

## **SOCIETY OF SPONSORS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY 2010-MAY 2011**

#### **SPRUANCE (DDG 111)**

On Saturday, June 5, 2010, Ellen Spruance Holscher christened the guided missile destroyer, SPRUANCE (DDG 111) in Bath, Maine. There were heavy rain and thunderstorms in the area but the rain held off for the ceremony. The ship bears the name of Admiral Raymond Spruance whose leadership greatly contributed to the American victory at the Battle of Midway in the Pacific in WWII. Ellen is the granddaughter of Admiral Spruance. In an article I read, Ellen is quoted as saying, "My grandfather would be in awe of all this fuss. He's portrayed as quiet, cool, calm and collected. But with us he could be this sort of mischievous, fun grandfather." When Ellen smashed the bottle of champagne against the ship's bow, there was a lovely spray and a cheering crowd. There were many members of the Spruance family present. (Please note I was unable to attend this event. This description is from an article viewed on a military forum website.

#### **SAN DIEGO (LPD 22)**

On Saturday, June 12, 2010, Linda Winter, wife of the Honorable Donald Winter, former Secretary of the Navy, christened SAN DIEGO (LPD 22). (LPD 22) is the fourth ship named SAN DIEGO and is the sixth ship of the LPD 17 class. SAN DIEGO is an amphibious landing dock ship. Although it was a very warm day in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the crowd was excited that another Navy vessel was about to be christened. General James Amos, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps gave the principal address.

Linda was very enthusiastic. During her remarks, she paused and placed her hand to her ear and said, "I hear her, she's calling me, she wants to be christened." Linda acknowledged the shipyard workers, the Navy-Marine Corps-Industry team and all those involved in the building of this great ship. She also acknowledged crew members who had planned to attend the ceremony but were delayed and still in San Diego, CA. When Linda smashed the bottle on the first strike, there was much applause and many, many smiles. It was a great Navy-Marine Corps Day!

#### **USNS HOWARD O. LORENZEN (T-AGM 25)**

The christening/launch of the USNS HOWARD O. LORENZEN (T-AGM 25) took place in Pascagoula, Mississippi on Saturday, June 26, 2010 at the VT Halter Marine Shipyard. T-AGM 25 is a missile range instrumentation ship. It is a platform for monitoring missile launches and collecting data that can be used to improve missile efficiency and accuracy. The sponsor is Susan Lorenzen Black. Susan is the daughter of the ship's namesake, Howard O. Lorenzen.

It was a hot and overcast day but as always, the excitement was contagious. It was an emotional experience for Susan as she smashed the bottle against the bow of the ship and bestowed the name of her father. It was a proud moment for the whole family. Susan said in earlier remarks she and her

mother were not “in the know” about the projects and travels of her father but they knew that his work was very important. She said the recognition and tribute to him was very moving and special. Much of Howard O. Lorenzen’s work was classified and as, William Skinner, CEO of VT Halter Marine, remarked in his address, “because of him there were wars not fought and lives not taken.” Susan’s gift to the ship was a model of a satellite.

### **USS MISSOURI (SSN 780)**

July 31st, 2010 was commissioning day for the MISSOURI. The USS MISSOURI (SSN 780) is a VIRGINIA class submarine and the fifth ship to bear the name of the “Show Me” state. The ceremony took place in Groton, CT at the Naval Submarine Base. It was a beautiful day in Groton. The principal speaker was House Armed Service Committee Chairman, Ike Skelton. In his remarks, he told the Commander of the USS MISSOURI, “I charge you to keep Mrs. Gates informed and to pass that charge onto your successor”. Becky Gates, wife of, The Honorable Dr. Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, was smiling and confident as she gave the order to “Man our ship and bring her to life.”

Several gifts were presented to the ship at a reception, the evening before the ceremony. Becky presented a time-capsule containing notes from the pre-school children at the Becky Gates Center. The time-capsule is to sail with the ship for its entire time of active service. Becky also presented a water color of the five Navy ships named MISSOURI.

### **USNS WASHINGTON CHAMBERS (T-AKE 11)**

On September 11, 2010, Loretta Penn, spouse of former Assistant Secretary of the Navy Installations and Logistics, the Honorable B.J. Penn, christened the USNS WASHINGTON CHAMBERS (T-AKE 11) at the NASSCO Shipyard in San Diego, CA. It was a beautiful day in sunny California. Loretta was graceful and very determined as she broke the bottle on the second try causing a beautiful spray on the ship. The principal speaker at the event was RADM Richard J. O’Hanlon, Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic. He was the only Naval Aviator on the podium. This, of course, was significant because the ship’s namesake, Washington Irving Chambers, played a leading role in developing Naval Aviation.

Loretta made a significant donation for the ship’s library. The plaque she presented to the ship’s Master was dedicated to Naval Aviation Innovators and to her husband, the Honorable B.J. Penn, a Naval Aviator and astronaut.

### **WORSHIP SERVICE**

Fourteen Sponsors and their guests attended the Worship Service at the United States Naval Academy Chapel on October 14, 2010. The chapel was quite full as there were many class reunion groups. The Service was lovely. The Chaplain recognized the SOS and mentioned that the Society’s main purpose was to provide scholarship support. Following the Service, we had a lovely lunch (thanks to Lucy Mustin) at the USNA Club.

## **FALL LUNCHEON**

Our luncheon on October 28, 2010, was hosted by Linda Winter and Barbara Morgan. The event was held at the beautiful Belle Haven Country Club. RADM Jay De Loach, USN (Ret.), Director of the Naval Historical Heritage Command, was our guest speaker. He spoke of the Command's mission. He also described the process by which ships and their Sponsors are named. RADM De Loach and his colleague, Kevin Hurst, were happy to answer any questions the Sponsors or their guests had.

We enjoyed the good food, tasty dessert and visiting with one another!

## **CALIFORNIA (SSN 781)**

On November 6, 2010, the eighth submarine of the Virginia class, CALIFORNIA (SSN 781) was christened at Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding in Newport News, Va. California is named after the "Golden State." The ship's motto is, "Silence is Golden." California will be the most modern and sophisticated attack submarine in the world upon delivery to the Navy in 2

The ship's sponsor, Donna Joy Willard, is the wife of Adm. Robert F. Willard, the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command. In her remarks, Donna mentioned participating in the keel-laying ceremony and visiting CALIFORNIA other times during the construction. Donna said, "I especially loved my white hard hat and my black steel-toed shoes, definitely not a fashion statement and the colors were all wrong." Donna also recognized the crew and their family members in her remarks. Donna said, "These men are the future of our Navy and we all should be immensely proud of the dedication they have to the defense of our country." Donna also said, "I'm so honored to be your sponsor and I pledge my enduring support as you begin the next phase of CALIFORNIA'S life. Donna's daughter, Ms. Jennifer Willard, was Matron of Honor and Donna's granddaughters, Ms. Alexis Willard and Ms. Carly Silvera, were Maids of Honor.

Donna christened CALIFORNIA by breaking a bottle of American sparkling wine on the side of the submarine's hull. Blue and gold balloons floated down as the christening was celebrated and applauded by a crowd of 2,000. (submitted by Rosalie Calhoun)

## **USS JASON DUNHAM (DDG 109)**

On November 13, 2010, the USS JASON DUNHAM (DDG 109) was commissioned and joined the Navy fleet. This destroyer is named in honor of Jason Dunham, a Corporal of Marines and a posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor from "Operation Iraqi Freedom". Jason was killed in Iraq saving Marines.

Over 4,000 people were present for the ceremony in Port Everglades, FL. Deb Dunham, Jason's mother, is the proud sponsor of this great warship. In her remarks to the crew, she said, "Rest assured when you sail, you sail with a guardian angel." Deb emphasized to them that in addition to her personal family, she now had her military family to watch over.

General Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, was the featured speaker. General Amos gave the crew words of encouragement. Both he and Commander Schiretta (CO) emphasized the strength of the Navy-Marine Corps team.

When Deb Dunham gave the order to “Man our ship and bring her to life”, all marveled and cheered as the crew ran to board the USS JASON DUNHAM.

### **USS GRAVELY (DDG 107)**

November 20, 2010 brought me to Wilmington, NC for the commissioning of GRAVELY (DDG 107). The ship’s sponsor, Alma Gravelly, a very energetic woman, is the widow of the ship’s namesake, VADM Samuel Lee Gravelly. The VADM was a man of many firsts and this fact was mentioned by every speaker. The Admiral, an African American, broke through barriers and opened doors leading the way for all races and genders to serve.

The CO of USS GRAVELY, Commander Kunzman remarked that Alma was the “heart and soul of the crew and ship. When Alma was being escorted to the platform, students from Gravelly Elementary School in Haymarket, Va. sang the song, “United We Stand.” Alma waved proudly at them.

In her remarks, Alma expressed her love and pride for the Captain and crew. She acknowledged the strong bond she shares with them.

At the end of the ceremony, there was a flyover by an EA6B Navy Prowler to salute the Navy ship and crew. The pilot of the aircraft was the son of the ship’s CO!!

### **FORT WORTH (LCS 3)**

On December 4, 2010, FORT WORTH (LCS 3) was christened in Marinette, WI. It was a very cold day and the hundreds of guests were assembled indoors to listen to the featured speakers. The sponsor of FORT WORTH is Congresswoman Kay Granger. In her remarks before the ceremony, Representative Granger said, “We deserve this honor because of our deep-rooted connection to our nation’s armed forces in every chapter of our history. Serving as FORT WORTH’S sponsor is one of the proudest moments in my career. This is just the beginning of a commitment I am making with everyone in Ft. Worth to all those who sail on the ship over the course of her life.” Representative Granger delivered a left-handed strike on the bow of the ship. It was amazing to see the ship launch sideways into the water!

**ARLINGTON (LPD-24)** – On Saturday, March 26, 2011 in Pascagoula, Mississippi, ARLINGTON (LPD-24) was christened. The ship’s sponsor, Mrs. Joyce Rumsfeld, broke the traditional bottle of champagne against the bow and bestowed her name. ARLINGTON (LPD-24) is the third ship named Arlington and the sister ship of NEW YORK (LPD-21) and SOMERSET (LPD-25), all in commemoration of 9/11.

Mrs. Rumsfeld said, “To those of you responsible for building this ship, you have done something quite remarkable. It represents the remembrance of those lost in the Pentagon attack, it represents the

clarity of purpose that the attack initiated and it represents so well what we as a nation are able to accomplish if we do work together.”

Mrs. Rumsfeld talked about the memories of that infamous day. Those who lost loved ones asked her and Secretary Rumsfeld, over and over again, not to forget them. She said the ship represented all of them, our wonderful country and all those who work to protect it.

Mrs. Rumsfeld said that ARLINGTON represents the whole story of that terrible day.....not only the loss, but the first responders, the men and women who worked at the Pentagon, construction workers, hospital workers and staff, and residents of Arlington County. In the face of tragedy, she said, “Our nation was unified in a way that was profoundly reassuring. Not only were we unified in grief, but also unified in understanding, and clarity of purpose.” She said she is honored to sponsor a ship that represents so much to so many.

After 9/11, Mrs. Rumsfeld received a drawing of an American flag from a 9 year old child. She kept the drawing in her kitchen until the Mast-Stepping ceremony. The drawing is now part of the ship.

**USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)** – On April 16, 2011, USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12) was launched during an evening christening ceremony in San Diego, CA. When Margaret Taylor, the ship’s sponsor and eldest niece of William McLean, confidently swung the bottle of champagne and named the ship, the band played and fireworks dazzled as the USNS MCLEAN slid into the water.

USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN is named after William Burdette McLean, the U.S. Navy physicist who developed the heat-seeking Sidewinder missile, the first effective air-to-air missile and whose variants are still in service.

Margaret retired from teaching after 33 years. She enjoys reading, quilting and playing in a community hand-bell choir. In her remarks, Margaret spoke about her memories of her uncle. As a child, she did not think of him as a scientist or a physicist but as her fun-loving uncle.

Margaret presented the ship a framed photo of Dr. McLean, a book, and a lovely quilt she had made. The quilt shows a Sidewinder missile, the ship’s and McLean family crests, and the USNS MCLEAN.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Magnus