Association Officers

President
Ron Zimmerman Sr.
474 SW Prater Ave
Port St. Lucie, FL 34953
(772) 621-4016

Vice President
Jim Dunno
272 Stone Hedge Row
Johnstown, OH 43031
(740) 817-2177
mgdjm60@gmail.com

Secretary
Joe Rios
507 Hemlock Court
Vacaville, CA 95688
(707) 328-1481
joe.rios@ucsf.edu

Treasurer
George Kaiser
311 W. Oak Lane
Glenolden, PA 19036
(610) 237-1652
dckaiser@juno.com

Chaplain
Mark Rucker
241 Larchmont Ave.
Springfield, OH 45503
(937) 322-1327
ruckerml@att.net

Webmaster (Non-officer)
Tom Stachelski
213 Challedron Drive
Summerville, SC 29485
(910) 484-7629
thomas.stachelski@gmail.com

Editor (Non-officer)
Dorothy Hodnichak
25850 Lake Shore Blvd.
Euclid, OH 44132-1107
(216) 731-5289
dhodnichak@aol.com

Association's Web Site:
www.greatsitkin.org

From Our President: To all my Great Sitkin shipmates, it is time for me to say my farewell as your President. After 16 years (and 50 newsletter articles), it is time to retire. It has been great to serve as your President these past years and with your help and support, watch this organization grow. Your support and encouragement made the growth and the achievements we accomplished possible, and I could not have done it without you! Thank you for all the years you stood beside me while I charted new courses for the Association. We have come a long way since September 2000, and I know the new leadership will take us on new courses to make the Association even better. See you at the Annual Reunion!

New find: Thomas C. Crabe, QM2 (‘68 - ’70)
Welcome aboard, Shipmate!

Ron Zimmerman, President

Vice President’s Words of Wisdom: To make this short and sweet: Our membership is at 90 paid Sitkin members, with a few regulars still out there as unpaid yet. Elections are coming up soon, so if you have any inkling of running for an office or know someone who would like to be a Board member, please submit your nominations.

Jim Dunno, VP & Membership Chairman

Secretary Report: Hello Shipmates! I’m looking forward to seeing many former and new shipmates at the reunion in Iselin, NJ and NYC!

Now for some official business: Nominations for executive board are now open for all positions for the coming year. Only active members with current dues paid are eligible to serve. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary by postal service or by E-mail.

All nominees will be contacted to insure their acceptance of the nomination and their willingness to serve. Nominations will remain open until our business meeting on Saturday, September 17, 2016. News: Jim Dunno has been nominated for President. Come out and vote!

Joe Rios, Secretary

Greetings from Repair 3: I look forward to seeing all of you in September! We have a great reunion planned for you. This is one reunion you don’t want to miss!

George Kaiser, Treasurer

The Chaplain’s Corner: “Good Day to all of you.” Spring has arrived, and we have begun mowing grass and getting the gardens ready to plant soon.

I am sitting here thinking about last spring. Patsy and I vacationed in Hawaii. Hawaii was everything we thought it would be. The Arizona memorial was more than I could imagine. Standing there over the tomb of so many of our brothers who never made it home was so moving. To think they lay at rest in the bosom of that old ship below. May God Bless Their Souls!

Patsy and I hope to see more of the 1970’s group at Bayonne this year. For those of you who have not attended a reunion, start making plans. Don’t wait until you are too old or sick to come and then wish you had. It’s time to say good-bye for now.

Let’s keep those families in our prayers that have lost a loved one who sailed aboard the Great Sitkin.

May the Lord Bless and Keep You.

Honor Roll Update:

Thomas N. Drum, BTG3 ’50 - ’51
Roy E. Feltenberger, SN ’49 - ’52
Burton A. Magnuson, F1c - ’45 - ’46

Mark Rucker, Chaplain

Comments from the Editor: George asked me to say something about my experience in NYC. Please check page 3 if you are interested in spending a few days in the Big Apple!

Dorothy Hodnichak, Editor
USS GREAT SITKIN (AE-17) 2016 REUNION  
September 14 thru 18, 2016  

Reunion Headquarters: Renaissance Woodbridge Hotel  
515 US Highway 1 South  
Iselin, NJ 08830  

Room rates - $119 + tax - Special rate is good for 3 days before and 3 days after reunion  
1-800-468-3571 - Mention USS Great Sitkin Reunion  
Rate includes 10% discount for food ordered in hotel restaurant, dine-in only  
Free Parking - Cutoff date for reservations: Monday, August 15, 2016  

Agenda  

Wednesday, September 14 - Ruby Hospitality Room (1st floor) open 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
6 p.m.  Meet and Greet Reception  
Assorted cheese display with water crackers  
Fresh fruit kabobs & House-made chips & onion dip  
Assorted sodas, coffee, teas, & bottled water.  

Thursday, September 15 - Ruby Hospitality Room (1st floor) open 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Bus trip into lower Manhattan to tour 9/11 Memorial and Museum  
9/11 Memorial tour included in reunion package - Museum (Optional tour) is $30  
Memorial tour - 90 minutes, Museum tour - 2 hours (approximate times)  
Lunch is available in museum  
(Those not wishing to do the museum tour, food is available in the area)  
Visit to FDNY Ladder 11 (pending)  

Friday, September 16 - Ruby Hospitality Room (1st floor) open 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Bus trip to former MILITARY OCEAN TERMINAL BAYONNE (MOTBY)  
Memorial service at “Tear of Grief” Memorial  
Visit to Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island  

Saturday, September 17 - Ruby Hospitality Room (1st floor) open 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Annual Business Meeting - 9 a.m.  
Free day to see some sights on your own  

6 p.m. Cocktail hour (Cash bar - 6 - 10 p.m.)  
7 p.m. Banquet in the Crystal Ballroom  
Plated dinner:  
Organic Field Greens with Tomato and Cucumbers  
Choice of Entrée:  
1. Roasted Prime of Beef, Au Jus  
2. Roasted French Breast of Chicken with a Stone-Ground Mustard Cream  
3. Baked Tilapia in a Lemon Caper Sauce  
Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes & Green Bean Almondine  
Fresh Rolls and Butter  
Cheesecake with Berry Coulis  
Coffee  

Music provided by DJ playing songs and requests from the 40’s, 50’s, 60’s, & 70’s  
Dance floor open until 10 p.m.  

Sunday, September 18 - Farewell breakfast in hotel restaurant
**Renaissance Woodbridge Hotel**

---

**Hotel courtesy shuttle:** 732-634-3600 Operates within a 2-mile radius. Will drop off & pick-up. NJ Transit/Metropark Train, Menlo Park Mall, Woodbridge Center Mall, Thomas Edison Center, many restaurants. Shuttle hours: 7:15 a.m. - 10:45 p.m.

**NJ Transit/Metropark Train:** 45+ minutes to NYC Penn Station NE Corridor Line One Way/Senior = $4.90 ea. 973-275-5555

Hotel has National Alamo Car Rental with pick up & drop off (ONLY) at Hotel) for those who want to travel in other parts of NJ.

---

**Sitkin Friends!** Are you interested in spending time in NYC before or after the reunion? You can go by Metropark Train OR you can stay right in the city.

In 2010, I took my grandchildren to NYC. Hotels are expensive. We saved $1,000+ by renting an apartment for the week through [www.vrbo.com](http://www.vrbo.com). The apartment was three blocks from Times Square! I checked: As of today, there are 1,000+ rentals available throughout NYC during our reunion time. (Note: In April, there were 2,400+ rentals available.) If you are interested, check it out and begin looking & booking NOW. Rentals go FAST! (Rentals generally are for 3+ days)

We took the following tours: Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island; Ground Zero; NBC Building & TV, Radio City Music Hall, & Top of the Rock Observation Deck. We did a Broadway show & sailed the Hudson at night through Shearwater Sailing. Picture this: Sailing on the Hudson River, going around the Statue of Liberty which is lit up at night, seeing the NYC Skyline, the moon above - it was fantastic! We rode the subways & took a double-decker bus ride over the Brooklyn Bridge in the evening.

The USS Intrepid complex was amazing! We went on the Concorde & the Growler Submarine. The space shuttle wasn’t there yet, but we had a chance to vote on bringing it to NYC! NYC won! You can see the shuttle at the USS Intrepid Museum! Don’t miss it! Lunch was in Central Park. We saw “Strawberry Fields” where John Lennon wrote his famous song, *Imagine*. We were part of the huge crowd at the NBC morning show, dancing to Enrique Iglesias as he sang.

I booked everything, including tours, through the Internet before we left for NYC. We didn’t have to wait in lines & everything was paid for ahead of time. I carried E-mail receipts in my bag. Today, they have APPS! If you are at all interested, start planning now!

Dorothy Hodnichak, Editor

---

**Hop-on Hop-off Bus tickets OR Smart Card - New York Pass**

(24 - 48 hour or 3 day passes) are available to see New York!
Thursday morning, September 15 (3+ hour) Tour - National September 11 Memorial Museum

Freedom Tower: The 1776 foot high tower (in homage of the year of American independence) is the highest in the Western Hemisphere. The observation platform is built on three floors (100th, 101st and 102nd). Five lifts (Sky pods - fastest in the world) transport visitors from the 1st to 102nd floor in 60 seconds. The view is breathtaking! On the 102nd floor is the theatre “See Forever,” which presents a film about the reconstruction of the site. On the 101st floor are three restaurants. The 100th floor has a 360 degree panorama of the city. You can see the George Washington Bridge up there and all of Brooklyn.

Lunch at the Memorial

“Reflecting Absence” Two pools of water embedded in the footprints of the fallen Twin Towers. Each pool is almost 1 acre, fed by a 30’ waterfall. The water disappears into the center abyss. Names of 2,983 people who died on 9/11 are engraved in bronze panels surrounding the pools.

Thursday Afternoon, September 15: Uptown to FDNY Ladder 11/Engine 28 for a short memorial service where our shipmate, Richard Kelly, worked. (Pending)


“Music was his passion. He also loved fresh water fishing, spending many hours with his son, Michael. His goals were not grand, but rather, pure and simple. All he asked for was to wake up each day and enjoy it to the max. Richard was a fun-loving, carefree, gentle and kind person. His free spirit was always on display, particularly when he played the “boom bah” - an old musical contraption that resembles a pogo stick with cymbals, a cowbell and various other percussive instruments attached. He played the boom-bah at firehouse functions, weddings, dances and bar mitzvahs. "When we went out, he would always throw it in the back of the car," said Mrs. Kelly. His antics included marching in the St. Patrick’s Day parades on Staten Island and in Manhattan sporting a pair of fake “Billy Bob teeth,” which made people on the sidelines laugh. He always made everyone feel comfortable and loved.

Richard had just received his 20-year ring from the officers and members of Engine 28 and Ladder 11. It was one of the proudest moments of his life." Staten Island Advance, 9/29/2001  Carolyn Kelly, Widow  (Deceased/2007)
During its six decades of operation, MOTBY was a vast naval supply center, shipping goods for every major U.S. military operation from World War II to Desert Storm. The military base was decommissioned in 1999 and officially transferred to the City of Bayonne in 2002. It was redeveloped as The Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor. It is now home to Cape Liberty, a year round cruise port and vibrant waterfront community. Harbor View Park is a two-acre public park situated on the tip of a manmade peninsula, formerly known as Military Ocean Terminal (MOTBY).

The memorial, "To the Struggle Against World Terrorism" was conceived as the events of 9/11 unfolded. As Russian artist, Zurab Tsereteli, walked the streets of Moscow, he was struck by the outpouring of grief he observed. A memorial with an image of a tear formed in his mind. Shortly after the attacks, Tsereteli visited ground zero and looked to New Jersey's waterfront for an appropriate site for a monument honoring victims of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks. Bayonne was a fitting location; the city was an arrival point for many New York City evacuees on 9/11, a staging area for rescuers and offered a direct view of the Statue of Liberty and the former World Trade Center towers. A gift from Tsereteli and the Russian people, the memorial is made of steel sheathed in bronze. Standing 100 feet high, its center contains a jagged tear. In it, hangs a 40-foot stainless steel teardrop, representing sadness and grief over the loss of life, but also hope for a future free from terror. Etched in granite on an 11-sided base are the names of the nearly 3,000 killed in the 1993 World Trade Center bombings and terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The memorial is often referred to as the “Tear of Grief.”
Memorial Service will be held at the “Tear of Grief”

In the city of Bayonne, New Jersey, on the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, there was a dedication ceremony for Tsereteli’s 175-ton sculpture entitled “To the Struggle Against World Terrorism” consisting of a 100-foot tall rectangular bronze block with a fissure down the middle creating the tension and drama of the sculptural image in which a teardrop in memory of those whose lives were lost is suspended. Nine pathways lead to the 11-sided granite base where names of 9/11 victims as well as victims of the 1993 World Trade Center bombings are engraved. The nickel-plated teardrop contained within the monument weighs four tons and measures approximately 40 feet high.

Friday afternoon, September 16 Tour: Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island

The Statue of Liberty is more than a monument. She is a beloved friend, a living symbol of freedom to millions around the world.

Total overall height from the base to the tip of the torch is 305 feet, 6 inches with total weight being 225 tons. There are 7 rays on her crown, one for each of the 7 continents, each measuring up to 9 feet in length and weighing as much as 150 pounds. The tablet held in her left hand is inscribed with the date JULY IV MDCCLXXVI (July 4, 1776). There are 154 steps from the pedestal to the head of the Statue of Liberty. At the feet of the Statue lie broken shackles of oppression and tyranny.

Ellis Island, in Upper New York Bay, was the gateway for over 12 million immigrants to the United States as the nation's busiest immigrant inspection station from 1892 until 1954. The Great Hall is where the people were processed.
When I graduated from college in 1962, I faced alternatives: The draft and the uncertainty of Army life, law school, moving to Canada, or the self-inflicting of a long-lasting injury that would preclude military service. Sitting in a college classroom for four years and an additional quarter in law school, I was ready for a new experience. The recruiter’s table in the student center of the University of Tennessee led me to Officer Candidate School where I reported in January 1963. After commissioning in April, I completed ten weeks of training at the U.S. Naval Underwater Swimmers School at Key West, Florida. After that came eight months at the Explosive Ordinance Disposal School outside Washington, D.C. before reporting aboard the Sitkin in March 1964.

The Sitkin had been designed and built using early 1940’s design and manning levels, which by the 1960s were seriously dated in not only its mission, but also its abilities. The 1960’s manning level was 200 enlisted men and 14 officers for a vessel that was designed to have 300+ men and double the officers. My assigned duties when I reported aboard the ship were multiple. I immediately became the second division (deck) officer, X division officer which included being personnel, administrative officer, postal officer, and responsible for the sick bay. Other assignments included being the Jewish lay leader, welfare and recreation officer, NATO document officer and probably a few more things.

My days on the ship underway were filled with watch assignments. In particular, was the mid-watch as I stood most of those with the lieutenant that made the watch schedule. I learned many dubious paperwork skills, including producing any necessary signatures to speed up the flow of paperwork in the office. During general quarters, I was originally in the after steering repair unit and eventually moved through to supervision of the forward three-inch gun and then onto the bridge to back up and witness any mayhem there during replenishment entering and leaving ports. As second division officer, I was on the deck at the various stations with the primary objective of preventing injuries and keeping out of the way. I was aboard the Sitkin for two years and two months and then it was off to civilian life.

I had a job waiting for me in my hometown of Chattanooga, Tennessee, where I became a full-fledged cub reporter for one of the two daily newspapers. I wrote obituaries for months before I progressed on to the more interesting side of the profession, school and library board meetings and local news. I enjoyed things like the sheriff’s raid on moonshine stills or “protest” gatherings. You have to remember: This was the 1960s and local civil rights’ protests were going into full swing. I yearned for bigger stories and joined United Press International in their Atlanta bureau a year after I left the Sitkin. Things were more active there, and I was in the thick of the civil rights’ movement covering everything from the governor’s press conferences to race riots. I also covered the black leaders and organizations that were bringing changes across the nation.

UPI opened a bureau in Richmond, Virginia, late that summer, and I was transferred there. I found myself in a hotel room alone producing copy for the radio stations in Virginia by telephoning state correspondents and taking calls from radio stations that thought they had a big story worthy of state or national attention. Eventually, I decided it was time to find something more interesting so I took over as editor of a weekly newspaper in West Point, Virginia. I became part of the town and enjoyed life, community activities, and managed the printing business there. I stayed at the weekly newspaper until the fall of 1969. Then I took a job at the Times, owned by the New York Times, in my home town of Chattanooga as a crime reporter. That was an exciting job with night owl hours!

A job opportunity outside the newspaper business came up in 1973. My father-in-law, at his building supply chain, employed me. My wife and I moved to Cleveland, Tennessee. During subsequent years, I sold forklift trucks, automobiles, and owned & operated a sheet metal fabrication business. In 1986, I became a teacher of English, History and Social Studies at the high school from where I had graduated in Chattanooga. I was there until my retirement in 2001. Through the years, my hobbies have been everything from radio control airplanes, canoeing, flying airplanes, bicycling, automobile restoration, sports car racing, sailboats and motorcycles. I have been a Cub Scout Weblo’s pack leader, taught arts and crafts at the local Boy’s Club, served on the local Draft Board, ran unsuccessfully for public office and shared my life with the same woman, Nora, for 56 years. We have lived in our present home for 44 years. We both look forward to new and exciting adventures.
**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association - Ship’s Store Order Form**

Name: ___________________________________________  Phone: ____________________________

Address: ___________________________________________  City, State, Zip: ______________________

**Ball Caps - $15 each**  All Blue  Note: Where sizes are indicated, please circle the size/sizes you want.

- USS Great Sitkin Ball Caps (solid back)  Quantity: ________
- USS Great Sitkin AE17 Ball Caps (solid back)  Quantity: ________
- USS Ship Name & Silhouette Caps (mesh back)  Quantity: _______

**Shirts:**

- USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Blue - $25  M  L  XL  XXL  Quantity: _______
- USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Gray - $25  M  L  XL  XXL  Quantity: _______
- USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Pink - $25  S  M  L  XL  Quantity: _______
- USS Great Sitkin Ship’s Picture T-Shirt - $18  S  M  L  XL  XXL  Quantity: _______
- USS Great Sitkin Ship’s Picture Sweatshirt $25  L  XL  XXL  Quantity: _______

**Jacket/Hoodie:**

- USS Great Sitkin All Weather Hooded Zip-Front Jacket - Blue  Quantity: _______
  
  (Note: Jackets are on special order) $45  M  L  XL  XXL  Quantity: _______

**Aluminum water bottles:** $10  Quantity: _______

All prices include postage.

Please make check or money order out to **USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association**

All orders should be sent to: **USS Great Sitkin Association**

c/o George Kaiser
311 Oak Lane
Glenolden, PA  19036

**Note:** DO NOT include your “Dues” payment in with your Ship Store Order

They need to be separate checks or money orders.

Questions about Ship’s Store items can be E-mailed to: ae17dc3@verizon.net

---

**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association - Member Application & Renewal Form**

**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association Active Membership:**  Active Member status in the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association is open to all crew members. Dues are $20.00 per year and are used to cover the cost of the newsletters, Website hosting, domain name, administrative and other expenses. The membership year is 1 January through 31 December. Membership cards will be issued to all crew members paying dues and will identify the individual by name, expiration date and number of years of Active Membership.

Payment of dues is not required to participate in any official function of the Association but is required for being an Active Member. Notices pertaining to dues will be posted on the Website and in the newsletters. Active Members must have their dues paid prior to the annual meeting each year in order to retain their status and eligibility to vote.

To become an Active Member of the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association, please complete the application form below and send it along with a check made payable to:

**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association, c/o Jim Dunno, 272 Stone Hedge Dr., Johnstown, OH 43031**

**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association Active Member Application & Renewal Form**

Name: ___________________________________________  E-Mail: ____________________________

Address: ___________________________________________  Phone: ____________________________

City, State, Zip: ___________________________________________

Dates Served Aboard: ____________________________  Application Date: ____________________________  [ ] New  [ ] Renewal

Amount Submitted: $__________________________  [ ] 2016 YR ($20.00)  [ ] 2017 YR ($20.00)  [ ] 2018 YR ($20.00)

[ ] Please send me a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws.

Comments: ___________________________________________
2016 “Back to Bayonne” - Iselin, NJ & NYC Reunion Registration
September 14th thru 18th, 2016

---

Crew Member’s Name and Age at Reunion Date

Years Served Aboard the Sitkin

Home Address

Phone and/or Cell Number

E-mail Address

Name(s) of Others Attending.

_______ # Adults (under 65 yrs.)

_______# Seniors (65 yrs. and over)

---

“Reunion Package”
Welcome Reception, World Trade Center 9/11 (90 min.) Optional tour - Memorial Museum (2 hrs.)
Uptown to FDNY Ladder 11/Engine 28 (Short memorial service for Richard Kelly (pending)
Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island
MOTBY - Memorial service at “Tear of Grief” Memorial - Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island Tour
Free time, Annual Banquet, w/DJ providing music from the 40’s thru the 70’s

_____ 1 Person    $196.00

_____ 2 People    $392.00

_____ 3 People    $588.00

“Optional Museum Tour” in conjunction with the National 9/11 Memorial Tour - Add $30.00 per person

_____ 1 Person    $  30.00

_____ 2 People    $   60.00

_____ 3 People    $  90.00

Total Amount Enclosed: ________________

Signature: _____________________________________

---

Make checks payable to: USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association

Mail Registration form and payment to:

George Kaiser
311 Oak Lane
Glenolden, PA 19036

Questions:
Please call George Kaiser at: 610-237-1652 (evenings only please)
OR E-mail: dcckaiser@juno.com

Please do not include membership dues payment in with your reunion payment. Thank you!

Deadline for submission of Reunion Registration: Monday, August 15, 2016

Please note: The tours and events are booked and paid in advance. Any cancellations before the deadline will be refunded.