

USN ALL HANDS Magazine Nov 1994

"Stand by for shot lines"

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Underway replenishment (UNREP) is an integral part of the Navy's mission. Without the ability to transfer food, fuel and firepower, our ships would be in and out of port constantly, seriously affecting their ability to sustain a fight. Perhaps in an effort to salute those supply ships that provide their sustenance, or maybe as just a snappy conclusion to the touchy operation that is UNREP, Navy ships have established the tradition of breakaway songs. As the two ships part, or breakaway, a song blares from the receiving ship's speaker system. Whatever the beginnings of this practice, the tradition is now bound in the annals of Navy folklore. Some ships have songs they feel represent their work ethic, others choose a different tune each time. Through time ships have piggybacked personal touches on existing tradition. Some ships unfurl their battle ensign at breakaway or have the conning officer don a funny hat. Some supply ships pass along mementos to their customers as part of their UNREP routine. Here are a few of the mottos, nicknames and breakaway routines practiced throughout the fleet.

USS Antietam (CG 54)

- Song selected based on replenishment ship. UNREP trademark is bolo toss rather than shot line gun for the forward line.

USS Arkansas (CGN 41)

- Theme from "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Flies Arkansas state flag. Conning officer wears red Arkansas Razorback hat (resembles a razorback) with a large "A" on both sides.

USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51)

- Motto is "Fast and Feared."

USS Aubrey Fitch (FFG 34)

- Passes along a "ship's bullet," an engraved CIWS shell. Motto - "On Station, On Time, Fully Mission Capable."

USS Avenger (MCM 1)

- Avenger is currently working with Marvel Comics (Ironman) to develop a ship's motto based on "Wooden Ships, Iron Men."

USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3)

- "Rawhide."

USS Bristol County (LST 1198)

- "Sweet Home Alabama."

USS Butte (AE 27)

- "Fanfare for the Common Man" by Aaron Copland. AKA. the "Silver Bullet Express."

Motto - "We Keep the Guns Loaded."

USS Camden (AOE 2)

- "Baby Elephant Walk" by Henry Mancini. Occasionally deviates from standard and plays good old American rock and roll. Displays sign on signal bridge that reads, "You are the -th trader along-side."

USS Cayuga (LST 1186)

- "Di Qeella Pira" from Il Trovatore.

USS Comte de Grasse (DD 974)

- "Theme From Patton." Passes a bottle of wine to UNREP ship that is "bottled exclusively for DD 974" under the label "Count's Choice." Ship's mascot - the Energizer Bunny.

USS Dubuque (LPD 8)

- "Bad to the Bone" by George Thorogood and the Destroyers.

USS Duluth (LPD 6)

- Different each time, crew suggestions.

USS Elliot (DD 967)

- Different each time, chosen by the "bull" ensign.

USS Essex (LHD 2)

- "Little Deuce Coupe" by the Beach Boys.

USS Flint (AE 32)

- Crew member picks different song each time. AKA: the "Silver Bullet." For first-time customers, the ship provides a six-pack of silver bullets (sodas) bearing a remarkable resemblance to Coors Lite Silver Bullet logo

USS Gettysburg (CG 64)

- Motto - "Deeds not Words."

USS Guardian (MCM 5)

- "Whipping Post" by the Allman Brothers.

USS Harry W. Hill (DD 986)

"Born To Be Wild."

USS Ingraham (FFG 61)

- Different each time, weekly

division in the spotlight makes the choice. Displays battle ensign during breakaway, same size as used by aircraft carriers.

USS Jarrett (FFG 33)

- NO traditional song. They have a breakaway band, the Black Cats, that plays on the 02-level forward or the flight deck aft during breakaway. Replenishment rig and linehandler personnel, at UNREP's end, conduct crisp line abreast bow, in the fashion of a wave, to the departing ship, followed by hand waves.

USS John A. Moore (FFG 19)

- Different each time, chosen by "George" ensign, then reviewed by the "bull" ensign, navigator, PAO and XO.

USS John L. Hall (FFG 32)

- "Johnny Be Good" by Chuck Berry.

USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53)

- Uses selections from "Victory at Sea."

USS Juneau (LPD 10)

- "North to Alaska" by Johnny Horton.

USS Kiska (AE 35)

- "North to Alaska." by Johnny Horton. Trademark is "Pumping Iron."

Laboon (PCU)

- AKA: the "Fearless Fifty-eight." Laboon's motto is "Without Fear."

USS LaSalle (AGF 3)

- AKA: "Great White Ghost of the Arabian Coast." During a recent shipyard visit, LaSalle was painted haze grey and is looking for a new nickname.

USS Lewis B. Puller (FFG 23)

- "Rawhide" by the Blues Brothers. Flies ship's flag, a Marine Corps bulldog for "Chesty" Puller, at breakaway.

USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55)

- "Born to be Wild" by Steppen-wolf. Passes the ship's "Dessert du Jour" to UNREP ship, usually brownies or chocolate chip cookies. Motto - "Move Swiftly and Strike Vigorously."

USS Mahlon S. Tisdale (FFG 27)

- "Sledge Hammer" by Peter Gabriel. Different songs solicited periodically from crew.

USS Merrill (DD 976)

- "Travelin' Band" by CCR was recently chosen by shipwide contest. Flies Unocal gas station flag with ship's motto "Spirit of '76."

USS Mississippi (CGN 40)

- "Born to be Wild" by Steppenwolf. AKA: "Mighty Miss."

USS Mobile Bay (CG 53)

- "Born in the USA."

USS Moosbrugger (DD 980)

- Moosbrugger's mascot is the "Mighty George Ensign Moose" who recently appeared at a World Wrestling Federation match featuring Hulk Hogan. The ship's motto is "The Moose is Loose."

USS Mount Hood (AE 29)

- "Sail Away" by Enya.

USS Mount Vernon (LSD 39)

- "Proud Mary" and "The Old Grey Mare." The song is selected just prior to breakaway based on how the day has gone.

USS O'Brien (DD 975)

- Motto - "It Wasn't Me." Trademarks are the green ball cap and a yellow battle flag with a shamrock.

USS Peterson (DD 969)

- Motto - "Proud Tradition."

USS Ponce (LPD 15)

- Ponce's mascot is "Sampson," a large stuffed lion that has developed a liking for highline transfers during UNREPs. Sampson has been known to escape from his caretaker with great regularity to go traveling.

USS Rainier (AOE 7)

- "Working Class Man" by Lacy J. Dalton. AKA: the "Ready Mart." Ship's motto - "Legend of Service." Flies one of 11 flags of major food products and/or gas companies upon breakaway. Rig crews tip hardhats to customer ship at breakaway.

USS Reid (FFG 30)

- "Ride of the Valkyries" by Richard Wagner. Symbolizes Reid's overwhelming presence as a battle frigate and not just an FFG.

USS Rentz (FFG 46)

- Songs are selected to fit each UNREP.

USS Reuben James (FFG 57)

- Crew makes suggestions for breakaway songs. On special occasions flies either the Reuben James flag (Reuben James holding a sword on a yellow field) or the 35 x 50-foot battle ensign ("Big Momma") during breakaway.

USS Roanoke (AOR 7)

- "Takin' Care Of Business."

USS Sacramento (AOE 1)

- "Tusk" by Fleetwood Mac. Passes bear claw pastries to receiving CO and flies California state flag during UNREP.

USS Safeguard (ARS 50)

- Theme song from "Hawaii 5-0." Home ported in Pearl Harbor and its hull number is 5-0.

USS Samuel Eliot Morison (FFG 13)

- The ship's mascot is a doberman/ black Labrador retriever mix dog named "Miss Liberty." Miss Liberty has mastered climbing up and down ladders and is a qualified watch dog in port. She

currently has more than 150 full-time masters and has located unlimited food sources, particularly steel beach picnics. Miss Liberty is up for reenlistment next February and is undecided about her future at this time.

USS Samuel Gompers (AD 37)

- "Born To Be Wild."

USS Santa Barbara (AE 28)

- Santa Barbara's mascot is "Santa Bee," a large yellow and black striped yellow jacket. The ship passes along a Mason jar full of Santa Bee's personal fueling honey. Santa Barbara's motto is "We deliver the sting"

USS Shasta (AE 33)

- "Fanfare For The Common Man" by Emerson, Lake and Palmer. Provides six-pack of Shasta cola to ship alongside. Motto - "We Serve Anytime, Anywhere."

USS Shreveport (LPD 12)

- "Perry" the brown pelican from the city seal of Shreveport is the ship's mascot.

USS Stump (DD 978)

-Stump's mascot is "Felix," a blue-fronted Amazon parrot acquired about 15 years ago. Stump's motto "Tenacity: Foundation of Victory."

USS Suribachi (AE 21)

- "Duke of Earle."

USS Thorn (DD 988)

- AKA: the "Mighty T." Thorn's motto is "Sharply Perseverant."

USS Tortuga (LSD 46)

- Tortuga's mascot is "Tuga" the turtle. Their motto is "Tough, Tall and Tenacious."

USS Truxtun (CGN 35)

-Different each time, crew suggestions.

USS Underwood (FFG 36)

- "Runnin' with the Devil" by Van Halen. The "Underwood Fighting Devils" are its mascot, and the motto is "Just Friend and Brave Enemy."

USS Vicksburg (CG 69)

- Motto - "Key to Victory."

USS Willamette (AO 180)

- "Takin' Care Of Business." Sometimes plays song that fits receiving ship. Flies ship's flag with Tasmanian Devil and motto "Fuel for Freedom."