

LST534 Newsletter

January/February, 1999

Volume II, Issue I

BULLETIN...BULLETIN...BULLETIN...BULLETIN...

HISTORY CHANNEL TO AIR LST534 DOCUMENTARY

YOUR STORY IS GOING TO BE TOLD ON A&E'S HISTORY CHANNEL!

With a total viewership of 50+ million subscribers, we should be able to generate a good audience.

Let me share the story with you. First of all, each of you know that I have never produced a documentary before. In fact, one of the first questions Howard K. Smith asked, was "Who is the producer and what have they produced?" At that precise moment, I wish I could have made something up. It was hard to tell him "my name is Linda, and I have never produced anything at all." Well, fortunately, Mr. Smith being the wonderful and professional man he is, knew this story had to be told.

Little did I know how hard it is to get something on the air. If your name is Steven Spielberg or Ken Burns, hey, people listen.

But with no credits to my name, it became quite a challenge. I give all kinds of credit to Ron Pobuda in my office, who rose to the challenge of getting this show on the air. We first approached 3 outlets; PBS, the History Channel and the Learning Channel. After some very anxiety provoking moments, we learned that even though the PBS Station, the New Jersey Network, recommended the show to PBS National, PBS National said they didn't really show much history documentaries because of the History Channel. I was so disappointed. For the first time during this whole project it occurred to me that no one may want to air this show. How could I ever face you guys again. That call came the day before Thanksgiving. Needless to say, it was not the best Thanksgiving I ever had!

So, after wallowing around in my sorrow for a few days, we had to kick back into high gear.

The History Channel just had to come through!

Ron really stepped up his efforts. After making calls to a few friends, he managed a "sit down" meeting with the History Channel. It was scheduled for December 23rd. As the day came closer, I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep. I was on pins and needles.

On December 23rd, 1998 at 11:00 am, Ron called to tell me the History Channel is buying the show. I burst into tears.

Congratulations to all of the crew, the ones I have found, the ones that have passed on, and to the ones I have yet to find – your story will be told!

Almost every day since then, I think about what really happened on December 23, 1998. I believe Dad woke up that morning, found Johnny Wilson, then Joe Szymanski,

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who then got John Shipe and John “Jack” Cain. They knew they had a big job to do that morning. On the way to their appeal, they were chatting amongst themselves about what to tell God. As they made their appeal, you can hear my Dad say, “her and the men worked so hard for this, you gotta sprinkle some angel dust over Ron and the meeting with the History Channel program people today.” God listened intently and as the men walked away, God smiled.

THE REUNION

Last issue I transcribed Mr. Howard K. Smith’s speech at the reunion.

This issue, I am showing you a picture of the award plaque that certain members of the crew awarded me during the reunion ceremony.

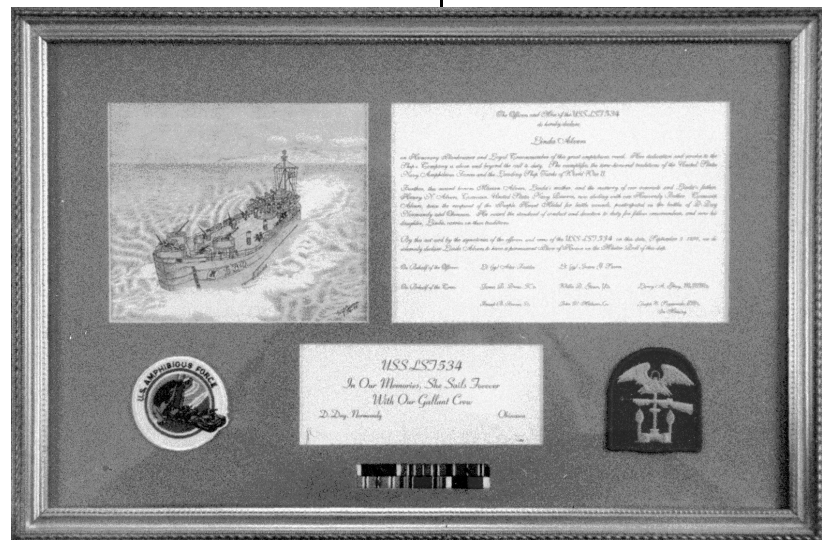
Here is what the tribute says: “The officers and men of the USS LST534 do hereby declare Linda Alvers an honorary plank owner and loyal crew member of this great amphibious vessel. Her dedication and service to the ship’s company is above and beyond the call of duty. She exemplifies the time-honored traditions of the United States Navy Amphibious Forces and the Landing Ship Tanks of WWII. Further this award honors Marian Alvers, Linda’s mother, and the

memory of our comrade and Linda’s father, Henry N. Alvers, Coxswain, United States Navy Reserve now abiding with our Heavenly Father. Coxswain Alvers, twice the recipient of the Purple Heart Medal for battle wounds participated in the battles of D-Day Normandy and Okinawa. He raised the standard of conduct and devotion to duty for fellow crewmembers, and now his daughter, Linda, carries on these traditions. By this act and by the signatories of the officers and crew of the USS LST534 on this date, September 5, 1998, we do solemnly declare Linda Alvers to have a permanent Place of Honor on the Muster Roll of this ship. On behalf of the officers: Lt. (jg) Alex Fielder, Lt. (jg) James G. Sarres. On behalf of the crew: James R. Drew, SC3c, Willie D. Gunn, Y2c, Larry A. Gray, MoMM3c, Frank B. Frame, S1c, John V. Medeiros, Cox and Joseph E. Szymanski, BM1c (in memory).

Willie explained further about the plaque.

It contains a sketch of the ship that we sailed on, at least in our memories. The original amphibious patch (left), we were called the “gater navy”, but the forces that be said that wasn’t dignified enough. They designed us a new patch (right) that we wore on our left sleeve; the only branch of the United States Navy ever to have a patch to be worn.

We have (in the center) the ribbons that were awarded most of the crew. The purple heart with an oak leaf signifying Coxswain Alvers twice being awarded the Purple Heart, the American Theater ribbon, the European African Middle Eastern ribbon with one combat star, the Asiatic Pacific Ribbon with one combat star, the Victory Medal and the Occupation Medal for the Navy for WWII.



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FACTS

Authors and the Military

J.D. Salinger – fought in D-Day landing

James Michener – Solomon Island aviation maintenance

Herman Wouk – earned four Navy Campaign Stars

Norman Mailer - Chose to be a private over an officer

Kurt Vonnegut – in Prisoner of War camp for five months

Source: World Features Syndicate

WWW.LST534.COM

I know many of you do not have a computer and the use of the Internet is beyond your interest. However, I believe the website is really important for the exposure of the LST534 and the documentary. Many, many people out there are interested in history or the military or human interest stories. We have all of that and more.

I want to do a section on the crewmembers. I will be asking all shipmates to fill out a form and send a “then” and “now” picture. Stay tuned.



IN MEMORY

For months we have had John “Jack” Cain, S1c (RM) on the get well list. Jack passed away on December 7th. He died of cancer. I spoke with Jack often over the last year. He knew my Dad well and wanted to tell me all kinds of stories. Every time I would think about going down to Pennsylvania to capture these stories, he would be too ill to go through an interview. The cancer finally won the battle.

Jack is survived by his wife, Theresa and their five children, John P., Patrick, Colleen, Kathleen, and Eileen, not to mention in-laws and grandchildren.

Jack and Theresa were married 51 and a half years.

He was very proud to be a part of the LST534 family. We will truly miss Jack Cain – may he rest in peace.

BIRTHDAYS

February 3

William Dox, S2c (Y)
443 South Main St
P O Box 756
Massena, NY 13662

February 16

Louis Stockdale, Lt (jg)
407 Taft Street South
Humboldt, IA 50548-2250

February 26

Willie Gunn, Y2c
105 Bull Street
Swainsboro, GA 30401

March 14

Salvatore Logano, S2c
101 High Street
P O Box 144
Portland, CT 06480-1656

March 16

Robert J. Foy, SF3c
719 Hiawatha Drive
Elkhart, IN 46517-1829

April 1

Angelo Anthony Cumella,
S1c (SK)
11 Freeport Court
Toms River, NJ 08757

April 14

Alex Fielder, Lt (jg)
5950 Ambassador Drive
Fairfield, OH 45014



RENTAL LIBRARY

We finally have a real live rental library available. My goal here is to make the video interviews and deck logs open for rental. I have tried to make the rental fees reasonable. It will be important for each of you to return the rental items on time. That way, each person can get what they want also, in a timely fashion. There is an order form enclosed.

GET WELL WISHES

If you need to be on the get well list, please call Linda at 1-800-237-1224.

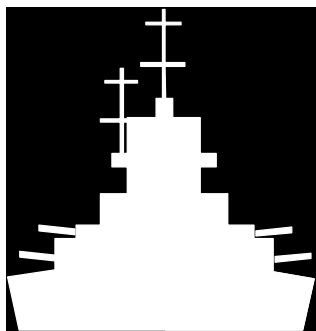
Dick Drew, S2c
290 Semicircle Drive
Demorest, GA 30535

Alfred Ellis, F1c
28910 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185

Ira Leonard, S1c
2335 Hawthorne Dr
Foristell, MO 63348

Earl Lego, Cox
5420 Niemyer Road
Erie, PA 16509

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62 W 62nd Street
Apt. 26B
New York, New York 10023



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JUST FOR FUN

JOKES FROM JIM

Q: What did the fish say when it hit the concrete wall?

A: "Dam"

Q: What do Eskimos get for sitting too long on the ice?

A: "Polaroids"

LOCATOR SERVICE

I am back on track on locating shipmates. I must admit that during the last 9 or 10 months, I have been focused on producing and selling the show. But I plan on spending one to two hours each week trying to locate more LST534 crew members. I'll keep you informed.

NAUTICAL TERMS

By James Richard Drew

Greenhorns: Never crossed the international dateline.

Cuddy: A small shelter cabin in a boat.

Dead Ahead: Directly ahead.

Do you have a nautical term that you remember...if so, phone it in!