



USS WESTCHESTER COUNTY, LST-1167, ASSOCIATION  
3770 N. HIGHWAY 29 • NEWNAN, GEORGIA 30265

**PRESS RELEASE**

*man file*

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E !

AS THE RESULT OF ENEMY ACTION ON 1 NOVEMBER 1968 THE U.S. NAVY SUFFERED IT'S GREATEST LOSS OF LIFE IN A SINGLE INCIDENT DURING THE ENTIRE VIETNAM WAR...

25 killed, 22 wounded when two large mines were detonated on the starboard side of U.S.S. WESTCHESTER COUNTY, LST-1167.

**OFFICERS**

President - Jere Beery  
Vice President - John Nosek  
Secretary - Dan Bailey  
Treasurer - Glenn Casey

KIA family members, mining survivors, and former crew members of U.S.S. WESTCHESTER COUNTY will be traveling to Washington, DC to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

On Sunday, October 8, 1995, Memorial Services commemorating the Service and Sacrifice of U.S.S. WESTCHESTER COUNTY will be held in front of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool steps. Under the spiritual guidance of CDR. NATHAN O. LOESCH, Chaplain, USN(Ret.), Services and Wreath Laying Ceremony will begin at 10:30 a.m. Chaplain LOESCH also conducted the Memorial Services aboard USS WESTCHESTER COUNTY in 1968. It is extremely important we make every attempt to notify our ship's GOLD STAR MOTHERS and KIA family members of these up coming services.

In an effort to notify KIA family members, mining survivors, and former crew members of upcoming Commemorative Memorial Services we are requesting the assistance of ALL Veterans Service, and National NEWS Media Organizations.

*See date*  
Admiral E.R. ZUMWALT, JR., USN(Ret.), will be participating in these ceremonies to recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of this ship and her crews.

This request for your consideration and assistance is being made by our combined membership of 235 former ship's officers and crew members. Of which, 39 are mining survivors.

For many of us, this will be a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to pay a combined organized tribute to a Great Ship, her Brave crews, and WALL panels 39 and 40 West...

For additional information & ship photos, please contact;  
[Association President], JERE BEERY,  
[Reunion Coordinator], P.J. NOSEK,  
[Membership Chairman], NORM HANSEN,

## The Mining of the U.S.S. Westchester County

new book

On November 1, 1968, the *U.S.S. Westchester County*, a support/supply/barracks ship, was mined in the Song My Tho River approximately 40 miles up river from Vung Tau, Vietnam.

The events that occurred that day represent great sacrifice and survival among the crew members whose swift and courageous actions saved the lives of over 400 shipmates.

Even though picket boats circled the ship dropping concussion grenades at random intervals to ward off swimmers, the *U.S.S. Westchester County* fell prey to the Viet Cong. At 0322 in the morning, while all personnel slept except for those on watch, two giant underwater explosions were detonated on the starboard side of the *U.S.S. Westchester County*, directly under fuel and crew compartments. In the confusion that followed the explosions, crewmen tried desperately to find their way to their battle stations through the dark, steam-filled, diesel-soaked wreckage. Crewmen showed up at their battle stations wounded and bleeding. Five of the ship's First Class Petty Officers/Department Heads were among those killed instantly, and in many cases much lower ranked personnel, without hesitation, manned damage control stations and assumed the responsibilities of the missing superiors.

This ship's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander John W. Brannin's immediate concern involved the stabilization of the ship, as she was starting to list to starboard due to the massive flooding to the lower decks. The danger of flash fires igniting the 350-plus tons of explosives and ammunition on the ship's tank deck were of great concern to the captain as well, as the entire ship was engulfed in an atomized cloud of diesel fuel. There was no doubt in the Commander's mind that any miscalculations at this point could result in a catastrophic explosion which could not only cause the loss of the ship and all 400 hands aboard, but could result in death and destruction to anyone within a very large radius surrounding the ship, "ground zero".

Battle stations remained at-the-ready, as it was not known if this was the beginning of a much larger attack, or if more unexploded charges were still attached to the hull. Damage control teams worked frantically to suppress and control the flooding, while attempts were made to free trapped crewmen. Many of the killed and wounded were crushed and pinned between the deck and overhead while still in their bunks, making rescue and body recovery very difficult. All teams were instructed to conduct their rescues and repairs without the use of cutting torches or welding equipment.

At one point, the ship's Corpsman, HM1 John Sullivan dove down into the wreckage to locate and rescue two men pinned in the lower compartments. He remained with the men for more than an hour until both men were freed. He would later be awarded the Silver Star for his actions.

As damage reports made their way to the Bridge, the names of dead and missing personnel began to add up. By daylight the numbers were in; 17 ships crew dead or missing; 5 U.S. Army personnel dead or missing; 1 U.S. Navy rivermine sailor dead, 2 Vietnamese allied forces dead; totaling 25 dead or missing and 22 wounded.

The 25 men killed that morning have come to represent the "U.S. NAVY'S GREATEST LOSS OF LIFE IN A SINGLE INCIDENT AS THE RESULT OF ENEMY ACTIONS DURING THE ENTIRE VIETNAM WAR."



Next block

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## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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1 NOVEMBER 1968 THE U.S. NAVY SUFFERED IT'S  
GREATEST LOSS OF LIFE IN A SINGLE INCIDENT  
DURING THE ENTIRE VIETNAM WAR.

25 KILLED, 22 WOUNDED WHEN TWO LARGE  
MINES WERE DETONATED ON THE STARBOARD SIDE  
OF THE USS WESTCHESTER COUNTY, LST-1167

KIA family members, mining survivors, and former crew members of U.S.S. Westchester County will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

On Saturday, October 7, 1995, Memorial & Wreath Laying Services conducted by CDR. Nathan O. Oesch, Cahplain USN (Ret.), will be held at the Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Services will begin at 1:00 p.m. and should not exceed 30 minutes.

On Sunday, October 8, 1995, Memorial Services commemorating the Service and Sacrifice of U.S.S. Westchester County will be held in front of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool steps. Under the spiritual guidance of CDR. Nathan O. Loesch, Chaplain, USN (Ret.), Services and Wreath Laying Ceremony will begin at 10:30 a.m. Chaplain Loesch also conducted the Memorial Services aboard USS Westchester County in 1968. It is *extremely important* we make every attempt to notify our ship's Gold Star Mothers and KIA family members nationwide.

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For additional information, ship photos, interview arrangements, please contact Association President, JERE BEERY, \_\_\_\_\_, Reunion Coordinator PJ NOSEK or Membership Coordinator, NORM HANSEN