



# Abnaki Courier

1943 - 1978

March, 2006

Phone---515-276-7250

**Annual dues \$15.00**

E-mail---- p.kingsley@att.net

If the last line on your address is not (05) or (11 or other) you may owe some dues. Send dues to:

Kingsley, Pete ---- 5320 N.W. 66 PL ---- Johnston, IA 50131



\*\*\*\*\*

## ARE YOU READY?

These Guys Are!

For The

2006

**USS Abnaki (ATF-96)**

Reunion

\*\*\*\*\*

August 23 - 27

**Big Boats**



Mike Holland

**Little Boats**



"Two-Block" Kingsley



**This is our hotel!**

Holiday Inn San Antonio-Riverwalk

217 North Saint Mary's St

San Antonio, TX 78205-2303

Phone: 1-210-224-2500 Fax: 1-210-527-9589

Hotel parking (Secure Garage) \$7.00/day

*Valet parking available at \$18.00/day. It is strongly advised you park yourself.*

It is your responsibility to make your own room reservations. We have a block of rooms reserved until August 1, 2006 at which time they will revert back to the general public at the regular rate.

**Room Rates: \$89.00/Day - Plus Tax**

This rate will be honored from August 21 through August 30, 2006

**Much more inside!**

## A Word From The Editor

As most of you know I often have a list of “Vital Statistics” such as, temperature averages, record high, and lows, average rain fall, etc for the location and during the time of the reunion. This time I think I can safely predict that it will be WARM and if it does rain all the natives will probably be delighted to have us join in with their jubilation. They have been experiencing a drought for several years. And... we probably would not mind the rain at all, remember Birmingham in the park?☺ This should be of little concern to us since we will be in an air-conditioned hotel and when we go some place the transportation will be air-conditioned so generally your exposure to the elements should be minimal.

One of the places you might be going where no AC exists, except in the cafes or shops, is the River Walk. However, not to worry, it is almost completely shaded and generally very comfortable. I will not even try to describe it here but you really should visit it at least once. Although they call it “The River Walk” some of you might prefer to simply sit along the river on one of it’s many benches. Or, if you want to see the whole thing, take one of the tour boats. These boats are inexpensive, relatively comfortable and the tour guides are very informative. And... since the river runs right alongside our hotel you should have no problem finding it. It is a great place to enjoy a leisurely meal or snack just sit and relax and listen to the birds and people watch.

Another place where you will be exposed to the elements is at the **Plaque Dedication** in Fredericksburg on Thursday morning. Notice that it has been scheduled for 10:30 AM which means that the temperature should still be very nice. And... the ceremony should take no more than one half-hour. Although this ceremony will be held outdoors there will be seating for everyone.

Remember! This is our chance to honor this gallant little ship that served in both the Atlantic and Pacific during WW11, plus the Korean, and Vietnam wars. By placing this Plaque in a place of honor that is visited by thousands of people every year, Abnaki’s legacy of service to our country, continuously for almost 35 years, will be carried forward for decades to come.

**One last word about the Plaque Dedication. We are hoping that everyone will make a special effort to join us there for this momentous event. And... remember to bring all your relatives and friends. It would be wonderful if we could pack that Courtyard. Even if someone does not wish to join us for the reunion they are still invited to join us for the dedication. Also... remember, there is no admission for the dedication so if they would like to join us just for it, that would be great! Let’s let everyone know that our ship was “Little but it was magnificent”! Bring them on, the more the merrier! And don’t forget that Fredericksburg is a great place to visit for a day a week or whatever. It’s hard to beat the “Hill Country”!**

The reunion sponsors have been working their respective fanny’s off, (Although Mike has little to spare☺), putting this thing together and they have done a superb job. The location is fantastic and all the programs look great so get yourself prepared for a lot of fun. Now it is our turn. All we have to do is make our individual plans, register, (The sooner the better) and then get there on time.

# USS Abnaki (ATF96)

## Reunion Registration Form

*Please complete the following form and return it ASAP to....*

**Kingsley, Pete, 5320 N.W. 66 PL, Johnston, IA 50131**

*For more information call, 515-276-7250, or e-mail <p.kingsley@att.net>*

**Please make check payable to: USS Abnaki Reunion Association**

**To insure your reservation for these activities this form must be returned no later than 8-1-2006**

**All prices include Tax**

Day	Time	Event	Cost	Times	# People	Total
Wednesday	10:00	Registration Fee	\$10.00	X		
Thursday	08:30	Bus tour to Fredericksburg	\$18.00	X		
	18:00	Welcome Aboard Buffet	\$17.00	X		
Friday	12:30	Bus Tour of San Antonio	\$16.00	X		
Saturday	18:00	Banquet	\$40.00	X		

There is no registration fee for anyone under eighteen.

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### THE BANQUET WILL BE SERVED BUFFET STYLE

Menu:

Traditional Caesar Salad with Foccacia Croutons and Shaved Reggiano. - Marinated Grilled Vegetable Platter with Fresh Basil. - N.Y Sliced Sirloin with Wild Mushroom Sauce. - Fried Chicken. – Penne Pasta with Marinated Shrimp, Asparagus, Tomatoes, Fresh Basil, and Shaved Reggiano, Harvest Blend Rice, Roasted Red Potatoes, Steamed fresh vegetables Du Jour. - Served with Warm Rolls and Butter.  
 Chocolate Torte, Coffee and Iced Tea.

The Menu for the “Welcome Aboard Buffet” To Be Announced

Please feel free to bring as many guests as you like including but not limited to Parents, Grandparents, Children, Grand Children, Great Grand Children, Cousins, Uncles/Aunts, and/or Friends. Reunions are for kicking back and relaxing, so bring them on!!! The more the better.

### Please!!!

See the next page for a full description of these events

Please show you and your guest’s name the way you want them to show on the “Name Badges” Also show your **name, rate and year/years** served aboard Abnaki. (Show “P” for Plank Owner)

*Please type or print*

---



---



---

*Use a separate sheet for additional names*

### Notice!!!

**We have lots of bills to pay so... your prompt reply will be greatly appreciated.**

Cancellations will be accepted and money refunded until 8-1-06. San Antonio is a place where the old meets the new, with lots of history and things too do.

**Important:** The first 12 people to register will have their choice of a room with a balcony overlooking the famous river walk or... just a plain old room overlooking other stuff. Mention this when you register!

**Very Important:** Some people have called about the rooms mentioned above and have reported that the hotel knows nothing about them so... here is the deal. The hotel management is keeping a record of every registration as they come in as to time and date. You may not know your status until you get there. If you are confused call Pete Kingsley☺

## Most Memorable Character

*Tom Thomas EM2 1958-59~ Reprinted from NAFTS Towline*

Louis A Downey, one of the most known, loved, feared, contradictory and delightful Officers and CO's I ever met. Our first encounter was in the fall of 1958. I was a hot rod EM2 on USS Arikara and just returned from a six month cruise to Operation Hardtack, the big atom bomb test in Bikini. After about a week back in Pearl Harbor, I received one of those famous EPDOPAC orders transferring me to USS Abnaki immediately. Abnaki at the time was just across the pier. A transfer of about 50 feet. A few hours later I became an Abnaki sailor! Lieutenant Junior Grade Louis Downey Commanding. What a day and night change from the laid back Arikara. The Captain definitely had his own philosophy on running a US Navy tug. First off there was the berthing compartment assignments. On every ATF I knew of the forward berthing compartment was divided into Deck on the port, Ops & Supply to starboard. The after berthing compartment was Snipe's. Not on Abnaki. The forward berthing compartment was watch and duty section I to port, II to starboard. The after compartment was section III. When underway everyone except the corpsman stood 3 section watch. You literally tripped over each other getting around underway.



Captain Downey

My first encounter with the Captain happened soon when one of the Ships Service generators was acting up while underway. I immediately had the standby started and shifted the load to it as I had been trained to do on Arikara. Then I notified the Bridge of what I had done. About one minute later I was summoned to "Lay to the Bridge". The first booming voice I heard upon arriving to the bridge was from Captain Downey, "**I am the Captain of this ship and I will tell you if I want the load shifted I will give you permission when I want it done!**" Wow. Three years into the Navy and I had never encountered anything like this. I barked back, "If I hadn't shifted the load when I did you would have been the Captain of USS Black and Cold." "Get off my Bridge... NOW", was the answer. Uh, Oh I thought after returning to Main Control. I'm in for it now. My new shipmates commiserated with me. Captain Downey will bust you for the slightest impropriety, you're had, I was told. Sure enough, some time later I was summoned to the Captain's cabin. The Captain, I was told would like to chitty-chat with me. This can't be a good thing. Hat in hand I entered the Captain's cabin and was told to sit down. The Chief Engineer and XO were both in attendance and weren't smiling. "Now tell me about this casualty and why you acted without permission." I explained as well as I could and answered a couple of gruff questions. "Your excused now", the Captain grunted. "Oh, and next time something like this happens be sure you report that you just corrected a casualty so I don't make an ass of myself again". So began 12 months serving the good Captain. He was undoubtedly the harshest, strictest CO I served under in my 20 years in the Navy. The Abnaki had more Captain's Mast every week then Arikara had in the three years I served on her. He was also a strict follower to his own code. He had a feel for handling the ship that was unreal and could have docked it in a Typhoon. I would have followed him to the hinges of Hades, but darn was I glad when my enlistment was up and I was separated from the Abnaki. Back in Treasure Island for separation I rethought my position and shipped over for another six. Why? Well, for one thing Captain Downey told me I was cut out to be a sailor. Perhaps he was right.

In 1963 I was promoted to Chief Electrician's mate and in 1964 found myself again stationed in Pearl Harbor. This time aboard the Conserver ARS 39. I looked across the pier one day as the CO of

Safeguard, moored across the pier was departing. Blow me down if it wasn't Captain Downey! Now a LCDR. During the next couple of years I came to know him quite well. He appeared to have mellowed quite a bit but kept his Safeguard to pretty strict standards. One thing for sure, his ship was always about the smartest ship around. When she landed at the pier it was nearly a choreographed play. There were no misses with the heaving lines, fenders neatly deployed and dressed. And no confusion. The Captain obviously still had things in hand. I left Conserver in 1968, this time picking up the Ammunition ship Virgo as a new Warrant Machinist for duty as MPA. In 1970 The Virgo was sent to Sasebo Japan to pick up retro ammunition for transport back to the US at the end of her deployment. We had a problem with one of the ancient condenser pumps and I went ashore to Fleet Activities to see if I could get some repair help. I was directed to the Fleet Acts Repair Officer who turned out to be..... you guessed it. LCDR. Louis A. Downey! The good Commander instantly recognized me and we had a long talk. We covered everything from the Abnaki to the present. He still remembered the day he threw me off the bridge of Abnaki.

I have spoken with several men that served under Louis Downey in the last few years. All remember him with great reverence. Some took the time to look him up and sit and talk to him.

It was with great surprise last October when the phone rang and I found myself talking to Lloyd Downey, son of CDR Lou Downey. "I'm sorry to report the death of a NAFTS member" Lloyd said. He acted in complete surprise when I responded that I had known the Captain well. Captain Downey passed away on 1 October, 2005.



### **Just another routine day aboard Abnaki☺**

*Jim "Pappy" Papworth*

If my memory serves me correctly it was in November 1952 and we had just finished a yard period in Pearl Harbor. While there we had our twin 20 MM Guns, along with ready boxes removed from the bridge wings. But... they did not remove the mountings for the 20MMs from the deck. They were about 4 inches high and could be tripped over very easy. So the Captain told the Shipfitter to take a torch and cut them off, that was ok, no need to notify the gunnery department right! **Wrong!**

I had been to the dentist on the base and as I got off the shuttle bus I could see sparks flying out of the 20mm gun tub on the starboard side. I wondered what was up so as soon as I got aboard I ran up to the bridge and saw what was happening. When I saw the Shipfitter cutting this mounting off my eyes got real big, and I ran down the ladder to the boat deck and looked under that gun tub. Sure enough there was that bright red ammo box strapped to the overhead. Smoke, rolling around the top of the box, was caused by the heating of the mounts that were being cut off. I immediately called out to the Shipfitter and told him to stop cutting and get the hell off the bridge before he got blown off. The OD leaned his head over the tub and ask what's going on? I said there is an ammo box against the overhead which is full of caps and could go off at anytime. I am not sure what the caps were used for, (They were never used anytime while I was aboard) but they appeared a lot like dynamite caps. Had they blown there would have been a hole in the side of the ship you could drive a truck through. All this time I'm also calling for some water. Someone finally showed up with a bucket of water and I dowsed the ammo box. Then I had him get another bucket full and pour it on the deck in the gun tub.

After cooling everything down another Gunners Mate and I unstrapped the ammo box and gently set it on the deck. The paint on the lid was all blistered and when we opened it up we were very relieved to see that all the caps were covered with real fine sawdust. Some of the sawdust had singed and was warm to the touch. These were percussion caps and very touchy. The electrical caps were kept in a small box half way up the rear mast This was just another quiet day on the old "96".

**Ed Note:** Recently someone told me that the Abnaki was one of the longest commissioned ship (Assuming her time with the Mexican Navy is also counted) second only to the USS Constitution. I looked up the history of the Constitution and found it very interesting and thought I would pass along this little tidbit about the famous ship. I did not research this information so please don't hold me responsible for it's accuracy. However, there seems to be a lot of similarities between the respective crews ☺

### Naval History Wooden Ships and Iron Men

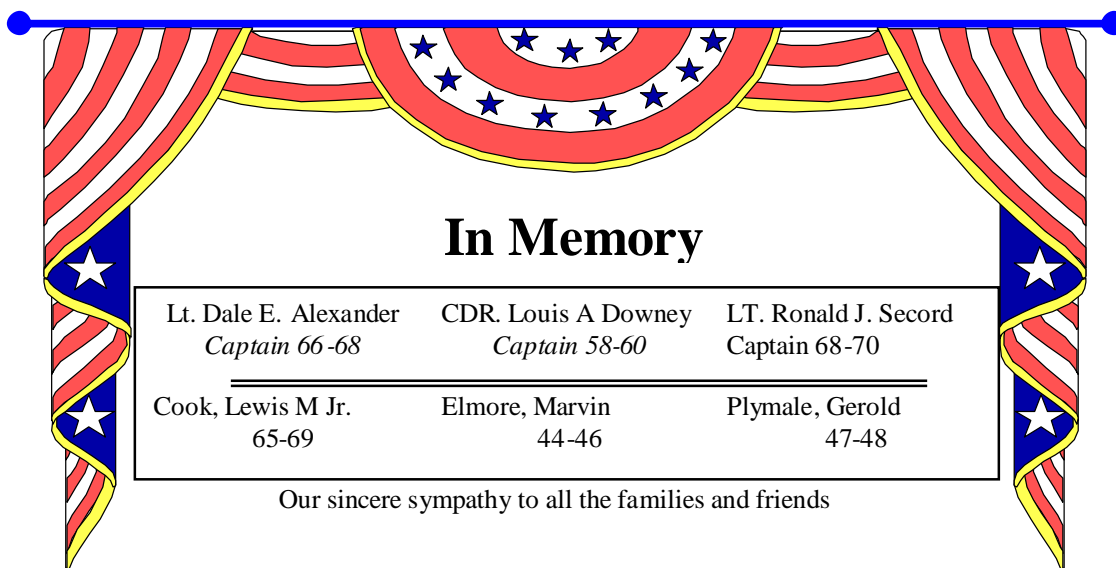
The following is from a tale related by the Chief Curator of the National Park Service, and printed in no less an authoritative source than "Oceanographic Ships, Fore and Aft", published by the oceanographer of the Navy. It has to do with a cruise of the 204-foot frigate USS Constitution, commonly known as Old Ironsides, in 1779:

The quote: On 23 August 1779, the USS Constitution set sail from Boston loaded with 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of water, 74,000 cannon shot, 11,500 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum. Her mission: to destroy and harass English shipping. On 6 October, she made Jamaica, took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Three weeks later the Constitution reached the Azores, where she provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 6,300 gallons of Portuguese wine. On 18 November, the ship set sail for England where her crew captured and scuttled 12 English merchant vessels and took aboard their rum. But the Constitution had run out of shot. Nevertheless, she made her way unarmed up the Fifth of Clyde for a night raid. Here her landing party captured a whiskey distillery, transferred 40,000 gallons aboard and headed home.

On 20 February 1780, the Constitution arrived in Boston with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no whiskey, just 48,600 gallons of water.

**DETAIL ANALYSIS:** Length of cruise - 181 days, Booze consumption - 2.26 gallons per MAN per day (plus whatever they rescued from the 12 English merchant ships)  
Guesstimated Re-enlistment rate - 100%

Pete Kingsley still has 14 license plate frames (gold) available for cars or trucks @ \$12.00 each and 2 frames for motorcycles \$8.00 each. When these are gone there will be no more ☺ So get your order to him soon!  
Order from  
Kingsley, Pete, 5320 N.W. 66 PL, Johnston, IA 50131  
For more information call, 515-276-7250, or e-mail <p.kingsley@att.net>



## Texas Facts, Quiz and Trivia

Read this carefully, You will be tested!!!

Since you will be traveling around Texas a lot you should know a few facts about it.

**Fact:**

Texas measures 801 straight-line miles (As the crow flies)☺ from north to south and 773 straight–line miles from east to west. Since Antonio is pretty much in the center of the state you will probably have a chance to see a lot of Texas no matter where you enter it

**Quiz:** You have probably all heard about (Six Flags over Texas) indicating that Texas was under six different countries. What were the six countries? If you get this right you win a free drink of your choice in the hospitality room☺ See Pete Kingsley for your prize!

**Trivia:** Texas has a population of about 22,000,000 that live in 254 counties, the largest of which is 6,193 square miles, an area larger than the state of Connecticut, and the smallest has an area of only 149 square miles. Of the 254 counties there are 51 with fewer than 5,000 residences and of those, eight counties have a population of less than 1,000. And... Texas has 91 mountains with peaks more than a mile high, (5,280 feet) the highest of all is Guadalupe which stands at 8,749 feet. All of these mountains are located in West Texas.

### Supplies

The following items may be ordered from the Abnaki (*Joe Colombara, Supply Officer*) supply department. All orders must be received 30 days before the reunion. Orders will be delivered to the reunion at the below prices.

If you wish to have your order shipped please see shipping and handling charges below.

**Please indicate size---Small---Medium---Large---Xtra Large-----XX Large (All Super Quality)**

#### Polo - Shirts

Color	Logo Colors	Quantity	Size	Cost	Total
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Ship			\$27.00	
Navy Blue	Silver Name, Number, Ship			\$27.00	
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Silver Ship			\$27.00	
White	Navy Blue Name, Number, Ship			\$27.00	
White	Men's V-Neck With Seahorses			\$27.00	
White	Women's V-Neck with Anchors			\$27.00	

**Note: Add \$2.00 Ea. For XX Large Sizes.**

Sub-Total \_\_\_\_\_

#### Caps

Color	Logo Colors	Quantity	Size	Cost	Total
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Ship		X	\$14.00	
Navy Blue	Silver Name, Number, Ship		X	\$14.00	
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Silver Ship		X	\$14.00	
White	Navy Blue Name, Number, Ship		X	\$14.00	

If your order exceeds the schedule shown below contact Joe Colombara

Sub-Total \_\_\_\_\_

**S & H-Charges.** One shirt, or one shirt and one cap \$5.00. Two Caps \$5.00. One cap \$3.00-Grand Total \_\_\_\_\_

(Please enclose check with order)

Please mail or call orders to: Joe Colombara Phone 618 - 344 - 8869  
 720 E. Country Ln. E-mail.....joec96@intertek.net  
 Collinsville, IL. 62234

Note: Make check payable to Joe Colombara☐ All profits go directly to the Abnaki Sailors Association.

#### New Item

Jackets like the ones worn at the Branson reunion, light quilted with full embroidery on the back.

\$75.00 - \$80.00 with your name on right breast (Includes Shipping)