



USS SPRINGFIELD

Newsletter

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Oct/Nov, 2023
Volume 23 Issue 6

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Thanks to all who contributed to this month's newsletter. As I give thought to things that might be of interest, last month I asked for input from the 60 shipmates who were on-board while the Springfield was in Gaeta. I thank those who responded for the wonderful stories that they shared. From their stories, Gaeta was certainly a different kind of port than Villefranche. As might be expected (ask any one of Italian descent), the town and it's people were very warm, welcoming and accommodating. Their stories are contained within. I'm sure you will enjoy them and probably give some serious thought to renting a villa and going there on vacation. I know their stories have me thinking that way.

Other contributions during the month are a number of miscellaneous documents that Brent Sponsler shared that are now included in the ship's publications section of our web page, including a Jan-Mar 1969 issue of the Rifle.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY? October looks to be a busy month for me so the next newsletter may not be published until December but do get your stories in so I can work on them as time allows. I would especially like to hear from those who were in the Marine Detachment. It was an important part of the ship which many know little about. Another area of interest is that of the Musicians, and of course any stories to help to keep our memories alive. (continued on Page 4)

USS SPRINGFIELD MEMBERSHIP

A big thank you to our new life member: James Miller FTMSN Fox Div 61-63 and our new Annual Paid Member: James Morrissey R Div 72-73

It's time again to be thinking of paying your Annual Dues or becoming a Life Member. If you pay now, your dues are good for all of 2024 as well. Annual membership is \$20. Life Membership is \$100.

Dues are needed for the Bluejackets ongoing expenses. While we are a not-for-profit-all-volunteer organization, we still have expenses to meet in keeping our organization viable. Your support is appreciated to the max.

Please make your checks payable to: USS Springfield Bluejackets Inc. and mail to: Keith Rivard-Treasurer , 160 Tommotley Dr, Loudon, TN 37774-2120. .

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS



October: Gerald Bailey C Div 45-46, Jerry Thompson M Div 63-65, Alan Torrone B,M Div(s) 64-67, Ken Guina OC Div 68-70, Bill Kolb S-2 Div 68-70 and Jan Buck X Div 70-72

November: Sherrill Allen A Div 68-69, Philip Berry Eng Div 57-57, Robert Berta X Div 64-67, Joseph Gagne H&D 60-61, Thomas Gorman GM Div 63-66, Luther Langley R Div 70-74, Peter Long G Div 62-67, Donald Nistendirk Flag 64-66, Robert Reese, Richard Godschalk Ops 60-62, Robert Goodson Flag 67-68, Peter Miller CO SSN761 03-06, James Miller FTMSN Fox Div 61-63

IN REMEMBRANCE



Our Deepest Sympathies and Prayers are with the Family and Friends of the Shipmates we learned to be deceased since our last newsletter who include: James King LTJG OE Div 60-63, David Ackermann QM2 N Div 63-65, Jack Chappell GMG3 1st Div 61-63, Charles Wilcox MM3 M Div 66-68 and CWO James Anderson 1st Div 62-64

"Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A veteran does not have that problem." -Ronald Reagan

GAETA, ITALY

In 1967, the homeport of the U.S. Sixth Fleet flagship relocated from Villefranche-sur-Mer to Gaeta which is located about an hour's ride from Rome to the North and Naples to the South. Since then, nine ships have been stationed in Gaeta, with the primary mission of serving as the flagship

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Please send any additions, corrections or questions to Dave Schantz at the address or email above

GAETA, ITALY (Continued)

for the Sixth Fleet commander: the USS Little Rock (CLG-4) 1967-1970, the USS Springfield (CLG-7) 1970-1973, the USS Little Rock (CLG-4) 1973-1976, the USS Albany (CG-10) 1976-1980, the USS Puget Sound (AD-38) 1980-1985, the USS Coronado (AGF-11) 1985-1986, the USS Belknap (CG-26) 1986-1994, the USS La Salle (AGF-3) 1994-2005 and the current flagship the USS Mount Whitney (LCC-20) since 2005.



When the USS Little Rock first arrived, the ship was required to anchor out, much like the Springfield did in Villefranche. Shortly afterwards, however, a pier was constructed which made for a nice mooring when in Gaeta.

Richard Jamieson HT3 R Div 70-72 writes: In Dec. 1968 while working at the New York Air Brake part of Westinghouse Corp in Watertown NY as a designer of a prototype air brake for railroad and other rail cars I joined the Navy Reserves. In Nov. 1970 when I went on Active Duty, I elected to be a Ship Fitter, went first to a school in San Diego CA and because the Navy had combined Ship Fitter & Damage Control I also went to an 8 week Damage Control school at Treasure Island (San Francisco).

As luck would have it, after finishing the schools, I got assigned to the USS Springfield CLG-7, home-ported in Gaeta Italy where I was stationed until my discharge in Oct. 72.

Most of my time aboard the Springfield was spent doing general repairs around the ship or working in the Ship Fitter's shop. Using a MIG welder I taught myself to weld aluminum which became handy around the ship. I often also did repairs to smaller ships who tied up next to us who needed aluminum weld repairs.

My life in Gaeta Italy was very nice. Shortly after I arrived I bought a Lambretta 50cc motorcycle. I rode it all over the area but it would only go about 35-40 MPH tops so I soon got bored and was able to buy a 1968 Triumph Dayton 500cc twin that one of the snipes who'd gone home leaving his bike behind.

Steve Lyverse SK2 S1 Div 72-74 recalls that he had a friend who had a FIAT 125 sedan that they used mostly to sight see and explore a bit. When on liberty, if my wife and young son were in Gaeta, I went home to our apartment on Corso Italia. If they were back in the States my roomies and I might take a swing up the Roma Road to a near-by town like, Terricina, Formia, Itria, Sperlonga and sometimes Roma. We enjoyed the food, which while enjoyable, was a

surprise sometimes due to our lack of regional Italian dialect.

In Gaeta, there was a downstairs 'Community Center' under a piazza (as I recall it) which featured American food, Cheeseburgers, etc. and current US music. There was also a small 'necessaries' PX on Corso Italia with beer, wine, spirits, baby diapers, cigarettes, postal mail boxes & a few other things. Most groceries were acquired on Navy sponsored bus trips to Naples/AF South.

My time in Gaeta was very much a formative stage of my maturity. My roommates were 3-5 years older than I was and shared an enlightened view of world events. I've been back twice and am scheduling a retirement visit very soon. My visits find a cleaner, nicer quiet sleepy fishing village.



... and Carl (CJ) Bennett HM2 H&D Div 71-73 remembers that he reported to the Springfield in Gaeta, in December 1970. His wife and 3 year old son arrived in February 1971 and they stayed in the SERAPO hotel for a couple of weeks, until the Support Detachment found us a 2 bedroom ground floor apartment.

The apartment was one of 4 in Signor Fedele's Villa, who also lived in the building. The other 2 apartments were rented by Junior Officers who were assigned to the Springfield. The Villa was located on a dirt and gravel road a few miles North of Gaeta on the Via Flacca (commonly called the ROME road) and offered an excellent cliff-side view of the sea! On the other hand, the water was intensely mineral flavored, so we filled 10 liter jugs at the main fountain in Gaeta for drinking. We quickly learned all about the Transformers and "Bombolas".

The Naval Support Activity Detachment was located in 5 story building in the downtown area of Gaeta. The building contained admin offices such as housing and transportation. On the ground floor was a very small Navy Exchange, similar to a 7-11. The post office was also located on the ground floor. Joshua Barney K-8 school was in the building, as well as a medical and dental clinic. More serious health matters required treatment at the Naval Hospital in Naples, about 60 miles south.



Photos Courtesy of Dick Jamieson

There were many distractions to occupy the crew members leisure time. In the warmer months Serapo Beach was a popular destination. Sightseeing and exploring the Old Quarter with its historic churches or going up to Split Mountain and the Grotto of the Turk were favorite past times for the crew and families.

GAETA, ITALY (Continued)

Night life was primarily located in the Via Annunziata, a small street to the left of the gate at fleet landing. This area, known as "The Gut", boasted a varied of bars and nightclubs such as the Splash and Hermes where drinks, dancing and female companionship could be found. In late 1972 an enlisted men's club was opened, that offered food and drink, for the crew members. It was located a short distance south of Gaeta on the road to Formia. A shuttle ran from fleet landing to the club, giving crew members a choice "The Gut" or the Club, although, they were not mutually exclusive.



I became very well acquainted with The Gut after being assigned as Senior Shore Patrol Officer, with my primary duty of making sure crew members got back to the ship safely after a night of revelry. I was assisted in this duty by GMG 2 Rick Trimmer, CS1 Armando Ciccione, SSGT Mirovski, USMC, Chief Garrison and other personnel detached from the ship. Occasionally, after a tough night (which usually ended around 3 or 4 in the morning) Ciccione and I would stop into a local bakery and enjoy fresh out of the oven baked pastries.

The task of getting crew members back to the ship safely was made easier after the Springfield received authorization to moor to the NATO Fuel Pier, eliminating a "U-boat" ride back to the ship.

The weekly market was an excellent choice for local fresh fruits and vegetables. An 'alimentary' (neighborhood grocery store) across the street from the support detachment was our choice for a variety of meats, cheeses, olives and vino locale. There was no shortage of dining locations. Pizza at Emilio's was always a good choice. If a special night out was in order A'ore Burlone's located in the base of the castle offering an extensive menu including seafood, steaks, and other specialty meals. The coffee bar, which was located across the street and just outside the gate, was a favorite stop for a quick cup of espresso or a cold beer.

Bob Rone FTM2 Fox Div 64-64 says "Reading the lat-

SEA STORIES

est Springfield Newsletter brought back some memories, knocking a lot of cobwebs out of the way.

I was transferred from the USS Barney DDG6 to the

SEA STORIES (Continued)

Springfield in January, 1964 at a time that the Springfield was in the Brooklyn Navy yard for repair. Shortly after I arrived the Springfield departed for a shakedown cruise near Cuba. I remember pulling into the docks at Gitmo. As we came in, the screw guard popped several of the wooden pilings supporting the pier. I was manning the rail just over the screw guards. We were in for a day or two then went back out for more live fire, guns and missiles. I remember when we came back in the yard birds were just finishing replacement of the pilings, that we damaged a few days before. The word at the time was that Capt. Crenshaw had written the book used at the Naval Academy on ship handling. He didn't need any stinking tugs. Capt. Crash Crenshaw popped the same pilings with the same screw guard as we returned a second time. The guys on the pier were shaking their fists at us.

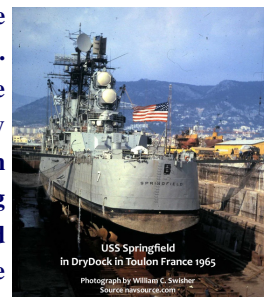


I was the senior NCO in the missile house. We did not have a FTM1 and we had an invisible chief, never seen after muster in the mornings. I remember things went well and we did most of our work at sea, so we could go on LIBERTY as soon as we hit a port. Fond memories of the Med. ports made in 1964 and Villefranche.

...and Tom Quinn GMM3 GM Div 64-66 writes "I'm thinking back to February 1965 when Springfield pulled in to drydock in Toulon for a month.

As we were in drydock all the shipboard heads were secured for a month. Restroom facilities were in a large concrete/block shed on the pier, alongside the ship. The interior of the shed was unfinished concrete and was unbelievably filthy with pretty horrid stains on the walls.

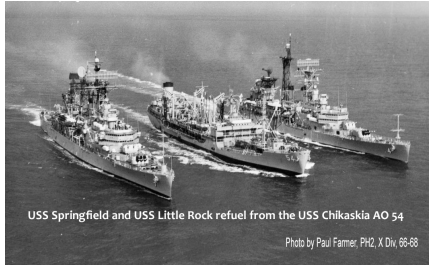
The walls only went up 9 or 10 feet and were open to mother nature as there was no glass. The winter winds sweeping down from the mountains made the unheated place pretty chilly! Seems as if there were 10-15 open faced stalls on each side of the shed facing each other. In the stall was what we referred to as a "bomb hole". A flat fixture on the floor with 2 spots for your feet. That's it.



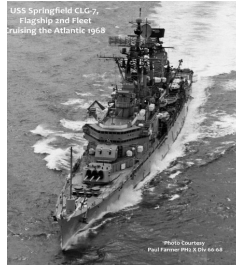
Part of the charm of the place was that the bomb holes flushed automatically and all at once. You heard the approaching rumble and grabbed up your trousers to run into the center aisle. Everyone all at once. Quite a sight! I don't think Toulon was a popular port call.

This and when Tom went aboard, he was assigned to 1st division and spent the month while in Toulon chipping paint pretty much every day so except for one 48 hour pass didn't get much time to see or enjoy Toulon. But after getting into GM Div, Tom did enjoy Villefranche, our ports of call and his time aboard

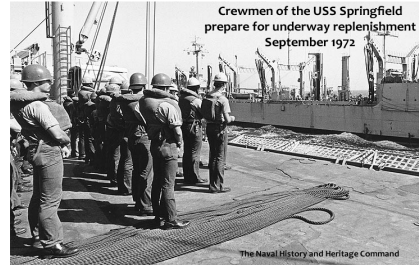
USS SPRINGFIELD



USS Springfield and USS Little Rock refuel from the USS Chikaskia AO 54
Photo by Paul Farmer, PH2, X Div, 66-68



USS Springfield CLG-7, Flagship and Fleet Towing the Atlantic 1968
Photo Courtesy Paul Farmer PH2, X Div, 66-68



Crewmen of the USS Springfield prepare for underway replenishment September 1972
The Naval History and Heritage Command

PRESIDENT'S CORNER (continued)

Your help is needed as we plan for future issues of the newsletter. Some thoughts of possible topics include taking a look at our ports of call, the different seas we have sailed on, highlighting different divisions and the responsibilities associated with them, etc. Since we all, were for the most part, aboard at different times and have had different experiences, your sharing your stories is an important part of doing so. Many, but not all of us have had the experience of a shakedown cruise in the Caribbean. Others, as we see in this issue, had experiences in different home port venues, and still others have had unique experiences in one or another port of call.

I look at the sharing of these experiences and stories as a way of helping our family, our children and our grandchildren to get a feel for life aboard the Springfield, of being in the Navy or Marine Corps, and how it contributed to our lives. While the focus certainly should be on our experiences while aboard the Springfield, adding things about life before and afterwards could also work.

A big thank you those who have sent in such stories, photos and relevant documents either through the USPS or by email. Writing newsletters is not my forte. I'm still learning and trying to get the hang of it and I try to incorporate as many things as I can into the newsletter. Some as in the case of documents like those that Brent Sponsler shared are now available in our web page under the Ships Publications menu item. I hope that you will take the time to visit our web page <https://usspringfield.org> and look at some of what is there. Please feel free to call or email. 585 723-0760 or daveschantz@yahoo.com Thank you.



2024 REUNION

The 6th Fleet Villefranche-Sur-Mer organization is having their reunion in Buffalo NY near the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park where our sister ship the USS Little Rock is located on September 13,14,15 2024. Our current thinking is to have our USS Springfield reunion with them. Details will be shared as we learn more. But for now, please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Questions? Call or email Dave Schantz (585) 723-0760 / daveschantz@yahoo.com or Keith Rivard (865) 388-2478 / kmrivard@gmail.com

SHIP STORE



Now on sale in the USS Springfield Ship Store are a new Polo Shirt and T-Shirt, Coffee Mugs, USS Springfield Window Stickers, Ball Caps and more. Visit our Ship Store on-line at <https://store16038547.company.site> or usspringfield.org or if you don't have access to the internet call Keith Rivard (865-388-2478). All proceeds go to support the USS Springfield Bluejackets, Inc.