

Turner Times



VOL. 11, ISSUE 1A

WEBSITE: WWW.USSTURNER.ORG

NOVEMBER, 2007

ARLINGTON D.C. REUNION – PART 1

ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS

MIKE MANIA BMSN '53-'54

In the second paragraph of the April 2007 TURNER TIMES cover story, I said the Turner reunion committee always finds a way to perfect the reunions each subsequent year. This past October's reunion in Arlington certainly proved the truth of that statement. It was a great get-together that was enjoyed to the limit by one hundred fifteen former TURNER crewmen, their wives and guests. Congratulations once again to the TURNER REUNION COMMITTEE.

This year, the reunion was moved from its normal time slot of September into October. The rationale for the move was due to the fact that the month of September in Washington, D.C. is considered one of the peak tourist's months and hotel room prices are really out of sight. Prices were considerably lower in October. This was a good move. Our reunion ran from October 4th through the 7th with farewells and departure on the 8th.

The fun started Thursday the 4th with the hospitality room being opened and registration from 1:00 to 5:00 p. m. At six o'clock the cash bar was

available and at 7:30 a Welcome Dinner Buffet was enjoyed by all in attendance.

During the course of the buffet, a beautiful pen and ink drawing of the TURNER was raffled off and awarded to lucky winner Paul Zorn. The drawing was made and donated by the very talented artist Todd Becker, son of Don Becker, SN, '53-'54 and Don's lovely wife, Barbara. Thanks to Todd, for his beautiful work, kind thoughts and consideration toward the TURNER group.

At 9:30 a.m. the next day, two buses were boarded for a driving tour of Washington. Some of the well known sites that were seen and enjoyed were the Lincoln, Jefferson and World War Two Memorials; the Mall; the Capitol Building; Washington Monument; The White House and a few other monuments and federal buildings of note.

Lunch and a bit of shopping were enjoyed at Union Station which includes one hundred twenty-five stores consisting of a wide variety of shops, restaurants, galleries and so much more.

The last stop of the day was at the National Holocaust Museum. It contains documentation that the Holocaust really did happen and was not a figment of any particular individual's imagination. It is full of reminders and artifacts, films, photos and histo-

ries that confirm and document the genocide perpetrated on European Jewry by the Nazis during the Second World War. The Hall of Remembrance is a solemn place best utilized as a shrine or holy sanctuary for deep thought and serious meditation.

The rest of the day wasn't as solemn. In fact, it was a lot of fun. Buses were boarded once again at 7:00 p. m., with the destination this time being The Kennedy Center. Here, our TURNER reunion sleuths tried to solve the murder in the jovial and mirthful mystery show, SHEAR MADNESS. After the show the TURNER guests were treated to a wonderful surprise.

Henry Turner, MM2, '57-'60, and his lovely wife, Natalie, escorted the entire TURNER enclave backstage, and introduced them to Henry's uncle, Mr. Glenn Turner, head of Production Operations for the KENNEDY CENTER, and his dear wife Jessica.

Glenn and Jessica graciously took the group on a tour of the CENTER and also introduced them to the actors and actresses. Refreshments were served and a beautiful cake decorated with the TURNER ship was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Henry, Natalie, Glenn and Jessica for going the extra mile! It was a day and evening enjoyed by all.

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\$ SHIP'S STORE ¢

The following items can be ordered from Carl Ackerman, 7436 Daisy Cir., Macungie, PA 18062, Ph: (610) 398-0145. All items are postpaid. Please make checks payable to Carl L. Ackerman.

- ▶ Up-to-date rosters — \$5.
- ▶ Turner baseball caps embroidered with Turner logo — \$18.
- ▶ Mesh polo shirts embroidered with Turner logo. Colors: Red, White or Navy Blue. Sizes M to XXL. All sizes come with a pocket — \$40. Sizes 2XL to 3XL — \$45.
- ▶ Sweat Shirts embroidered with Turner logo. Colors: Navy Blue or Gray. Sizes M to XXL — \$45. Sizes 2XL to 3XL — \$50.
- ▶ DVD of 1961 Med Cruise photos — \$10.
- ▶ Denim Shirts: Short sleeve, light blue with dark blue Turner Logo. Sizes M to XXL — \$45. Sizes 2XL to 3XL—\$50.
- ▶ Ship's patches: Both the Tiger and Double Eagle, 4" round with color embroidery. Also official Navy patch just like on the ball caps. Blue/gold lettering of "USS Turner DD/DDR 834" around gray destroyer profile. 3"H x 5"W. Cost is \$5 per patch.

FROM THE OF THE PREZ

Fellow Turner Shipmates – I have just returned from the sixteenth reunion of the USS Turner in Arlington, Virginia. The reunion was a rousing success from the standpoint of all who attended. We also welcomed eight new shipmates to the reunion. The location of the reunion was wonderful and the days were filled with a multitude of things to see and do.

This reunion was my last duty as the President of the Reunion Association. I have now been bumped down to join the illustrious group of the previous Past Presidents. It was a great run and I enjoyed every minute of my tenure and would do it again in a heartbeat. Thanks to all for putting up with me.

Please join me in welcoming and supporting Bernie Sciarpettetti as he begins his tenure as your new USS Turner Reunion Association President.

Grant

Hello Shipmates,

I am writing this while my memory is still fresh on the wonderful 16th reunion we just held in Washington, DC. It was there that I was elected your President and I will fulfill my office to the best of my abilities.

The tours were outstanding, from the DC city tour along with the Holocaust Museum, the Navy Memorial/ Navy Yard Museum tour and the Washington War Memorials along with the Arlington Cemetery Tour. The murder mystery play, "Shear Madness" at the magnificent Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was very funny and we were treated to a great surprise when we were met by Glenn Turner and his wife Jess. Glenn, Head of Technical Facilities at the Kennedy Center is shipmate

Henry and Natalie Turner's nephew. Jess is Central Wardrobe Manager at the Center. One of the actors even wore a USS Turner T-shirt! We were also treated to a backstage tour and we had a personal meeting with the cast and a beautiful cake was provided for us.

It was wonderful to see such a great attendance with many first timers, at least eight of them. Not a record, by the way. One of our special door prizes was a magnificent framed drawing of the Turner done by the son of Donald and Barbara Becker. All in all we had 111 attendees at the Sunday evening banquet and we recognized three Turnermen who have attended all sixteen reunions!

It is my wish that we all can contact another shipmate we know and invite them to attend our next reunion which will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, September 24-28, 2008. This is a slight change in previous plans as Charleston, South Carolina was going to be much too expensive and the Executive Committee felt that that would be a deterrent to many who would want to attend.

I wish to thank Grant Wilcox, Immediate Past President, for his excellent leadership and guidance for the past two years and his offer to help me in any way he can. I also wish to thank you all for your vote of confidence and look forward to seeing a record number of attendees in St. Louis, Missouri next year.

Your President, Bernie Sciarpettetti

New Editor: send your articles for the next newsletter to Bill Schaepe. See address on back page

CHIEF FORREST C. REBER-IN MEMORIUM

Dave Bodendorf ETN-2, 56-59

Joe Stepanek ETR-2, 56-60

What can one say about the Chief? During one very long (or very short, depending on your point of view) Mediterranean cruise, from the fall of '58 through the spring of '59 he was our mentor, a father figure, story teller, an all-around good guy, and our Chief. We looked forward to his coming with some trepidation as he had announced his forthcoming arrival to the ET crew with a letter outlining how he planned to run the ET shack. The tone of the letter suggested that he might be a tyrant, but he turned out to be a teddy bear. In fact, we don't recall his ever having a harsh word for any of us "just out of our teens" sailors. Yet the ET shack ran smoothly and the Chief was always there to help.

We learned this spring from his wife, Alice, that he had passed away. We had hoped that some day he might change his mind and attend a reunion, but it never came to be. Alice related to us that "His time on the Turner was the fondest memory of his career. He wore his Turner cap proudly. To our surprise, many young men came up to him and shook his hand and thanked him." We thank you too, Chief, for your service and all the good memories.

We called him some eight odd years ago. The first time, Alice told us that he was out playing golf. We think he lived near or on a golf course and enjoyed playing on a regular basis. When we finally got a hold of him it was like taking a step back in time. He was the same old Chief. We related several war stories. We reminded him of the *Necchi* sewing machine that he bought for Alice during the Med cruise and the countless hours he spent breaking it in by repairing ours and other shipmates' clothes. We also told him



Chief Reber on his Necchi

about the weekend he was tending to the radar business as all of the radar electronics technicians were on shore leave. Since we were due to sail on Monday, the radars had to be checked out. One of them didn't, the Height Finding Radar, the SPS-8. The chief spent all weekend in that radar space on the second deck, pouring over schematics, trying to diagnose the problem. I (Dave) offered to help him, but I guess he didn't think I could help much since I was a communications ET, (he was probably right) so he continued on his own. I did supply him with coffee, as needed, throughout his ordeal. I think he changed the transmitting magnetron (a common problem source with the radar), at least twice, as well as the receiver protectors, etc., all to no avail. On Sunday evening when Joe Bennett returned, he assessed the problem, went to CIC (Combat Information Center), flipped a toggle switch hidden under the edge of one of the tables, and all was well again. It was one of those famous field changes that somehow never got recorded in the schematics. The poor Chief was chasing a problem he couldn't hope to find. When we related the story to the Chief, his memory of it was very foggy. We believe he stored the episode in a section of his memory labeled 'It's best to forget this'.

We learned during this conversation that the Chief had a

very successful career until his retirement after he left the Turner. He achieved Chief Warrant Officer and was the director of the ET school at Great Lakes, Illinois. We believe that this was his last billet.

When we tried to talk the Chief into attending a reunion, he felt that his time on the Turner was so short that he wouldn't know any people there, the common excuse of so many of our shipmates who choose not to at-



tend. I think he was just happy to spend the rest of his days enjoying life in Couer D'aine, Idaho with his loving wife Alice.

The best way to sum up the Chief is that he was always a friend to us young ET'S, and always willing to take the time to help us with our problems no matter how trivial. Yes Chief, you were a friend.

A photo taken on the main deck shows from left to right ET'S, Joe Stepanek, Lyn Sona, Joe Bennett and the Chief. Radioman Ernie Fogg stands in back.

We miss you Chief.



OUR TURNER TIMES

WHAT WE REMEMBER ABOUT OUR TIME ON BOARD

A TRUE SHIPMATE

In response to, or continuation of, Bernie's article, "Join the Navy", I'm not sure whether Bernie was still on board ship when I reported or not. I reported in March '62. I have only attended two reunions myself which were Chicago and Savannah. I don't know how he got my name unless from where I had been searching for possible ships reunions, but I received a call from Ray Leistikow. At that time he told me they had just gotten home from the Las Vegas reunion. What a surprise to hear from an old friend after such a long time.

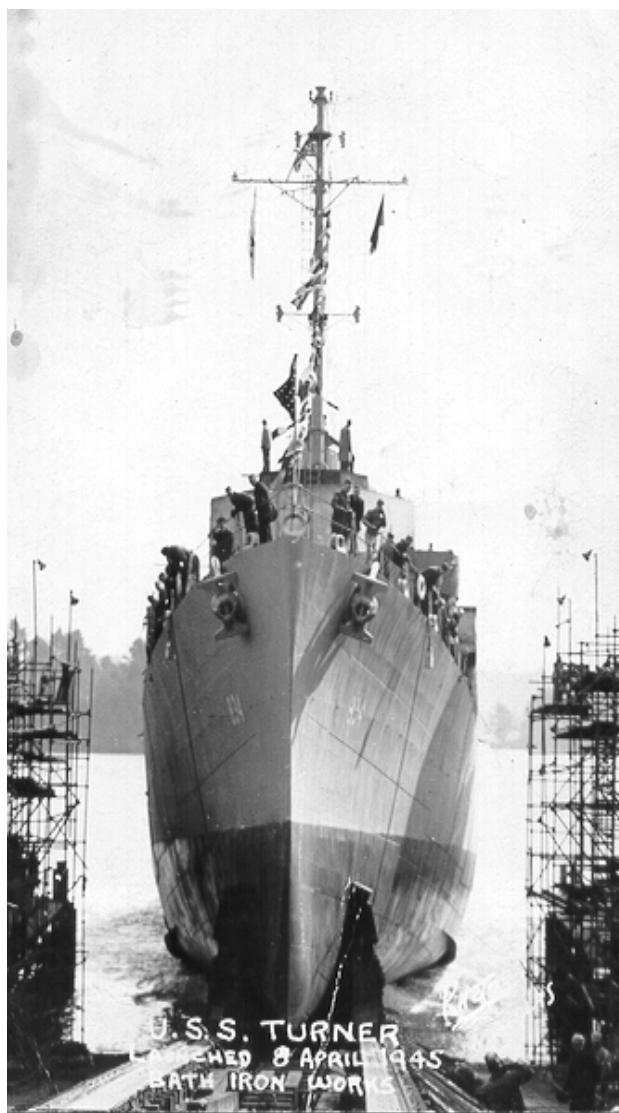
Looking back on our relationship and thinking, it's amazing the impact one person can play in another's life.

Aboard ship, after working hours, we would hang out on the fantail sharing stories, entertaining each other with various talents such as sing-a-longs, some played guitars or just clowning around. This is where I first met Ray. Through our conversations he found out that before coming in the Navy I had worked in hardware and had experience in inventory control and shipping and receiving. Well, this is where the real story starts. Ray was 2nd Class Storekeeper, in charge of store rooms including spare parts, consumables and day to day supplies used on board. He took a real interest in my background and what I could bring to his department. Being short one Storekeeper already, he explained

the procedure to follow in order to transfer from 2nd Division (Deck Force) to Supply Division. I put in my request chit the next day for a transfer. I don't know whether my leading Petty Officer and Division Officer liked me or if it was my work ethics, or what, but they disapproved my request. However, thank God, it didn't stop there. The request went on up the chain of command. The next in line, Gunnery Officer, called me in for an interview and after determining that the Navy first and then me would both benefit if I was transferred to supply. This is where our relationship began. I became a storekeeper. Ray was my first boss (leading P/O), as time went on we became friends. He and his wife, Diane, would have me over for dinner and then after our yard period in Portsmouth, VA, I moved my wife to Mayport, FL, next door to Ray and Diane. This is where we became not only a team on board ship, but best friends and next door neighbors. Ray got out in October or November '93, or thereabouts. His impact on me went on after I got out in February '64. I got a job in retail (Sears), where I advanced to Senior

Merchandise Manager. In the meantime I stayed in Naval Reserve. I left J. C. Penney in November '81 at the age of 40 and went back in the Navy as a Recruiter. I retired off active duty April 30, 1998 as a Chief Storekeeper with 38 years of service. I can truly say thank you, Raymond Leistikow, for your mentorship, your friendship and for being a "Shipmate".

SKC (Retired) Joseph C. Jacobs



**ARLINGTON/D.C.
REUNION—PART 2**

(Continued from page 1)

At 9:45 a.m. the next morning, the business meeting was called to order. Roy Turcotte was elected to a two year term as the next first vice president of the TURNER REUNION COMMITTEE. Henry Turner was elected as the second vice president. Congratulations and good luck, Roy and Henry.

Because of the high increase in room rates throughout out Charleston, South Carolina, the 2008 reunion was switched to St. Louis. That was done at the suggestion of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., who is now chiefly instrumental in setting up the TURNER reunions. As yet, a site for the 2009 fete has not been determined.

Later that morning, the buses were once again boarded and headed for the Navy Memorial. There we got to see the Wave Wall which depicted two hundred years of American naval history. We also witnessed a very moving wreath laying ceremony at the Lone Sailor statue. It was very emotional to say the least.

Many saw a film describing what shipboard life is like aboard an aircraft carrier-- different in some aspects from that of a 'tin can sailor.'

We ate lunch at the Ronald Reagan Building food court then left for the Washington Navy Yard and a wonderful tour of the Navy Museum. There we were exposed to a great array of ships models of all kinds plus many navy photos, paintings, and artifacts. The DD BARRY was moored outside and visitors were welcomed aboard to tour the ship. Everyone was back at the hotel at 4:30. The rest of the evening was free time.

Sunday morning was spent at four memorials: World War II; Lincoln; Korean and Vietnam. Very touching, very sad.

I would like to interject a small sidebar to this article right here that you might find interesting. I had total strangers come to me at the different memorials, shake my hand and thank me for serving our wonderful country and protecting the freedom we enjoy. Perhaps you may have had the same thing happen to you. This did happen on more than one occasion at each of the memorials. What a great feeling!

After leaving the Memorials, the buses headed for Arlington National Cemetery. We witnessed the changing of the guard and the laying of a wreath at the tomb of the Unknowns. We stopped for picture taking at the gravesites of President and Mrs. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and down the hill, we also photographed the gravesite of Robert, the president's brother.

A quick stop to eat at Pentagon City Mall food court was followed by our final ride back to our hotel.

Picture taking for the TURNER Memory Book began at 5:30 with great anticipation for the cash bar to open at six. The banquet began at 7:30 and a wonderful meal as well as great comaraderie was enjoyed throughout the room. Dancing and male and female chorus lines followed the dinner. The one problem that was noticeable was the time flew by so fast it seemed the party had just started then suddenly it was time to leave.

And that's how short the entire reunion seemed. We must find a way to stretch the time. A few more drinks at the cash bar might do the trick. Anyway, hope you all had a great time. I certainly did. See you in St. Louis next year.

Trouble...

A Navy man walks into a bar, gives the bartender a conspiratorial wink and says, "Quick, pour me a drink, before the trouble starts." The bartender pours a drink and watches as the Sailor downs it in one gulp.

The Sailor slams the glass down on the bar and says, "Quick, give me another one before the trouble starts."

The bartender pours another glass and the Sailor drinks it as quickly as he had the first. The Sailor pauses, lets out a belch and demands a third drink 'before the trouble starts.'

After several rounds of this, the bartender says, "Look Sailor, you've been talking about trouble for ten minutes. Just when is this 'trouble' going to start?"

The sailor looks at the bartender and grins. "The trouble starts just as soon as you figure out that I don't have any money."

Navy Jokes from: <http://www.thedeckplate.com/jokes.htm>

Navy Etiquette

Officer: Sailor, do you have change for a dollar?

Sailor: Sure, buddy.

Officer: That's no way to address an Officer! Now let's try it again. Do you have change for a dollar?

Sailor: No, SIR!

UNSUNG HERO

**BY MIKE MANIA BMSN, '53-
'54**

It has been duly noted by many military historians over the years, that countless heroes have emerged out of the chaos and carnage of every war. People such as George Washington; Florence Nightingale; Sgt. Alvin York; Lt. Audie Murphy; Col. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington; Lt. Comdr. Butch O'Hare; and on and on goes the list--too numerous to name all, but true heroes never-the-less.

And while we dote on these military demigods, whose names, because of their heroic exploits on the battlefield, have become household words, we tend to forget the obscure, but just as valiant "little guys." They also served, fought their hearts out and sacrificed their time, blood, breath and lives, yet received little, if any recognition at all. They are no less heroes than their highly decorated peers.

Here's a brief story of one of those heroes, who while he did receive a commendation for his heroics, soon fell between the cracks and became just another unknown seaman sequential to his intrepid deed. His story is of special interest to us former TURNER crewmen, especially those who served aboard the TURNER DD 648.

As many former TURNER crewmen know from reading the story on our website, TURNER DD 648 was the second destroyer to be named in honor of Captain Daniel Turner, a naval hero of the War of 1812. The ship was commissioned on 15 April 1943,

Lt. Comdr. Henry S. Wygant in command.

Subsequent to her complete outfitting at the New York Navy Yard, she conducted shakedown, then anti submarine warfare training until early June. From that point on, she engaged in a series of assignments including escort duty for carriers; screening service for transatlantic convoys; escort duties for assorted ships.

TURNER eventually got into physical enemy contact with a German submarine and fired some rounds from its deck guns, then ran a depth charge pattern over the sub. It was never determined the sub was sunk.

More convoy escort duty was ordered for TURNER plus other assorted sundry destroyer tasks. On 1 January 1944, near the end of her final return voyage across the Atlantic, TURNER headed for New York and arrived at Ambrose Light on 2 January and dropped anchor.

Early the next morning, a series of explosions rocked the ship. In a matter of minutes, she took on a 16 degree starboard list. More explosions, mostly in the ammo magazine areas, continued to wrack the now doomed ship. Finally, at 0742, one final tumultuous explosion capsized the TURNER and caused her to sink. She took with her 123 crewmen and 15 officers, including the captain, Commander Wygant.

Nearby ships rushed to rescue TURNER survivors who were trying desperately to stay afloat in the frigid water. One of those ships was the Coast Guard frigate, USS GULFPORT PF 20. On board the GULFPORT was Second Class

Gunner's Mate Walter C. Danilewicz, USCG. Danilewicz was stationed at Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, New York, which was located not too far from where the TURNER disaster took place. He, along with other Coast Guardsmen, were hustled aboard various ships and sent to help with rescue operations.

When the GULFPORT arrived at the scene of the disaster, the TURNER was still afloat, but listing badly with fires raging throughout the ship and on the water. Rescue ships got as close to the TURNER as possible in order to retrieve survivors.

As the GULFPORT approached to within a safe distance of the sinking TURNER, it was obvious the survivors who had abandoned ship were having a difficult time swimming to the rescue vessels. Once the GULFPORT stopped dead in the water, it was clear to Danilewicz some of the wounded would never make it to his ship. Deciding to close the gap, he jumped into the icy water and swam toward the wounded TURNER crewmen who could not significantly help themselves, and pulled them back to the hull of the GULFPORT. Once there, other crew members lifted the stricken sailors aboard while Danilewicz swam back to help others who could not help themselves. It is not known how many TURNER crewmen owe their lives to Gunner's Mate Second Class Walter C. Danilewicz, USCG. However, if it was just one life he saved, we are still most grateful and deeply indebted to him, as well as to all members of the United States Coast Guard, who so willingly put themselves in harms way so others might live.

(continued on page 7)

Final Roll Call

Since our last issue we have learned that these shipmates have answered the call of the Supreme Commander:

John J. Berghuis	67	SH2
Leslie E. Boone	59-60	MM1
Huey L. Byant	59-60	TM2
Dean T. Close	47-50	S2
Arnold L. De Maris	51	S1
Walter P. Mazur	51	EMFN
David J. McCorskey	49-52	GM2
Earl A. Olson	47-50	SK2
Forrest C. Reber	58-59	ETC

(Continued from page 6)

To each of them, a heartfelt 'THANK YOU,' and a hearty 'WELL DONE.'

Petty Officer Danilewicz's commendation reads in part:

... I wish to commend you for your splendid performance of duty on 3 January, 1944, in connection with rescuing survivors from the U.S.S. TURNER after that vessel exploded and while it was still burning off New York Harbor. Your courageous conduct as a member of the crew of a Coast Guard vessel which participated in the rescue was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service.

Signed:

Stanley V. Parker
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
District Coast Guard Officer
Third Naval District

After the sinking, Danilewicz was assigned to duty aboard the GULFPORT.

2007 Reunion Memory Book for Sale. Cost is \$21 To order send check to Joseph Stepanek 9372 Duff CT Ellicott City MD 21042

March 21, 2006

To: All recipients of Freedom in these United States of America

From: A veteran of the U.S. Navy

A couple of years ago I happened to be in a small donut shop near my home and while enjoying one of my favorite pastries, noticed an aged couple at a table close by, quietly enjoying theirs too, but who had little to say.

Noticeable to me they were probably Hispanic, but most likely American Indian.

I was wearing my favorite cap which showed my pride in the U.S. Navy ship on which I had served in the Pacific.

The gentleman asked me about my ship and spoke of his service during World War II. After introductions we spoke of our duties and old memories. They were indeed American Indians and even referred to the difficulties they had in buying a house in the area many years ago. All the problems were overcome and they had lived there a long time.

It struck me that—here is a humble man who had served his country honorably and had most likely suffered a lifetime of anonymity, in civilian life and in the service. I could feel his humility and also a quiet pride of services rendered without any special recognition.

In my seventy eight, I had never felt the sudden crushing need to do what came next and very naturally. I stood at attention in front of him, gave a very formal, heartfelt salute and said, "Thank you for your service", then shook his hand.

I saw in their eyes an almost thundering expression of gratitude, especially from his wife.

It was obvious to me that he had never been thanked or recognized in such a personal way.

There are countless veterans still walking among us who go past us daily without a handshake or a thanks.

It is my fervent hope that, even though you are a veteran too, you will put forth your hand in gratitude to those men and women who were fighting for your freedoms when you were very small or not even born yet. Thank them for their service and show them that you mean it.

Anonymous

Submitted by Henry L. (Pete) Newman
March 2006

"Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile...can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, 'I served in the United States Navy'."

President John Fitzgerald Kennedy



