

U.S.S. Mars

NEWSLETTER NO. 1

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Published and Compiled by



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Great to make contact with you, even if we did not serve on the Mars together. I have received many phone calls asking about the Mars and a reunion. The mailing list is slowly growing as we add a few more names with each new ad.

As this first newsletter goes in the mail, I have mailed 118 copies of the Welcome Aboard information request to past crew members. The response has been somewhat slow, around 20 per-cent, which is about normal for a reunion. Because of the cost, I will mail this newsletter to those who have returned the information request. I will also mail this letter to some others who have said they want to receive the information on a reunion, but have been slow to reply, as I often do myself.

Our reunion ads have been placed in six publications. The Navy retired newsletter, Shift Colors, should bring the biggest response from past crew members of the Mars. To get this ad in Shift Colors as soon as possible, I listed a reunion date in San Diego for 1998. If I did not have a date, the ad would go on a waiting list for an open space.

WEST COAST MINI - REUNION

The USNS Mars is still active and on the West Coast. I will be making contact with the Master of the Mars and will see if we can make plans for a special tour in 1998.

Maybe a evening together and a tour of the ship the next day. I will keep those on the West Coast informed of any set plans and dates.

If anyone else is interested, drop me a line, so I can mail you the info, if this takes place.

If anyone can help with these plans, please let me know.

REUNION 1999 UPDATE

Ernie (Dutch) Mueller is moving ahead with plans for this reunion. He has selected the Regal Hotel in the downtown area of Cincinnati. This hotel has a spacious lobby, which will make it enjoyable for social gatherings with old and young past shipmates.

Our reunion will be the weekend of the Octoberfest in Cincinnati. This should insure plenty of activities for everyone. Plans are to have a dinner and dancing on a river boat, as well as a tour or whatever can be worked out. The reunion will be one of the last two weekends in September. Set those dates aside, if you plan to attend.

Anyone who lives in this area and would like to offer Dutch your help, please give him a call.



The End and New Beginning of an Era

By Lieutenant Stan Crozier, SC, USN, former Stock Control Officer and Assistant Supply Officer, USS MARS (AFS)

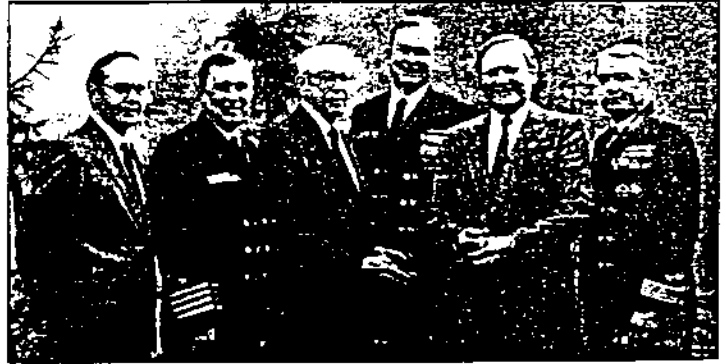
Nearly 30 years of active service came to an end on 1 February 1993 as the commissioning pennant onboard USS MARS (AFS) was lowered from the main mast during a unique decommissioning and transfer ceremony conducted at Naval Station Treasure Island, CA. Against the backdrop of the Oakland Bay Bridge under cold but sunny skies, responsibility for MARS was transferred from the U.S. Navy to the Military Sealift Command.

During her active service, MARS provided logistics support throughout the Fleet including underway replenishments on Yankee Station, Market Line in the Gulf of Tonkin and in the Arabian Gulf during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Additionally, she was a key contributor to the drawdown and relocation of Naval Station Subic Bay assets to various commands throughout the Pacific prior to its closing. MARS' many contributions to Fleet support manifested themselves in her receipt of numerous awards

including the Battle "E," Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation and the Supply Blue "E."

To every Supply Officer and supply enlisted person who served in MARS, it was a golden opportunity to obtain some of the greatest logistics and supply experience available and a stepping stone to promotion and advancement. MARS' reputation was built on years of dedicated commitment to quality and to providing the best logistics support possible. Through her efforts she became affectionately

known as the "Number One Attack Food Ship in the Universe." Although she no longer serves as a unit of the U.S. Navy, she will continue in the proud tradition of her past as a deployed unit of the Military Sealift Command, USNS MARS.



Six of MARS' former Supply Officers attended the decommissioning and transfer ceremony on 1 February 1993. From left to right are CAPT E. J. Dempsey, SC, USN (Ret.), 1976-78, CAPT W. A. Jackson, SC, USN, 1990-92, CAPT C. A. Gardner, Jr., SC, USN (Ret.), 1963-65, CAPT (Sel.) M. D. Hudock, SC, USN, 1992-93, CAPT E. W. Withrow, Jr., SC, USN (Ret.), 1978-80, and RADM J. T. Kavanaugh, SC, USN, 1980-82.

U.S.S. MARS HISTORY

Is anyone interested in working on the 30 year history of the Mars? This could be a long and interesting task that would be well received by our group. If this is something you would like to do, let me know and I will give you all the support I can.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

A total of \$135.00 has been received in support for the cost of the news letter.

\$135.00	-----Newsletter donations.
\$115.79	-----Printing & postage.
Fall 1997 balance	----- \$19.21

Many Thanks

To the following shipmates who are helping with the newsletter expenses.

Dale Ascroft	-----	\$20.00
John Fussell	-----	\$25.00
John Willis	-----	\$20.00
Everett Jones	----	\$20.00
Bill Lada	-----	\$10.00
Charles Cuson	----	\$25.00
Larry Derr	-----	\$ 5.00
Richard Godfrey	--	\$10.00



Chief George Johnson and Eleanor Lada at the 1997 reunion.

Our fellow shipmate, Bill Lada (1965-67) has been ill and is in the hospital recovering from surgery. For those who know Bill, I am sure he would appreciate receiving a few words of encouragement for a full recovery. Eleanor and Bill attended the 1997 reunion and made all of us happy they are a part of the Mars family.

85 Broadview Ave; Maplewood, NJ 07040

mail call

COMMENTS
. . . . from the crew



The heart of this newsletter is the information that our past shipmates have been willing to share with us. I have enjoyed reading all your letters and have left everything as received. I hope everyone enjoys this MAIL CALL section of our newsletter. Keep sending your letters.

**
I worked several years for a hospital in engineering dept. I was a police officer for 10 years and now work for a municipality in the gas, water and streets dept. I have been married 26 years. I have 2 children both of whom serve in the U.S. Marines. One is a 1st LT and the other is a corporal. I am active in local veterans affairs and am the commander of the local V.F.W. My brother Phil Dengler served on the Mars.
**

Steve Dengler (1969-70)

**
Retired at Davisville, R.I. in 1975, moved to Florida in 1978. Retired from Orange Country Corrections as a Corrections Officer in 1994. Two of my four sons decided to make the military as a career. Jack, M/Sgt. with Delta force at Ft. Bragg, NC. Jim graduated class of '79' Aunapolis. Now in Denver, CO as a CMDR. Wife Shima, 7 grandchildren, one daughter Maria, two other sons Richard and Bill, all married with families. Service 1944 - 1975, 30 yrs. 10 mo. 29 days. Retired as MSCS.
**

Jack Grabe (1966-68)

**
Retired from navy in 1979. W O R K being a four letter word!
I decided not to do it. I've been playing tennis and golf ever since.
**

J. C. Kaltenborn (1968-70)

**
I started out in 2nd. Div. as a seaman. I went to school in Japan, to become a Quartermaster. On 9-68, transferred to USS Tappahanock AO-43, for 4 months duty in Long Beach, CA. Dec.27,1968 - received orders for 9 weeks of school in San Diego, to train on PCF's (swift boats) for duty in country Vietnam. Received Bronze Star Medal. I worked for 31 years for a ceramic tile co. The place closed the doors on 6-2-97. That is why I didn't make last reunion. I am divorced with no children. Thanks for thinking of me.
**

Dennis T. Hunsberger (1966-68)

**
I was transferred to the Mars before commissioning, while the ship was still under construction at Ntl. Steel and Shipbuilding in San Diego. We were housed at the Naval Sta. in S.D., not far from the shipyard where construction was going on. We attended numerous schools and training experiences at the Naval Sta; until we went on board at Long Beach Navy Shipyard. As for as crew members, my mind is drawing a blank right now. The only two I can think of at this time is a first class DC from Los Angeles, who's last name was Ratcliff. I also remember a 2nd class Snipfitter by the name of Victor Otto and he was from Washington.
**

John C. Peck (1963-65)

Retired July 1, 1979. Taught finance courses at University of Arizona part time 1987-94. Retired again June 1, 1994. Spend summer months on Iowa farm (north of Marshalltown, Iowa) plus do some traveling from there. Iowa phone (515) 366-2256 approx mid May - early Sept.

Charles (Chuck) E. Cuson (1968-70)

**

I arrived aboard USS Mars, fresh out of AK "A" school, an AK3. In 1973, I transferred to NAF, Atsugi, Japan and in 1979, went aboard USS Enterprise for 3 years in overhaul at PSNS, Bremerton, WA. In 1982, I transferred to NAS Whidbey Is., was promoted to AK1 in 1983, retired from the navy, May 1985. I am interested in Mars reunions. Financial considerations, however, limit my participations primarily to those held on the West Coast. Reunions in the Pacific N.W. are even better for my limited budget.

Guy L. Harris (1972-73)

**

Retired 8 - 88, currently staff Radiology Technologist at local hospital.

Richard Donnelly (1980-83)

**

I reported to Mars PreCom in Fall of 1963. The Supply PreCom crew worked putting the AEL items, items that would be required for Mars to operate on a day-to-day basis after commissioning, together; the nuts and bolts, so to speak.

The Kennedy assassination occurred during this period, and a month after the tragic event, Mars was commissioned at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. The next nine months were busy. Sea trials, a visit to Acapulco, some yard time to replace an onery steering unit, and time spent at NSC Oakland loading our cargo and filling storeroom shelves with the thousands of items that would make Mars' mission possible. Finally in September 1964 Mars sailed west to our homeport of Yokosuka, Japan, to begin our mission of supporting the 7th Fleet operating off, and in-country, Vietnam. I had been assigned to S-2 Division, but prior to commissioning, I was assigned to S-3, where I handled the Commissary records. My first day on the job, CSC Jim Doyle greeted me with the words "Welcome to the nuthouse, Squirrley," and for almost four years that was my name. Feeding the crew the best was Chief Doyle's concern, and prior to each meal, he would load up a pie tin with a little of each menu item. If something didn't please him, the item was pulled off the chow line and replaced. His dedication to the crew's welfare made Mars cuisine the best food I ever ate during my 20 years in uniform. Of particular note was that dehydrated potatoes, onions, and even eggs were indistinguishable from fresh. Also, there were some officers who would dine below decks rather than in the wardroom, itself a compliment to Chief Doyle's concern for the troops.

After I left Mars, I was stationed at a Marine Corps Air Station in North Carolina, where I met my future wife, was married, and made SK1. After that I spent two years in Iceland, time on an Amphibious Command Ship in Norfolk, shore duty in Norfolk, and the last year and a half on board USS John F. Kennedy (CVA-67). A year prior to my retirement I was divorced. In 1977 I retired and settled in Northern Kentucky, where I attended Northern Kentucky University, on the G.I. Bill, taking courses in photography. The late '80s were spent on the staff of a local community newspaper as photorapher, writer, and doing what ever came along. As a writer for the paper I did not let a Memorial Day pass without digging into my memory to produce an article to honor the day.

At present I have retired fully, but am usually found with a camera making Kodak rich by recording the world around me. I am happy to hear that the reunion is scheduled for Cincinnati, right across the Ohio River. I hope to be around in '99 to attend and see what changes time has done to those of us who served on what some called, for a while, "Gorgeous George's Stop and Shop", a tribute to the second CO.

I have been going through boxes locating MARS items, slides, papers, etc. The biggest problem I am having is that I stop often to relive yesteryear. Please insure that

I am kept posted on how things are going.

Frank (Squirrley) R. Hart (1963-67)

I was leading RM in Mars during what was probably her busiest period, the latter years of the Vietnam war. Good ship and good crew, but busy. I was heart broken when our home port was changed from Yokosuka, Japan to Alameda NAS in May 1970. That's when I decided to take shore duty. Other commands served after Mars: NAF Detroit, ComLan Ship Ron 9, Com Sevent Flt, Nav Comm Sta Japan, USS Wabash (AOR-5). Retired 1/78. Worked Civil Service in Oakland and Mare Island for 3 years. Then sailed U.S. Merchant Marine for 7 years. Last 9 years in security field in North Bay. Been living in Vallejo since 1976. When we left NCS Japan, was fortunate to be able to attend Mars turnover to MSC in 2/93. Great ceremony, an RMC gave me tour of radio shack, completely different though from what I remember. All strange to see women in off-going USN crew, but times have changed.

Just before reporting to Mars in 6/68 I had made chief (4/68). Understandably I was a bit nervous coming into a Chief's Mess for the first time. I asked one of the Chiefs at my command for suggestions. He said "Just walk in there like you belong there." I did, and it worked. I was coming from Fleet Training Group, Western Pacific, right there in Yokosuka and had been taking ships through refresher training for several years. Right after I reported to Mars, she underwent refresher training, and the XO, Ops Officer, etc.. were all after me to give them the inside scoop on how to pass this thing with flying colors. Regardless, it went quite well. I had brought along all my notes and inspection forms, etc.. and they turned out to be quite helpful.

I particularly remember Capt. Anderson, Cdr. Kaltenborn (XO) and Mr. Bruce (Ops Off.) They were a good group and they ran a good ship. During the entire two years I was on there we were humping and I mean humping but it was a good crew. I didn't want to get off the ship but when they changed homeport on us in 1970 that was it. That was a real blow to me and my family. Let me tell you how they worked it. We left Yokosuka in Feb, '70 for a swing down to Viet Nam, to return around 1 Apr. Right after we left Yoko, heading for Taiwan to pick up fresh produce before proceeding on the line (Viet Nam), we got a secret message with the info that our homeport had been changed to Alameda, effective 1 Apr 70. I took the msg up to Capt. Nutt (Tom Nutt, Anderson had already gone). He told me to sit on the info, as it was classified Secret. After the Market Time and Yankee Station swing we headed into Subic for reload. When we got there everyone already knew about the homeport change. So much for keeping secrets. Anyway, Tom Nutt sent an officer and a couple of enlisted men up to Yoko to set up a moving team and to get the dependents ready to relocate. It worked beautifully. When we pulled in on 1 Apr. my wife told me that all the paperwork had already been completed and she and the kids were ready to leave in a couple of weeks. They left about a week before we did. Mars left on 27 Apr 1970, pulling out early in the morning. The reason I remember that day is because it is my birthday. I was in town all the previous evening hitting the bars, getting loaded and telling everyone that I didn't want to leave Japan. And I didn't. Tom had arranged for all the household goods to be taken back on Mars, including cars, and also pets. All the pets were kept on the cargo deck and pet owners had to look after them. We went from Yoko to Pearl and then on to Alameda. By the time we got to Pearl, that cargo deck was smelling pretty good from the pets.

Well, enough of that. Capt. Paul Anderson was a real gentleman, even though he was on my rear end all the time for not keeping a radio station on the ship's radio system. That wasn't all that easy to do at sea, as the RM's were usually swamped and normally forgot to tune in the receiver that was designated for ship's entertainment. Not to mention that it is pretty difficult to pick up radio stations at sea. One morning, we were passing Hong Kong on the way to Yankee Station, he stormed into radio carrying a small transistor. He said that he was getting good reception on his small radio so how come there wasn't any stations on the ship's radio? Good question. We had forgotten to tune one in. But we sure remembered after that.

**

Peter F. Warncke (1968-70)

**

BS in Bus Admin UNH 76. MS in Computer Info Systems NHC 97. Married, two sons Tyler - 1982, Brian - 1985. Scuba Instructor, part time college instructor. Work as Database Design - local insurance company.

**

Peters P. Jones (1970-73)

**

During my twenty one years of service, seven ships (not including one year in charge of MSB-18 in Vietnam) the year and a half of Mars duty stands out in my memory as the best of my career. The ship, the officers and the men were overall outstanding. I'll always remember the friends I made on the Mars. Really enjoyed the Branson, MO. reunion in June of this year. Was really great to see BMCS Jones, BTCS Willis and their wives, BMCM Johnson and others whom I hadn't seen in over 30 years. I think that only in the navy could you make friends for life. Great reunion! Looking forward to Cincinnati!!

Frank Rawl (1965-67)

**
Dropping you a note, I believe we were aboard the Mars at approximately the same time, of course we were in different departments so we didn't get to know each other. Yes, I remember Capt. Medley, then we served under Capt. George Watkins. I was his driver. Remember he was a jet pilot, but he flew the helo's quite a bit. I met Captain Watkins brother James Watkins at that time he was CNO. He was here in McAlester for Armed Forces Day Parade.
I was injured in Camm Rahn Bay in 1968. I'm a disable veteran. When I was aboard the Mars I was known as "Vince", I was a radioman. Because of my injury I can't remember names. I would like to get in contact with someone that was aboard ship in operations at that time period. My e-mail address is: "jvincent@EDUMASTER.NET". Thank you.

James P. Vincent (1965-67) **

**
Retired off Mar's in Jan. 70. Employed by San Diego Muni Court May 70. Retired from court's June 88 and joined the Social Security group. Now go to Vegas eight to ten times a year, Going to Vegas in Sept. for reunion of USS Rowan DD-782. Looking forward to your news bulletin's.

Ed Fourre (1967-70)

I worked in the engine room and had mess deck duty for several months, temporarily helped load frozen foods down in the reefers. Was on the fire rescue and assistance team that went over to the "Tong Jet" to extinguish fire. (Malysian cargo ship). In 1972, I got orders to U.S.S. Flint and was plank owner. Was discharged in May 1973. I currently work for a elect utility company, Northern States Power, as a plant equipment operator, running boilers, turbines, 750 and 900 megwatt units, coal fired in Becker, Minn.

Bill Lindberg (1969-72) **

**
I am a radio announcer for a 5000 watt AM station and 2 100,000 watt FM's. FYI - Mars moved 10 million pounds of cargo during Desert Shield/Storm. When the Marines deployed from both coasts to the gulf - Mars (in the Arabian Sea) was the ship they met with, As far as we know, Mars had the first woman go aloft to change lights and the first female Chief Engineer.

Bob Jackson (1990-92) **

**
I have been working at the Portland, Oregon - shipyards as a Foreman Boilermaker. I live in Boring, Oregon with my wife Janelle and my chocolate lab Bosco. I fish every chance I get in beautiful Oregon. Alaska and Canada, when my wife let's me! (Ha-Ha).

Larry A. Derr (1968-69) **

**
After leaving the Mars, I was on the U.S.S. Castor for two years and then I went in country Vietnam on the PBR's for 1½ years where I was promoted to BMC. After Vietnam, went on a tanker AO-105 and before retiring, I was on recruiting duty in Colorado for 3 years. Was suprised to see the article in the Naval Affairs on the Mars. Attended several reunions in 1992 and 1994 for the Castor AKS-1. Sure would like to see Ellis. Sure hope I can make the next reunion. I am fully retired.

Sam J. SanAngelo (1963-66) **

**THIS PAGE HAS BEEN EXCLUDED
FOR SECURITY REASONS.**