 60 years apart*.) **PFC Jack Mancini**, USMC (Camden), **John Atkins** (Pennsauken), and **Bob Westcott**, (Bridgeton) *shown in both photos 60 years apart*). Front row, kneeling Left to Right are: **Carmen Colacci** (Camden), **L.P. Reilly** (Berlin), and **M. R. Lawrence** (Audobon).

(USS New Jersey memorial wreath shown being held by Volunteer **CWO4 Pat DeChirico**, USMC/Ret.)



# The Jerseyman July 2003

## MAIL CALL...

"Thanks for your Memorial Day tribute to the servicemen past and present. The Arlington Cemetery celebrations had a special meaning for me this year as my oldest brother was buried there last year. He was a member of the 101st Airborne Paratroopers Division and jumped on D Day. His plane was shot down and after 7 days he was captured and held prisoner in Germany till the end of the war.

We were 6 boys in my family and all 6 of us were in the service. My five brothers were in the army. I thought better of it and joined the good old Navy. Five of us volunteered and one waited to be drafted. He said, "If they want me, they can draft me, and that's exactly what happened. We laugh about it now.

Four of my brothers were in Europe and my younger brother and I served in Korea. One of my son in law's has been in the Air Force for twenty years and one of my grandsons did four years in the Marines, so as you can see we are a service oriented family."

\*\*\*\*\*

## THANKS!

I want to sincerely thank BB-62 volunteer, and Vietnam commissioning plankowner **Ken Kersch**, for his recent donation of 15 large plastic bins. These bins will be used for students to deposit their lunch bags for the trip to the mess decks, and make the check-in process for school-age visitors a lot easier. **Thanks Ken!**

Doug Buchanan  
Education Manager

## MAIL CALL...

"I noted one error in your ship's volunteer's listing of old ships last month. The ship "GREAT SITKAN" should be "GREAT SITKIN (AE17), and her nickname was know as the GREAT S... C.."

\*\*\*\*\*

### Editor's note:

*The Jerseyman* gets many emails every day, and we want to especially thank all contributors for taking the time to drop us a line. Even though some emails may not make it into *The Jerseyman MAIL CALL*, they are all very much appreciated.

On a humorous note, there have been many funny emails, photos, and stories that we would also like to share... but frankly, a few are not quite suitable for our family newsletter.

But, please keep all the emails coming! They are all we count on to let us know what is good, and what is not so good about *The Jerseyman*. Your emails help us to improve each month.

Thanks!

\*\*\*\*\*



## ADDITIONS...

We missed these in *The Jerseyman's* June issue, but here are a few more of "My Ship, My Unit and My Outfit" once served by BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY volunteers...

- USS Truxton.....DLGN 35
- USS Nimitz..... CVN 68
- USS Salem..... CA 139
- USS Robert A. Owens..... DD 827
- USS J.D. Blackwood..... DE 219
- USS Snowden..... DE 246
- Brown River Navy..... 22nd UDT
- USS Grant.....AP 29
- 25th Inf. Div, 35th Inf. Regiment

\*\*\*\*\*

### "Yesterday" photos...

All good things must come to an end... *The Jerseyman* now has a final set of "Yesterday" volunteer photos for the August issue. With this July issue, we begin "Today" photos of all volunteers. For our readers across the country, these are the folks bringing back USS NEW JERSEY as you remembered her.





## The Jerseyman July 2003

### U. S. NAVY SHIP'S BELLS...

Since posting our request for photos of US Navy ship's bells, more new bell photos received this month with thanks...

#### **USS Lexington, (CV-16)**

John Miller, Jr.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

#### **USS Chara (AKA-58)**

Volunteer George Hunt

#### **USS Providence (CL-82/CLG-6)**

FTM3 Sam Villa (1968-1972)

### US Naval Academy Bells

#### **USS Cumberland "Station Ship"**

#### **1854 Gokokuji Japanese Bell**

#### **USS Enterprise (CV-6)**

#### **USS Paddle (SS-263)**

from USNA 1947 Class Secretary  
Chester Shaddeau, Jr.

#### **USS Arizona (BB-39)**

#### **USS Missouri (BB-63)**

Volunteers Harry Ruhle,  
and George Gasper

#### **USS LeJeune (AP-74)**

Volunteer Tony Pizzi

#### **USS Samuel N. Moore(DD-747)**

Don Rank, President  
DD-747 Association

#### **USS Telfair (APA/LPA-210)**

John Tonyes  
Ship's Coordinator

#### **USS LaVallette (DD-448)**

Fred G. Lampe

#### **USS Maryland (BB-46)**

Dick Beaman  
BB-46 Vet's Ass'n President

### **MAIL CALL...**

This license plate looks like it could belong to someone who served aboard...

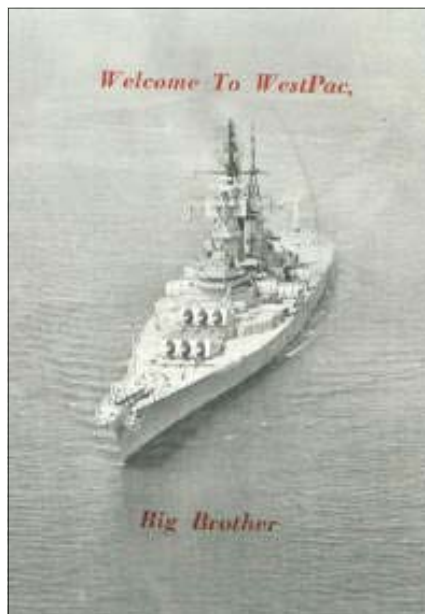
#### **USS Midway CVB-41**

**Welcome back  
shipmate  
Paul McPike!**



\*\*\*\*\*

"I remember seeing our "Big Brother" (Oct 68) out there in Vietnam with us. Congratulations on saving the New Jersey."



### **MAIL CALL...**

In the June issue of The Jerseyman, we had a mail call comment about a "skinny" Korean War crewman climbing into each of the USS New Jersey's 16" barrels to take measurements. He had a line on one arm, and on his feet, to be pulled in, and pulled back out.

Since publishing that issue, we heard from an officer who did the same thing! He was a newly minted Ensign aboard USS Pennsylvania (BB-38). To his knowledge, he is the only officer who did that. He was asked, and he volunteered. What makes this even more interesting, is that USS Pennsylvania's main battery consisted of 14" rifles! There were a total of 12 of them in 4 turrets. The Ensign remembers being greased up, and the lines tied to his arm and his feet. The officer's name? -

**RADM Ed Snyder, USN (Ret.)**

\*\*\*\*\*

**March 31, 1969—**

**USS NEW JERSEY**

**fired her last rounds**

**against the enemy**

**in Vietnam.**

**The total number of  
rounds expended by**

**USS NEW JERSEY in**

**Vietnam were almost**

**equal to her total of**

**expended ammunition**

**in both World War 2**

**and Korea.**

## The Jerseyman July 2003

### FROM THE ARCHIVES... USS New Jersey (BB-16) -1915

**Peter N. Holste** was born and raised in Minnesota. He joined the Navy, and in 1968 served as a Petty Officer 3rd Class (Journalist) in X-Division of USS NEW JERSEY. Several years after leaving the Navy, and while out in the Los Angeles area on a business trip, he ran across the USS New Jersey (BB-16) photo seen below at a flea market. He bought the photo for "about \$20" and has had it rolled up at home ever since. It measures a huge 59 inches by 9 1/2 inches!

Pete recently visited BB-62, and donated the photo showing the Officers and Crew of USS New Jersey BB-16, and taken on April 24, 1915 in Charlestown Navy Yard. The extracted Captain's photo, (yet to be identified), is also shown... This extremely sharp, very detailed, and probably one-of-a-kind historic photo is now part of the archives of USS New Jersey (BB-62). Close examination of this photo clearly shows the cage mast and extremely wide air vent (above and center) over the crew. **Many thanks to former USS New Jersey (BB-62) crewman Pete Holste!**



**Battleship/Aircraft Carrier/Cruiser Nickname challenge...** *The Jerseyman* has had great response to our request for Battleship nicknames, and many Aircraft Carrier and Cruiser nicknames have also come in! **Please send in as many Battleships, Aircraft Carrier and Cruiser nicknames as you can remember...** Do you know which famous Battleship was the... "Cheer-Up Ship?"

#### NEW MEXICO CLASS

USS NEW MEXICO (BB-40) "Mighty Mex" & "The Queen"  
USS MISSISSIPPI (BB-41)... "Pirate Ship" & "Missy"  
USS IDAHO (BB-42)... "Big Spud"

#### TENNESSEE CLASS

USS TENNESSEE (BB-43)... "Rebel Ship" & "Tar Ship"  
USS CALIFORNIA (BB-44)... "Prune Barge"

#### COLORADO CLASS

USS COLORADO (BB-45)... "Bucking Bronco"  
USS MARYLAND (BB-46)... "Big Mary"  
USS WASHINGTON (BB-47)... NOT COMPLETED  
USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB-48)... "Wee Vee"

#### SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS

USS SOUTH DAKOTA (BB-49)... NOT COMPLETED  
USS INDIANA (BB-50)... NOT COMPLETED  
USS MONTANA (BB-51)... NOT COMPLETED  
USS NORTH CAROLINA (BB-52)... NOT COMPLETED

USS IOWA (BB-53)... NOT COMPLETED

USS MASSACHUSETTS (BB-54)... NOT COMPLETED

#### NORTH CAROLINA CLASS

USS NORTH CAROLINA (BB-55)... "The Showboat"  
USS WASHINGTON (BB-56)... "Rusty W," "Mighty W"

#### SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS

USS SOUTH DAKOTA (BB-57)... "Sodak," "Battleship X" & "Old Nameless"

USS INDIANA (BB-58)... "Mighty I," "Indy," "Indian Country"

USS MASSACHUSETTS (BB-59)... "Big Mamie"

USS ALABAMA (BB-60)... "Big Bama" & "Mighty A"

#### IOWA CLASS

USS IOWA (BB-61)... "Big Stick"

USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)... "Big J" & "Black Dragon"

USS MISSOURI (BB-63)... "Mighty Mo" & "Big Mo"

USS WISCONSIN (BB-64)... "Big Cheese" & "Wisky"

**(Keep the nicknames coming... thanks for the input!)**

According to RADM Ed Snyder, Commanding Officer of USS New Jersey during the ship's Vietnam tour...

The Marines called her the "NEW JERSEY HILTON," the Naval Aviators (and Nixon/Reagan White Houses) called her "BAMBOO CAGE PREVENTER," the Air Force (and NSA from satellites) called her "BABY BLUE EYES" (Reference to Port/Starboard 40mm Gun tubs painted up as Swimming pools.) Admiral Snyder also offered the nickname remembered from his own ship as a young Ensign - USS Pennsylvania (BB-38) was called "RATTLESNAKE."

During the ship's Vietnam cruise, Captain Snyder has said that he was aware he had his own nickname of "THE PHANTOM" - by the crew, and told *The Jerseyman* that he "would like to hear some of the others"...

Vietnam crewmen of USS New Jersey - Were there other nicknames for Captain Ed Snyder?

Disclaimer: The Jerseyman Is an independent newsletter written for and by Battleship New Jersey museum volunteers.

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Master Chief Tom Helvig, USN (Ret.) - Volunteer Writer/Editor *The Jerseyman*

## The Jerseyman July 2003

### RADIO ROOM... “Eggbeater” Antenna



Last month's radio room article on the ship's radio antennas has raised a couple of questions about the Fleet Broadcast (“Eggbeater” antennas)

As mentioned last month these four antennas are located so that at least one of them would always have a view of the earth-orbiting Navy satellites, regardless of the ship's position or course changes. These odd-looking devices sit on small platforms on the port and starboard sides of the Bridge, on the forward bulkhead of the O7 level and the aft side of the Aft Main Battery Director. All four antennas fed a “recombiner” that was used to select the best incoming signal for processing by other equipment.

The origin of the nickname is obvious (see picture), but the reason for the twisted design needs a short explanation.

In an effort to keep the antennas aboard any orbiting satellite pointed toward the surface of the earth, the satellite is spun about its own axis, much like a gyroscope or a child's toy top. A side effect of this spin is the corkscrewing of the radio signal on its way to the ship's antenna. The twist of the receive antenna is calculated to match this corkscrewing and improve the strength of the received signal.

### RADIO ROOM... (A clarification...)

In the **RADIO ROOM** antenna section of *The Jerseyman's* June issue, we mentioned that there was doubt that the NTDS Link 11 antenna (Cone cage antenna at the bow) was actually capable of receiving any kind of data back from the Tomahawk missiles. The mistaken interpretation of the NTDS function, was based on the book: *Iowa Class Battleships, Their design, weapons and equipment* by Robert F. Sumrall, which says: **“Currently the Iowa's have a Link 11 receive only capability to the Tomahawk weapons control system.”**

After considerable research and a *Jerseyman* exchange with VADM Doug Katz (former C.O. of USS NEW JERSEY), we report that the USS IOWA Class Battleship Tomahawk missiles were only used as **“Fire and Forget”** weapons.

When describing the Tomahawk firing process, Docents are asked to describe as follows: **“Tomahawk missiles fired from USS Iowa Class battleships are... “Fire and Forget weapons.”**

Thanks.

## The Jerseyman July 2003

### USS IOWA (BB-61)...

With sincere thanks to *Jerseyman* reader **Ben Lee from Fremont, California**, we are able to show photos of USS IOWA, taken as recently as April 6, 2003. USS IOWA (BB-61) is among the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, located in San Francisco Bay.



### CALLING FORMER USS NEW JERSEY HELO OPS AND "CRASH CREWMEN..."

We are asking anyone with first-hand knowledge, or photographs of USS New Jersey's SH-2 "Sea Sprite" Helicopter operations just prior to her final 1991 decommissioning, to please get in touch with us. We are trying to accurately determine the ship's helicopter unit information, such as the squadron's name, fuselage numbers etc... If you can assist our Battleship New Jersey restoration effort with this important information, please contact *The Jerseyman* at [THelvig@aol.com](mailto:THelvig@aol.com), and thanks!

Submitted by: Helo Ops Restoration Volunteer **ABMC Joe Boyle, USN (Ret.)**



## The Jerseyman July 2003

### 58 YEARS AGO... SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

QM3 Norman Benson's WW2 story from USS New Jersey ...as told to *The Jerseyman*.

Norman Benson was born in Illinois, joined the Navy in 1943 at 17 years old, and went on to Great Lakes, Illinois for Boot training. He is now 78 years old, still living in Illinois, and he and his wife have just celebrated their 57<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They have 3 children, 12 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren... "When I first arrived at the New Jersey after boot camp, they were still building her at the Philadelphia Yard, and I stood my very first fire watch with a fire extinguisher in my hand.



When I finally got aboard, and we put the ship into commission, they put me on as a 5" loader but I was underweight for the job, so they transferred me into L-Division as a lookout. I later asked for a transfer to N-Div where I eventually made Quartermaster 3<sup>rd</sup> Class. I was one of the helmsmen on USS New Jersey, but I stood watches all over the ship. Some of my areas of duty included steering aft, quarter master on the bridge, helmsman, engine order telegraph, and by no means did I get out of my cleaning station. They kept me busy! On the shakedown, I remember we made high speed turns and speed runs. We went into the North Atlantic and ran into some ice; had to chip some ice off the railings. During the shakedown, I may not have been a quartermaster though (old age brain trying to remember), I was probably working in the lookout division then.

I was told that there was a 17 pound pull to turn the wheel at the helm – I still remember that. When you steer the ship, you don't actually have to see through the hatches and port holes; all I had to do was watch the repeater compass and stay on course. The officers did all the looking. I was just along for the ride. We were never to put it in full right rudder or full left rudder so that the rudder would bang the stops. You would watch the gauge and turn it left or right but always stop before it was totally at full... It would be interesting to know if any of the men from N Division are still around. I have lost contact with my shipmates through the years.

One thing that has really bothered me through the years though is the 1943 – 1945 War Log. On page 81 you can see the N-Division photo and they only list 3 of my shipmates as plankowners. The reason they were listed as plank owners is because they came aboard as Quartermasters in the N Division. As for me, when this picture was taken it was overlooked that I was also a plankowner. Believe me, I am a plank owner!

I am also sending you a copy of a chart that I made during the war that shows the ship's route during the war. The Black line shows the shakedown, the red is our first war cruise, and the green is our second war cruise. I want you to know that I thought Captain Holden was a fine man, and very much the "Father image" on the ship. When you got a "Well Done" from him, you really felt great about it."



#### Editor's note:

All WW2 USS New Jersey sailors with copies of the "WAR LOG"... You can set the record straight for a shipmate (after 58 years) by adding in QM3 Norman Benson's name on Page 81, and note with the N-Division picture an additional "true" WW2 plankowner. Petty Officer 3/C Benson is standing on the far right and directly behind the ladder. Any N-Division shipmates out there wanting to contact Norman Benson, please contact *The Jerseyman* at [THelvig@aol.com](mailto:THelvig@aol.com). Many thanks to Plankowner and WW2 Petty Officer 3/c Norman Benson for sharing his great story with *The Jerseyman*!

(You will notice in the above photograph that the Quartermaster petty officers all show rating badges worn on their right arms. Quartermaster was known as a "Right-Arm rate," and will be the subject of a future *Jerseyman* article.) If any readers care to share their own story about a "Right-Arm" rate, please contact *The Jerseyman*!



## The Jerseyman July 2003

### TODAY'S BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS...



Volunteer  
Coxswain Bob Whomsley  
**USS David W. Taylor  
(DD-551)**

1943– 1945

“The missing Captain’s Gig (starboard beam) was lost in a Typhoon on our way home to San Diego... The tallest guy with the 4 standing at the bow (58 short years ago,) was yours truly.”



Volunteer  
Aerographer 3/C  
Bob Carmint  
**USS Cabot (CVL-28)**  
1951-1953

“RED SKY AT NIGHT,  
SAILORS DELIGHT;  
RED SKY IN THE MORNING,  
SAILOR TAKE WARNING!”



Volunteer  
Radioman 3/c Joe Donnelly  
**USS Pickaway (PA-222)**  
1943-1945

“I was a pretty good Morse Code speed key operator in those days, and I had my own speed key, but lost it somewhere.

Someday I’d like to find one again...  
I still remember my Morse Code.  
You never forget it.”



## The Jerseyman July 2003

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS... INVASION OF NORMANDY D-Day June 6 1944

by Vol. Pete Fantacone

"It was the end of May 1944 that I reported aboard the USS LCI (L) 492, a couple of weeks prior to D Day, June 6, 1944. This was my first look at a Landing Craft Infantry, the LCI (L) is the smallest ocean going ship in the Navy. She carried a crew of 24 enlisted men and 4 officers, with a troop carrying capacity of about 200. She was 158' long with a 24' beam and with her flat bottom she would discharge her troops directly on the beach. Troops would disembark by two ramps, more similar to gang planks, which were lowered on each side of the bow, going directly down onto the water or beach.

The place was the seaport town of Weymouth on the southern coast of England. The LCI 492 along with other LCI's of Flotilla 10 were tied up at the pier 3 or 4 abreast. The LCI 492 was outboard, which necessitated we cross over two or three LCI's if we wanted to go onto the pier. Flotilla 10 was basically made up of Coast Guard LCI's, there were some Navy, the LCI 492 being one of them. The Coast Guard LCI's were battle hardened having made landings in Africa and Italy, their campaign ribbons and battle stars were painted on their con. The LCI's 85 and 87 were two of them.



Darkness fell about 11pm or Midnight and about this time each night, prior to the invasion, general quarters would be sounded as the Germans made their nightly bombing run on our port. The LCI's would immediately head out of the harbor for open water. My station was below deck and I could hear the fire of our 20MM and then explosions around us. After a while we would secure GQ and head back to the pier. Fortunately our ships suffered no casualties during these nightly raids but it kept us from getting a good nights sleep, since by the time we secured from GQ it was about 0400.

On coming back to the ship from a short day time liberty about 3pm on June 3rd or 4th, I found the complete pier area and ships crowded with soldiers. I had to work my way through the troops and their equipment on the in-board LCI's until I got to my ship. We were loaded with troops, who were combat engineers. To me it seemed something was about to happen but my shipmates, who had been on the LCI for some time assured me it was just another practice run, one of the many they had experienced over the past months.

Late on the afternoon of June 5th, it was announced there would be a Catholic Mass on the pier for all those who wanted to attend. At Mass time the pier was packed with soldiers and sailors so much so they spilled over onto the ships. I think every soldier and sailor from those ships was at Mass that afternoon. When the Chaplain gave General Absolution during the mass I knew then this was a sure sign this was not another practice run.

At approximately 1700, special sea detail was set and we got underway from our pier in Weymouth, England. As we left the harbor we sailed past Portland bill that jutted out into the Channel. The weather was dull and gray and the sea was rough and we were taking spray over the bow. I looked out as we reached the open sea. I saw ships and more ships, Landing craft, Patrol craft, troop transports, breaking through the seas and all heading for France. It was at this time that the captain read over the speaker, General Eisenhower's "Order of the Day"

**"Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force. You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you. Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely. But this is the year 1944!...The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory! I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory! Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."**

(Continued...)

## The Jerseyman July 2003

Our Flotilla 10 had the USS LCI 87 leading the starboard column, Our LCI the 492 leading the middle column, and the USS LCI 408 leading the port column. The USS LCI 492 acting as headquarters ship set their course for France. I remember on this trip that my stomach didn't feel the greatest, with the rough seas, the flat bottom and most of all the smell of the diesel fumes, since we must have had a following wind and the fumes kept blowing from the stern forward for the whole trip. After sailing all night, we arrived off the coast of Normandy early the morning of June 6th about 0330 and began circling in this rendezvous area.

June 6th was a dull gray day with rough, choppy seas. About 0500 battleships, Texas and Arkansas would unleash a tremendous barrage of fire power from their 14" and 12" guns. The cruisers, Tuscaloosa, Augusta and Quincy and other ships would join them in firing at positions on the beach. I was stationed at the bow of the ship, as we circled, manning a radio and listening to communications when the first wave landed on Omaha about 0630. All I kept hearing on the radio were garbled words which included "easy red, fox green", which later turned out to be the beach areas the landings were taking place. Spray was coming over the bow so much the paper pad I was writing on was useless from getting wet.

Twelve LCI's of Flotilla 10 including the LCI 492 were assigned to land our troops on Omaha beach. The tides at Normandy were of tremendous length. Since the Germans had all kinds of obstacles on the beach, to stop, impale or blow up the landing craft, we would land at low tide in order to avoid these obstacles. However the problem was that the dead and wounded would be engulfed as the tide came in and would be floating around in the water, this we witnessed.

We landed on Omaha beach approximately 0730 about one hour after the first wave. I remember when looking at the beach, was the wreckage of equipment burning and smoke that was on the beach. We backed off the beach and proceeded to waters just off of Omaha. The LCI 492 was lucky, of the 12 LCI's of our Flotilla that landed at Omaha, four were lost due to Heavy artillery, machine gun fire and mines. The four lost were the LCI's 91,92,93 and 85. Two others the 83 and 88 were severely damaged. All suffered casualties of both crew and troops. The 85 capsized and sunk. We saw her floating bottom up. She had tried twice to land her troops under heavy fire and hit a mine. It was hard to believe that a little more than 12 hours earlier, I had attended Mass and received General Absolution with the troops and crews of these LCI's on the pier in Weymouth. We came back off the beach a few hundred yards and performed other duties off of Omaha for the rest of the day.

One sight that all tin can sailors can take pride in, was the way the destroyers swept in close to Omaha beach and delivered gunfire into the German positions, from late morning and into the afternoon. These destroyers were called in to furnish the only direct artillery support the infantry got on Omaha beach. Sometime during the day two German planes came out of nowhere and flew so close over us you could almost touch them. They did not fire or drop anything on us and were gone in an instant. Also, as the day progressed we start seeing the results of the battle on the beach. The rescue and recovery of the wounded and the dead was assigned to the Coast Guard, who manned their 83 footers, these small wooden craft were all over in these rough seas doing their work. We also picked up survivors and dead from a life raft from a British destroyer that had hit a mine. We also circled an LST which was floating bow up, which had hit a mine also. Survivors were probably picked up by another ship.

As the day drew to a close and darkness fell, two things remain to be mentioned. One was the German E Boats. These boats similar to our PT boats would infiltrate the invasion fleet and torpedo ships or they would lay mines. Secondly, this first night the Germans mounted an air raid on the invasion fleet. Never in my life and probably will never see a display of fire power as was delivered by approximately 5000 ships. It was like a thousand fourth of Julys rolled into one. Tracers filled the sky that it looked like one curtain of fire. So much was thrown up in the air, that you had to wear your helmet on deck as you could hear the pieces of metal hit the deck as it fell from the sky. This display of fire power was a fitting end of D Day. We ended up at the finish of D Day in good shape. The LCI 492 was still afloat and only our quartermaster had been slightly wounded.

As for myself and USS LCI 492, we stayed off Omaha beach for the next two months, performing duties from rescues to directing men and materials into Omaha and riding out the worst storm in a hundred years. This great storm occurred only about 10 days after the invasion." - **Pete Fantacone**





## The Jerseyman July 2003

### Volunteer Art Hill

"I was born in Manhattan, New York on November 26, 1920 where my parents owned a food market, but sold it when I was a year old. They bought another store in Queens, New York: a community of single homes where I was raised. Upon graduating from Richmond Hill High School in 1938 I received the Industrial Arts Award.



The Great Depression had not yet ended and jobs were scarce, so graduates applied for every Civil Service Examination that sounded promising. I was on the Police and Fire Dept. lists when a test for Apprentice, Navy Yard was announced. 40,000 young men took a three-hour examination. 300 of us achieved perfect scores. Though only 60 openings existed, the Navy Yard hired all 300 and put us to work starting at \$14.89 per week as Apprentices on the USS Iowa. The Iowa was about two months into production, and I was working with a senior ship fitter on the double bottom. Within two months, my foreman gave me my own tools and a helper and work assignments on my own. I worked on the 16-inch powder magazines, side tanks and armor belt, 16-inch turret, and #4 boiler stanchions as well as on the French Battleship Richelieu, which was liberated from Oran, Libya. The apprenticeship included one day of college level schooling each week at a special school at the Navy Yard.

My team was present along with Navy Secretary Forrestal, Admiral King and several other Naval Officers at the official keel laying of the USS Missouri (BB 63.) I also had minor assignments on the Missouri. We worked so much overtime that my four year apprenticeship was completed in just over three years. I was now working as a Loftsmen, making templates for the ships and earning over \$60 per week. In June of 1942 I married Kate, and continued to study engineering at night at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute.

On June 10, 1943 I enlisted in the Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet, qualified for pilot training, and trained at bases in Kent, Ohio, (Piper Cubs), Pine Bluff, Ark. (Fairchild PT 19s) where I soloed, and Independence, Kansas (Vultee BT 13s). In 1944, as the war was winding down, they transferred me to Navigation School at Monroe, LA. This is where I earned my wings and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Navigator. I was then sent to the first Air Corps Radar School in Victorville, Cal. Radar was a new device on aircraft, and I completed training and was assigned to a B-29 Bomb Group at Walker Kansas. I was the eleventh man in a B-29 crew where my job was to navigate by radar, and bomb when clouds or darkness obscured targets. My equipment was sweep radar that could see space 300 miles ahead and about twenty degrees wide. It was not circular sweep as on the New Jersey. It was so powerful that Jacksonville, FL could be seen from Miami, over 300 miles away. The antenna was housed in a wing, set under the plane.

After hundreds of hours practice bombing all over the U. S. and offshore islands we learned to hit our targets. We did photo bombing of cities and live bombing of ocean islands.

Early in 1945 my Bomb Group was given our own, new B-29s and overseas assignments. Our equipment, footlockers, and personal belongings were shipped to Tinian, where we were to be based, possibly to replace the Enola Gay Group. We were primed to go and in full fighting trim when President Truman ordered the Atom Bomb drops targeting Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered on the deck of the USS Missouri, and our overseas orders were cancelled. My war was over.

The Bomb Group was sent as a unit to Grand Island, Nebraska, where we continued to fly as a group as we waited to be discharged. On Christmas Eve 1945, I was honorably discharged at Mitchell Field, Long Island." - **Art Hill**





## The Jerseyman July 2003

More identified "Yesterday" volunteers.  
How many did you ID?



Volunteer  
**Radioman 3/c Joe Donnelly**  
USS Pickaway (PA-222)  
1943-1945



Volunteer/Docent Supervisor  
**PFC Bruce Haegley**  
Army Medic

Volunteer  
**Boatswain's Mate 3/c  
Al Faulkner**  
US Naval Armed Guard  
S.S. Anderson City  
S.S. Richard Basset  
S.S. Park Holland  
Many others...



Volunteer  
**BMSN Stephen Swift**  
USS Plymouth Rock (LSD29)  
1961—1964



Volunteer  
**CTM1 Ed Clark, USNR (Ret.)**  
1968-1992  
Misawa, Japan  
Rota, Spain  
Many others...



Volunteer  
**SN Frank Brennan**  
US Naval Reserve  
1948

Volunteer/Docent Supervisor  
**DC2 John Mills**  
USS Enterprise (CVA(N)-65)  
USS F. D. Roosevelt (CVA-42)  
1962-1967



Volunteer  
**FCSN Jack Croghan**  
USS Worcester (CL-144)  
1948-1952



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