



Pat's Gourmet Coffee Shop

166 North Main Street, Mooresville, NC

The Most Patriotic Coffee Shop in the USA

Volume 03 Issue 08

August, 2007

A SPECIAL DEDICATION

by Ken Neff



The following is close to what was said as part of the dedication ceremony for the plaque honoring the Veterans who have served on Military Funeral Burial Details.

In the beginning - One Thursday, awhile ago, a discussion touched on the people who carry out official Military Funeral Burials.

I realized that they were a group of devoted

Veterans that have not been recognized as they should be. Richard and I discussed the problem and here we are today.

I asked everyone that could to please stand for the presentation and the words on the plaque were read as follows-

We Dedicate This American Flag To All The Men And Women Who Have Given, Unselfishly, Of their Time And Support To Serve In The Military Funeral Burial Details For American Veterans.

Taps: Day Is Done Gone The Sun From The Hills From The Lakes From The Skys All Is Well God Is Nigh Go To Sleep Peaceful Sleep May The Soldier, Marine, Sailor Or Airman God Keep

**Given By The Veterans At Pat's Coffee Shop
Richard Warren Proprietor
Mooresville N.C.
August 2007**

There are a couple things, relating to the plaque, that I want to tell you about.

First I had a tough time finding the official words to taps when I mentioned it to Richard he jumped on the computer and immediately found them for me to copy

Second I also had trouble getting the cross rifles I wanted which are the Lapel Insignia for The US Army Infantry. I mentioned it to Joe Stallings and he said "stop worrying you got em, I will give you a pair of mine". He did and those are on the plaque. Of those items both are special and mean a lot to me personally.

Both Joe Stallings and Richard Warren expressed their feelings regarding the dedication and the ceremony was over.



Thanks to Cheryl Ann for the photographs.





NAVAL SHIP WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN DEVELOPING POLARIS AND POSEIDON MISSILES

It seemed like a very ordinary cargo ship, one of many C4-S-A1 hulls built by the Maritime Administration at the start of the Cold War. Launched in 1953, the Empire State Mariner made three voyages carrying general and military cargo for the Military Sea Transportation Service. The Navy acquired the ship in 1956, and it was converted for naval service, joining the fleet as USS Observation Island in 1958.

Observation Island was classified as EAG-152 and her mission was to evaluate a new strategic weapon, the Polaris Fleet Ballistic Missile System. The Polaris was to be test fired from Observation Island as the sea-going launch platform. She served as an active commissioned ship until 1972 when she was transferred to the Military Sealift Command as T-AGM 23, assigned to the Special Mission Ships Program (PM2), with a civilian crew.

As an EAG, the 564-ft Observation Island displaced about 16,000-tons fully loaded and had a crew of 35 officers and 400 sailors home ported at Cape Canaveral, Florida. The ship was fitted with roll stabilization fins and an extensive suite of instrumentation, cameras and data-acquisition gear to monitor the Polaris tests. The first test of a Polaris from a ship at sea was conducted on 27 August 1959.

"Though strictly a 'test ship,' the Observation Island will perform several most important missions," said William Holaday, director of guided missiles for the Department of Defense during the ship's commissioning ceremony at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in 1958. "It will put together for the first time all elements of the Polaris Fleet Ballistic Missile (FBM) system in a sea-going ship and then test them in an ocean environment. In doing so, it will perform a major service."

Observation Island carried the Ship's Inertial Navigation System (SFNS) (developed aboard a sister ship, USS Compass Island (EAG 153)) as well as the Navigational Data Assimilation Center (NAVDAC), a "supercomputer" at the time, which used navigational data from SINS to create a ballistic fire control solution for the missile.

Observation Island was the test ship for the follow on A-2 and A-3 versions of the Polaris missile. In June 1963 she conducted the first successful at-sea launches of the A-3 Polaris. President John F. Kennedy came on board

Observation Island 16 November to observe a Polaris launch (see the PGCS November 2006 Newsletter).



The Navy redesignated Observation Island an AG-154 on 1 April 1968, after undergoing a ten-month conversion at Norfolk Naval Shipyard to prepare her to support the Poseidon C-3 missile program. She returned to Port Canaveral, and resumed her duties of monitoring experimental missile launchings, training FBM submarine crews, and supporting FBM submarine shakedown operations.

Between 1977 and 1981, Observation Island was converted to the Missile Range Instrumentation role (AGM) and fitted with the Cobra Judy AN/SPQ-11/G shipboard phased array radar and, during the mid-80s, fitted with the AN/TPQ-3IA X-Band parabolic dish radar. Still "active" after all these years, her current mission is treaty monitoring and verification of foreign strategic ballistic missile tests over the Pacific Ocean.

Observation Island- more than 50-years-old - is the oldest auxiliary in the Navy's fleet and is not expected to serve beyond 2012.

Observation Island continues her mission of monitoring missile shots. Originally they were U.S. missiles, and today they are those fired by other countries. Although the Navy considered launching ballistic missiles from battleships and cruisers, **the only US surface ship to ever fire a Polaris missile was USS Observation Island.**

Earl Fowler was a crew member onboard the USS Observation Island and was kind enough to share some photographs of a mission while he served onboard.





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Departing home port en-route to South China Sea



R & R on Missile / Helicopter deck



Traversing Panama Canal Locks.



Canal Pilot Boat passing and in the distance you see the Bridge of the Americas.



Missile Launch

Missile accelerating over the Main Mast.





Preparing for return home, Torpedo men filled balloons with helium and released them into the empty missile tube



Balloons being released at home



Back home – Families and Girl Friends waiting

Happy Birthday Wishes to everyone who had a birthday in August.

Remember, the day you were born God saw you and it was love at first sight!

Cheryl Ann

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It's another case of -

"Desperation is the Mother of Invention."

September 5, 2007: Here's a case of smart bombs with a clever, and unexpected, twist.

The Lebanese air force created an improvised helicopter bombing system for their recent operations against several hundred Islamic terrorists who had barricaded themselves in a northern town (technically a Palestinian refugee camp).

Bomb racks from retired Mirage 3 jets were mounted on the underside of American UH-1 helicopters. The landing skids were lengthened a bit for this. The bomb release mechanism from the Mirage 3 was then installed in the helicopters. Instead of smart bombs, the helicopter crews carried 500 and 900 pound dumb bombs, but flew them to GPS coordinates of their targets then, at an altitude of about 3,500 feet, and released the bombs. The accuracy was amazing, usually the same as GPS guided smart bombs (within 33 feet of the GPS coordinates). Troops on the ground, or the helicopter crew, could use laser rangefinders equipped with GPS (a commercially available product) to get the coordinates of the target. Then, using the GPS in the helicopter, you fly the chopper until you are right over those coordinates.

Apparently no one ever realized that, combining GPS, and a hovering helicopter with bomb racks, you can get about the same accuracy as a JDAM. Of course, one other factor was keeping down the ground fire. The army troops surrounding the terrorists could open fire as the helicopter approached, to make the bad guys keep their heads down. Bombing attacks could also be made at night, to make it more difficult for machine-gun fire to hit the choppers. At 3,500 feet, a UH-1 is a pretty small target. and at night, very difficult to hit from the ground.

