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U.S.S. Underhill Newsletter

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Official Call for Reunion 2001

This is it folks... It's time to get those reservations in for this year's Underhill Reunion at Annapolis. If you are receiving this notice for the first time, consider this your special invitation to join us!

Paula has provided complete information on reservations for the hotel, the banquet and plans for the memorial service. This year promises to be very special with Sam Saylor as banquet speaker. There will also be a special presentation of the Unit Commendation from the Navy Department which we only recently received.

Navy Unit Commendation/Citation for the Underhill is Now Reality...

That's right! In case you haven't heard, and perhaps some of you haven't, the special Navy Unit Commendation for personnel of U. S. S. Underhill DE 682 has finally come through!

Dace's daughter (and mine too, by the way), Cheryl, just would not give up! She knew how much her Dad wanted this recognition for you guys, and she just kept "hammering away." In fact, she had received a rejection letter as late as this past November. But she tried again. This time something apparently clicked, and just this past month word finally reached us (through Senator Kit Bond) that it had been approved. It arrived a short time later, with a copy of the instructions from the Department of the Navy that it be presented in an appropriate ceremony. The original citation will be presented at the reunion; however, a copy suitable for framing for each of you is enclosed with this newsletter.

Also enclosed is a copy of the letter from the Navy Department along with the news release we prepared for newspapers. Change any part of it you need to, to make it suitable for your local newspapers. As you can see, it is written for our local situation, and you will want to change it to fit yours. We found the newspapers delighted to run the story. "This is national news," one of the editors commented.

I apologize for the delay in getting this word to you. It has been a busy time here. However, the Office of Constituent Services, i.e. Senator Bond, didn't get it to us until March.

Copies of "The Last Convoy" Still Available...

By now all of you who ordered copies of Joe Reilly's "The Last Convoy" should have received them. We certainly owe Dr. Joe our deepest gratitude for his many hours of work in putting this work together, and a special word of thanks to Don Kruse for his work in keeping records of the orders and mailing them. That was no small task! We've had a number of notes from those who have enjoyed reading it, and a number of those are included in this newsletter.

At last report some 330 copies had been sold, and some 150 copies are still available at \$23 each. They are available for bookstores at a reduced price. Contact Don for details. ~

Our Sympathy to Don and Mary Alice Kruse...

Our sympathy goes out to Don and Mary Alice. Their son, John, recently lost his battle to cancer. John had been with Don and Mary Alice during the last few months.

And to the family of Ruth Grady ...

A note from Charles Charlock tells us that Ruth Grady passed away recently. In notes from her letter to us published in the December newsletter, Ruth spoke of looking forward to attending the July reunion. Ruth, we will miss you!

Also the family of Norman Brice...

Brice's daughter, Coast Guard Rear Admiral (select) Sally Brice-O'Hara, sent us this newspaper account of his death. We thank you Sally, for your thoughtfulness, and the Underhill family extends our sympathy to you.

Norman Brice

Norman Earle Brice, a retired banker, World War II veteran and direct descendant of one of the oldest families in Annapolis, died of cancer Feb. 3 at Williamsburg Nursing Home in Williamsburg, Ky., after a lengthy illness. Formerly of Annapolis, he was 76 and lived in Rockholds, Ky., for the past five years.



Born May 10, 1924, in New York City, Mr. Brice graduated in 1943 from Pennington Seminary in New Jersey and attended the University of Maryland and Rutgers University. He served in the Navy during World War II, receiving the American Campaign Ribbon and the European and Pacific Campaign ribbons with battle stars.

He began his career in banking at

County Trust Co. of Maryland and then joined Maryland National Bank, retiring as assistant vice president in February 1982.

Mr. Brice, who raised game birds, held a Maryland State Gamebreeder License and and Federal Wildfowl Propagating Permit. He traveled to the Canadian Arctic several times, including a 1975 expedition by dog sled from Greenland to Ellesmere Island.

He was a life member of the St. Andrews Society of Baltimore where he served on the board of managers. He was on the board of directors of the Archeological Society of Maryland, treasurer and vice president of the Anne Arundel County Archeological Society and Maryland state president and Annapolis Council president of the Navy League of the United States.

His memberships also included the archeological societies of Virginia and Kentucky, the Bank Administration Institute and the Arctic Institute of North America. He was a charter member of the Baltimore chapter of the Steamship Historical Society of America.

His interests were archeology, marine history, wildlife and the Arctic.

Mr. Brice was formerly married to Anne Ridout of Annapolis.

Surviving are his daughter, Coast Guard Rear Adm. (select) Sally Brice-O'Hara of Cape May, N.J.; two sisters, Elizabeth Morton of Annapolis and Nancy Davis of Baltimore; and two grandchildren.

Private services will be held at a later date. Memorial contributions may be sent to the Tri-county Hospice, P.O. Box 395, London, KY

"Thank you" From the Slater ...

"Your contribution of \$100-00 from USS Underhill DE 682 Shipmates is sincerely appreciated by the staff and volunteer crew who are braving the winter weather to restore your destroyer escort USS SLATER DE-766." It was a very attractive color folder/brochure. Space prohibits reprinting here, but I will bring it to Annapolis in July, and perhaps reprint here later.

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

From Bill Kreider (LST 768)...

I recently received an e-mail from Rodger Crum via my niece Nancy Seaver. It contained a message from Captain Westfall and others and a very interesting article from Henry A. Lord whose father Henry Arthur Lord MM I/c was one of the casualties from the Underhill. The title of his article, "A Visit To See A Kaiten." Thank you Rodger.

Enclosed is a check to help with the postage etc. for the newsletter. ~

From Charles Charlock...

Getting right to the point - our friend Ruth Grady passed away December 28, 2000.

Ruth was a good friend. We talked on the phone a couple of times a week. I'm going to miss her phone calls. She was in poor health but never complained, she was even talking about going to the Underhill reunion this year.

I didn't attend many of the reunions. My wife Francis was sick a lot. She only made it to one reunion. Frances passed away December 21, 1994.

I had an operation for cancer of the prostate in 1991 and that took a lot out of me. Now I'm living on shots and pills. I really enjoy the USS Underhill Newsletter and I must say you are doing a wonderful job for us old sailors. Thank you. Please accept my check to help with the mailings. (Charles, it is truly a pleasure to put the newsletters together. You fellows and your families make it possible by the news bits you send and your contributions to the fund. I appreciate your patience with my "tardiness" at times. And speaking of shots and pills, a bunch of us seem to have a "diet" of them these days. Hope this finds you feeling much better --VI)

From Victor Buck ...

This will be just a short note to tell you that I ordered a copy of "The Last Convoy" and look forward to reading it in more detail than in the past, the story of USS Underhill.

From Florian Tomkowiak...

I have picture of Lt. New. Need Barb's address. Am seeing Dr. Stein at VA and receiving free medication. Feeling 40% better. (Thanks Florian, for the copy for our files also. -- Vi)

From L. C. Patterson...

I need help. I have been trying to find Ed Hancock. First address I had was Miami, Florida. Then I found one on the Internet which was southern California. Neither one paid off.

When the ship was hit I was blown under a gun mount. I was unconscious. Ed came from the bottom deck where K-guns were and pulled me out.

Any help would be appreciated. It would mean a lot to me to hear from him once more. (Some of the rest of you may want Edd's current address: 45330 Ocotillo Dr. Apt. 10, Palm Desert CA 92260)

My address and phone # are: 2500 Lin Do Ct. #145, Sumter, SC 29150.

When I first went aboard the ship, Dace was my constant help. I will always remember him for that. I wasn't the only one. He was help to all.

From M. L. Spurgin ...

I received your big envelope but there wasn't anything in it. I would like to hear about the DE Underhill reunion if you have one more. I know it's been a big Job for you doing all you do. (Again, it's truly a pleasure to do the newsletter. Sending 170 plus does wield some mistakes sometimes. One that happens often is missing stamping one - or two! -- Vi)

I hope all of you had a good time and a good Christmas. I sent for the book, "The Last Convoy." I was on the LST 768.

I am enclosing a small check for the cause.

From Eva DiNetto ...

I'm writing to let you know how much I enjoy the newsletter, and also "The Last Convoy."

Tony never talked about his war years. When my children read the book, they were surprised to read about the Underhill. And in the book there were some remarks Tony made, and it was a comfort to them.

I'm fine, and I want to wish all the Underhill good health, and I also enjoy the letters they write.

I hear from Vilma and Andy Praskevich at Christmas. Regards to all!

From D. E. Sprayberry ...

I received the newsletter a couple weeks ago. I appreciate so much you doing this. I read it several times and then file it so I can refer back to it.

I also received "The Last Convoy." I have really enjoyed reading it. It brought back many fun as well as sad memories to me. I think it was well done. We owe a big thanks to a lot of people, especially Don Kruse and many others that I am not aware of. This book will be one that I will treasure and pass it on to my children. I am sure they will treasure it also.

I am enclosing a check to help with the cost of the newsletter. I thank you very much for sending it to me.

From Rich McIlvride.

It has been a long time since I have talked/written to you. I hope that all is well with you and your family. I do enjoy catching up with you and the Underhill activities via the newsletter.

I'm sure it's obvious that I have "Withdrawn" from my pesky and persistent pursuit of information about the Underhill. Between what you graciously provided me in the past and, now the plethora of information that has been generated by the Underhill Website as well as the recent book, "The Last Convoy," I feel that I have satisfied the hunger that I've had over the years to learn more about the circumstances of Bill's loss. So, in a sense, I am more at peace now than I have been in the last 50+ years-- I -do wonder, -from time to time, what the future of the Underhill Memorial will be as the survivors fade from the picture - - a sad thought indeed. As for my situation, my son Bob has shown great interest in his Uncle Bill's life as well as his Uncle Bob's life (for whom he was named along with my Dad) who was also KIA 'in 1945 when his P-38 crashed in the Philippines during the early weeks of that campaign. So my son has -expressed interest in pictures, medals, ribbons, etc. of Bill and Bob and plans to erect a display. Poignantly, he told me "...the display will always have a place of honor in our house." So--Bill and Rob will be remembered for another generation. That pleases me and I'm sure it would them. Could you please add Bob's name to the newsletter mailing list? It is:

Robert McIlvride
5651 Killamey Way
Aurora, Colorado 80015

Somehow, I have let time slip away without contributing to Underhill memorial activities. I have been meaning to do it for a long time and never got to it (not that I'm so busy - just forgetful). Enclosed is a contribution that I hope will help out with some of the expenses.

From Kenneth Statler...

We had a note from Ken Statler -- a little confusion over his book order. Apparently his order and my second request crossed in the mail, but that has been resolved. We appreciate your writing us, Ken.

MESSAGES FROM THE UNDERHILL GUEST BOOK...

Many of you frequent visiting the Underhill web pages and the Guest Book, but a number of you don't have that readily available, so I'm taking the liberty of reprinting some of the recent messages found on the Guest Book. We are so grateful to Rodger and his son Jay for developing this and keeping it up. You can visit the web site at: <http://www.geocities.com/ussunderhill/>

From Traci (Roberts) Pajerski, Georgia jeff_traci@email.com

My grandfather was on the Underhill and was killed. Howard L. Roberts was his name. We really do not have many photos of him and it. Would be greatly appreciated if anyone out there had any photos and if they could possibly email them. It would be appreciated if anyone who knew him could tell us more about him. He left behind two small sons and a wife. Thank you so much in advance.

From Michael J. Ficklin, Indianapolis, IN JABBAH067@AOL.COM

I learned of the USS Underhill while at the USS Indianapolis web site. I don't know anything about the Underhill to post a comment, but I will read all that is posted here on this site. God bless all who served and fought for the freedom we all enjoy today.

And a later message: "GO GET THAT SON OF A BITCH." Even in the face of danger and death this shows the spirit of Americans. No other citizens of any other country can be so proud of their country as I am to be an American! My hat is off to the veterans who have served this country, many of whom lost their lives. The cost of freedom has a priceless value. Thank you all for your unselfishness in providing the very blanket of freedom my family finds comfort under each night. God bless America, but mostly GOD BLESS THOSE WHO GAVE ALL.

From Bob Sparks, St. Louis bsparks@nightowl.net

Sent here by a crewmember of the Leslie L. B. Knox which was replaced by the Underhill on its last mission. My father was also a crewmember of the Knox. Obviously this site has a special meaning for me!

From Terri Houglin, Louisville, KY LuvMy96Tbird@yahoo.com

Hi again Rodger and Gang! My oldest son, Timothy, (grandson of John D. Houglin, DE682) is contemplating following in his grandfather's footsteps and enlisting in the Navy! I am so proud! He is also an Underhill history buff, and has written several school papers and talked about the Underhill. He was very excited about the Underhill and JAG. The odd thing is--the date of October 17 (the air date) is the 10th anniversary of my dad's death ... almost like he had something to do with the show! I hope all of you are doing fine, and each and everyone is in my prayers!

From Glenn Cook, Sullivan, Missouri bcook@fidnet.com

I am a proud nephew of Stanley Dace. I listened to his story of the USS Underhill before entering the US Army in 68/71. I responded with a statement that he was very brave under such a situation. He simply said, "I did what had to be done."

From Donald R. Heming, Pennsylvania deedee@youron.net

Lost brother on Underhill

From Kim Patterson Jacobs, Dallas TX speedy3214@cs.com

I am the granddaughter of Thomas F. Patterson. He served on the USS Underhill and thankfully was able to be named on the survivor list. He has now passed away. I wanted to thank you for this incredible site. My paw paw was a very special man sharing his love with many kids, grandkids and great grandkids and he is dearly missed. You have served the memory of his friends and shipmates with the honor they deserve and have touched my heart in the process. Thank you.

From Chris Patterson, Texas ***chrispatterson75@go.com***

My grandfather T.F. Patterson was onboard the Underhill when It was sunk. I think it is incredible that I can now learn more about this event than I had previously known. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity!

Ryan P. Thompson, Australia (no email given)

I came to this site with a special lady, she wanted to share with me her family history. It is her grandfather Thomas F. Patterson that served on this ship. All I can say is an Australian that has never been through what the people on this ship had to encounter, I feel proud and privileged to have seen this site and shared in the story. To Thomas Patterson, u have a beautiful granddaughter that holds u in the highest regard and treasures the memories u have left for her to pass on to her own children.

From Mike Kelley, St. Louis jmkelley@swbell.net

I am happy that I finally found your site. It has been difficult to find info on the Underhill. What is more exciting is that 2 of my cousins, unbeknown to me, have signed your guest book in memory of our grandfather, T. F. Patterson. I concur with Kim and Chris about this wonderful website and appreciate the reference to our grandfather. I have just recently had one of those great grandkids that Kim talks about and she Will know of her great grandfather because of your site. Many thanks and hello Kim and Chris Patterson.

From Brian Capra, Springfield, PA ***shooby29@aol.com***

I have just received my book "The Last Convoy" and I would like to say Thank You. My grandfather, William J. Grady, would have loved to have seen this. I don't know if this is the way to ask, but I would really like to come down to any event regarding the Underhill and the men aboard it. I tried to make past reunions, but was unable to. I would like to make the next one if possible. (You are most welcome! We'll get info to you. Watch the website. -- Ed..)

From Thomas Charles Channels, DeLand, FL
diggeirsadvantage@dotmail.com

Son-in-law to VanDriel, Henry J., married to Suzanne M. VanDriel (Note from Ed. -- the last newsletter was returned "addressee unknown." Can anyone shed light on his present address?)

From John B. Clark, Corpus Christi, TX ***'abclark@swbell.net***

I served aboard the Doyle C. Barnes, DE 353 which was in ComCort Div 82 of the Seventh Fleet

From Patrick Hardy, Lawrenceville, GA ***patrick.hardy@exacs.com***

The JAG episode was incredible. I am CBM Stanley Dace's grandson. I couldn't believe how much they showed his name and commented on it What a tribute to those who lost their lives and those who served on the Underhill I am so proud to be an American where we have men and women that give their lives for our freedom.

From Brendan Denehy, Milford, NH ***bdenehy@top.monad.net***

My uncle, Wilfred Soucy was one of the survivors of the USS Underhill. At Thanksgiving this year, his sister brought out his Purple Heart and photo of the Underhill. It really encouraged me to look up more information. I know my uncle was very proud to serve.

Down Memory Lane...



Remember: Mr. Morrison and Mother Hogus
(instrumental in starting Underhill Reunion)



& Marcellus and Carvel Hall?
(Thanks to Maki for this one)

After 55 Years, USS Underhill Awarded Navy Unit Commendation

[Note-. Delete or change any thing you see fit to make appropriate for your local paper and/or radio-TV station]

More than 55 years after the fact, the Secretary of the Navy has presented the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION to USS Underhill (DE 682), honoring the crew's action during World War 11.

The last small fighting ship lost to enemy action in World War 11, the Underhill was the lead ship in a convoy carrying battle weary soldiers from Okinawa to the Philippines for a much needed rest and reinforcements.

"Stand by to ram," the order from the captain on that July 24, 1945, afternoon, are words never to be forgotten by the surviving crew members of the destroyer escort who had identified kaitens, Japanese midget submarines in the waters. When the Underhill proceeded to ram the kaitens to protect the convoy, two violent explosions severed the ship, and 112 of the 236-man crew went down with the bow of the ship. The stern remained afloat until survivors could be rescued.

Following rescue of survivors, the convoy continued to the Philippines without incident.

With the assistance of Senator Kit Bond and his staff and the persistence of Cheryl Jones, daughter of the late Stanley Dace, chief boatswain's mate of the Underhill, the commendation is now reality.

". . . It is highly appropriate that this citation of merit be presented to the crew which manned the guns and protected the convoy enroute to the Philippines," wrote Senator Bond. "This is a fitting tribute to the men of the USS Underhill (DE 682). It is never too late to recognize their bravery. I salute their service to the Navy and the nation. We can never repay our debt to the shipmates of the Underhill who did not return. . ."

"My family and I are most grateful to Senator Bond for his assistance in obtaining this award," Jones said. "My father had always wanted recognition of the Underhill crew for their heroic action on that fateful afternoon. He was so proud of the crew."

Dace, a former resident of Sullivan, died in November 1995. He was posthumously awarded the bronze star with combat "V" and citation of merit in August 1998. One other shipmate, Joe Manory of New York was awarded the Navy and Marine Commendation Medal with Combat "V" in 1998.