

USS Johnston (DD821)



Volume 4, Issue 1

March 2012

In this Issue

- USS Johnston DD821 Assoc headed to Savannah, Georgia
- The next volume of “The Real Story of the USS Johnston DD-821 is a real possibility!
- Biography of George A. Sites, RD2
- USS Johnston DD-821 Association
- In Color?
- TAPS
- Call for biographies



USS Johnston DD821 Association headed to Savannah, Georgia

The 2012 Reunion will take place in Savannah, Georgia this year from May 17 thru May 20. It will be held at the Sheraton hotel (888-627-7811). This is a beautiful hotel located right in downtown Savannah making it close to all the shops, restaurants and other attractions and within walking distance of most.

Both the “Welcome Dinner” and the “Farewell Banquet” will be held in the hotel rather than busing everyone off as we have in the past. The “Hospitality Room” will be centrally located and be open from early morning to late night. The perfect location to exchange some old sea stories, get reacquainted with old shipmates and have some snacks so take advantage of it and visit frequently.

We’re arranged for a “Civil War Fort” tour, a musical review and a tour of old Savannah plus lots of free time for touring the city on your own and/or relaxing.

This year for the reunion we have done the Reunion Badges different than in the past. This year we will have two different badges. The Blue Badge will be given to each of the Johnston officers and sailors who attend the 2012 Reunion in Savannah. The “Welcome Aboard” badges will be given to each guest.



We’re looking forward to seeing everyone again and having a great time. It looks like we will have a big turn-out again! If you haven’t returned your reunion registration forms yet, please do so as soon as you can.

The next volume of “The Real Story of the USS Johnston DD-821” is a real possibility!

Nearly everyone who got a copy of our book, “The Real Story of the USS Johnston DD-821” really enjoyed it and many of those who did not contribute have said they wish they had given us a story or two for it. Recently, George Sites has been asked to make an additional volume of “The Real Story of the”. George has agreed to put it together but he will not be “begging” for stories this time around—he says it is simply too stressful. He currently has about twenty-six new stories that shipmates have sent in but needs many more. George says that once he has more than 50, he will go to work on it. It is a lot of work and will likely take up to a year to complete once it is started. If you did not contribute the first time around now is your chance! If you did, share some more of your stories. If you are interested in contributing your stories, please send them to George via email or snail mail. Please include any photos you would like included. He says the format will be similar to the first book so please include the information that was required for the first book. George’s email address is: george.sites@gmail.com and his address is on the last page of the newsletter listed for the “Association”.



Boot Camp



Radarman ‘A’ School

Biography of George A. Sites, RD2 USS Johnston DD-821, 1968 – 1971

After WWII, my Dad returned home from the US Navy. Shortly thereafter, he was hired by General Motors as a production worker, my Mother worked at the local five & dime store. I was born in 1948 to George and Frances Sites in Columbus, Ohio. They both worked hard at their respective jobs in life and instilled in me the work ethic I possess today. There is nothing else could they have taught me that would be more important in my adult life.

I led a pretty normal life growing up in the Midwest, sheltered, going to high school, working, etc. I played guitar in several local garage bands, built a model railroad and studied electronics in high school. Having listened to my Dad’s sea stories for years, I knew that someday I would also join the Navy. Not long after turning 18, I received my ‘Draft Notice’ for the US Army and immediately headed for the Navy recruiter and ‘signed my life away’. My ‘coming of age’ story is mostly based upon those four years in the Navy.

I left for Boot Camp at Great Lakes on October 25, 1967, graduated and moved across the street to attend 13 weeks of Basic Electric and Electronics (BE&E) school and 26 weeks of Radarman ‘A’ school. Upon graduation I was assigned to the USS William C. Lawe DD-763 stationed in Jacksonville, Florida which was

(biography continued from page 2)

going through a yard period in Charleston, South Carolina. Upon arrival, I was assigned to 'Mess Cooking' and we headed for GITMO. Upon return from GITMO, I got my orders to report aboard the USS Johnston DD-821. Off I went and upon arrival, I was once again assigned to 'Mess Cooking' and then off to GITMO again. I was stuck in a rut – however Chief Jackson and RD1 Dawson came to my rescue and allowed me in CIC to learn even though I was assigned to Mess Cooking. I achieved 2nd class quickly and had passed 1st class exams but did not have enough time left to be advanced. I was the lead guitar player in "SMOKE", the Johnston's Rock & Roll band. Hindsight tells me I should have shipped over for the two months that I was short. I loved the Navy life!

At the end of my four years I headed home and joined a Rock & Roll band. We played all over but I decided I probably wasn't going to make the big time so I quit the band and got a job at Halmar Electronics as a stock clerk. While employed there, I got married, had two sons, went to college and got my bachelors degree in Electronics, advanced to Engineering Manager, received two United States Patents and helped double the product offering at Halmar. I spent 19 years at Halmar before moving on to HDR Power Systems as Vice President of Engineering and starting up the 'Power Products Group'. I spent 20 years at HDR, wrote and published two technical books and while developing the 'Power Products' product line. A third technical book is currently in the works. HDR is now the leader in their industry. My connection to the Navy did not end at discharge, as I developed industrial power supplies for use in "Waste to Energy" being used by the US Navy, the US Air Force and multiple companies around the world.

I retired from HDR on March 4, 2011 and thought I was on a fun filled journey I had been working my whole life for. Unfortunately on the day I retired, my 85 year old Dad had a stroke (resulting from Hernia surgery) and six weeks later my 28 year old son, Brent took his own life suffering from PTSD from three tours in the war zone. He had served five years honorably stationed most of the time on the USS Enterprise CVN-65 as a MM3. He was only five weeks from graduating from college. He loved his country and was proud of his Navy service. A year later, I'm still mourning our loss of Brent as I always will. They say 'time heals all wounds', I'm not so sure about that. To say my retirement got off to a rocky start would be an understatement!

As a retiree, I find myself splitting my time between my home town of Columbus, Ohio and my new home in Venice, Florida. I've always wanted to spend time in Florida every since my Navy days in Jacksonville. I finally made it! People always say, "What are you going to do with all your time?" I seem busier now than I ever was. I've always had an interest in writing as evidenced by my two technical books and the "USS Johnston" book which I am very proud of. I am currently working on a third technical book, a book about my son, Brent and a horror story. Not sure any of them will be a 'Best Seller'. I also have G.A. Sites Engineering, LLC which in which I am a consultant to the industries I worked in during my near 40 year career. In addition to all of this, Alida and I take long walks nearly every day, while in Florida we walk the beach every opportunity we get and generally try to have some down time that neither of us had during our working career. I guess the moral of this story is work hard but find time to enjoy life. Life is far too short.....enjoy it while you can!

USS JOHNSTON DD-821 ASSOCIATION
 5653 Haydens Reserve Way
 Hilliard, OH 43026

Robert "Bob" Nava, President
 USS Johnston DD-821 Association
 541 Heswall Ct.
 Henderson, NV 89014
 E-mail: usnavy821@cox.net

Webmaster: Duane Mallast
 Newsletter Editor: George Sites

WWW.USSJOHNSTON.ORG

USS JOHNSTON DD-821 ASSOCIATION

THE PURPOSE OF THE USS JOHNSTON DD-821 ASSOCIATION IS TO PERPETUATE THE BONDS THAT WERE FORMED AMONG THE PERSONNEL WHO EXPERIENCED THE "TRADITION OF THE SEA" WHILE SERVING ABOARD THE USS JOHNSTON DD-821, IN PERPETUITY.

WE DO THIS BY PROVIDING SHIPMATES A WEBSITE SECOND TO NONE THAT WAS BUILT BY AND IS OPERATED BY FORMER SHIPMATE DUANE MALLAST, AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE USS JOHNSTON DD-821 ASSOCIATION AS A MEANS TO MEMORIALIZE AND SHARE THE EXPERIENCES WE ALL HAD WHILE SERVING ABOARD THE U.S.S. JOHNSTON. IN ADDITION, THE ANNUAL JOHNSTON REUNION REINFORCES THESE BONDS AND BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER AGAIN.

THE ASSOCIATION IS A "NOT FOR PROFIT" ORGANIZATION FORMED BY AND OPERATED BY USS JOHNSTON DD-821 SHIPMATES.

In Color?

If you prefer to see the newsletter in color, check it out on the Johnston website at:
www.ussjohnston.org

TAPS

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, we will post the names of our newly fallen shipmates and their wife's name if known. These additions are based upon the most recent information we have. If you see an error or an addition that needs to be made, please report it to your board as soon as you can. The newly listed are in the order that we received the information. We will continue to list the newly fallen in each newsletter.

Mr.	Frank	Dapollonia	Ella	8/15/98
Mr.	Marion	Barksdale	Evelyn	12/31/10
Mr.	Dean	Miller		9/4/11
Mr.	Bill	Hughes	Theresa	11/11/11
Capt.	Allison	Maynard		12/15/10
Mr.	Clayton	Hill		12/15/11
Mr	John	Drimak		1/1/01
Mr	Bill	Crenshaw		1/24/12

Call for Biographies!

If you enjoy reading the biographies of your shipmates, please consider sending us yours! We have been mailing the newsletter three times a year and would like to expand it to four times. If you enjoy the newsletter and would like to see more of them, please help by sending in your biography or short story. Without your input, it is hard to put it together.