## USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION

c/o T. Hoffman 36078 Huntington St. Millville, DE 19967

Phone: (610) 417-5163 E-mail: ussemmons@gmail.com Website: www.ussemmons.org



USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

www.ussemmons.org

Visit our website at

HERE'S YOUR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER EDITION OF THE USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER!

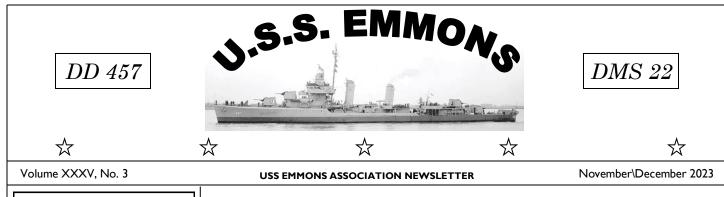


JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP USS EMMONS REUNION



USS *Emmons* Association president Eleanor Yates presents the 2023 scholarship awards to Emma Gilanders and Dennis Yecke, accepting on behalf of daughter Tiffany Brooks (story page 1).

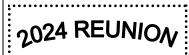
🕷 SINCEREST WISHES FOR A HAPPY, HEALTHFUL NEW YEAR! 🖓



# In This Issue

- Reunion Recap
- 2024 Scholarship Results
- Special Guest Shares Her **Experiences Diving on** the Emmons
- Scholarship Honorable Mention Awards Added
- Your Opportunity to Leave a Legacy

 $\stackrel{\frown}{\simeq}$ ☆ **THE 2024**  $\overset{\frown}{\mathcal{A}}$ \$ **SCHOLARSHIP**  $\stackrel{\frown}{\simeq}$  $\stackrel{\frown}{\sim}$  $\overset{\frown}{\mathcal{L}}$  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$ **APPLICATION IS**  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$ \$ **NOW AVAILABLE!** \$ 2  $\overset{}{\sim}$  $\overset{\frown}{\mathcal{T}}$  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$  $\stackrel{\frown}{\rightarrow}$ \$5000 IN AWARDS! 2 \$  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$ \$ **VISIT OUR**  $\overset{\frown}{\mathcal{A}}$ \$  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$ WEBSITE AT  $\stackrel{\frown}{\sim}$  $\overset{\frown}{\mathcal{D}}$  $\overset{\frown}{\mathcal{X}}$ **USSEMMONS.ORG**  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$ ☆ FOR INFORMATION  $\overset{\frown}{\sim}$ ~ 



We're still in the planning stage.

Visit our website for updates.

# 2023 REUNION BRINGS TOGETHER FRIENDS OLD & NEW

ing the first time with their *Emmons* family, making for many new friendships forged over the weekend and another Dives page. successful time honoring the legacy of our Emmons shipmates.

The Sheraton BWI Airport served as home base and, despite threatening skies, the weather was perfect for Friday's visit to the USS Constellation at Baltimore's historic Inner Harbor.

## **Honoring Departed Shipmates**

Friday's tour of the Constellation began on the ship's stern with a memorial service in tribute to the shipmates lost at Okinawa and those we lost the past year. Following the tour and free time to visit the other historic ships, attendees enjoyed lunch together at Phillips Seafood Restaurant, a culinary tradition of Maryland's Eastern Shore,

Back at the hotel, Friday afternoon's program featured a return of the Wall of Honor, allowing family members and friends to recognize and share memories of their beloved Emmons shipmates.

Among the 43 Emmons family mem- video provided by Kurt REESE of the April bers who gathered in Baltimore for Sep- Memorial Dive when eight Marines and tember's annual reunion were 16 enjoy- Airmen came together to honor the lost shipmates. The video and photos are available on our website's Memorial

> Many took advantage of their free time Saturday to, among other things, enjoy the National Aquarium, tour Fort McHenry, the birthplace of "The Star-Spangled Banner," or to simply relax.

### **Banquet Highlights**

The weekend's events climaxed with the Emmons Family Banquet Saturday night. Those in attendance had the opportunity to meet and hear from this year's Griffin/Emmons Scholarship recipients as they shared a reading of their essays. And special guest, Darlene FONG, addressed the crowd sharing her experiences diving on the Emmons and her participation in a number of memorial dives (see story, page 2).

The weekend came to a close with Sunday morning's breakfast buffet allowing for one last time together before sharing goodbyes until next year.

Visit our website's Reunions page for The program closed with a moving photos of the weekend's activities.

# GILLANDERS, BROOKS AWARDED 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS

Jr./USS Emmons Memorial out for them. Scholarship recipients.

With nine applicants, prompt

The Legacy Committee most competitive yet in Emmons' role in supis pleased to announce the program's 14 year porting the allied landings Emma GILLANDERS and history. And with the qual- and the sacrifice of those Tiffany BROOKS as this ity of the submissions, the who perished that day. year's Lt. John J. Griffin, judges had their work cut

This year's this year proved to be the Normandy Invasion, the (See SCHOLARSHIP - page 3)

Emma is the greatgranddaughter of shipessay mate Walter D. BLAIR, and dealt with the Tiffany is the granddaugh-

#### VOLUME XXXV, NO. 3

#### USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## EMMONS FAMILY WELCOMES LONG-TIME FRIEND

"Meeting you all has impacted and completed my experience of having relationship this with the Emmons." —Darlene FONG, long-time participant of the annual Okinawa Memorial Dives, shared those words as she attendance at the

addressed those in Mike Esposito presents Darlene with a copy of "The Emmons Saga."

dives, including many of the memo-DeCESARI and others, we were honored to have Darlene and husband Mike RELYEA join us at this year's ence.

reunion's Saturday banquet.

reunion.

true "Guardians of the Emmons" and that she was always happy to support them and the memorial dives in honoring the lost shipmates' sacrifice.

ship was like diving on a time capsule...how she could touch the hel- kane, Washington.

mets and shoes, look through portholes to see disheveled cots that tumbled as the ship made its final landing and the sinks where the young men washed their hands. "It was a very surreal moment and affects everyone who dives on the Emmons."

Darlene shared how she enjoyed Having visited the *Emmons* on 131 inviting other divers on their first experience in getting to know the rial dives with Kurt REESE, Chuck Emmons and how she felt honored to experience it and wished it was something we, too, could experi-

As a token of appreciation for her As she addressed the group, Dar- years of honor and respect shown lene spoke of Kurt and Chuck as the the Emmons and her crew, Mike ESPOSITO presented Darlene with a copy of "The Emmons Saga" containing a special inscription and signed by those in attendance.

Following her 2022 retirement, She talked of how diving on the Darlene and Mike are back in the states and now live just outside Spo-

(SCHOLARSHIP continued from page 2) ter of Dennis E. YECKE, brother of shipmate Donald L. YECKE, who gave his life aboard the Emmons at Okinawa, April 6, 1945..

Emma began her freshman year at the University of Tampa in Tampa, Florida. She is majoring in Business Marketing and has her sights on a career in fashion merchandising. Emma lives in Parkland, Florida.

Tiffany is working on her Master of Arts in Spiritual Formation at the Portland Seminary at George Fox University, Portland, Oregon. She lives in Norman, Oklahoma.

The essays and photos of our recipients, as well as the 2024 scholarship application are available on our website's Scholarship page.

# **INTERVIEW DETAILS OKINAWA ATTACK**

A recently discovered audio recording of an interview with Emmons shipmate Lafayette EASTON, a survivor of the Okinawa attack, provides a fascinating account of that fateful day aboard the Emmons. Visit the National Museum of the Pacific War's oral histories to hear his interview at pacificwarmuseum.org.

# LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY HONORING YOUR LOVED ONES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Digital memorials have emerged as a way of honoring and remembering our loved ones. Thank you to Kevin KING who brought to our attention several ways you can create a tribute to your USS Emmons veteran that will reach across generations, helping to preserve the memory of his service to our country.

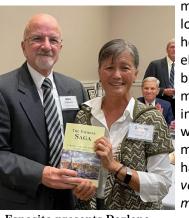
The U.S. Navy Memorial offers an opportunity to display a photo-engraved plaque, both in its Washington Visitor Center and online. The USS Emmons currently has a plaque there honoring the 60 lost shipmates.

The Navy Memorial also maintains a "Navy Log" where you can post a tribute to your *Emmons* shipmate. The log is available online and allows you to post a photo and list ships he served on and other duty stations, as well as significant awards (i.e. medals).

Likewise, the National WWII Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, has a searchable online registry where you may also upload a photo.

The National Museum of the Pacific War, located in Fredericksburg, TX, has an extensive digital archive of interview recordings and transcripts you may submit. The Emmons Association is currently working with them to submit our shipmate interviews that can currently be found on our website's Shipmate Interviews page.

Visit the Leave a Legacy page of our website for information and links to these sites.



# Notes....from the Reunion Log

A highlight of the weekend was the sharing of Kurt REESE's video of April's Memorial Dive. The dive is held every year on the anniversary of the ship's sinking to honor the 60 lost shipmates. The video is now available to everyone at our website's Memorial Dives page.

> \* \* \* \*

The Emmons Association is grateful for the support provided by American Legion NE Post 285 in Baltimore. Unable to locate anyone to present the colors for our reunion's memorial service aboard the USS Constellation, the members of Post 285 stepped up and were aboard the ship waiting as we arrived.

> \* \* \* \*

The success of our reunions is the result of the work and contributions of many. This year was no different.

\*

Special thanks go out to Mary Kay MIKUSKA for her thoughtful and generous donation of raffle prizes and all who participated in the raffle. With Spencer OTTO stepping up to handle the raffle emcee duties, we raised \$636 for the scholarship fund!

Thanks are also extended to Nancy and Rick SLIMMER for the wellstocked hospitality room and Allison GUINAN and sister-in-law Susan for the beautiful banquet centerpieces, as well as Susan's cake honoring the *Emmons* and her crew.

We were honored to have in attendance U.S. Army Major Robert and Dawn BOURGEAU who recently relocated from Okinawa to the Baltimore area. Both are avid divers and have experienced dives on the Emmons.

Following the reunion, Rob & Dawn shared that, "...the conversations we had with family members of the ship's crew brought our experiences diving the Emmons full circle."

The Association deeply appreciates their interest in attending and, in turn, providing us the opportunity to lay the foundation for sharing in the special bond we possess.

Over the weekend, Mike FLORY brought to our attention a recently discovered memoir written by a close friend of his father's and Emmons shipmate Seaman 3c Owen BUTLER.

This valuable piece of Emmons history provides an inside look at life aboard ship. In it, he speaks of how "breathtakingly beautiful' the Emmons was when he first saw her.

He provides interesting insight into the operation of the "relatively primitive" sonar and the game of hide and seek played by the hunter and the hunted in locating submarines. And his narrative of his work as signalman using lights and flag signals is enlightening.

The Association thanks the Flory family for making available Owen's compelling account which is now available to read on our website's Media page.

Saturday's business meeting resulted in the re-election of the current corporate officers. A listing of the officers and board of director members can be found at the Administration page on our website.

The bylaws were also amended to update Association membership classes, voting rights and quorum requirements. Corporate documents can be accessed with the password "morningcolors" at our website's Corporate Documents page.

	<u>*************************************</u>
	🗧 MEMORIAL
:	<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b>
	The USS <i>Emmons</i> Association <b>*</b>
	$\frac{1}{2}$ respectfully acknowledges the $\frac{1}{2}$
	★ following gifts received:
	🖌 In Memory of David, Gerald & Leon 👗
	★ Horwitz ★
	🖌 Jeffrey Horwitz
	* * *
	The Memory of Armand Jolly
,	★ Stephen Jolly ★
,	1 In Memory of Grover McMichael
	★ Nancy & Mike Alford ★
	★ Fred Johnson ★
	<ul> <li>★ Fred Johnson</li> <li>★</li> <li>★</li> <li>Lori &amp; Dave Shuck Family</li> <li>★</li> </ul>
	🛨 Lesa & John Painter
	★ In Memory of Bill Patton
	🔒 Susan McLeish 🗧 🙀
'	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	★ Shipmates ★ Our Oking Diver Friends
	Our Okinawa Diver Friends
	*****
	ENHANCEMENTS TO

# ENHANCEMENTS TO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

With the increased interest and competitive nature of the scholarship program, the board of directors was asked to look into ways to increase recognition of those applying each year.

After much consideration, the board has approved, in addition to the two existing \$2500 scholarships, the awarding of up to two \$500 honorable mention scholarships, subject to certain criteria as outlined in the scholarship application, and a required minimum scoring threshold.

It is the board's hope this will allow them to better recognize the work done by the students while acknowledging the program's budgetary restraints.

For more information and to access the 2024 application, visit the Scholarship page on our website.

PAGE 3