



# NEWSLETTER

1st Issue 24th Year

01 November 2015



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Association's Web Site:  
[www.greatsitkin.org](http://www.greatsitkin.org)

**From Our President:** To All: I started another round of maintenance Chemo. I was supposed to be finished with the maintenance as I had the four-session (4 weeks each) during the past two years. I had my follow-up CT/PET scan soon after we came home from the Reunion. The results were I had a relapse - no other way to put it.

Several questions came up. What stage am I in? Doctor said "Once a stage 4, always a stage 4. They never re-categorize you. It is "Remission" or "Relapse" for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma." Course of action is back to full chemo or radiation. We discussed radiation in a lot of detail as we had previously discussed radiation was not an option for NHL. Doctor said it is true most of the time because NHL is not localized. However, the area concerning him most is "localized." It is in the area that "started it all." Radiation is the most aggressive route; and if successful, should eradicate the problem in that area. He feels confident that the rest of the areas that were "active" when first discovered can be kept in remission with the "maintenance level" of Chemo.

I have given this a lot of thought since returning from this year's Reunion and have decided to retire as President at the 2016 Annual Business Meeting. I will resign sooner if health dictates it.

Tom Stachelski has been appointed Web Master and Facebook Coordinator.

**New Find:** Ron Bass, QM3, ('64 - '66)  
David A. Brownworth, SN, ('64 - '66)  
Raymond D. Bryant, BM3 ('69 - '73)

**Welcome aboard, Shipmates!**

**Ron Zimmerman, President**

**A Word From the Vice President:** These reunions just keep getting better and better! **GREAT JOB, FRED!** We had a wonderful time! That is until we got to the Ringling Bros. Museum. That's when Ron had to feed the squirrels. There I was trying to sit still so not to scare the squirrels away when all of a sudden this GIGANTIC squirrel jumps on me, up my side and tried to steal my hat! OK, OK, so it was a little squirrel, but it still attacked me! I will be scarred for the rest of my life! OK! OK! So I got over it in a couple of minutes! Geez!

Since Joy and I are doing Buffalo in 2017, we are planning a trip there soon. We have some great ideas already. For any of you who have not been

to Niagara Falls, the Canadian side has many things to do. Free time will give you that opportunity. The catch: You need to check your passports or get one if you are planning to cross the border. You have two years to do this.

Now for membership: Guys! 2015 is basically over, and it is now time to pay your 2016 dues. Current membership stands at 46, so if you see or hear from anybody else, please remind them to pay up!

**Jim Dunno, VP & Membership Chairman**

**Secretary Report:** The officers elected by Association membership for 2015 - 2016:

President:	Ron Zimmerman
Vice President:	Jim Dunno
Secretary:	Joe Rios
Treasurer:	George Kaiser
Chaplain:	Mark Rucker (appointed)
Newsletter:	Dorothy Hodnichak (appointed)

Thank you to all Association members for electing me as Secretary. I am in the process of learning the duties and responsibilities of my office.

**Joe Rios, Secretary**

**Repair 3:** Time once again to write some words of wisdom for our newsletter editor, Dorothy. I can say that our reunion this year in Tampa was again, and as usual, awesome. Numbers were a little low, but that is okay. The people that made the reunion were the ones that were supposed to be there. As usual, stories and memories of exploits on the old ship were told and retold. Such is the stuff of our reunions. Speaking of reunions, let me say a few things about 2016.

**Reunion Dates - September 14 thru 18, 2016**

We will be meeting in New Jersey at a yet to be named hotel; hopefully, very close to the shores of our beloved Bayonne. Mary and I will be your hosts, but we have an incredible lineup of New Jersey Shipmates who will be coming in on the assist. Our tentative itinerary plans are for two group tours. The first one will be to Manhattan. We will tour the memorials at the World Trade Center. Just a side note; you will not see me referring to it as "Ground Zero." To me, they are media-contrived words and show what I feel is disrespect to where thousands were murdered on 9/11/2001.

Back to the tour. We will visit a working FDNY firehouse. Ladder 11 / Engine 28 are where our shipmate ET3 Richard Kelly worked as a firefighter and where he left from on his Final Alarm to the World Trade Center. We will have the first of two memorial services there. That should wrap up our first day.

On Day 2, we will go to MOTBY to see what the old base and the city of Bayonne looks like today. (Hint: The Spa Bar is a Walgreens now.) We will have the second and main memorial service at the "Tear of Grief" memorial at the end of the pier. I will have more on the memorial in the March newsletter. We will go from there to a tour of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty.

There is just too much to see in lower Manhattan to do another group tour. Seeing how some of the attractions might be out of the abilities of some of our shipmates, we will instead make up little tour guides for you to choose your own tours. Some include the USS Intrepid Museum, riding the Staten Island ferry and doing a very nice walking tour of Battery Park, the South Street Seaport. Hope that "wets" your appetite for 2016.

That wraps it up for now! Mary and I would like to wish all of you a Happy and Blessed Christmas season. Be careful shoveling snow, and keep abreast of what your United States Navy is doing these days. I'll "see" you in the spring!

**George Kaiser, Treasurer**

**The Chaplain's Corner:** It was good to see all our friends again in Tampa this year. What a tremendous job Fred and Michele Kiesel did in putting together this reunion! We all had a great time!

The visit to the American Victory ship was great. It sure brought back many memories of the "Sitkin." A few of us drove down to Sarasota and toured the *Ringling Bros.* and *Barnum & Bailey Circus Museum*. That was a great place to visit.

The weather is changing and winter is fast approaching us. I am not looking forward to snow blowing this year. Thanksgiving will soon be upon us, followed by Christmas. Let us not forget the true meaning of these holidays as we celebrate them.

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

I would like to encourage more of our shipmates that served on board during the late 60's and 70's to plan on coming to New Jersey next year. I would like to see many of you there. Well it's time to move on.

May the Lord Bless and Keep you.

**Honor Roll Update:**

**Robert W. Leonard, SN, '57 - '59**

**John N. Shadgett, SN, '53 - '54**

**James Sands, FN, '53 - '56**

**Harold E. Ward, CS1, '56 - '59**

**Mark Rucker, Chaplain**

**2015 Tampa Reunion Report:**

A great big **THANK YOU** to all who attended our 2015 USS Great Sitkin Reunion. It was an awesome time together! The hospitality, services, and accommodations at the Tampa Westshore Marriott made it a welcoming place to come back to every day.

From our opening reception to our farewell breakfast, friendships flourished amid smiles and laughter. Ybor City, Plant Museum, Dali Museum, the annual Memorial Service on the American Victory Ship was all memorable and enjoyable, as were the BBQ at the indoor/outdoor pool and the Annual Banquet. How about that music by TnT!

On a personal note, Michele and I are scheduled to cruise the Danube from Budapest to Amsterdam while you are enjoying the wonderful reunion next year. Therefore, it is our hope to see all of you in Buffalo, NY in 2017! Until then, we wish you health and happiness.

Thank you for allowing us to be your hosts in Tampa. It was our pleasure.

**Fred and Michele Kiesel, Reunion Hosts**

**Comments from the Editor:** Tampa, FL 2015 was a wonderful reunion! Even after 23 years' of reunions, we had two Sailors who came as first-timers and one Sailor who returned after a long absence. We would like to see more of those "missing" Sailors in New Jersey next year!

**Dorothy Hodnichak, Editor**

**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 the:

**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: \_\_\_\_\_



**Edgar Carman, EM3c**

Date Entered Service: September 1944 - Date Discharged: 24 June 1946

Ed Carman enlisted in the U.S. Navy in September 1944. He went to Sampson, New York, for "boots." After boot camp, Ed dispatched to the Detroit Naval Armory, and then sent to Pre-Commissioning in Newport, Rhode Island.

Ed's final destination was Charleston, South Carolina, where he boarded the USS Great Sitkin. As a "plankie," he was there for the commissioning of the ship on 11 August 1945, at the Charleston Naval Shipyard. It was quite a sight to see! On 2 October 1945, the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) reported to the Commander Service Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet for active duty.

After discharge, Ed married Dorothy, the love of his life, and they just celebrated 67 years of marriage. They have two children and one grandchild.

**USS Great Sitkin (AE-17)**

**Commissioned on: 11 August 1945 at the Charleston Naval Shipyard**



**Photo contributed by: "Plankie" Edgar Carman, EM3c, ('44 - '46)**

# USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association - Ship's Store Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ball Caps:** Note: Where sizes are indicated, please circle the size/sizes you want.

- USS Great Sitkin Ball Caps (solid back) \$15.00 ea. Blue Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_
- USS Great Sitkin AE17 Ball Caps (solid back) \$15.00 ea. Blue Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_
- USS Ship Name & Silhouette Caps (mesh back only) \$15.00 ea. Blue Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

- Shirts:** Sizes
- USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Blue \$25.00 ea. M L XL XXL Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Gray \$25.00 ea. M L XL XXL Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - USS Great Sitkin Polo Shirts - Pink \$25.00 ea. S M L XL Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - USS Great Sitkin Ship's Picture T-Shirt \$18.00 ea. S M L XL XXL Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - USS Great Sitkin Ship's Picture Sweatshirt \$25.00 ea. L XL XXL Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

- Jacket/Hoodie:**
- USS Great Sitkin All Weather Hooded Zip-Front Jacket - Blue  
(Note: Jackets are on special order) \$45.00 ea. M L XL XXL Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

**Aluminum water bottles:** \$10.00 ea. 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:

Note: **DO NOT** include your "Dues" payment in with your Ship Store Order  
They need to be separate checks or money orders.

**USS Great Sitkin Association**  
c/o George Kaiser  
311 Oak Lane  
Glenolden, PA 19036

Questions about Ship's Store items can be E-mailed to: [ae17dc3@verizon.net](mailto:ae17dc3@verizon.net)

**Deadline for Christmas mailing: December 15, 2015**

## Ship's Store



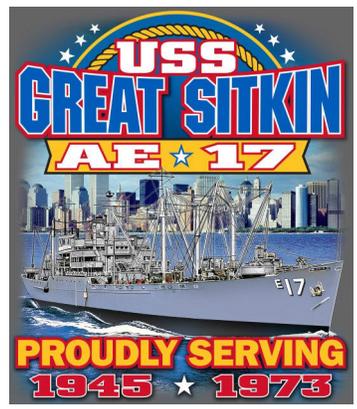
**Ship's Ball Caps \$15.00 each**



**Aluminum Water Bottle \$10 each**



**All Weather Jacket Blue, \$45 each**  
(Jackets are Special Order)



**Ship's Picture Shirts**  
T-Shirts \$18 ea  
Sweat Shirts \$25.00 ea  
Back of shirt has picture,  
Front has Ship's patch design



**Polo Shirts**  
Men's and Ladies, Dark blue, Grey, Pink **\$25.00 each**  
(Dark blue not shown)

Note: Letter Captain English sent to all the families after the "Bent Screw Incident."

Contributed by: Fred Gallagher, BM3 ('64 – '67)

**USS GREAT SITKIN (AE-17)  
FPO NEW YORK 09501**

8 May 1965

**FAMILYGRAM**

Dear Mother, Dad, Wife, Fiancée, Best Girl, Brother, Sister, and Other Loved Ones of Crew Members of the USS GREAT SITKIN:

I am writing this letter to tell you of the outstanding job that your men are doing in keeping this fine ship at the peak of efficiency as the Number ONE Ammunition Ship in the U.S. SIXTH Fleet today, and how our efforts are so important that Fleet's ability to be ready to respond to any need to protect the interests or citizens of the United States or its Allies. We are now in the beginning of the fourth month of our deployment, which is scheduled to be the first of the short cycles (5 months) inside the Mediterranean Sea for AE's. We were chosen to come over 2 months early because we have always lived up to our motto: "ALWAYS READY." In the first 3 months and 1 week of our tour in the "Med," we had exceeded by 9 ships and come within 50 tons of the record set during the entire last deployment! We have rearmed, with live ammunition, 41 ships, totaling 383 tons of bombs, rockets, missiles, gun ammo, and other ordnance components, plus many practice rearmings to keep our own and other ships' proficiency at a high state. This kind of performance has not gone unnoticed by the Fleet, Force and Task Unit Commanders, and we are getting more and more frequent "Well Done" messages and reports from those it is our job to service.

This effort has not been without its hazards. One of these was not so happy in its outcome when, in Souda Bay, Crete, a combination of circumstances involving language difficulties, a Greek pilot and tugs, and adverse wind conditions caused us to get this stout ship into a position from which it seemed impossible to extricate it without damage. And damage it we did, to the extent of curling the propeller blades a bit on the tips. As you know, the captain of the ship has the ultimate responsibility for the safety of the ship and her crew. In this instance, the Captain had the Conn, with the pilot assisting and advising. The crew was magnificent and backed me up throughout the scrape with the dock. I found real strength from that support. We missed going to Athens for the Easter holidays, going instead to Rota, Spain to offload "ammo," then to Cartagena to dry-dock the ship to change the propeller, picking up a new one at Gibraltar enroute. The crew again demonstrated its superb "can do" spirit by setting what undoubtedly is an all-time record by unloading several thousands of tons of "ammo" in four days of working from 0700 in the morning until 2000 (8:00) in the evening. After getting the propeller changed, we reloaded the ship in just over 4 days, which is even more phenomenal. It was a very difficult and hazardous job, which was accomplished with only a few minor bruises, but many sore muscles. We did the job so quickly and were ready to go back on the "line" that we surprised everybody, and actually missed only one week of operations with the fleet, plus the trip to Athens. I feel that the experience put the finishing touches to welding the crew into the tight-knit organization that it must be to be ready for any task. We now know our own strength, and it is tremendous! You can all be very proud of your men on board, for I certainly am.

All has not been work to make "Jack a dull boy," for part of our purpose in being over here is to make friends with our Mediterranean neighbors and Allies, and we have done our share of this, too. We have visited Valencia, Spain, Palma, Mallorca, Livorno and Naples, Italy, besides Rota, Cartagena, and Gibraltar (very briefly to get the prop and a quick shopping trip.) We are now racing toward Genoa, with all its historic places of interest, including the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. As the weather gets a little warmer, we will visit Cannes and Golfe Juan on the French Riviera, Barcelona, Spain, then Cartagena for a turnover with our relief AE, the DIAMOND HEAD, then Rota for a quick one-day stop, and then home to Bayonne on the 5th of July. All of you who can will probably want to meet us on the pier, and you will be a most welcome sight. No

matter how short or how interesting a cruise, the sight of families and friends waving on the dock brings a smile to the face of even the saltiest of old “seadogs.”

In between all the above ports of call for a little well-earned rest and relaxation will be some long and hard days at sea providing “ammo” to carriers, cruisers, guided missile frigates and destroyers. But that is all part of the reason we have a Navy and why this ship is such a vital part of that grand Navy. The job will get easier as we get better and better at working together, and as the cruise draws toward a very successful conclusion. You all can help in two very important ways: (1) Keep the home fires burning, even though the absence of your man may mean much hardship on the part of many of you; (2) Keep writing letters, for until you have been away from home for long periods, wondering how the family and friends back home are doing and wishing for the welcome sight of a letter with that certain handwriting on it, you will never know how important to morale such letters are. All of us need your support, for we are doing this to ensure your safety — and while you are saying your daily prayers, please include us in them, as we do for you.

Having spent the last 25 years in the service of my Country, I can say without hesitation, that this is the finest collection of men in the Navy, and I am proud to be a part of this crew.

Sincerely,

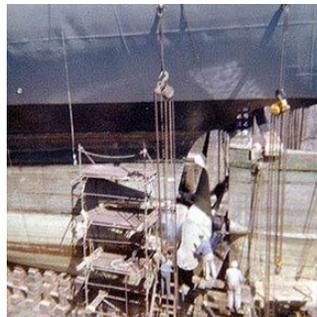
E. H. ENGLISH, JR.  
Captain, U.S. Navy  
Commanding Officer



Tip of bent screw after ramming into concrete pier at Souda Bay, Crete



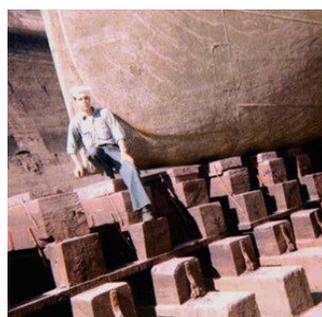
Replacement screw on fantail, Gibraltar, BCC



Bent screw being removed - Dry dock - Cartagena, Spain



In dry dock Cartagena, Spain



Resting on keel blocks



Bent screw being lowered to dry dock deck



Capt. English & BM3 Flaton on Quarter Deck with Inspecting Capt.



Captain English passed away on June 17, 2002

Please note additional stories regarding the “Bent Screw Incident” in the August 2009 newsletter under [SEA STORIES](#); also on the USS Great Sitkin Website. Comments are from SM3 Mike La Fauci, ENS Richard Hatfield, and PN3 Paul Carlson.



**Paul M. Marsan, CS3**

Active: August 24, 1969 - August 23, 1973

Aboard USS Great Sitkin from January 21, 1970 - July 1, 1972

In my senior year of high school, I knew I had some serious decisions I needed to make knowing that I was not college bound. The Vietnam War draft concerned me, as I did not want to go into the Army or Marines. I decided to sign up early for the Navy. Recruiter EMI Ronald Fox, USN, was a great help in advising my parents and me on what to expect in the service, which was to become my new life.

January 1970, I reported on board for duty and was put to work in Deck Force. Being new, I went to Mess Cooking for three months. This turned out to be lucky for me. I could be inside during the winter months and avoided the cold weather. I discovered that being in the Galley as a cook was the right place for me! While mess cooking in the Chiefs' Quarters, Chief Jenks and I talked about me moving up when one of the cooks retired. Lucky for me one retired not long after our talk. I moved gear and all to my new bunk in the Supply Division of the Rear Berthing Compartment.

During my two and a half years in the Galley, I cooked many different meals and was a server on the mess line. During this time, I moved from SR to CS3. Under the Commissary duties, I was a "Jack of the Dust." The job included getting food supplies for the cooks in the Galley. This required trekking off to another part of the ship as some were stored as dry goods and the perishables were kept in large refers. Being a Commissary Records Keeper was another job I had which included ordering, tracking and being sure the civilian contractors were paid. Monthly and quarterly inventories were tallied weekly. Menus were typed and approved by the Captain. Both jobs were Monday through Friday. We also had a Duty Day when in port. They could be Quarter Deck watches, SP or Side Boys for the ship. At sea, we were either on the bridge or in Director 31 for MK2G-On Scene Messenger. I was also in Repair-1 on the Mess Deck.

I transferred to Groton, CT in '72 and went onboard the USS Sunbird, ASR-15. A submarine rescue ship, she had divers, a diving bell and decompression chambers. This crew totaled seventy-five with officers and crew, small, compared to the Sitkin – less to feed! We went out to sea almost every week (HA! If you consider Long Island Sound out to sea...it is maybe more like a fresh water cruise!) August 15, 1973, I moved to the Sub Base in Groton as I was getting close to being discharged from the Navy. The Sub Base rather than the Sunbird handled my paperwork. My last day was to be Sunday, August 24. With it being a Sunday and no one around, I got out a day early!

The benefits of being in the Navy even followed me after I left. The VA hospital in Newington, CT helped me with needed dental work, and I went to trade school on the GI educational benefits program. Due to being on active duty during the Vietnam era, the \$300 bonus we got came in handy with returning to civilian life.

I would like to mention how the Sitkin Association has influenced me. The first reunion I attended was in New London, CT. This group met from Friday to Sunday, did small excursions traveling in their own cars, and we had a short business meeting prior to their dinner-dance evening. It was very simplistic. I had a good time. Since then my wife, Kathie, and I have been attending as many reunions as we can! Each has been exceptional. The reunion locations, events, excursions, and comradery have made the trips worthwhile. I enjoy swapping stories. Often each one of us remembers it differently, although we were there at the same time. In addition, the tales get grander each time! It is wonderful seeing the families attend, learning about what their father/grandfather/husband/brother did while in the service and to meet the men they served with. I look forward to our reunions, reconnecting with everyone especially since we only get together once a year. No matter the cost, the location or length of time we are together, we make our own fun and new memories! Large or small, it is always worth the trip!



**CSSA Marsan, CSSN McCrane, and CS3 Koon**



**CSSA Marsan posing with USS Nashville (LST 13) behind.**



**USS Nashville (LPD-13) underway after replenishment**

20 January 1970



Note: Paul Marsan - 6th row up on the left-hand side w/eyes closed

United States Naval Training Center - San Diego, California - 30 July 1952



Company Commander, M. W. Gundersen MMC

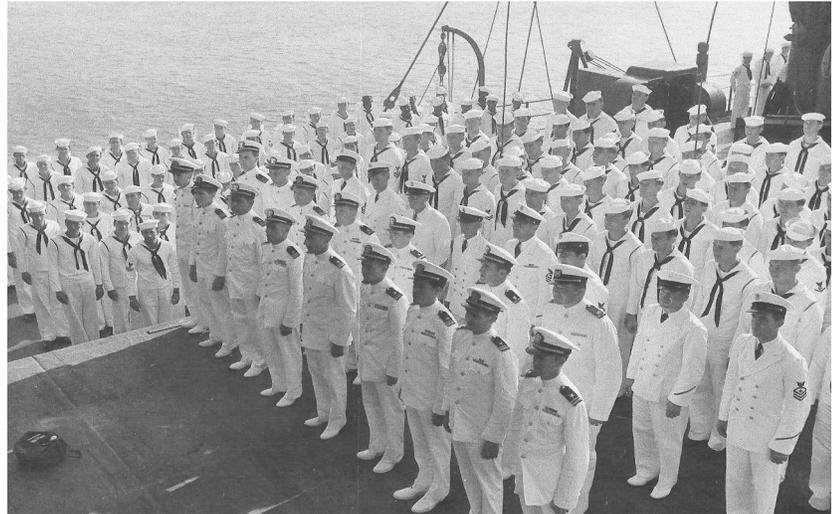
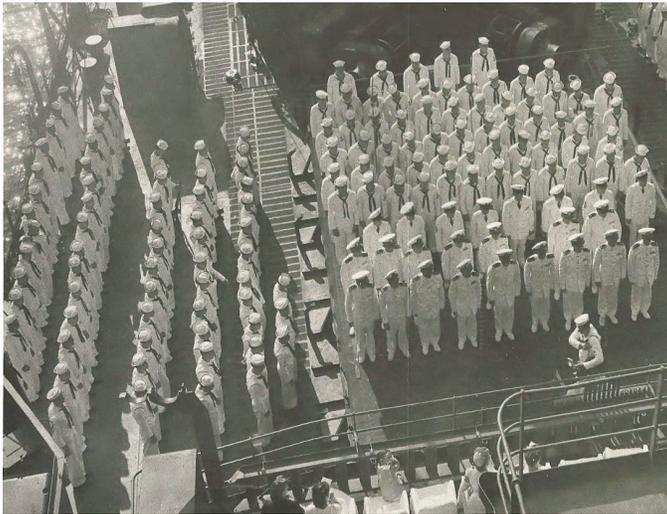


W. Carlson (DC3) and R. Weaver (FP3) (mid-50s)

### U.S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia - 1954



A. Carambia, C. DeRoche,\* H. "Spider" Nuremberg,\* E. "Ski" Wesolowski, V. Albanese, K. Morgan (deceased \*) (Contributed by E. Wesolowski)



Commission ceremony on 11 August 1945 at the Charleston Naval Shipyard

Contributed by Edgar Carman, EM3c



She might not have been a warship in the sense of a big gun cruiser, but she carried enough ordinance in her bowels to destroy a lot of the known world; and she did have 4 3" 50 cal guns, so yeah, she was a warship. This was my sunset view looking aft from her starboard side. Thanks for the memories Great Sitkin!  
Contributed by George Kaiser, DC3



W. Agee (SH3) at it again! First was Chattanooga, then there was Nashville. Wayne found water to "play" around in at Ybor City, Tampa, FL in 2015!

## USS Great Sitkin (AE-17) Association



## 23rd Reunion in Tampa, Florida - 2015

