



# USS GENERAL A.E. ANDERSON (AP-111) (TAP-111)

FEB. 2007 Editor: Harry "Swede" Lagerstedt

SEAGOING MEMORIES Thanks to Hank Hojnacki for passing this along.

As the years have gone by we still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods — the impossible shimmering mirror calm or the storm tossed green water surging over the bow. (Picture credit Al Berg) And there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief’s quarters and mess decks. Gone ashore for good we grow humble about our Navy days, when seas were a part of us and a new port of call was ever over the horizon. We can look back in fond memory and be proud of the time we spent in the service of our country.....



These SEAGOING MEMORIES stir a number of my own that I will share with you and also challenge you to share your favorite memories of ship and sea with us.

I remember the beauty of night time phosphorescence in the water, of flying fishes skipping over smooth swells, of dolphins playing in the bow wake. Sounds, like the bosn’s pipe calling for a “Clean sweep-down fore and aft”, the ship’s bell ringing the time of day, the roar and vibration as twin screws flailed the air during a storm, feet pounding the deck following a call to general quarters. Who can forget standard daily staples? SOS, oh yeah, it must be Friday. Best was the off-duty trek to the Gedunk Stand. I remember sleeping third high on a scrap of canvas surrounded on three sides by guys with smelly feet and bad breath — I did my best to reciprocate. Remember trough type urinals as the ship rolled? Remember eating standing up, wide legged, using the little fingers to hold the food tray in place? It was better when the chow hall was converted to movie “theater”. Who can forget one’s personal metamorphosis from Pollywog to Shellback — or payback time when you a Shellback? Last, but not least, were the interesting parts of the world we were privileged to experience (too bad we were not mature enough to fully appreciate it) and the exciting liberties we pulled and interesting people we met. Now it’s your turn, tell us your favorite MEMORIES.

**Think Indianapolis!** Head's Up for the 13th annual ANDY Reunion Sept. 9-12, 2007. The host hotel is the Adams Mark (Airport) where the rooms are \$80.00 + tax per night. Indianapolis is known as the crossroads of America. It is the nation's 12th largest city and entertains 20 million visitors each year. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a major attraction, especially the Indy 500 for the big Formula One cars.

Indianapolis is home to the Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial which pays tribute to 3,459 medal of honor recipients ranging from the Civil War to date. The Memorial is composed of 27 curved glass walls, 7' to 10' high

The Indiana War Memorial Plaza is a 7-block historic district in downtown Indianapolis which includes the American Legion Mall, Soldier's & Sailor's Monument, the Vets Memorial, Civil War memorial, the WWII Memorial and memorials for Korea, Viet Nam and even Bobby Kennedy. We will see a memorial to the USS Indianapolis, the last ship to be sunk at the end of WWII with the loss of 883 men and only 316 survivors.

We will be taking a scenic tour of the city, visit Union Station, tour Boone County, visit an antique mall, a chocolate factory and a flower barn. There is a little bit of everything and a whole lot of variety in the plans.

This year's reunion co-hosts are: Karen & David Akers and Lila & Roland Jones who are making the plans for the 13th annual ANDY Reunion. The purpose of reunions is not just to swap lies, but to renew old friendships and to make new friendships.

**As Abraham Lincoln once said: "The better part of one's life consists of friendships".**

**Another Reunion-----The A P Transport Reunion Group Navy and Coast-guard shipmates that served on some of our sister ships, are having their annual reunion May 31 to June 3 in Jacksonville, FL. Contact person is Chuck Ulrich, 35 Oak Lane, New Hyde Park, NY 11040. (516) 747-7426, email: cful115@aol.com Crews from the following AP's have members in the APTRG: 61-Montecello, 111-Anderson (Hank Hojnacki), 114-Mitchell, 115-Randall, 117-Gordon, 118-Richardson, 119-Weigel, 121-Capps, 123-Eberle, 124-Hughes, 125-Mayo, 141-Greely, 144-Hodges, 155-Brewster, and 176-Breckenridge. Any AP/TAP crew member is welcome to join the APTRG and attend their reunion.**

**Helaine Hamelman** sent out the annual ANDY Assoc. \$20 dues notice at the end of 2006. We thank the many of you that responded. In case the notice slipped through the cracks and want to remain/become a paid-up member, her address is, 2008 Covey Glen Road, McKinney, TX 75070.

She sent me over 50 member responses that came about as a result of the annual dues notice. It was a true delight to read all the shipmate's comments and memories. Here are some excerpts:

**Bernie E. Conley**, S1/C, Plankowner, onboard 10/43 to 7/44 wrote to say that he became a Shellback July 8, 1944 and that every time we left port, he was always in the brig, and never missed Captain's Mast! He also mentioned that he received salvation 3/2/49, went to college and seminary and has been an ordained Preacher over 50 years. I gave him a call and learned that he is still going strong at 81, still preaching and enjoying the good life living on a hill top 15 miles from Fort Worth.

**George R. Painter**, DT2c, onboard 10/51 to 1/53. Had the distinction of being a Seaman, a Bosn's Mate, a Quartermaster **AND** a Dental Technician. What a combo! This sounded like an interesting story so I gave him a call. It turns out that he became friends with the ship's Dentist, Dr. Harry Ishida who persuaded him that there was no future in quartermastering, but that there might be in dentistry. So George became Harry's Tech. **AND** changed his life! You may now call him Doctor Painter, a self-made man who continues to practice dentistry just outside of Huntsville, AL.

**Dean A. Tripp**, FP3c, onboard 12/51 to 3/55 wrote just a line to say that he was a pipefitter in the R Div. and he's the one to thank for keeping all that interesting plumbing going. THANKS DEAN!

**Jim Love**, Electrician, onboard 1951-53 just commented that he was the guy that kept the lights on! Thanks, and a tip of the ole flat top to you Sparkie!

**Bessie Christine Taylor**, sailed with us as a passenger in Jan. 1951 going from San Fran to Seattle and Yokohama. She and a daughter joined us at the reunion in Columbus, OH. She has been herding grand-kids, attended 6 HS graduations, has a grandson in the USMC and hopes to join us again in Indy.

**Shirley Akers**, widow of Charles (whom we lost last year), sent in dues and wants to retain her ANDY membership. I trust she will join us in Indy with Karen and David.

**Donald W. Carrington**, MM3/C, onboard 1944-46 wrote to say that he took care of the throttle and air. Since he and I were onboard the same years, I decided to give him a call. He had lots of interesting stories. He spent a number of years mechanic-ing in Alaska and then some more in construction before and after the H-bomb test. These "outpost" jobs resulted in a nest egg that he put towards apartment houses so he has been in real estate for many years. He's in Seattle at (206) 363-1721. His wife has Alzheimer's so she needs attention 24/7 and it ties him down. He needs an ear,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,give him a call.

**Robert C. Little III**, Plankowner, PFC USMC mentions the shakedown cruise, the first 2 skippers, Miller and Mead, and some of his buddies: Toga Janson, Chuck Ostner and Jack Lyons. Toga is an ANDY Assoc. member, Ostner has passed on and I have been searching for Lyons for years. Please tell me where he is hiding Bob and I will send a few back issues of the newsletter plus a Marine roster.

More and more of us are developing a working relationship with the computer and e-mailing, for which we need a "Handle" i.e. an address. Here are some clever ones that have shown up: thelitterbox@terranova.net belongs to **Robert S. King**, sariedly@aol.com = **Edmund Ostos**, fatfatfat2@yahoo.com = **Frank Thompson**, thilderbra@aol.com = **Rayford N. King**, caravanhome@msn.com = **Lois & Doc Vandever**, bigmoo32@aol.com = **Paul J. Wetzel**, attukid@comcast.net = **Leo S. Glende**

## **CREW CONTACTS \*\*\*\*\***

Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.” —Aesop

**Voyd H. “Shorty” Beights**, a signalman (QMS1/C) who is about 6’6” called soon after receiving the Nov. newsletter. He just wanted to thank me for cranking it out and providing a bit of ANDY history on occasion. While I greatly appreciate his appreciation, I believe it mostly reflects on the kind of person he is: Thoughtful, thankful and one who takes the time to pick up the phone and express his feelings. A tip of the ole Flat Top to you Shorty! You are truly a noble soul!

We all shared stories at the 6<sup>th</sup> reunion in Albuquerque where I remember Shorty telling about having an extension welded on the metal frame of his bunk so that he could stretch out. Several years later he visited the ship while it was in port, went down to the sleeping quarters and found his “extended” bunk still in existence.

Shorty is 88 years old, is gradually losing his eyesight and has voluntarily given up his driver’s license, but has not lost his great sense of humor. He says that he has now promoted his wife Connie, to the position of chauffeur.

At Christmas time lots of greetings and good wishes came from Robert Little III, Roberta & Bob Setzler, Capt. George W. Mead III, Mildred Karling, Priscilla & Joel Levy, Judy & Don Stocks, JeryLen & Henry Reid, Karen & David Akers, Jean & James Jordan, Betty Jean & Tony Perino, Lil & Jan Janson, Anne & Al Nesbit, and Lois & Doc Vandever. Lois is having some extreme back problems, lots of pain, bet she would love to hear from some of you. (803) 782-8286. For the first time in 55 years, they missed being with family for Christmas back in Ohio.

Homer L. Smith, YNSN, onboard 12/57 to 11/58 and was present for the decommissioning. Also onboard for last year’s reunion in Colorado Springs. He wrote with a lot of praise (Credit Frank Thompson) for the reunion organization and the friendly atmosphere. He and Dayma are planning on Indy.

Dr. Allen Aldred onboard 1954-55 wrote to Helaine about joining the ANDY Assoc. and about the next reunion. Welcome aboard Al, Hope to see you in Indy! He mentioned serving with another Physician Beeman Otherson. I may have located Otherson in Eaton, OH, but have not yet make contact.

Jeanette Hale wrote in behalf of her dad Roy Keeler MM2/C, onboard 1952-54. We requested a mailing address, but never heard back.

Scott Phillipson RM3/C onboard 1952-56 made contact with a little story about Capt. Fowler who commissioned a painting of his daughter by a Japanese artist. Scott would see the painting while delivering radio messages to the Skipper. The painting was expertly done from a photograph.

Bill Branam BMCS onboard 1953-54 wrote to provide a clipping about William G. McCarley, an ex Alabama senator running for Governor of Georgia in ‘06. He thought some of the “Alabama Gang” might remember “Mac” who passed away recently at age 79.

While helping Jerry Moscovitz, RM3, onboard 1954, search for some RM shipmates, I came across Eugene Chovanec, ET2 onboard 1953-56, and was able to contact him. Gene is interested in becoming a member and, living in Illinois, maybe we can induce him to make a trip to Indy. Gene located and copied dinner menus for Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas ‘52 & ‘53 and sent them along. I will publish these in a timely manner. A tip of the flat top to you Gene!

**AP Sinkings** were not highly publicized during WWII as they often resulted in a large loss of life and represented negative war news. It is interesting to research currently available information from above and below the sea's surface, i.e., from the American and German sides.

The ultimate fate of most ships is a quiet, undignified encounter with the scrapper's torch.  
A privileged few vessels may earn a genteel second life in a museum.  
The rest belong to the sea--its depths their final port of call.  
They belong to Davy Jones

A sampling of Transport (AP) ships sunk early in WWII follows:

USS *Edward Rutledge* (**AP-52**) sunk after being torpedoed by German submarine *U-130* off Fedala, Morocco, 12 November 1942. The U-130 was sunk by depth charges 12 March west of the Azores by the destroyer USS Champlin DD601.

USS *George F. Elliot* (**AP-13**) sunk by Japanese aircraft off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, 8 August 1942.

USS *Hugh L. Scott* (**AP-43**) sunk after being torpedoed by German submarine *U-130* off Fedala, Morocco, 12 November 1942.

USS *Joseph Hewes* (**AP-50**) sunk after being torpedoed by German submarine *U-173* off Fedala, Morocco, 11 November 1942. The U-173 was sunk 16 November by depth charges from three destroyers: Woolsey, Swanson and Quick.

USS *Leedstown* (**AP-73**) sunk after being torpedoed by German aircraft off Algiers, Algeria, 9 November 1942.

USS *Susan B. Anthony* (**AP-72**) sunk by a mine off Normandy, France, 7 June 1944.

USS *Tasker H. Bliss* (**AP-42**) sunk after being torpedoed by German submarine *U-130* off Fedala, Morocco, 12 November 1942.

USS *Thomas Stone* (**AP-59**) torpedoed by German aircraft off Cape Palos, Spain, 7 November 1942, and abandoned after going aground in Algiers Harbor, 25 November 1942.

## **More Ships Sunk**

On 11 November 1942, at about 2000 hours, USS Winooski, Joseph Hewes, and USS Hambleton were torpedoed in quick succession, just outside Casablanca Harbor. All ships in the area were notified and an intensive search for the submarine was begun. Thirty minutes later the officer of the deck aboard USS Bristol DD453 sighted a surfaced submarine traveling at high speed across her bow. The Captain ordered full speed in an attempt to ram. The forward 5" gun was brought to bear along with numerous 20 millimeter guns. Several 20 mm hits were scored near the base of the conning tower before the submarine submerged. Two depth charge attacks followed and a dull muffled explosion was heard though no debris was found. No further contacts were made throughout the night by any ship.

The night of 12 November brought three more sinkings. About sunset the USS Hugh Scott, Howard Rutledge, and Tasket Bliss were all torpedoed at brief intervals in that order. Several survivors of the latter were rescued by the Bristol.

On 15 November Bristol was ordered to assist in salvage operations after the USS Electra was torpedoed. A convoy was formed on 17 November, and Bristol was designated as one of the escorts to see it safely back to Norfolk. She arrived without further incident on 30 November 1942.

**The USS General Anderson** was soon to enter the Mediterranean and be in harms way. Here are some excerpts from the log of **“The Mighty A”** published onboard in August 1945:

Dec. 4, 1943 we are in Casablanca, French Morocco, a jittery town so only a few of the crew got ashore. Italian prisoners-of-war unloaded our cargo and really appreciated ANDY chow!

Christmas Eve 1943 we load and leave. No one could believe they could do this to us! A memorable trip because of subs laying in wait around the Azores. Arrived Casablanca Jan. 2. Saw the French battleship Jean Barte sunk at the dock following 7 days of dive bombing planes from the USS Ranger.

1/21/44 rendezvoused with the British destroyers Anthony and Atherstone at sunset and proceeded through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean Sea under their protection. Set condition two for the first time and had a tough night. Arrived Oran 2/1 where we were protected by mine fields, nets AA guns and barrage balloons. Feb.2, left Oran with the same two destroyer escorts. Passed through Gibraltar at night and headed to Casablanca and embarked more passengers. Feb.4, the USS Breckenridge escorted us through sub-infested waters and left us that night.

March 8, met HMS Witherington and HMS Wishart for night escort through Gibraltar on way to Oran. 3/9 ordered to leave dock and get into open waters of the bay to fight off expected air raid. After a long GQ we learned that the raid was intercepted and turned back. Some were relieved while others were disappointed. Sailed again with our British escorts through Gibraltar.

April 4, back through the Straights of Gibraltar with HMS Calpe and HMS Mendip to Oran and Mers-ei Kebir. Easter, 4/8, Captain's Inspection and the big group picture taken on the breakwater. 4/13 battle hardened veterans of the British 8th Army came aboard for transport to England along with several labor battalions of Italian prisoners. Departure delayed due to wire rope tangled in starboard screw.

April 14, joined convoy of 10 large troop ships and 7 escort vessels. Saw snow-capped mountains of southern Spain during this daylight passage through Gibraltar. Our first convoy was a big strain on the bridge guys and engineers having to change revolutions every time we got out of position by a hundred yards. Bad sub waters and later, off the coast of France, aircraft possibilities. Crew ready to re-name ship USS General Quarters!

April 21, Entered North Channel into the Irish Sea. April 22, Anchored off Gourock, Scotland, within liberty range of Glasgow. April 26, left Scotland solo and without passengers headed for Bermuda.

Arrived May 5, and embarked over a thousand British Censors and their families who had handled all the trans-Atlantic mail since the beginning of the war. Left the same day with escorts USS Meridith, USS Dukirk and USS Hayter. Oh yeah, there were German U-boats in the Caribbean too!

QUARTERS FOR MUSTER



## THE GERMANS HAD THEIR PROBLEMS TOO (October 30,1939)

The German submarine U-56, commanded by Lieutenant Wilhelm Zahn, found itself in the middle of a contingent of the British Home Fleet sailing just west of the Orkney Islands. Leading the contingent was the battleship HMS Rodney followed by the HMS Nelson and HMS Hood, all surrounded by a protective screen of destroyers. Here was the U-56, sitting at periscope depth in an ideal firing position and straight ahead was the Flagship of the Fleet, HMS Nelson.

Elated, Zahn fired three torpedoes at the target which was impossible to miss. Two of the torpedoes actually hit the Nelson but did not explode! The U-56 made a quick getaway.

Had the torpedoes exploded, the V.I.P.s on board the Nelson would have been in great danger. They had gathered for a conference to determine what action had to be taken after the sinking of the Royal Oak at Scapa flow. The illustrious guests included the Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, Admiral Sir Charles Forbes, the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Dudley Pound, and Lord of the Admiralty, Mr.Winston Churchill!

This heaven sent opportunity caused Admiral Karl Donetz, the German U-boat supremo, to write in his war diary "Without doubt, the torpedo inspectors have fallen down on their job ... at least 30% of our torpedoes are duds!" Gunther Prien, hero of Scapa Flow, remarked "How the hell do they expect us to fight with dummy rifles". Without doubt this was a great embarrassment to the German Navy - 31 U-boat attacks from favourable positions, 4 attacks on the Warspite, 12 attacks on various cruisers, 10 attacks on destroyers and 5 attacks on troop transports - without a single hit! All torpedoes failed to explode. How lucky we were!

Operating in the North Sea in late 1939, faulty torpedoes had seen U-23, under the command of Kretschmer, take three torpedoes to finish off a small freighter. Leaving 1 torpedo, Kretschmer entered the Orkney waters near Kirkwall. Inside the bay sat a neutral tanker, the Danmark, 10,500 tons. The U Boat crew could see men on deck smoking cigarettes and the neutral tanker made no effort to hide herself. When the torpedo exploded, all eyes went skyward thinking it was the Luftwaffe. Nobody thought a submarine would penetrate the bay. Sailing right past the look outs, U-23 slipped away as gunfire was directed into the air.

The sinking of the Danmark marked a new phase in the war. She had flown the flag of a neutral country. By January 1940, the Prize Regulations governing Conduct of Nations at War at sea, were being deliberately ignored. To disguise this, U boats were told to choose their targets with care, hoping the Allies might think that the unlucky ship had hit a mine. The Admiralty did assume mines and swept the area. Both of the U-23's sinkings were attributed to mines. It was not until U boats were sighted on the surface by aircraft that the Admiralty faced the grim truth.



With the capture of Denmark and Norway in May 1939, the U-boats obtained greater access to the Atlantic and the British trade routes. The German Navy's smaller U-boats were suitable for short range attacks and between 1940-43 they took a heavy toll on Allied shipping in the North Atlantic, Arctic and the Mediterranean. The Allies introduced anti-submarine strategies such as the convoy system, long range aircraft patrols, improved anti-submarine detectors and depth charges. By May 1943, German U-boats were gradually being eliminated from the Atlantic.

## **THE LOG OF “THE MIGHTY A”**

The crew onboard the ANDY during August 1945, all received a bound copy of the “LOG OF THE MIGHTY A”. It had a blue cover with the title, the years 1943-1945 and the name of the recipient (me) embossed in gold on it. Stamped on the cover, in relief, is a picture of the ship with sky above and sea beneath.

The log contains pictures of all the crew, the various ship’s divisions, candid shots onboard and onshore, even sketches. The duties of each division is described, there is a crew roster and the unofficial log covers the first 13 voyages in a narrative way. If you were onboard during those first two years, but were transferred off prior to 8/45 or have lost your copy of the log, there is hope for you, Oldtimer!

An entrepreneurial type ex-swabby who goes by the handle “Navyboy” has collected numerous “ships logs” or “cruisebooks” and copied (scanned) them to CD’s which he is selling for about \$40.00 — and no, I’m not getting a commission. His web site is [www.navyboy63.com](http://www.navyboy63.com) and e-mail is [doug@navyboy63.com](mailto:doug@navyboy63.com) He is located in Cleveland, OH.

The CD is professionally done. You will need a computer to view (turn) the pages individually, view them as a slide show or enlarge the pics. Jerry Wooten, Ensign, onboard 1945, bought a copy recently and gave it kudos! If you were on a ship other than the ANDY, check Navyboy out as he may be able to come up with info from your ship. I can provide more info if you need it.

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**LETTER FROM BILL LAMBERT** Some of you will remember Bill from our 9th reunion in Mobile, AL in 2003 when this sprightly 92-year old (at the time) traveled from Boca Raton, FL by bus, arriving 3 am. Bill was a U.S.Army Medic and survivor from the Japanese prisoner of war camp at Cabanatuan on the Philippines. He worked in the ship’s sick bay during the 9th voyage from Luzon to Frisco and he still has a card designating him as “Temporary Crew of the USS General Anderson”. He called that: “The best 30 days of duty during my 30 years of Army service”.

Bill is now living on Roatan Island located off the coast of Honduras. He first visited there in 1965, fell in love with the place, bought some land and became a resident. He is interested in pre-Columbian archeology of which the third most important site is on his property.

You might say that Bill went “Native” assimilating himself into the island culture by marrying an Island girl 35 years his junior. He was 59 at the time and they have three sons.

Bill sent along a newspaper clipping telling of his odyssey of going from urban D.C. and Cadillac’s to what was a relatively undeveloped island without roads. Maybe I will share that article with you in a future newsletter.



### Raymond R. Walla, Plankowner, WT1/C

Onboard 1943-44 AND 1950-52.

Ray had the unique distinction of serving aboard the ANDY not once, but TWICE, during WWII and the Korean conflict. What are the odds of that happening? Following his discharge from the Navy in 1945 he stayed in the USNR and was called up again when the Korean War broke out.

Ray passed away January 6, 2007. His death was totally unexpected as he was active up until the day he died. Ray is survived by a sister and two brothers. He attended several of the ship's reunions so many of us had the opportunity to get to know him. He was a friendly and gentle gentleman. I am pleased to think of him as a friend who picked up the phone a couple of times each year just to keep in touch.

In civilian life, Ray worked at Rocky Flats, a weapons production facility of the U S Atomic Energy Commission. This site, about 15 miles NW of Denver, was devoted to production of the hydrogen bomb and from 1952 till 1988 it was plagued by numerous contamination events of various radioactive compounds. Ray believed that he had been exposed to some form of contamination resulting in physical impairment during his retirement years.

## DAVY JONES' LOCKER

**Davy Jones' Locker** is an [idiom](#) for the bottom of the sea — the resting place of drowned [sea-](#)  
[men](#).

It is used as a [euphemism](#) for death at sea, i.e. to be "sent to Davy Jones' Locker".  
**Davy Jones** is a term formerly used by pirates for what would be a watery grave..

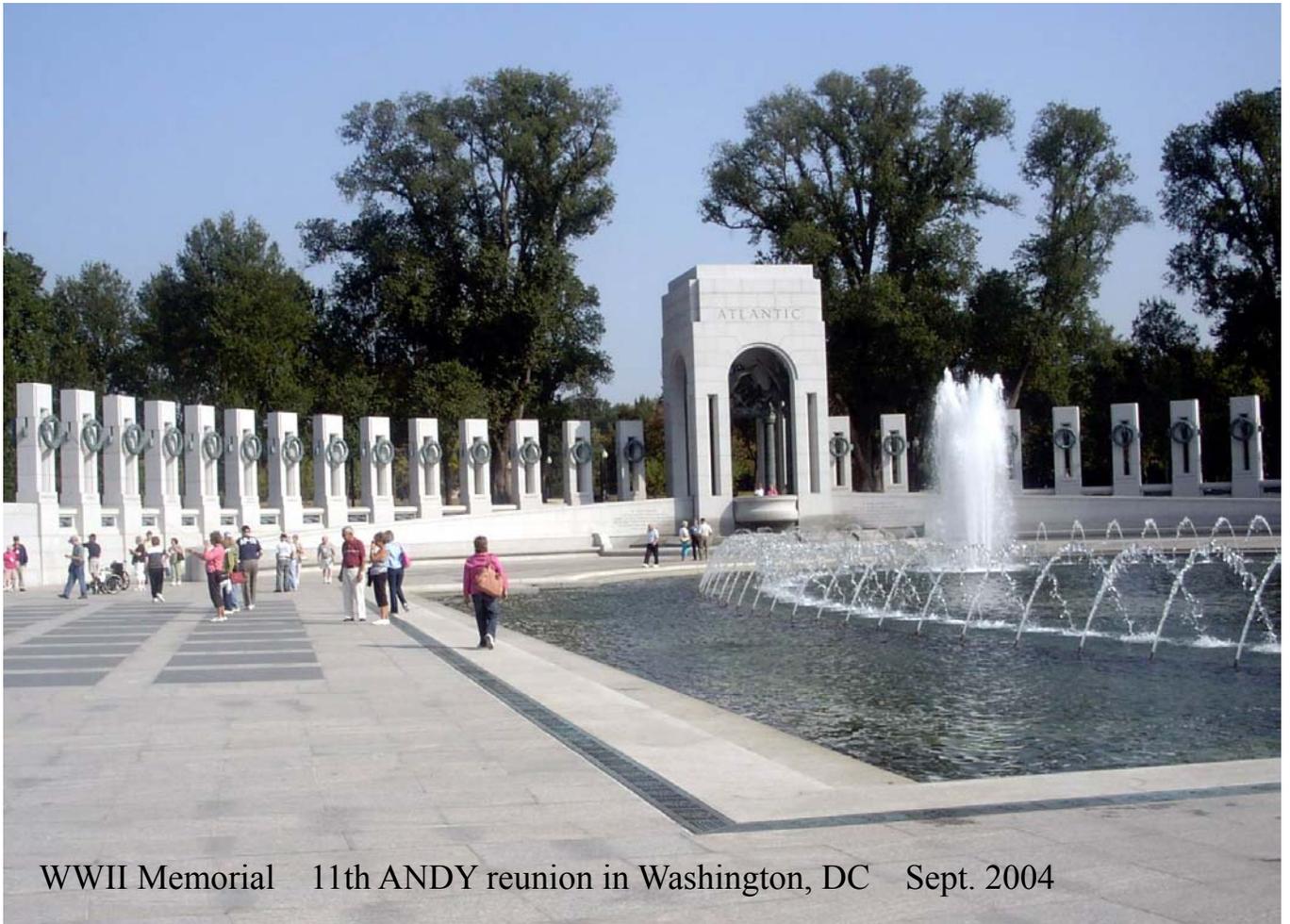
From the recent dues notice responses, we learned of the passing of several shipmates:

**Malcolm D. Alarid, Yeoman onboard 1953 passed away Oct. 13, 2006 in Fair Oaks, CA. He earned a Doctor of Optometry degree and opened practice in Albuquerque, NM, retiring in 1994.**

**Elbert E. Belk, SM1/C of Hernando, MS died Jan. 6, 2006.**

**John Dowling, CSK, USN, served nearly 25 years. Died in San Diego Sept. 9, 2006. His widow Frances continues as an ANDY member.**

**Wayne A. Schultz, QM 3/C, onboard 1954-57 lived in Rathdrum, ID. He entered Davy Jones Locker May 5, 2003.**



WWII Memorial 11th ANDY reunion in Washington, DC Sept. 2004