

Cortron Courier

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Issue 3

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6 December 2003:

Navy vs Army has its annual battle on the gridiron in Philadelphia. This year Navy is supposed to have the best team in many years. Go Navy! Beat Army!

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7 December 2003: Remember Pearl Harbor! It happened on 7 December 1941.

Flags at half staff until mid-day, then two-block them at the mast head. Today is a day that many of us remember with great sadness. It is not just a sad day for the Navy, but it was the one significant day in history that the world was changed forever. I was very young at the time, but I remember it very well. Lest we not forget, "Pearl Harbor Day"! Send out a prayer for all of the valiant souls, and survivors.

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7 December 1954:

Eddie "Hollywood" Arnold joined the Navy at the Naval Reserve Training Center at Lake Union in Seattle. He also passed out when given his first battery of inoculations that rainy night. He was just seventeen years and seventeen days old, and his face had never met with a razor in his life. God, he was green! He was one proud puppy when he took his new seabag home that night. He sure had a lot of growing up to do. The Navy helped me do it!

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"USS Saratoga CV-3"

The "USS Saratoga CV-3" was MY ship. I adopted it at a very early age. She was ten years and four days older than I was. When the war broke out, I played with a young boy my own age by the name of Kenny White. He lived almost directly across the street from me in Alton, Illinois. The two red-headed twins next door, (Billy and Porgy McNear) with Kenny and myself, would have been good role models for the 'Little Rascals', or 'Peanuts'.

As with many others our age we played 'war'. Our biggest difference was, we played 'Navy' while others played soldiers. Kenny's much older brother (Jerry-Boy) who used to be our paperboy was a "SAILOR" aboard the 'Sara'. Jerry-Boy was our hero, and according to us he was the one to win the war. Never mind that he was a pink-cheeked kid just out of Boot, and slogged in the oily bilges of a fireroom. He was just a Fireman Deuce.

Now the Sara was the largest, fastest, ship in the entire Navy, and according to us it was the largest and fastest ship in the entire world. The Sara was at least five to eight knots faster than the Arizona. We weren't the only ones to think so either. We weren't handicapped like the battleship admirals that dominated the Navy at the time. We knew that airpower from the decks of the Sara would ultimately win the war. After all, 'Jerry-Boy' was aboard.

When Mom bought my supplies for the first grade, all of my Pee Chee's had the Sara dead center on the front cover. The Arizona believe it or not was dead center on the back. Smaller ships like destroyers, PT boats, and submarines, circled each of these two pictures with smaller aircraft all around.

The first time I ever saw Sara was when she came back scorched and blackened, limping and crippled, from a Kamikaze attack at Iwo Jima. We had moved from Illinois to Washington. I stood at the tide line of Port Orchard with Shirley White, (Jerry's bride of just a few months) and the new Jerry-Boy (still in diapers) watching as the tugs nudged Sara into the dry dock across Sinclair Inlet. Shirley cried and I cried with her. My kid brother played among the rocks of the beach unaffected by what he saw.

I was in the second grade, but the gravity of what we saw in front of us shook our whole world, and at that point in time we knew not whether Jerry was alive or dead. I made a silent vow to grow up and "kill those yellow bastards". How dare they damage MY ship, and how dare they do anything to harm my hero! Ed Arnold

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Many talk about "Navy know-how", but here is exhibit A to prove a point. Back in December of 1941, our fleet was still smoking at Pearl Harbor. The most critical job then was Navy Diver. These over-worked men were needed like the Army needed MASH Surgeons in Korea. They "got away" with almost as much.

The first task for salvage divers was removing ammo from sunken ships so future work could proceed safely. The first items rescued were usually the medicinal alcohol. Martial law declared, Hawaii was "dry". This booze, mixed with Coca-Cola could give a Sailor an advantage when cruising for "company". The ratio of woman to men in Honolulu was then something like 2000 to 1. Navy Divers were very popular with the Ladies.

One day, just before Christmas, a group of Divers exploring the smashed ARIZONA found a cache of ceremonial Colt .45s. For those not familiar, Navy ceremonial .45s are virtually hand-made, well balanced and very ornate. These weapons were stripped, cleaned, and re-blued. One hell of a souvenir.

One of the Divers tried to impress his girlfriend's Father by giving him one of these guns. Little did he know this guy was a drunk with a bad temper. A few days later this man was picked up by Honolulu Police while waving the .45 in an alcohol-induced stupor. The serial number was checked and it was discovered this weapon should still be at the bottom of Pearl Harbor! Divers were immediate suspects.

That night, a contingent of Honolulu Police and Shore Patrol paid a visit to the Diver's barracks. With the hapless Swabby in tow, all the men gathered as their crusty Chief gave this menacing speech:

"See your friend here? He's history-good-bye! (as he pushed the man into the arms of the SP). Now I want to tell the rest of you panty-waste bastards that first thing tomorrow there will be a full-blown barracks inspection and I will leave no stone unturned looking for more '45s. Have a good night." Click-off went the lights.

All night long, ghostly shadows scurried along the perimeter fence, as .45 after .45 was tossed over from the remaining frightened Divers.

As the last Sailor threw his gun over the fence, he saw something move on the other side. Hiding, he crouched and watched. Incredibly, it was the Chief! He watched as this old salt calmly walked over, picked up the weapon, and deposited it in a burlap sack. He had set them up and had been lurking outside the fence all night long!

This "grizzled one" had taken no shit from anyone, laid down the law, maintained discipline, retrieved the guns and held on to his badly needed Divers-all at the same time!

If someone tries to tell you Army or Air Force Officers are more savvy than Navy Chiefs, remember this story. These guys know how to get results.

-Roger Hare

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Name Change: "CortDiv 53"

Okay, I guess it is settled. I have received enough votes saying Aye, and with no Nays we will change the name of our group to "**CortDiv 53**" So far our group has expanded to seven ships. We will continue to accept any DE sailor that just wants to B.S. with other DE sailors, but unless we get an abundance from any one ship I do not think we will add any more ships. They are the:

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|-----------------------|--------------------|
| USS Wileman DE-22 | USS Snyder DE-745 |
| USS Hemminger DE-746 | USS Bright DE-747 |
| USS Tills DE-748 | USS Roberts DE-749 |
| USS McClelland DE-750 | |

I think I will leave the name of the newsletter the same because it looks good, but when we advertise

for reunions in different periodicals such as the DESA or the VFW we will use the new name. Just as soon as Joe and David give me a firm date for the reunion I will try to post it in these different places as "**CortDiv 53**", and list all of the ships. You know it would help me if you would respond that you have at least received this newsletter and whether or not you really want it

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**Website:** Al Read from the Tills is developing a website for our group. Articles and photos etc should be sent directly to Al for posting. It is a very professional job, and it needs help for each ship. Dig into your past for pictures and stories to send to him. You may log on to:

**<http://www.aljeanread.com/Cortron.htm> (*temporally until a specific web site is set up*)** See what you can do to help out here. No money, just ideas, stories, photos, etc. Contact readaa@mchsi.com.

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Apology: I apologize for neglecting to bring up Veteran's Day in last month's newsletter. It was a terrible oversight. Is there at least one Veteran out there who will forgive this Dummy?

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**Holiday Season:** With the Holiday season upon us let us not forget our valiant warriors who are not going to be home with their loved ones. If someone sends you a letter to be signed and forwarded to the troops, DO IT! And when we bow our heads at our tables over turkey or roast goose say a prayer for those kids, Pray for their safe return to their homeland and their loved ones. I have no doubt that the military will provide them with turkey and all of the trimmings, but it just isn't the same without being with their family.

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Donation to USS Slater: Another plea for donations. We collected \$230.00 in Albany, and I have contributed another \$100.00 so we now have \$330.00. The goal is \$5000.00. C'mon guys help out a bit here. Blow out the moths and donate what you can. These people at the Slater are doing a 4.0 job, but they need help. With the enrollment we have I think \$5000.00 is not an unreasonable figure. In their last newsletter they (the Slater) put out a plea for coffee fund for their volunteers. I am going to send a case of coffee with sugar and creamer for them. I don't want to send money as it may well end up in the general fund. Almost all of the crew is 65 or older and providing coffee for them is also not unreasonable.

Let me tell you a sea story about this kind of work. On a Cannon Class Destroyer Escort there are four V-16 General Motors or Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines. Many of you Enginemen will verify this. This is the same power plant that was found on the Fleet Submarines of WW II. They are supposed to get higher speeds, but flank was always about 20 knots.

There are two in B-1, and two in B-3. They each have a shaft coupled with spring packs going back through the after bulkhead into B-2 and B-4. Then they are mechanically coupled to very large DC generators that have the capability of producing 2000 amps of current (I forget the voltage). Each engine has one generator.

Joe Jordan once told me the average speed of these diesels was somewhere around 700 RPM. Their very loud hammering sound was deafening, and maybe that is why Joe has to ask you to repeat yourself so often. They did have earplugs back then, but they were as large and as hard as bullets. They always gave me a headache in about 5 minutes. Maybe that is why I also ask people to repeat themselves very often.

The wiring goes through the control switchboard, and on to the large DC motors of the propeller shaft. There is a very large metal box on the after end of each generator. This box houses the commutator. The commutator is made of copper segments, and to get the juice from that generator there are large gangs of carbon brushes that 'pick off' the electricity. In normal use these brushes wear down to large piles of carbon dust. This dust is everywhere. These segments need to be cleaned periodically, and the worn-out brushes need to be replaced. This is the job of the Electrical Gang.

As a 20 year old member of the Electrical Gang I was sent to perform this job more than once. There

are inspection plates that have to be removed to gain access to the communtator, You actually have to crawl inside and your first sensation is that your feet are about six inches deep in carbon dust. You remove ALL of the carbon brushes before you do anything else. Then with a pocket knife, a wire brush, and commutator (abrasive) stones you clean the segments until they are smooth, even, and shiny. With a dust pan, a foxtail, and a bucket, you carry out all of the dust you can get.

Then someone (of higher rate) hands you new brushes to replace those you took out. This is not a job for an hour or two. This may take a day or two. Each time you come out of the box you are blacker than Coalies' (Pennsylvania Coal Miner) Ass!

Back then we didn't have the benefit of dust masks and OBA's were too cumbersome for the small space one had to work in. We bitched like crazy, but it still had to be done, and we didn't have bilge coolies the way Steve McQueen did in "Sand Pebbles". We were in Philly, Bawlmer, or No-fuck, Virginia. We did it ourselves.

Now the Slater is in Albany, New York, it is winter and 75 and 80 year old men are doing what we used to bitch about at 20. For them it is a labor of love, but they need hot coffee because their non-existent paycheck from being a volunteer will not allow them the luxury of frequent cups of coffee in very cold weather. Help me out here! Preeze!

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**Joke of the Month:**

**WARNING to the Family and Friends of a Returning Sailor:**

You will soon have your loved one home again. He has been living in an extremely crude environment for quite some time and will require time to adjust to his former lifestyle.

The key to help him through this difficulty is PATIENCE.

Remain calm if he mixes his mashes potatoes with his chocolate pudding, stirs his coffee with his finger, or eats as though someone was going to steal his food.

Bear with him if he walks out to the back patio and throws the trash over the railing into the backyard.

Do not be alarmed when he walks through a door and ducks his head and raises his feet, because it's not a neurotic condition. It's just the way he has been walking for the past 6 months.

Show no surprise if he accuses the grocer of being a thief, argues with the sales clerk about the price of each item, or tries to sell cigarettes to the newsboy on the sly.

**Most important of all:**

His digestive tract will also require some adjustment. For the first week, all vegetables must be boiled until they are colorless and falling apart (after they have been sitting out in the hot sun for at least a week prior to his getting home).

Eggs must be tinged with a shade of green and be runny, bacon nearly raw and all other meats must be extremely well done.

Have beef for the first five or six days, calling it roast beef the first night, braised beef the second, beef tips the third, beef stew the fourth, etc.

If milk is served, it should be at room temperature and slightly diluted with water.

If he prefers to eat his meals while sitting next to the trash can, don't be concerned. He's grown so used to the smell that it may take a while for his normal tastes to return.

In the evenings, turn off all air-conditioning, open all windows and let in as many bugs as possible.

Let him sleep on the floor in the laundry room with the dirty clothes because he's so used to the smell.

For the first few nights, wake him every three or four hours. Tell him he's late for the night watch in the backyard. He'll understand because he's been doing something just as stupid for the past six months.

Under no circumstances should he be allowed to get a complete nights sleep during the critical adjustment time.

His daily routine may seem strange to you, especially when he wakes everyone up at six in the

morning screaming "Reville-Reville, all hands heave out and trice up!" Just smile and nod and make sure everyone is up and on the back porch at seven for muster, instruction and inspection.

Then, in the late afternoon, humor him when he walks around the house closing all the windows and doors and reports to you that yoke is set throughout the house.

After sundown, don't argue with him when he yells at you for opening up the window blinds while darken house is set.

His language may seem foreign and you may not understand all the terms he uses. It isn't necessary that you do. Just smile and be pleasant. Some of the terms you may hear are: Turn-to, Sweepers-Sweepers, Men working aloft, This is a drill, Wog, Beer-thirty, etc.

Do not be surprised when he answers the phone and instead of saying "Hello," he says: the room he's in, his rank and name. For example, "Living Room, 'You Fill In The Blank' speaking, this is a non-secured line subject to monitoring, how may I help you Sir?"

NEVER make favorable references to the Navy leadership structure. To do so will almost always illicit an extremely loud and profane outburst which may continue for hours.

The bathroom (*head*) is quite possibly the most dangerous place in the house for your USS \_\_\_\_\_ returnee. Before he arrives, strip the bathroom (*head*) of all accessories such, bathmats and any and all toiletry items.

Crack the mirror and run water on the floor. Toilet paper is optional, but if it is furnished, it must be placed in a puddle on the floor. Usually there was none that was dry.

Turn off the hot water at the source for the first few days. Wait until he is in the shower, soaped up and then turn the water off altogether for about 15 minutes.

All of these precautions are imperative, because if he walks into a bathroom (*head*) which is complete with the above mentioned items, he may shrink into a corner and curl up into a fetal position, wide-eyed and shaking. If this happens, there are only two proven and accepted methods of snapping him out of it; yell "**Mail-Call**" or "**Liberty-Call.**" In either case, stay clear of the doorway.

In closing, always remember that beneath that suntanned shell there beats a heart of gold, it being the only thing the Navy couldn't confiscate or reschedule at a later date. With kindness, patience and the occasional swift kick, your loved one will soon return to his former self.

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Bumper Sticker of the Year!

"If you can read this, thank a teacher.... If you are reading it in English, thank a soldier."
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**Ship's Store:** Good News Shipmates. I have a company that makes customs cups and mugs. I have sent for a catalog and I will keep you informed. The old handleless mug (called a "Liberty Mug") comes at a base price of \$10.00. It can be ordered at extra charge for rates, names, etc. All of the options & prices will be in the catalog.

Ship's Ball Caps \$20.00 Includes S/H

Book "Gunship Sailor" by Ed Arnold \$25.00 Includes S/H

**Attention Contreras and Emmons:** Due to the Xmas season the latest order of ball caps may take more time than you would like. I apologize for this but it is unavoidable. Editor  
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A Christmas Poem

'Twas The Night Before Christmas

Submitted by Ted Hansen USS Tills DE-748

'Twas The Night Before Christmas,
He Lived All Alone,
In A One Bedroom House
Made Of Plaster And Stone.

I Had Come Down The Chimney
With Presents To Give,
And To See Just Who
In This Home Did Live.

I Looked All About,
A Strange Sight I Did See,
No Tinsel, No Presents,
Not Even A Tree.

No Stocking By Mantle,
Just Boots Filled With Sand,
On The Wall Hung Pictures
Of Far Distant Lands.

With Medals And Badges,
Awards Of All Kinds,
A Sober Thought
Came Through My Mind.

For This House Was Different,
It Was Dark And Dreary,
I Found The Home Of A Soldier,
Once I Could See Clearly.

The Soldier Lay Sleeping,
Silent, Alone,
Curled Up On The Floor
In This One Bedroom Home.

The Face Was So Gentle,
The Room In Such Disorder,
Not How I Pictured
A United States Soldier.

Was This The Hero
Of Whom I'd Just Read?
Curled Up On A Poncho,
The Floor For A Bed?

I Realized The Families
That I Saw This Night,
Owed Their Lives To These Soldiers
Who Were Willing To Fight.

Soon Round The World,
The Children Would Play,
And Grownups Would Celebrate
A Bright Christmas Day.

They All Enjoyed Freedom
Each Month Of The Year,
Because Of The Soldiers,

Like The One Lying Here.

I Couldn't Help Wonder
How Many Lay Alone,
On A Cold Christmas Eve
In A Land Far From Home.

The Very Thought
Brought A Tear To My Eye,
I Dropped To My Knees
And Started To Cry.

The Soldier Awakened
And I Heard A Rough Voice,
"Santa Don't Cry,
This Life Is My Choice;

I Fight For Freedom,
I Don't Ask For More,
My Life Is My God,
My Country, My Corps."

The Soldier Rolled Over
And Drifted To Sleep,
I Couldn't Control It,
I Continued To Weep.

I Kept Watch For Hours,
So Silent And Still
And We Both Shivered
From The Cold Night's Chill.

I Didn't Want To Leave
On That Cold, Dark, Night,
This Guardian Of Honor
So Willing To Fight.

Then The Soldier Rolled Over,
With A Voice Soft And Pure,
Whispered, "Carry On Santa,
It's Christmas Day, All Is Secure."

One Look At My Watch,
And I Knew He Was Right.
"Merry Christmas My Friend,
And To All A Good Night."

A Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan wrote this poem. The following is his request: "PLEASE. Would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S. service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities.

Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your small part to plant this small seed."

I think this is more than reasonable!!! If you agree Please Pass It On!!