

AUGUST 2019 WORDS OF WISDOM

THIS R RATED ARTICLE CONTAINS SOME ADULT MATERIAL WHICH MAY INCLUDE ADULT THEMES AND HARD LANGUAGE AND SEXUALLY ORIENTED TALK

Locker Club? What in the hell is a Locker Club?

Bet that is the first question asked by one of today's modern bluejackets.

There was a time, not that long ago, when the United States Navy did not try to be all things to all people. There were no enlistment incentives, education credits or bonus bait. Those were the days when you had to change into the uniform of the day to go to the chow hall. These were the day's that you did not talk back to a third- or second-class petty officer. There was a good chance you would get your ass kicked or at least get EMI. In addition, they had control of your liberty card.

Also, the naval leadership encouraged the wearing of the uniform...not civilian clothes.

These are the days of civilian uniform shops, in town where You could buy seafarer gabardine dress blues which were actually black in color and very sharp. They had a zipper that went from arm pit all the way down the side, They were the Giorgio Armani of uniforms. You could just about guaranteed an outstanding during an inspection. They also carried seafarer dungarees and assorted naval items. Thanks' BMCM Robertson.

Men were proud to wear the uniform. This may have become an alien concept, but many of us enlisted simply liked to wear the uniform that was recognized around the globe as the symbol of the finest, sharpest, navy in the world.

Civilian clothes were not allowed on navy ships.

Since back in the 50's, and 60's boat sailors assigned to SUBRON TWELVE had no barracks or 'ashore accommodations'. So, there were locker clubs...establishments with row after row of metal lockers. They were the kind of lockers found in high school locker rooms They cost between seven and ten bucks a month. Rumors had it that some of these locker clubs were owned by old chiefs. And were usually Found right outside the main gate or close by.

Rick's Locker Club...1959. What did you get? You got an upright locker and access to a shower that steamed up the entire locker area...and what may have very well been the world's largest collection of sour towels.

There was a shoeshine boy. We called him 'buff 'em up, because that's all he ever said. Had a coffee can on a string around his neck. The can held two rolled up buffing rags, several wadded-up polish application rags and three cans of black Lincoln shoe polish. In addition, you could get sprayed with sure fuck or fu fu juice for a couple of bucks before heading into town to meet the lovelies at the local establishments.

The little kid was one helluva businessman...he probably owns a couple of hotels now or a major fast food chain. Hope so, anyway.

We'd come in from sea. Once the skipper put down liberty, we dropped off our laundry and hauled ass down to Rick's for a couple beers and a hot shower.

The shower was a kind of international exchange of Athletes' Foot. It was like the global transfer point. I picked up a world-class case. They had exotic Athletes' Foot germs in there the size of roaches.

There was always a lot of noise. Married sailors, the quiet, mature sailors had homes to go to with hot water and other comforts. Senior rated single naval personnel normally had 'living arrangements' that included mixed gender back scrubbing and other mutually agreed upon advantages.

The 'Animals', the unmarried idiots occupying the lower rungs of the naval advancement ladder, made up the majority of the 'park your crap in a locker' society of saltwater buccaneers. Yes I was one of them.

Chatter, nonsensical banter, bullshit exchange, hooting, hollering, cursing, the singing of ditties whose lyrics would make a female lumberjack blush, could be heard 24 hours a day.

Towel fighting of epic proportions took place...not Girl Scout camp terry cloth flipping love taps...no, we're talking towel gladiatorial combat that took triangular butt divots the size of the little pieces of meat in pork fried rice. One poor fellow, if the unlucky sonuvabitch is still alive, probably still has an identifiable scar near the business end of his tallywhacker.

The clientele of Rick's Locker club had absolutely no taste in clothing...Esquire Magazine never held male fashion photo shoots in Rick' Locker Club.

Blind Gypsies dressed more conservatively than the After-Battery Rats on diesel submarines.

Guys coming in from a long time at sea or a northern run would still be in the throes of channel fever. These euphoric idiots would come in hauling their 'duty free combustibles...open jugs and pass' em around

Sailors you had never seen before in your life would yell, "Hey Buddy...have a snort." And you took a swig...didn't matter what it was or if the bastard looked like he had terminal gum disease...it was like smoking the obligatory tribal peace pipe. It was proper low-end bluejacket etiquette, like moving over to make room for another boat sailor when the Ricks men's head was so loaded, that guys were peeing down the floor drain... a matter of seagoing courtesy.

Rick's Locker Club...that and all the others are gone now...consigned to the memories that live on in old sailors and in stories they swap among themselves in the twilight of their lives.

Gone are the old COBs who would say,

"Son, welcome aboard...give your orders to the titless wave forward. Stow your gear in this side locker and haul the rest of your crap up to a locker club up on Truman Boulevard. Don't let 'em charge you more than ten bucks and hey, invest in some good shower shoes if you don't want to pick up some major league foot rot."

That's all gone now. But when a bunch of old worn out SUBRON TWELVE smoke boat once-upon-a-time banditos are parked around a table sucking suds and swapping long ago memories. You can't help wondering what stories today's sailor's in this political correct nontraditional navy will have.

GLOSSERY

AFTERBATTERY: THE AFTER BATTERY ON DIESEL SUBS WAS WHERE THE SECOND BATTERY WELL WAS LOCATED UNDER THE MAIN DECK. THE MESS HALL AND GALLEY WERE LOCATED THERE IN ADDITION, CREW BERTHING WAS ALSO LOCATED JUST AFT OF THERE. THE MESS DECKS ARE USUAL GATHERING PLACE WHERE THE CREW TOOK THEIR MEALS, PLAYED CARDS, WATCHED MOVIES, HELD MEETINGS, OR JUST SAT AROUND IMPARTING 'WORDS OF WISDOM' TO THE LOWER RATED RIFFRAFF.

TIT LESS WAVE: THIS WOULD BE THE MALE YOEMAN, WOMEN WEREN'T ALLOWED ON SUBMARINES. I'VE HEARD THERE WERE SOME IN SQUADRON ADMIN AND THE HOSPITAL BUT I CAN'T SWEAR TO IT.

COB: CHIEF OF THE BOAT SENIOR ENLISTED CHIEF SELECTED BY THE CAPTIAN

BOAT: SUBMARINES ARE KNOWN AS BOATS

SMOKE BOAT: DIESEL SUBMARINE DUE TO THE DIESELS

SEAGOING COURTESY: PISSING IN THE BILGES IF THE HEAD IS OCCUPIED

CHANNEL FEVER: WANTING TO GET TO PORT FOR LIBERTY

SURE FUCK, FU/FU JUICE: MEN'S COLONE

LIBERTY CARD: NEEDED TO LEAVE THE SHIP OR BASE

WAVE: UNKNOWN SPECIES DON'T THINK WE EVER SAW ONE

EMI: EXTRA MILITARY INSTRUCTION, HELD AFTER WORKDAY SECURED

BEST NAVY MOVIE THE LAST DETAIL JACK NICKLESON

SECOND BEST NAVY MOVIE CINDRELLA LIBERTY JAMES CAAN

NEXT MONTH'S EXCITEING ARTICLE "TRADITATION"