



Atkron 12 Newsletter



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Ubangi

2006 Reunion

Another Reunion has come and gone as we relived old memories and created new ones. Thanks to all that attended and made it a very special event. Because in the end, it's not about where we have it, if the chow was good, what events took place or if it rained or shined. It's about old men remembering when we were young and finding that the humor and camaraderie has not dulled with age, if anything those things have grown. I salute you all.

Naval Memorial Project

I may have missed a step in the process of raising the necessary funds to put a VA12 plaque at the Navy Memorial in Washington DC. It seems like a fine and worthwhile idea to me, and indeed many of you were in agreement. However, we did not officially vote on the project. So let me back up and ask for your input. Please email/call me with your opinion. I will continue to plan for raising the necessary funds until there are more votes against than in favor. See more info at <http://www.lonesailor.org/plaque.php>

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Ubetcha



Two sailors aboard the USS Constitution wear the blue digital-patterned battle dress uniform concept. According to the Navy, the uniform will be made in three variants, all in a multi-color digital print pattern: predominately blue, with some gray, for the majority of sailors and shipboard use; and a woodland digital pattern and a desert digital pattern for sailors serving in units requiring those types of uniforms. — Chief Journalist Michael Foutch / U.S. Navy

Navy officials are expected to approve two new uniforms for sailors and announce the changes in an AllNav message Thursday. Approved will be a blue digital-camouflage, battle dress-style uniform for all sailors. The new BDUs will be the working uniform. Gone will be the light blue shirt and dark blue dungaree pants worn by enlisted sailors and known as the utility uniform. The "wash khakis" worn by E-7s and above onboard ships also will be out. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen approved plans for a single working uniform for all ranks, E-1 to O-10. The new uniform will be officially called the Navy Working

Uniform. It is similar in style to that worn by other services with a few exceptions, including a two-pocket blouse and an eight-pointed cover. Also expected in the AlNav is the announcement that CNO also approved a new service uniform for sailors E-1 to E-6. That uniform features a khaki shirt and black pants. Women will be allowed to wear an "over blouse" that replaces tucked-in shirts.

The new uniforms will replace summer whites and winter blues. The moves will mark the first major changes coming out of the 2½-year-old Task Force Uniform, which was chartered in late 2003 to overhaul the Navy's seabags. Previous fleet surveys showed sailors were unhappy with their uniforms, officials have said.

VA12 Association Members

Here are names of those that have joined our ranks since the last newsletter.

Jack Leach	65-68
Adrian Roop	66-69
Bob Ruddell	70-73
Roger Doles	76-79

Sea Story

There was a time when everything you owned had to fit in your sea bag. Remember those nasty rascals? Fully packed, one of the suckers weighed more than the poor devil hauling it. The damn things weighed a ton and some idiot with an off-center sense of humor sewed a carry handle on it to help you haul it. Hell, you could bolt a handle on a Greyhound bus but it wouldn't make the damn thing portable. The Army, Marines and Air Force got footlockers and we got a big ole' canvas bag.

After you warped your spine jackassing the goofy thing through a bus or train station, sat on it waiting for connecting transportation and made folks mad because it was too damn big to fit in any overhead rack on any bus, train and airplane ever made, the contents looked like hell. All your gear appeared to have come from bums who slept on park benches. Traveling with a sea bag was something left over from the "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" sailing ship days. Sailors used to sleep in hammocks. So you stowed your issue in a big

canvas bag and lashed your hammock to it, hoisted it on your shoulder and in effect moved your entire home and complete inventory of earthly possessions from ship to ship. I wouldn't say you traveled light because with one strap it was a one-shoulder load that could torque your skeletal frame and bust your ankles. It was like hauling a dead linebacker.

They wasted a lot of time in boot camp telling you how to pack one of the suckers. There was an officially sanctioned method of organization that you forgot after ten minutes on the other side of the gate at Great Lakes or San Diego. You got rid of a lot of issue gear when you went to the SHIP. Did you ever know a tin-can sailor who had a raincoat? A flat hat? One of those nut hugger knit swimsuits? How bout those roll your own neckerchiefs... The ones the girls in a good Naval tailor shop would cut down and sew into a 'greasy snake' for two bucks?

Within six months, every fleet sailor was down to one set of dress blues, port and starboard undress blues and whites, a couple of white hats, boots, shoes, assorted skivvies a pea coat and three sets of bleached out dungarees. The rest of your original issue was either in the pea coat locker, lucky bag or had been reduced to wipe down rags in the paint locker. Underway ships were not ships that allowed vast accumulation of private gear. Hobos who lived in discarded refrigerator crates could amass greater loads of pack rat crap than fleet sailors. The confines of a canvas back rack, side locker and a couple of bunk bags did not allow one to live a Donald Trump existence. Space and the going pay scale combined to make us envy the lifestyle of a mud hut Ethiopian. We were the global equivalents of nomadic Mongols without ponies to haul our stuff.

And after the rigid routine of boot camp we learned the skill of random compression packing known by mothers world-wide as 'cramming'. It is amazing what you can jam in to a space no bigger than a breadbox if you pull a watch cap boot and push it in with your foot. Of course, it looks kinda weird when you pull it out but they never hold fashion shows t sea and wrinkles added character to a salty

appearance. There was a four-hundred mile gap between the images on recruiting posters and the actual appearance of sailors at sea. It was not without justifiable reason that we were called the tin-can Navy.

We operated on the premise that if 'Cleanliness was next to Godliness', we must be next to the other end of that spectrum... We looked like our clothing had been pressed with a waffle iron and packed by a bulldozer.

But what in the hell did they expect from a bunch of jerks that lived in the crews hole of a 2100 Fletcher Class can. After awhile you got used to it... You got used to everything you owned picking up and retaining that distinctive aroma... You got used to old ladies on busses taking a couple of wrinkled nose sniffs of your pea coat then getting up and finding another seat...

Do they still issue sea bags? Can you still make five bucks sitting up half the night drawing a ships picture on the side of one of the damn things with black and white marking pens that drive old master-at-arms into a 'rig for heart attack' frenzy? Make their faces red.. The veins on their neck bulge out... And yell, "What in God's name is that all over your sea bag?"

"Artwork, Chief... It's like the work of Michelangelo... My ship... Great huh?"

"Looks like some damn comic book..." Here was a man with cobras tattooed on his arms... A skull with a dagger through one eye and a ribbon reading 'DEATH BEFORE SHORE DUTY' on his shoulder... Crossed anchors with 'Subic Bay 1945' on the other shoulder... An eagle on his chest and a full blown Chinese dragon peeking out between the cheeks of his butt If anyone was an authority on stuff that looked like a comic book, it had to be this E-7 sucker.

Sometimes I look at all the crap stacked in my garage, close my eyes and smile, remembering a time when everything I owned could be crammed

into a canvas bag. (Author Unknown)

Submitted by Chuck Drescher 76-79

Joke

Soldier and the Nun!

A soldier came to a fork in the road and saw a nun standing there. Out of breath he asked, "Please Sister, may I hide under your skirts for a few minutes. I'll explain WHY later."

The nun agreed.

Just a moment later two Military Police came running along and asked, "Sister, have you seen a soldier running by here??"

The nun replied, "He went that way."

After the MP's disappeared, the soldier crawled out from under her skirt and said, "I can't thank you enough Sister, but you see I don't want to go to Iraq."

The nun said, "I think I can fully understand your fear."

The soldier added, "I hope you don't think me rude or impertinent, but you have a great pair of legs!"

The nun replied, "If you had looked a little higher, you would have seen a great pair of balls....I don't want to go to Iraq either."

Jerry Thomas 63-68

Navy Memorial Plaque

Bob Fossum's thoughts on raising the funds for the Navy Memorial Plaque for VA-12...

- 1.) Outright request for contributions for the memorial - with a free year of association membership if contributing \$100 or more....
 - 2.) Have Tom Lannom (I think Fat Tom would enjoy this) create a "Memorial" hat (or patch or shirt or jacket...) for us, and sell them at a higher than necessary price - say \$25 for a Patch, \$50 for a Hat, \$75 for a Shirt, \$150 for a Jacket or Windbreaker (no, not an Ice Breaker...), or something like that, and make them available only for the duration of the fund raising effort.
 - 3.) Frank and Robbie Giaccone did a great thing with the Mugs. Is there some other "memorabilia"
 - 4.) A raffle with the motel/hotel room paid for the '08 Reunion, offering chances at \$50 ++. Just some ideas.....
- available??? Maybe we order a set of "memorial" mugs similar to Frank's...

Bob Fossum 68-71

