

MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

December 2012

A message from the President



Tony LaMorte

Hello again:

One holiday down and the other right around the corner. Grandchildren are probably driving their parents up the wall as to what Santa is going to bring them for Christmas.

Used to tell mine only coal this year, they would just look at me and say, "Oh yeah, Right," and walk away. One time I did hide their presents on Christmas morning, and they didn't know what to do. Of course I finally gave in and we did have a happy Christmas.

It's that time of year when you're watching your children or grandchildren opening their presents and seeing the smiles and laughter coming from them makes it all worth while.

You threaten them as to what is going to be their downfall, but then comes Christmas morning and all those threats just vanish into thin air as if they never existed. Yes, Christmas is for everyone, but to me it's mostly for the children. They have a lot of love and laughter to give and not a care in the world. It's their day and no one should take that away from them.

This Christmas day lets say a prayer for all our troops that can't be home with their families and loved ones. They're doing a job that has to be done and they're doing it without complaining. Say a prayer for their safe return; I know I will.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND I WISH ALL OF YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A JOYOUS NEW YEAR.

Tony

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Hours of Operation
Open: Wednesday through Saturday Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/>

**Editor's Note. As promised,
Vice Admiral J.A. Sagerholm, USN (Ret)
shares some of his memories of his YMS experiences:**

The YMS sea stories brought back some memories of my own experiences in two of the YMS class. In 1955, after six months at Mine Warfare School, Yorktown, VA, LTJG Sagerholm was ordered to USS Crow (MSC (O)-7) as XO.

The YMS classes had been re-designated as AMS shortly after the war, and were given bird's names. In 1951 or so, they were again re-designated, this time as coastal minesweeper (MSC) with the (O) added, for "old," to differentiate them from the new MSC class being built. The crew consisted of four officers, a LT, a LTJG and two ensigns, plus 36 enlisted, of whom there was an ENC and nine other enginemen to operate the ship's diesels, three RM, one EM, one ET, three cooks, one SM, three QM, one GM, three BM, and ten non-rated. As often as not, the EM, the ET, the GM, a QM, a BM a RM, and one of the cooks were all strikers, fresh out of "A" school. And the two ensigns were newly commissioned from OCS. The Chief mentioned that his officers were nervous, and so were we, but for different reasons. With a ship that was burdened with old or obsolescent WWII gear that continually was breaking down, a ship that, as he frequently mentioned, could barely make ten knots with All Ahead Flank rung up, there was never a lack of things to be nervous about.

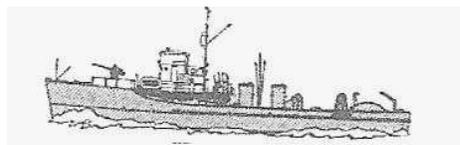


Vice Admiral Sagerholm photo taken during a cruise of the South Atlantic Force (now the U.S. Fourth Fleet) to South America in 1977.



We were based at Panama City, FL, the site of the Mine Warfare Laboratory, providing services for the lab. Our berth was at a pier in a corner of St. Andrews Bay called Alligator Bayou. We used to do small arms shooting in a copse of pine trees not far from the pier, and just a few feet from the water's edge.

One night, when I had the duty, I was on deck watching some stray cats catching fish with their paws down at the edge of the water. I noticed a very slight ripple in the flat calm water, moving across the bayou without making a sound. The ripple glided up to where the cats were fishing and suddenly these jaws erupted out of the water, grabbed a cat and pulled it under before those cats realized any danger. The bayou was living up to its name, and from then on, we were very careful about using that small arms range.



One type of mine is the pressure-actuated mine. It is actuated by the change in water pressure above the mine caused by the passage of a ship which displaces a weight of water equal to the ship's tonnage as it passes over the mine. Sweeping mines is done by simulating the actuating factor, either contact, acoustic, or pressure, or some combination of them. Of the three, pressure is the most difficult to simulate, requiring in effect a displacement of water above the mine that can only be achieved by a hull being towed over the mine.

Continue on Page 3 of 6.

The lab had conceived the idea of using large helos to tow a barge or any hulk, thus reducing the risk to the towing vehicle since the helo did not have to be on the water. To check the feasibility of a helo doing such a tow, the Crow was stationed in the far western corner of the bay, with a large bridle made of a heavy steel cable, the bitter end of the cable being firmly attached to the starboard bow cleat and passed through the bullnose, leaving the bridle loop extending some fifteen feet vertically, tended by two deck hands. The helo made a slow pass over the bow, hooked the bridle, and commenced towing us across the bay. In less than a few minutes we were making almost fifteen knots and heading for the east shore, which was looming rapidly nearer. The CO called the helo, asked him to stop, which he did, and we then backed full on both engines. It took several minutes to get the ship stopped so we could disconnect from the helo, the downwash from the hovering helo also adding to the problem. By the time we got free, we were within several hundred yards of the east shore of the bay. The trial was pronounced a success, and we could make the claim of being the swiftest coastal sweep ever commissioned.

After 18 months in Crow, I went to USS Rhea (MSC(O)-52), based at Charleston, SC, as CO. The sea stories from that tour will await another day.

J. A. Sagerholm
Vice Admiral, USN (Ret.)

Editor's Note: Thank you Admiral for the great stories. We look forward to the Sea stories from your tour in the USS Rhea.

Welcome Aboard New Members

At the end of October 2012, Edward and Maria Sheehan became members. Ed was a WWII Navy Seabee and is a retired Construction Engineer. Maria is a retired Comptroller. Ed and Maria live in Lake Placid, Florida.

In November 2012 CAPT Charles Johnston, USN became our newest member. Captain Johnston works in Cyber Readiness at Navy Cyber Forces, Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia. He transferred to Navy Cyber Forces from the Navy Information Operations Command, Norfolk, where he was the Commanding Officer. Captain Johnston lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

A very hearty welcome aboard to our newest members! A sincere thank you to all our members for their continued support. Without member support, the Museum would not be able to pay its bills and would have to close the doors.

Anniversaries

December 7, 1941, "A date which will live in Infamy." Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, killing 2,403 U.S. citizens.

December 8, 1941, the United States and Great Britain declare war on Japan.

December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

December 20, 1989, the United States invades Panama in Operation Just Cause.

December 23, 1968. The crew of the USS Pueblo released after 11 months imprisonment and torture by the #\$\$@*! North Koreans.

Letter to the Editor

Loretta Perfectus Walsh CY (F)

Dear Editor.

Greetings from your correspondent in the Boston Mountains. Nothing much seems to be happening other than a prolonged chill heralding the approach of winter. Sitting next to the fireplace, comfortable and deep in thought, I retrieve from the old memory bank a couple of recent *Scuttlebutt* items about President Tony and his granddaughter, Shannun LaMorte, promotion to CPO.

Now I must admit that I have never seen a female Chief Petty Officer. As a callow youth, all those many years ago, WAVES (off limits) seemed to abound but no chiefs. So until a few months ago I would've said no such female rating existed. Actually over the years, on a few occasions, I have been wrong. Perhaps a further check with our reliable Navy Historical Society might be in order.

Virtually all CPO's would agree that the very foundation of the Navy was built on chiefs making the Navy what it is today. Actually the rating of CPO is relatively new. While there is some confusion as to the actual month and day, it is generally agreed that the rating came into existence 1 April, 1893. Now that we have that bit of trivia out of the way we can get back to the business at hand.

For many years the armed forces of the United States had utilized the services of women as commissioned Nurses but none served in any other capacity. In 1917 the Navy opened the door authorizing enlistment of females in the Naval Reserve as yeoman and other limited essential ratings. At this point the U.S. Navy, the only branch of the US armed forces to recruit females in the enlisted ranks, needed a pioneer.



On 18 August 1917 Loretta Walsh, 18 years of age, enlisted in the U.S. Navy, thus becoming the first enlisted female in any of the armed services of the United States. Soon after Walsh was sworn in as Chief Yeoman CY (F), she became the first female Chief Petty Officer.

Shortly after the conclusion of WWI Walsh, with some 4000 other female Yeoman, was separated from active service. In 1918 the Spanish influenza swept through the world killing millions. Walsh fell victim to this disease but survived; however, the resultant Tuberculosis ended her life in 1925 at the age of 29. She was laid to rest at St. Patrick's Cemetery, Oliphant, Pennsylvania.

At the tidy gravesite a monument is embellished by a rather lengthy epitaph. For our purposes the opening and closing tell a story.

**Loretta Perfectus Walsh
April 22, 1896 - August 6, 1935**

Woman and Patriot

**Her comrades dedicate this monument
to keep alive forever
the memories of the sacrifice and devotion of
womanhood**

There can be no doubt that the legacy of Chief Walsh and those who followed, are in good hands with Chief LaMorte and her sister shipmates.

Allie Ryan



Photo # NH 65619 Yeoman(F) Elsie M. Long, 1918-19



Photo #: NH 65619

Yeoman Second Class (F) Elsie M. Long

Photographed in 1918-19.

She was on active duty from 7 October 1918 to 6 June 1919 and served at the Supply Department, Naval Overseas Transportation Service, Fourth Naval District, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Courtesy of Miss Elsie M. Long, 1968.

NHHC Collection

Online Image: 66KB; 485 x 765



The Perfect Gift

Once again the Museum is offering a solution for what may be a dilemma for some during the holiday season.

What about a Museum membership or an engraved brick for our Memory Walk. Remember this gift has zero calories, is heart healthy, and is tax deductible! One size fits all.

You can download a membership or brick application from our website <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/> . Or, for assistance please call the Museum at (863)385-0992, Tony LaMorte (863)382-2578, or Gene Kissner (863)382-4047.

The Museum will send a membership certificate and a card to the new member to let them know who gave the gift. We will also send a card to whomever the brick is gifted to let them know that a brick will be placed in the Memory Walk and who purchased the gift. For those living outside the Sebring area, we will mail photos of the brick after installed.

Memory Walk Ceremony

Mr. Robert Mullins of Lake Placid plans a short ceremony at the Museum's Memory Walk. The ceremony will commemorate the installation of two bricks in the Memory Walk, one in memory of his father, a WWII Navy Veteran, and one in honor of his son a BM2 in the U.S. Coast Guard stationed aboard a Coast Guard Cutter in the Great Lakes. The ceremony will be at 1530 on 22 Dec while his son is home on leave. Mr. Mullins would appreciate it if our Veterans turned out to witness the ceremony. Although not necessary, it would be great if those vets who can still wear their uniform did so. Attending this ceremony is a good way to show our support and appreciation for this young member of the U.S. Coast Guard and all active duty personnel.

While on the subject of the Memory Walk, we wish to express our appreciation to Superior Design Monument Company, Orlando for the excellent job they do in engraving the bricks for the Memory Walk. These folks truly do a superior job on the monuments they create and the bricks they engrave.

Pearl Harbor Attack, 7 December 1941

The following poem by JO3 Jim Deken, USN, was included in a photographic montage made for the 30th anniversary of the attack and is appropriate for this 71st anniversary:

**In the darkest of moments
a nation is wounded,
rights herself
and pushes on.
Her wounds give her strength
and urge her on to victory.
Time passes,
the wound heals
but leaves a mark.
The mark is her reminder
of what has been and could be again.
She does not forget.**

Priceless Observations

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year. - Victor Borge

Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was "SHUT UP." - Joe Namath

We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress. - Will Rogers

Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older, it will avoid you. -Winston Churchill

By the time a man is wise enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere. -Billy Crystal

Yard Sale

The Museum's yard sale on 16 and 17 November netted \$331. The entire amount has been placed in our savings account. Many thanks to the Museum members and friends who donated items for the sale and to those members who worked the sale. A special thank you must go to the Fred Juliano family, Danny Meekins, Bill Clements, and Billie and Peggy Jewett who went way above and beyond in the value of items they donated for the sale.

Mail Recipients of Scuttlebutt

If you are receiving the Scuttlebutt by mail and have an email address, please provide us your email address. You will not only save the Museum postage, but you will be able to see any color photos in color. Unfortunately, the Museum cannot afford the printer ink required to print 40 some copies of the Scuttlebutt for mailing. We copy them on our copy machine which only reproduces in black and white. You can send your email address to any of the following: navmargrd@gmail.com , Lamorte@vistanet.net , or genekissner@yahoo.com . Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

***The current issue of Scuttlebutt will be posted on line at: <http://milseasvmuseum.org/>
1scuttlebutt@att.net***