

U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

July/August 2023

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2023 REUNION

Baltimore, MD
September 28 - October 1

Registration information enclosed or visit our Reunions Page at www.ussemmons.org
DEADLINE AUGUST 31

2023 REUNION — STAYING CONNECTED

We hope you'll join us for the *Emmons* Family Reunion!

Emmons Family reunions are always a special time to reconnect and honor the courage and selflessness of the shipmates of the USS *Emmons*. This year will be no exception.

We'll gather for the 2023 USS *Emmons* Family Reunion from September 28 – October 1 in beautiful and historic Baltimore, Maryland. Our home base will be the Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel – BWI.

Friday & Saturday Activities

We will tour the USS Constellation on Friday, and gather together on Saturday for our always-enjoyable and meaningful banquet dinner, when we'll hear from our 2023 Griffin/*Emmons* Scholarship recipients.

On Saturday, there will also be time to visit other attractions in Baltimore's historic Inner Harbor and surrounding area,

including Fort McHenry, the National Aquarium, the Maryland Science Center, Guinness Brewery tours, golf, casinos and more!

Registration Deadline Approaching

Register using the form you received earlier this year or the form enclosed with this newsletter. Visit our [Reunions page at ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org) where you may also download the form and read more about the weekend. The deadline to register and book your hotel room is August 31. A block of guest rooms has been set aside so book early to ensure getting the \$129 group rate.

Come for any or all four days of the reunion. And remember to take along photos of your beloved *Emmons* shipmate for the "Wall of Honor." We hope to see you and always look forward to meeting new attendees!

MARINE, AIR FORCE REPRESENTATIVES HONOR LOST SHIPMATES WITH ANNUAL MEMORIAL DIVE

Dealing with murky waters, Kurt REESE reported the annual memorial dive took place as planned April 1st.

Accompanying eight Marines and Airmen to the *Emmons* were the Stars and Stripes, a US Navy Flag and a memorial wreath Eric ECKMAN had made at the Kadena Annex flower shop.

As always, Chuck DeCESARI generously donated the use of his boat.

Joining Kurt, Eric and Chuck were Hebert VALMOND, Hunter PRATT, Cesar LOPEZ, Charles FLEMMING, Jr. and



The memorial and builder's plaques are flanked by the US and Navy flags with memorial wreath.

Photo courtesy of Hebert Valmond

Jordan LEE. Those participating raised \$700 towards the Griffin/*Emmons* Scholarship Fund.

As in the past, we anticipate Kurt will provide a video of the memorial dive to be shared at our September reunion. Photos courtesy of Kurt and Hebert Valmond can be seen on our website's [Memorial Dive](#) page.

The *Emmons* Association is forever grateful for the honor and respect shown for the shipmates and the ongoing support of the scholarship fund.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In our series featuring past Griffin/Emmons scholarship recipients, we hear from 2013 recipient, Sara IVILL, granddaughter of Ed HOFFMAN.

Since receiving the scholarship, Sara graduated from Villanova Law, passed the bar exams in PA and NJ, and began practicing employment law in Philadelphia. She also married her husband, Doug, and had two children, Edison and August (both USS Emmons Association junior members!).

Sara currently works as an attorney on the in-house legal team in the Philadelphia office of a global venue development, advisory, and investment company. Sara tells us that, "Outside of work, I spend most of my time running around after our children, ages four and two."

Reflecting on the Griffin/Emmons Scholarship, Sara says that it was important to her because "it helped me to further my legal education and, most importantly,

allowed me to promote the legacy of the USS Emmons crew members, particularly those lost at Okinawa. I remember learning about the Emmons from my Grandpa while putting together a school project about the ship when I was younger, so it was cool to come full circle by learning more about the ship to put together my scholarship application essay years later. It was also a special and memorable way to honor my Grandpa, who very much enjoyed being part of the Emmons family."

Sara also encourages any student thinking about applying for the Scholarship to do so. "Every minute of the time you spend working on your application is a minute you are honoring the Emmons crew," she said, "and it's special that we have the opportunity to carry on the Emmons legacy for our generation and those that come after us."

REUNION OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE AMERICAN HISTORY UP CLOSE

In addition to seeing old friends, meeting new ones and celebrating the special bond forged by our beloved shipmates over the years, this year's reunion destination provides an opportunity to experience events that that helped shape our country's history.

One such opportunity we'll experience together is a guided tour of the USS Constellation, while free time allotted on Saturday will provide ample opportunity for those interested to visit Fort McHenry.

USS Constellation

The USS Constellation is a sloop-of-war (a warship with a single gun deck), the last sail-only warship designed and built by the United States Navy. She was built in 1854, using material salvaged from the frigate Constellation, one of the Navy's original six ships, which had been disassembled the year before.



Sloop-of-War USS Constellation

The sloop-of-war Constellation's first tour lasted three years and protected American commercial ships. It served in the Africa Squadron as a flagship capturing slave ships, and then patrolled for Confederate blockade runners during the Civil War. In 1871, she was recommissioned for use as a training ship for midshipmen.

The ship was finally dry docked in Baltimore where she is preserved as a museum ship and is a National Historic Landmark.

Fort McHenry

Among the many options for Saturday's free time is a visit to Fort McHenry, best known for its role in the War of 1812, when it successfully defended Baltimore Harbor from an attack by the British navy.

It was during that attack that an American flag flown over Fort McHenry during the bombardment was replaced early on the morning of September 14, 1814, with a much larger American flag. The larger flag signaled American victory over the British in that battle. The sight of that flag inspired Francis Scott Key to write a poem that was later set to music and became known as "The Star-Spangled Banner."

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE: The Legacy Committee is pleased to report a record nine scholarship applications were received this year. As of this printing, the essay scoring is still in progress with applicants to be notified no later than July 30. Stay tuned....

IN MEMORIAM

GROVER T. McMICHAEL

Grover McMichael passed away on May 2, 2023, at his home in Sequim, Washington. Just a few weeks shy of his 100th birthday in June, he was the last known surviving shipmate of the *Emmons*.

Grover, who boarded the ship in November, 1942, served as a Sonarman 3c. In June 2015, having participated with his shipmates in the 1944 Normandy Invasion and bombardment of Cherbourg, the French Consul General bestowed upon him, at the Georgia State Capital, the Legion of Honour Medal. The medal is

the highest distinction France can confer on a citizen or a foreigner.

He was known among his *Emmons* Family as a true patriot with a keen wit and wonderful sense of humor. He lived to share the *Emmons* story with everyone from students, through his visits to the Newnan, (GA) High School where he shared his WWII experiences at their annual Student-Vet Connect days, to his friends and neighbors. Regarding his educating the students, Grover stated, "I want the young people to understand and know what went on at the time."

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The USS *Emmons* Association respectfully acknowledges the following gifts received:

**In Memory of
Grover T. McMichael**

- Eleanor Yates
- Nancy & Rick Slimmer
- Anne Marie Patton
- Diane & Tom Hoffman

Gifts in memory of loved ones payable to USS Emmons Association may be sent to the address noted on the outside panel of this newsletter.

Now HEAR This !

In 2008, the *Emmons* was featured on an episode of The History Channel's *Cities of the Underworld*. Escorted to the wreck site by Kurt REESE and Chuck DECESARI, the show's host, Don WILDMAN oversaw the filming and expressed awe at the size of the ship and its condition at the time.

This past spring, Kurt sent a couple challenge coins to Don with the funds for the coins going to the scholarship fund on his behalf.

Having received the coins, Don posted, "*Good U.S. Marine Corps members coined me these kindnesses for a past act done on behalf of the surviving crew members and in memory and love for souls lost on the USS Emmons.....I will treasure these coins.*"

* * * * *

For the past several years, Jim KORNEY has been working with the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, providing video interviews of several of our shipmates.

This past spring, all seven of the interviews, complete with audio and video, were made available online. Included are interviews of Robert PATTON, Arthur BLUMER, Anthony ESPOSITO, Edgar SIMONEAU, Armand JOLLY, Edwin HOFFMAN and James KORNEY.

Search "Library of Congress VHP" online to find the site, then search the collection for USS *Emmons*.

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Have you visited our website's Ship's Store? There you can purchase the survivor accounts book and flash drive, challenge coins and even remit your dues electronically.

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Since the Association's incorporation back in 2007, we have not updated our corporate documents (Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws). At their March 2023 meeting, the Board of Directors addressed the issue.

The Articles of Incorporation, updated to reflect the current direc-

tors and officers, have been filed with the state of Delaware.

The Bylaws were also updated, but require approval by the membership, which will be addressed at September's reunion business meeting. The amended bylaws are available on our website on the Corporate Documents page, using the password "morningcolors." Questions/concerns may be forwarded to us at ussemmons@gmail.com.

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This editor welcomes Donna JOLLY as a contributing writer for our newsletter and website content. Donna's expertise in communications is a much welcomed addition to our efforts to stay connected.

Planning to attend the September reunion? Don't forget your shipmate photo(s) for the 'Wall of Honor' (service time or pre or post).

And as always, we'll be collecting personal items for the local Maryland Veterans' Home.

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USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

Visit us online at

www.ussemmons.org



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP
USS EMMONS REUNION

EMMONS FAMILY REUNION

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 1

Registration deadline August 31

Join your Emmons Family as we continue the tradition started by the shipmates and celebrate their selflessness, courage and love of country.