



1943



1972



THE BANG GANG NEWS LETTER

Published to perpetuate the memory of USS BANG (SS-385) and her Crew

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THIS IS THE LAST
BANG GANG
NEWSLETTER



FPO



This column is dedicated to all the letters we receive from you. Any info about yourself or others you want to share with your shipmates will be published here. Think of this as a combination of the bulletin board in the Crew's Mess and the

Hello Shipmates, friends and loyal readers!

As Mr. Whitney, my English composition teacher at Bridgton Academy used to say, while handing out the dreaded grades for the weekly essay; "now that I have your attention" I'll explain the cover page. First, this is not the end of the Bang Gang Newsletter, I'll be putting it out as long as I am editor and two, that end may be coming sooner than one suspects. As I have said many times before, you are holding in your hands the most expensive item the Bang treasury has to fund. We do this by funding it almost 95% by the slush fund. That is a terrible way to fund an undertaking. It is sporadic, uneven money wise, and almost completely driven by outside forces we have no control over.

Everyone who has taken Economics 101 knows the best way to make a profit is to control costs and increase revenue. Well, we have costs, but limited revenue, and that revenue is getting more limited every quarter. I'll illustrate with a few figures, (very few, as my shipmates in the forward room know, that if I have to count beyond ten, at least one shoe has to come off). Here are the hard facts:

1. We have at the present 170 hard copy recipients, and 105 e-edition recipients. The hard copy issues are paid completely by our treasury. The e-edition costs us nothing, zilch, nada!
2. We discussed at the reunion business meeting several solutions, most were discarded. Charging dues for the hard copy, we said no, as anyone who stood topside watch on the old girl at a temperature of 10 below with a 10 mph breeze coming off the Thames, has already paid their dues.
3. Reducing the number of issues. I said no, I have nothing else to do, and I'm just getting used to the job!
4. Reduce expenses where we can. Ike Cohen and I did so last year. The Post Office had a deal with a company out of Taiwan, that sold forever first class stamps at almost 40% off. The catch was you had to jump through so many hoops and sharp turns, it would have made the CIA interviewing process very jealous. We bought the maximum of twenty rolls. We used all rolls this year, meaning we, postage wise, paid nothing for postage. Michelle, my angel at Staples, our printer, looks out for coupons that Staples periodically sends out to the VIP customers, which we are one. This year, due to the coupons, we were able to reduce the cost of the hard copies by \$300.00. That is the good news, here comes the bad...as of this writing Staples has no coupons in the pipeline, and we will be paying full price for the postage. The slush fund will take a big hit with this issue. We have close to 275 shipmates and loyal readers, of that number we had a total of only close to 30 donated to the slush fund this year. We have to do better. I for one have made a promise to Ike that I will contribute every quarter to the fund, and if you look at past issues many of those who do contribute are repeat donors. Let's all step up to the fiscal plate and contribute what you can. We, as veterans know the saying, "Freedom isn't free" well neither is this newsletter.
5. Finally, one other solution to our fiscal situation is the easiest, and really the most cost effective, because it solves our problems in a big way, and it costs nothing. That solution...convert from hard copy to the e-edition. Now, I know we are pretty much that generation that grew up holding the newspaper in our hand. I was one of them, it just feels good. However, reality has dawned on the publishing industry as well. The e-edition of the New York Times costs \$1.00/wk, at the newsstand it's \$3.50 a hard copy issue. I'll go into the dollars and cents next page.

The advantages of going electronic are more than just hard currency. The issue is in full color! If you move, you don't have to do a thing, the newsletter follows you automatically! Plus, since it comes to you via your computer, just hit Ctrl P on your keyboard, and your printer shoots out a hard copy, just staple the edges and you have your very own little booklet. It's a win-win situation! Also, you can make a newsletter file, and store it for future reference, no paper clutter. But best of all, it comes to you at no cost to the BANG treasury, you'll make like a friend for life! If you are reading this on hard copy, it came to you probably as much as a week after the e-edition people received theirs.

The last two newsletters were 8 pages in total. This is because of the Microsoft Publisher dreaded RULE of FOUR! All items on publisher must be in groups of four pages. For a newsletter, I think it's a pain, but rules are rules. If this was the minimum four pages, you have the front and back page, and two on the back side of each page. It would basically a two page newsletter. The eight page was not that much better. The reason, cost. Each page costs about .25 cents, if we have a coupon. I'll try to illustrate.

The third quarter newsletter, eight pages, cost \$ 336.19 including tax and fasteners. That doesn't sound like much, but remember we did not have to pay for postage and we had a \$125.00 coupon, Taking into consideration no coupon and paying full price for postage, those newsletter hard copy editions would have cost \$858.99. The 105 e-editions...ZERO! Postage is the culprit, and that is only going to rise.

This is all and good Mr. Editor, but what if I don't have a computer, will I still receive the newsletter? A resounding of course you will! This newsletter is for everyone, and if you are on either the email or hard copy lists you will continue to receive the newsletter. There are readers that, like me, are digitally challenged and need a lot of help. My grandson was my go to Mr. Fix it, but now he's 1500 miles away and I have to sink or swim. He would always smirk when I asked the kind of questions every geek knew the answer before I finished asking him, but then I would say "if I bought something for 5 dollars and sixty six cents and paid with a ten dollar bill and a penny, how much change would I get back?" Then he'd smile go back to the computer. But the conversion is easy. Just click on the icon at the bottom of the page, hit "open" and enjoy! Literally, if I can do it, anybody can. Well, that's my pitch and I hope many readers can see my point and change to the Digital edition. Now enough of the dreary doom and gloom world of finance and switch to something more fun....The reunion!



THE USS BANG (SS 385) ANNUAL REUNION JACKSONVILLE FLA.10/13-17 2025

Well shipmates and loyal readers, the annual Bang Gang 2025 reunion is in the books, and by the opinion of all who attended it was a fantastic week! We gathered at the Double Tree by Hilton hotel in downtown Jacksonville right on the river and the weather was one that every Chamber of Commerce dreams about. Warm, sunny and clear skies every day. Several attendees came in early and enjoyed the many sights and attractions afforded nearby and sampled the many restaurants and tourist spots that this vibrant North Florida city has to offer. The reunion officially got under way on Monday with a vibrant get together out on the hotel's spacious deck with a cocktail hour with plenty of snacks and hors d'ouvres provided by our hosts Lenny and Sharon Sciuto, Jennifer Wilson and Rob Bridle. It was a great time to catch up with all our shipmates and families. Tuesday saw the first of our tour days, with a trip to St. Augustine, America's oldest city. We took a guided tour of the city with all its history and unique Southern charm. We concluded with shopping time on St. George street and ended with a great lunch at Harry's restaurant right on the water. That night several of the attendees went to the nearby dinner Theater to take in an interactive show entitled The Mystery of Edwin Drood, by Charles Dickens.

Wednesday was a trip to Kings Bay, Georgia and a "tour" of the submarine base. However, due to the government shutdown it was a limited tour, but the staff was very helpful in making it an interesting, if brief, couple of hours. The best part of that Wednesday's tour day was lunch at the Horse and Cow bar and restaurant in town. This Horse and Cow is a replica of the original on the West Coast, and has a ton of submarine memorabilia. The food was great also, each portion was usually too much to handle, but being well trained "bubbleheads" AKA never miss a meal "while on duty," we acquitted ourselves admirably. That night we had our now famous Pizza night courtesy, as always, of Rob Bridle. Later, we were entertained by Lenny and Sharon with a trivia contest and since it was Columbus Day week, most of the questions were heavily Chris Columbus slanted. Any one who was Lief Ericson, ahem, related was at a distinct disadvantage. It was a fun, and educational evening, and to see our Chaplain Lenny in pirate's get up was well worth the price of admission. I'm still dreaming about the pizza!

Thursday, we had our business meeting, while the ladies went on a museum tour. That night we had our banquet with a lively performance by a comedian who is also a Navy veteran, so there were several jokes, including several about one particular newsletter's editor and is less than stellar qual's performance. Jennifer and Harley Wilson were made "honorary" Bang Gang Members. Well deserved for all their help in making every reunion a success. As always we concluded the banquet with fond farewells and promises to keep in touch and meet again next year. Where, you might ask? Well the Bang Gang will hold its 2026 Annual Reunion in July in beautiful Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Summertime in the beer capital of America, what could be better!

So please join our hosts, John and Dalene Kraft in Milwaukee, and who knows maybe we'll see Kenosha don't you know, eh? Further details of the Milwaukee reunion will be in the next newsletter.

It was a great time in Jacksonville and thanks to the great work of Lenny and Sharon, Jennifer and Harley Wilson, and Rob Bridle who worked day and night to make this a great reunion, one that will be remembered for a long time, if not for all our experiences, but also for Lenny's "AARGH MATEY" welcome.

**SAILING LIST FOR THE 82ND BANG GANG REUNION
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 13-17 2025**

**FRANCIS & CANDI FERGUSON 58-61 IC
ROBERT SAWYER 58-61 TM
ROBERT HECHT 61-63 YN
JIM & CAROLYN ANDEE 62-64 ETR
ROCCO & NANCY DeLEO 63-66 TM
LEN FAGOTTI & MARILYN BARRATT 63-66 EN
JOE & CATHY BURDESHAW 64-65 FTM
JIM & YOLANDA KLEIN 64-66 EN
HARLEY & JENNIFER WILSON (HOSTS)
MARK & ESTELLE WALERZAC (GUESTS)
JACK & DIANE O'CONNOR 64-67 MM
FRANK & CLAUDIA STEINMETZ (GUESTS)
RALPH & CLAIRE GATES 65-67 SN
ROLAND & AUDRY DAIGLE 66-67 ET
GABE & PAM LEWIS 66-68 FTGU
KARLA LINDQUIST (GUEST)
ESTHER HAMPTON
ERIC & SALLY ERICSON 67-68 TM
DENIS O'BRIEN & GUEST DENISE HANSEN 67-68 TM
JAMES & HARRIET SCHULTZ 67-68 TM
ROB BRIDLE & PAULINE RONDO 67-70 EN (HOSTS)
BILL & JOAN FENTON 67-71 LT
TOM & ROSE HILL 68-69 MM
ALAN & LINDA THOLE 68-69 IC
JOHN & DARLENE KRAFT 68-70 RM
LEN & SHARON SCIUTO 69-71 QM (HOSTS)
HAL & EDITH WILKINS 69-72 ET
IKE COHEN & MICHELLE OSTAPIEJ 70 SK
PAUL SCHRAMM 70-71 ET
MARK & ANELISA & GUEST KIRK HEIMAN
HARRY & JoANN ROSS 64-67 STS & ED ROSS (GUEST)**

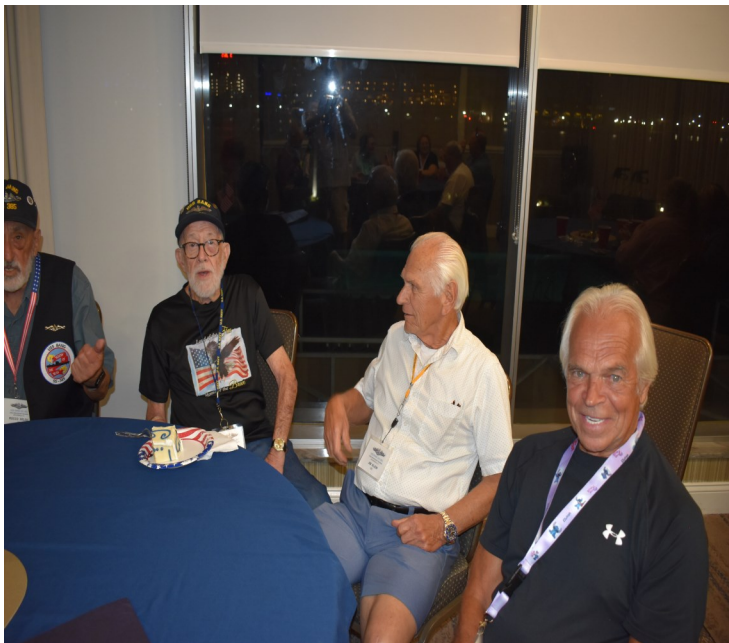














LOST AND FOUND



This page is dedicated to informing you of any additions, deletions, or corrections to our active roster.

It has been brought to our attention that the following shipmates have passed away and will be placed on Eternal Patrol.

**NONE TO REPORT
(AMEN)**

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE GENEROUSLY DONATED TO THE BANG SLUSH FUND

ROCCO AND NANCY DeLEO

ERIC AND SALLY ERICSON

BILL AND JOAN FENTON

LENNY AND SHARON SCIUTO

JIM AND HARRIET SCHULTZ

EDITOR'S NOTE: A VERY HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE SCHULT'S FOR THEIR GENEROUS GIFT!



**CHANGE OF ADDRESS
HARRY AND JOANN ROSS
201 WATERMERE DR
UNIT 209 BOX 48
SOUTHLAKE, TX 76092**

THE PROPHECY

Yamamoto's prediction that won the Pacific War for the Americans

It was the afternoon of December 7th 1941 and the Japanese Pacific fleet was steaming home from Pearl Harbor after their greatest sea victory in Japan's history; even more decisive, some say, than the victory over Russia's Imperial Pacific fleet in the battle of Tsushima in 1905. Every American battleship in port was sunk or severely damaged, the aircraft on Hickam airfield, with just a few stragglers who managed to get airborne, were destroyed.

Every capital ship from cruisers to destroyers, to auxiliary ships were either sunk or damaged, and the only capital ship of the line to make it out to open sea was the light cruiser USS Phoenix which returned after finding no Japanese ships. Only the submarine base, fuel tanks, and CincPac headquarters survived without a scratch. The cost to Japan's fleet? 29 aircraft shot down, 74 pilots lost. Celebratory cups of sake were passed around and the mood was triumphant, except for one man...Isoroku Yamamoto, the Commander of Japan's Imperial Navy. Yamamoto's somber demeanor dampened the triumphant spirit in the wardroom, and when asked why so subdued when he was sure to be summoned and praised by Emperor Hirohito himself, Yamamoto supposedly answered, "All we have done, I fear, is awaken a sleeping giant, and fill him with a terrible resolve."

While there is no written or audio proof that Yamamoto actually made this statement, many felt he truly believed it. For Yamamoto had lived and had been taught in the States. Educated at Harvard, and fluent in English, he had traveled widely as a Naval Attache in the Japanese Embassy in Washington. He was a baseball fanatic, as were many Japanese, and had traveled widely across the Central and Eastern United States following his favorite team, the Washington Senators. He saw the automobile assembly lines in Detroit, the steel furnaces and plants in Pittsburg, Birmingham, and Gary Indiana, the clothing and armament factories in New England, and in doing this had traveled extensively by the vast, sprawling rail system that crisscrossed the entire country, and if the time came, could transport vast amounts of men, material, weapons, and food unhindered. What impressed him the most as a Naval Officer however, was the seemingly endless coastal shorelines of the eastern and western United States. Each town and city seemed to have a harbor, and each harbor could one day become a Naval Base or more importantly, a Navy Yard. He was also impressed with the American people. They were hospitable, hard working, generally up beat, and while they respected tradition, they were not driven by it. In short, he had acquired the greatest advantage any military commander must have when going into battle, 'know your enemy'.

This is why he was reluctant to enter into a war with America. The other military leaders, however were not so cautious. America had stopped its oil exports to Japan due to the war in China. Japan was making up this shortage with Indonesia and French Indo-China, but still it wasn't enough if it were to expand its East Asia Co Prosperity Sphere, just another phrase for conquer. Still, no matter how adamant he was against going to war with the Americans, Tojo, the Prime Minister, had the ear and influence over the Emperor, and Yamamoto finally came around, with one caveat. If he were to enter a war with America, he would be able to promise six months of victories, hoping to draw the United States into a treaty, after six months he made no promises. He was right... the first six months of the war went unbelievably well, then came Midway.



THE END OF AN EMPIRE, THE BEGINNING OF A WORLD POWER

The United States of America was in no way able to put together a credible military offensive on December 8th, 1941. Still in the throes of the Great Depression, battling rampant unemployment, and budgets stretched to the breaking point, Franklin D. Roosevelt turned to advisors for a miracle. He needed one. The United States' standing Army on that Monday stood at a laughable 174,000 men, an army smaller than Portugal's. An Army equipped with World War I armament and equipment. An army with an air corps consisting of obsolete, unproven and unsafe "flying coffins" as described by the pilots who flew them. The Navy was in better shape with a somewhat powerful Pacific fleet which disappeared in one terrible morning. That morning, in his "day of Infamy" speech, he asked Congress for a declaration of war against the Empire of Japan. Later that day, thousands upon thousands of young men descended on recruiting stations across the country. It was the beginning of the greatest enlistment process in American history. It was needed. Japan, with America's Pacific fortress destroyed, the Empire went on an unimpeded rampage across the Southeastern Pacific. The Netherlands lost its navy and its Indonesian holdings in weeks, Singapore fell along with the two newest and most powerful British Navy battle cruisers, the Repulse and Prince of Wales in an afternoon. Guam and Wake Island fell, along with Burma, and Australia was threatened. On December 8th, The Philippines were attacked and would soon fall. It wouldn't be until the following spring that the sleeping giant would fully awake and begin to show the nightmare Yamamoto had envisioned.

In the past, if you wanted to become a Naval Officer, you went to Annapolis, now new ships were beginning to slide down the ways every day and the Navy needed a lot more officers to man them. They started the Naval Reserve Officer training program. Ninety day wonders, the Academy graduates called them. The Reserve officers countered by calling the regular Navy Ensigns "trade school" graduates. As the war in the Pacific began to be fought in earnest, the Marine Corps bore the brunt of the fighting. They were transported in troop ships that were requisitioned Ocean Liners. As the battle lines increased, so did the need for troop transports and a whole lot of them, not just to carry men but their provisions, weapons, tanks, clothing and medical supplies. Here was the beginning of Yamamoto's worst nightmare, an enemy, dedicated to victory, with unlimited supplies, with no fear of being bombed, a workforce ready and able to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until the final shot.

Kaiser Works Shipyards on the West Coast, took Henry Ford's assembly line idea and produced a new type of ship, the Liberty ship, and by the end of the war was launching two ships every three days. Boeing Aircraft opened four new plants and produced a total of 12,692 B-17's and over 6,000 B-29's, Consolidated built a new plant in Willow Run, Michigan in three weeks to manufacture B-24 Liberator bombers, and North American built two plants in Kansas for B-25's. After the Stanley tool company produced a smaller, lighter line of hand tools specifically designed for the smaller hands of the women workers, the Willow Run plant was turning out one B-24 Liberator every 63 minutes. Tanks, jeeps, and personnel carriers started rolling out the Ford plants hundreds a day. All transported to the ports by rail cars unimpeded by air strikes. Even a small shipyard in Quincy, Ma. (still in operation) sent Battleships, Cruisers, and Destroyers down the Fore River to the sea. Grumman, Vought, Curtiss, and North American plants were turning out F6F Hellcats, F8U Corsairs, and P51 Mustangs, at a withering pace. The A6M Zero, the scourge of Pearl Harbor was no match for the power, armament, and sheer number of American dedication, ingenuity and work ethic. Oh, and those towns that had a shipyard, they were launching ships at a maddening 24 hour 7 day week pace, that at the end of the war, the Navy that started with 4 Pacific based aircraft carriers at the beginning of hostilities, had 43 carriers in the water at war's end.

Yamamoto was right, the giant had been awakened and was ready to fight. At the Battle of Midway, even before the full might of American industry went into high gear, Japan lost its first battle in its history, it sailed home on June 6th 1942, leaving 4 of its first line carriers, 3 of which took part in the Pearl Harbor raid, at the bottom of the Pacific. As he sat in his stateroom on the voyage home in disgrace, I wonder if he realized it was six months to the day since the attack on Pearl Harbor.

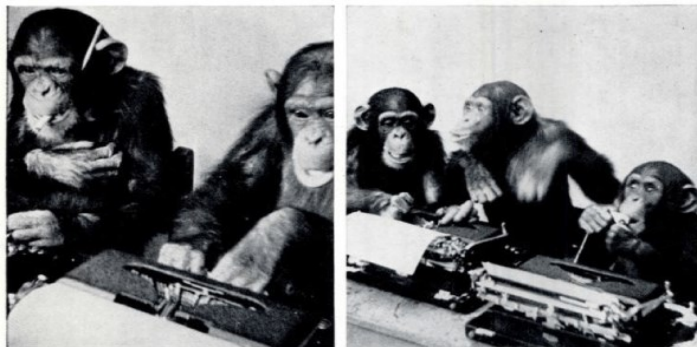
THE LUCKY BAG

**JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT
WAS SAFE TO GO TOPSIDE !**



Well, Loyal Readers we've come to the end of another year. This newsletter was the longest I've written and sent out, probably even longer than Phil sent out. This, I feel, is what a newsletter should be. You, the reader deserve it, and I, the editor should deliver it. It was sixteen pages, the same as the last two newsletters combined. As I write this, we still don't have any word if Staples will have any discount coupons, and we will pay full price for the stamps we use for postage, it will probably be the most expensive newsletter we've ever produced, so the treasury will take a hit. So once again, I will make a plea, the last one, for more slush fund donors to step up to the plate and send what you can to Ike, our treasurer, to keep this kind of newsletter showing up in your inbox or mail box. As always, call or email Ike first to find out what address he wants you to send the check to. Ike's phone number and email address are in the mast head, do not send the checks to me, as it only delays Ike getting the donation. What you CAN send to me is an email saying, "Eric, I've decided to join the 21st century, become a member of the Bang Gang digital express and convert to the e-edition." Or you can write anything, or nothing just give me your email address and I will take it from there! The e-edition is the fastest, cheapest, as in no cost, way to receive and insure the survival of your newsletter. Again, enough about scary financial stuff, let's talk about the reunion.

This past reunion was again one of the best in memory! Kudos, Bravo Zulus, 4.0 performance ratings all around! Your hosts Lenny, Sharon, and Rob went above and beyond to bring us an enjoyable week together. With get togethers, blind auctions, trivia contests, and comedians galore, it was a fun filled, action packed week, of tours, hospitality rooms, and fascinators, Oh My! A really great job. However, the best part was what is the heart of any reunion, the seeing old shipmates once again, rekindling of forever friendships, the sea stories that unlike the tellers, never grow old, and the warm feeling seeing people we spent a couple of years, or twenty as our unique in the military family. Even my best friend, fraternity brother, football teammate, and college roommate, a retired Marine Corps Major, once confessed, "you bubbleheads are the tightest bunch of veterans there are." Strong praise from someone who knows the military. It's the same old story, when someone asks, "how could you stand being in that sardine can all the time?" Our answer is the same, no matter what boat we qualified on. "I could tell you, but if you weren't there, you wouldn't understand." So, as I end this issue of the newsletter, which I'm sure will last a long time, and me along with it, Happy Holidays from myself and your newsletter staff! Stay safe and I'll see you next year!



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PRAISE OUR MILITARY! - AND PRAY FOR THEM TOO.

