



# Ramblin Rose



A Publication of the USS Montrose Association

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## Captain Edward Baxter Billingsley



**S**hortly after Japan's surrender in 1945, Cdr. Billingsley addressed the men in his command. He said in part, "It takes a great nation, a powerful nation to accomplish what we have done. Every man in the Navy or Army and every one of the folks at home have a right to be proud of our power. We ought to be conscious of that power and see that it is properly used. The United States of America is a great nation!"

"Let us consider the costs of the war. It has cost billions in money and material. If all the money, materials and energy spent in this war had been used to better the conditions of the world, it would have provided a decent living for everyone in the world... But that is not the way of human nature. Let us pray that conditions will be better in the future."

"One of the greatest costs of the war has been human life. Millions of men have been killed. The United States alone has had more than two hundred thousand killed. Those men are not with us today to rejoice in victory. They lie buried in graves on the shores of Normandy, Guadalcanal, Tarawa... and within a stones throw of us, here on Okinawa. There is no celebration for them. The least we can do is to resolve that they have not given up their lives in vain."

"The world today is in a horrible state. Millions are homeless and millions are facing starvation. Great

## Capt. Edward B. Billingsley (cont.)

problems face the world of the future and the United States of America as a nation. As you return to civil life, it will be your duty to help find the answers to those problems and to see that the might of America is not wasted. I ask you to consider all this and to resolved that as good citizens you will see that never again does such a great tragedy overtake the world and the United States. And above all, see that never again are we caught with our defenses down. See that our might is wisely and justly used."

"And now, let us rejoice that peace is once more coming to this war-weary world."

Edward Baxter Billingsley was born 18 June, 1910 at Melbourne, Arkansas, the son of Edmund Billingsley and Harriet Baxter Billingsley. His great grandfather was the first Republican governor of Arkansas. His grandfather on his mother's side was a country doctor who made his rounds on horseback.

He entered the U.S. Naval Academy July, 1928, attending the University of Arkansas two years prior to entering the academy. His first sea duty was aboard USS Nevada. Stationed in China, October 1934 to May 1937, he served on the gunboat, SACRAMENTO, last coal burning ship in the navy; river gunboat MINDANAO, flagship of South China Patrol; patrol yacht ISABEL, relief flagship for Commander Asiatic Fleet. Two years duty on heavy cruiser CHICAGO, as Assistant Engineering Officer, was followed by two years at U.S. Naval Training Station, Norfolk, Virginia. He was married to Patricia Malloy of La Crescenta, California, 28 December, 1939.

In August 1941, he was assigned to the destroyer, USS EMMONS, as Engineering Officer. EMMONS was commissioned at Boston two days before Pearl Harbor, 5 December 1941. EMMONS was one of five British and American Destroyers which accompanied the TUSCALOOSA to Murmansk to bring out survivors of ill-fated Convoys PQ-17 and to deliver ammunition and supplies to the Russians and British stationed there. In October, 1942, he was made Executive Officer of the EMMONS and took part in the inva-

sion of North Africa. In 1943, she again operated with British Home Fleet, making several sweeps into the Arctic and off the Norwegian coast in attempts to draw the TIRPITZ and other German ships into battle. He assumed full command of the EMMONS at Scapa Flow on 4 July, 1943.

EMMONS was one of the destroyers assigned to escort the IOWA in the Eastern Atlantic phases of President Roosevelt's trip to Teheran in 1943.

1944 saw EMMONS back in European waters as part of a special submarine hunting unit while waiting for the Invasion of France. In May EMMONS assisted in the hunting and sinking of the U-616 for which Cdr. Billingsley received a letter of Commendation from Commander, Eighth Fleet. The same week EMMONS departed for England and the Invasion of France. She took part in the invasion of Normandy as close fire support ship at famed Omaha Beach. EMMONS claims to have fired the first shot at Omaha. On 25 June, Cdr. Billingsley took part in bombardment of Cherbourg. For these activities, he was awarded the Silver Star by Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal. In August 1944, he participated in the invasion of Southern France, as close fire support unit, and was awarded the Bronze Star by Vice Admiral Hewitt, Commander EIGHT Fleet. Was awarded Croix de Guerre (with Silver Star) by the Government of France for the part EMMONS had played in the liberation of France.

In fall of 1944, when EMMONS was converted to a high speed minesweeper, he was detached and ordered to command USS JOHN A. BOLE, a 2200-ton destroyer being built at Staten Island, New York. BOLE was commissioned 3 March, 1945 and arrived at Okinawa 29 June, 1945 where she served on picket duty until the Japanese surrender.

After the surrender of Japan, Bole operated with our Naval Forces in the Yellow Sea and Chinese waters. Bole was one of the destroyers present at the initial landing of U.S. Forces at Jensen (Inchon), Korea, on 8 September, 1945. Cdr. Billingsley commanded a naval task unit consisting of BOLE, LSM 5, AND LSM 355, with army troops embarked which were responsible for

## Capt. Edward B. Billingsley (cont.)

receiving the surrender of some 60,000 Japanese troops on Quelpart Island. He witnessed surrender of Japanese forces there on 2 August and was directly responsible for disarming Japanese naval forces which included destruction of naval guns and 88 suicide motor boats.

Cdr. Billingsley returned to San Francisco in March, 1946, and served as part of the THIRD Reserve Fleet until detachment from command of the BOLE on 16 September 1946. During the period June-September, he was squadron commander of DesRon 21 in addition to duties as CO of the BOLE.

In September 1946, he was ordered as a student in Navy's new postgraduate course in Personnel Administration and Training at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois and graduated in June 1947 with a Master of Arts degree.

In June 1947, he reported to the Bureau of Naval Personnel for duty and served two years as Assistant Director of the Special Services Division of the Welfare Activity.

From July 1949, to January 1951, Cdr. Billingsley served as executive officer, USS COLUMBUS, flagship of Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic Mediterranean. COLUMBUS was awarded Battle Efficiency Pennant for year ending 30 June 1950. He was promoted to Captain 1 January, 1951.

From February, 1951 to May, 1952, the Captain was assigned as Chief of Staff and Operations Officer to Commander Cruiser Division SIX, RADM W.S. Parsons, on board USS MACON.

Detached from Cruiser Division SIX in May 1952, he served as Base Operations Officer at Pearl Harbor from 6 July 1952 to 19 August 1954.

On 2 October, 1954, he became commanding officer of USS MONTROSE at Yokosuka, Japan

and spent the greater part of 1954-1955 in the Western Pacific.

On 8 November, 1955, the Captain was detached as commanding officer of MONTROSE and ordered to U.S. Naval Station, Subic Bay, Philippines, for duty as commanding officer.

Detached 5 January, 1957, he reported for duty as Commanding Officer, USNRTC, Indianapolis, Indiana on 2 March, 1957.

He retired from active duty 1 November, 1959 with rank of rear admiral on the retired list.

Following retirement, the Admiral attended the Goethe Institute in Ebersburg and then Luneburg, West Germany. His next move was to Chapel Hill where he earned a PhD in Latin American History from the University of North Carolina in 1965. A de-academized version of his doctoral dissertation concerning the wars of Independence in Latin America (Chile and Peru) in 1818 to 1824 and the activities of the newly established U.S. Fleet in those South American waters, was published by the University of North Carolina Press under the title In Defense of Neutral Rights.

After a one-year stint as chairman of the Social Sciences Department and Assistant Professor of History at Methodist College in Fayetteville, N.C., he accepted chairmanship of the History Department at Fort Bragg Branch of the North Carolina State University where he remained before moving to the University of South Florida at Tampa in 1967. He retired from there as Associate Professor in 1977.

His book on the history of the EMMONS was started in 1981 and completed in 1989 when a limited edition was privately printed for members of the U.S.S. EMMONS Association under the title The EMMONS Saga. Admiral Billingsley died in Tampa, Florida on September 3, 1997. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Patricia Malloy Billingsley.

# Letter From The President

Hello Montrose Family,

Reunion '99 has come and gone but not before everyone had a great time.

Our hotel at Independence Mall was located smack-dab in the middle of historic Philadelphia. The U.S. Mint was right across the street. All that money, so close you could smell it but not get your hands on it. One of Philly's first fire stations was kitty corner to the hotel (just in case Geno got too hot to handle!). The Liberty Bell and Independence Hall were only two blocks away. Ben Franklin is buried in a very old cemetery just behind the hotel. Talk about close!

As expected, we filled every moment sight seeing and visiting with old friends. Ninety plus attended the reunion and there was lively comraderie in the hospitality room; sea stories flowed freely, pictures came out and old cruise books appeared. We kidded, we laughed, we drank—it was great fun. Our own Del Bussell (64-66), ill in health and unable to attend, called the hospitality room to chat with the gang. A very special treat!

On Saturday, we got a chance to see the new Navy. U.S.S. Yorktown (CG-48) was in port and we took a special tour aboard her. Nice but I still prefer old Rose. Later that night, during the dinner dance, we presented awards. Skippy Clark received the 'Suzanne Moore Spirit Award' which is given to the person who, like Suzanne, makes each and every Montrose reunion attendee feel welcome and special, like family. He does that every day, not just reunions. Congratulations again Skippy! Newton Newstrom received the 'Sea Story Writers Award' for "New Year's Eve, 1954". I stopped at Topeka, Kansas after the reunion and gave him the award. Hey Newt, it's just too bad you weren't at the reunion to bask in all that thunderous applause. Someone even had the audacity to present plaques to Don Johnston and Tom Gamel (co-hosts for Reunion '97) after they scheduled that cruise on the tail-end of a Mexican typhoon.

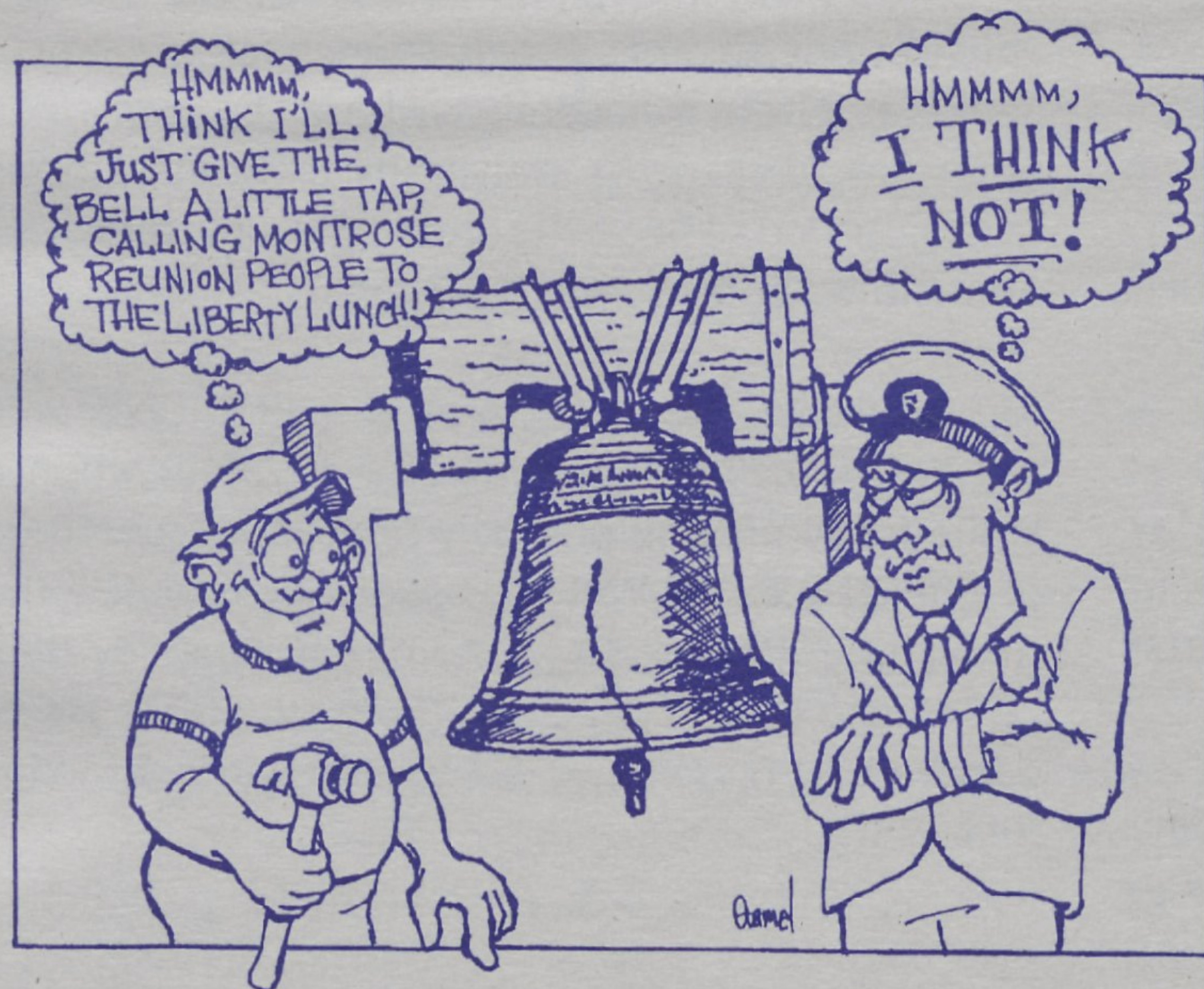
Sunday morning at the breakfast meeting, association officers were voted in. Results were as follows: President - Russ McDonald, Vice President - Tom Gamel, Secretary - Don Johnston, Treasurer - Tom Parkes. San Diego was voted the next site for U.S.S. Montrose Reunion 2001. It will be held in October and hosted by Don and Vonnie Johnston. As is our tradition, the 'Last Man's Wine' was passed from Wayne Lamond to Don Johnston.

I would like to thank everyone who helped make Reunion '99 so special. First and foremost, Wayne and Connie Lamond and their daughters, Kim, Tracy, and Amy; Bob Gay, Bill and Linda Miller, Joe and

Cathy Barbarito for pitching in wherever needed, Mayor Tony Batten for emceeing the dinner dance (nobody does it better). A big 'thank you' to Doc and Helen Judge and Archie and Martha Moore for donating raffle items! A long overlooked 'thank you' to Tom Parkes who donated the Montrose reunion buttons for Reunions '97 & '99. And finally, thank you to Russ Jr. for lugging all of his dad's gear around. By the way, you're some dancer! Forgive me if I overlooked anyone.

Gotta go for now.....Donna says it's time to unpack those bags for awhile.....but you know me!!!

Mac



**Part of the Crew  
from WWII**

left to right

- Bill McClure
- John Meenan
- Charles Jardine
- 'Skippy' Clark
- Erling Lund
- Joe Behrens



**The 'Suzanne Moore  
Award'**

presented to

'Skippy' Clark

left to right

- Tony Batten
- Keith Mariett
- 'Skippy' Clark and  
Archie Moore



**The 'Last Man's Wine'**

passed on to

Don & Vonnie

Johnston

our next co-hosts

for San Diego Reunion

2001

left to right

- Mac, Don & Vonnie  
& Wayne

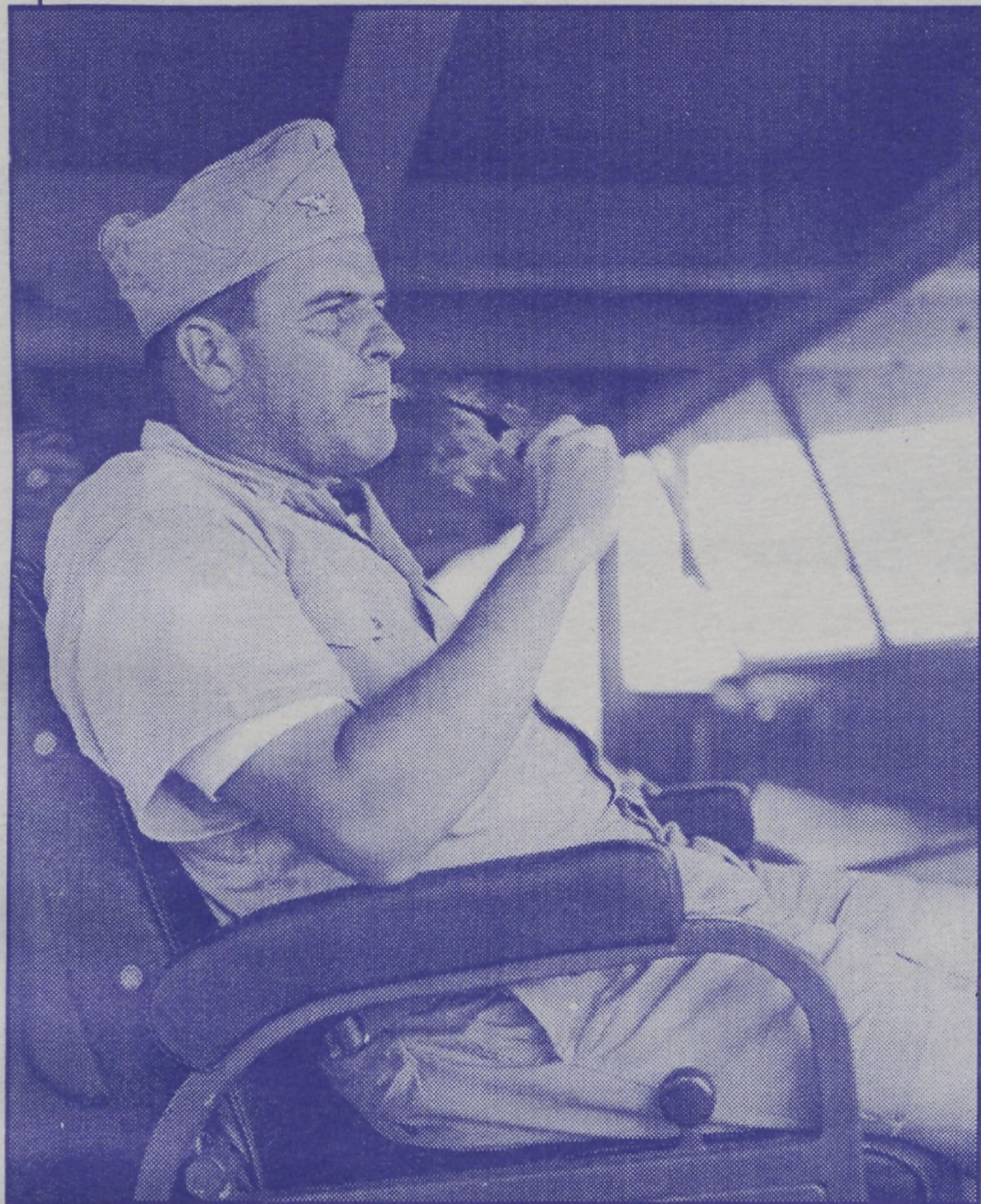


**The 'Sea Story Writers Award' went to Newt Newstrom**

(see back cover for details)

# YOUR FEEDBACK

## Captain John D. Andrew Remembered



As the Commanding Officer of the **U.S.S. MONTROSE APA-212**, Captain Andrew had his bad moments. He disliked reservists and was very vocal on this issue. He did not like the fact that he had received a crummy old troop transport for a command rather than a cruiser, which is what he'd expected.

Yet he had his kind side. This author remembers an incident that happened in 1954. The Ship's company was having a party in a night club in Nagasaki. I had over-indulged and was suddenly broke. I went outside and tried to bargain with a cab driver to take me back to the ship for my wrist watch when suddenly I heard, "Young Man, Young Man." I went over to find Captain Andrew in the back seat of another cab.

He asked me what the matter was. I told him I was broke and would have to leave the party. He opened his billfold and gave me 2000 yen and told me to go back and have some more fun and see him next payday. When payday came, I went up to the officers' country to pay him. He was standing on a ladder and said, "Here comes the young man who owes me money." For the Commanding Officer of a ship to do this for an enlisted man was rather unique. I have never forgotten his kindness.

Jim Ruotsala

We had a great time in Philadelphia. Looking forward to California in 2001!

Jerry Campbell

Ramblin Rose is well-done! Expect to have a mini reunion with John Lawlor (co-designer of the RO-RO) in Sept.-Oct.

Sincerely, Larry Peterson

## From The Editor

A huge 'Thank You' to Nancy Rogers Sever, of Gainsfield, Florida, for sending us so much biographical material on Admiral Billingsley. Due to space limitations, we couldn't use it all; a problem we should have all the time!

Also, our thanks to Patricia Billingsley, of Tampa, Florida, for asking Nancy to help us.

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A hand-salute to Jim Ruotsala for his memories of Captain John D. Andrew. This is just the sort of thing we could use from all our Montrose people. By the way Jim, don't you owe me \$20.00??

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Thanks for the well-done, Larry! And by the way, what the devil's an RO-RO?

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A special congratulations to Newt Newstrom on getting the 'Sea Story Writer's Award.' It's your stories that make Ramblin Rose fun to read and that we're in desperate need of right now!

## SNIPPETS

So you don't feel you have the time or talent to write a whole or even a half page sea story.... Is That Your Problem Bunkie?

Then CHEER UP! The answer to your 'writer's block' is 'SNIPPETS'. Notes! Short-takes! Something like, "I'll never forget the time we towed Byzewski behind the ship, trolling for sharks; they'd sniff but not bite! That was a lotta laughs!"

See how easy, and factual that is!? So what're you waitin' for?



Cutting along the dotted line is purely optional, as it will, in all likelihood,

# Reunion 2001

San Diego! Ah yes! The place where I became.... Well, you fill in the blank.

Those of us who've been to our reunions know how much fun they are. Many of us repeatedly attend. Why? Because the spirit of the ship and the Montrose family is alive. Over the years many of us who used to say "The older I get, the better I was" are starting to say "The older I get, the better WE are!" Gee, is it possible that we can have even more fun now than then? Is it possible that there's a new and better San Diego? Yes, there is a new San Diego; just like there's a new, improved, slightly different You. What fun it will be to see how San Diego and you (and we) have changed, but, also, how much we are still the same.

The next opportunity will be in October 2001. As much as possible, we want to make this reunion fit you. To do that, thought, we'll need your input. So, please answer the following questions.

- Should memorabilia be included in the "reunion cost"?
- If priced separately, would you purchase : (circle your choice)
  - Hats Yes / No
  - Pins Yes / No
  - Coffee mugs Yes / No
  - Tee shirts Yes / No
  - Describe other items of interest
- Which group activities / tours interest you?
  - Ampitibious base - group
  - Aircraft carrier - group
  - 32nd St. Naval station - group
  - San Diego Zoo - group
  - Sea World - group
  - Old Towne - individual visit
  - Gas Light District (near convention center)
  - Tijuana - individual visit
  - Seaport Village Shops
- Should we have a dinner dance? Yes / No
- Should we have a reunion book? Yes / No
- What suggestions do you have?
- What special needs do you have?
- Do you plan on attending?

Please respond to: Don Johnson  
1601- A Sinclair St.  
Anaheim, Ca 92806

mutilate a perfectly good newsletter, a keepsake, wouldn't it make more sense to photocopy this page and

then mail it in? Man, oh man, I get tired of helping Don out of these fixes!!

U.S.S. Montrose Association  
P.O. Box 1112  
Stanton, CA 90680

Forwarding & Return Address Requested

So Mac, you feel fairly certain this'll make the front cover of the newsletter?



Newt Newstrom of Topeka, Kansas accepts the 'Sea Story Writers Award' from Russ McDonald for "New Years Eve, 1954."

## OFFICERS.....

### PRESIDENT

Russ McDonald  
P.O. Box 613  
Garden Grove, CA 92841  
(714) 636-6267

### SECRETARY

Don Johnston  
9399 Siskin Avenue  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708  
(714) 962-4753

### V. P., COMMUNICATIONS

Tom Gamel  
15967 Sierra Pass Way  
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745  
(626) 369-5344

### TREASURER

Tom Parkes  
16411 Wishing Well Ln.  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647  
(714) 596-1273

### HISTORIAN

Jim Ruotsala  
2723 John Street  
Juneau, AK 99801

### CHAIRMAN, MEMBERSHIP

Joe Degnan  
7 Stone Hill Drive  
Westerly, RI 02891

### CHAIRMAN, BY-LAWS

Arnie Wegher  
23836 Currant Dr.  
Golden, CO 80401

### CHAIRMAN, MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Bob Gay  
15111 Pipe Line #93  
Chino Hills, CA 91709  
(909) 597-6183

### BY-LAWS COMMITTEE, MEMBERS

Bob McRoberts	Gus Ostrander
Tom Parkes	Tony Batten
John Meenan	Don Johnston

### CHAIRMAN, REUNION 2001 - SAN DIEGO

Don Johnston - 9399 Siskin Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708