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# U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

April/May 2026

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## **2026 REUNION**

Warwick, Rhode Island  
October 15—18

Registration information enclosed and available on our website at:

[www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org)

**DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 10th**

## **REUNION PLANS HAVE THE EMMONS FAMILY HEADING BACK TO NEW ENGLAND**

A familiar venue awaits the Emmons Family when we gather for the 2026 Reunion—the Crowne Plaza-Providence/Warwick (Airport) in Warwick, Rhode Island.

While it’s the same hotel that hosted us in 2024, this year, we’ll be pushing back the date one month to October 15 - 18. The hotel is conveniently located just off Interstate 95 and four miles from T.F. Green International Airport. The hotel offers a complimentary shuttle and parking.

### **Museum Visit**

A highlight of the reunion will be our Friday visit to the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT, including a tour of the USS Nautilus—the world’s first nuclear-powered submarine.

The museum houses the world’s finest collection of submarine arti-

facts. While there, we will hold our annual memorial service to honor the memory of the lost Emmons shipmates, followed by lunch together.

As always, the weekend will include our Friday evening buffet and Saturday evening banquet and program, including introduction of our 2026 Lt. Griffin/USS *Emmons* Memorial Scholarship recipients.

### **Registration Deadline**

Enclosed is the registration information, also available on our website. The deadline for submitting the registration form AND making your hotel reservation at the Emmons’ \$169/night +tax group rate is September 10th. The block of rooms at that rate is limited so please book early. Reservations may be cancelled up to 24 hours prior.

## **USS NAUTILUS AND MUSEUM HIGHLIGHT OF 2026 REUNION**

Those attending this year’s reunion will have the opportunity to experience first hand, life aboard a Naval submarine. And not just any submarine, but the world’s first nuclear powered vessel.

Friday, we’ll visit the Submarine Force Museum and tour the USS Nautilus, designated a national historic landmark in 1982.

Over its lifetime, the Nautilus shattered all submerged speed and distance records. In 1958, she operated under top secret orders to conduct “Operation Sunshine,” the first crossing of the North Pole by a ship. That August, the Nautilus accomplished the “impossible” - reaching the geographic North Pole, 90 degrees North.

In the spring of 1966, the Nautilus again entered the record books with her 300,000th mile underway. In the fourteen years that followed she was involved in a variety of developmental testing programs while continuing to serve alongside many of the more modern nuclear powered submarines she preceded.

## THE BOAT WE DIDN'T EXPECT TO FIND

*The following is a reprint of a post by Steph PAWELSKI on her Facebook group, Okinawa Battle Sites. There, Steph shares her experiences exploring the numerous sites related to the Battle of Okinawa that have been long forgotten. Printed here with Steph's permission, is her encounter with the Japanese' last ditch efforts to stop their enemy from reaching the mainland.*

Rob [Oechsle] and I met up for lunch at the Ministry of Defense building in Kadena. It was one of those meals that was simple, delicious, and made better by good conversation. Afterward, we stumbled upon another local oddity and stopped for a quick photo shoot. That's when Rob asked if I had "about ten extra minutes." I laughed. We both knew that those ten minutes would turn into hours, as they usually do with him.

He took me to the Hija River, which empties out into the East China Sea, this area closely tied to the opening days of the Battle of Okinawa, where U.S. forces first landed. Along the riverbanks, he showed me several dugouts in the earth. I then asked if he had ever visited the shinyo dugouts in Yomitan. Rob said "no" but recently this area became restricted. He, of course, received permission from the town mayor to access this area. So we went.

As the situation continued to deteriorate for the Japanese military throughout World War II they turned to suicide tactics in the air, land, and sea in hopes of delaying the Americans from reaching Japan for as long as possible.

The use of Shinyo boats on Okinawa and its surrounding islands was considered during World War II. Preparations were made on land to support this plan, including the construction of dugouts to hide the boats. Designed to be packed with explosives and driven directly into U.S. ships in hopes of damaging or sinking them, the strategy was ultimately never used when American forces reached the island.

We entered the first dugout and walked straight back. Near the entrance to the second dugout is a signboard explaining the historical significance of the site. Just beyond it is a gated entrance to the next dugout.

Rob began talking again, launching into one of his wonderfully detailed, rapid-fire explanations. The kind where I nod along and quietly accept the fact that I'm

not going to get a word in anytime soon. I stood there listening, giving him my full attention, at least at first. After a few minutes, while he was still mid-thought, mid-sentence, possibly mid-century, I walked away and leaned forward, and looked through the bars.

I froze. Inside, partially visible in the dim light, was what appeared to be a shinyo boat. I've only ever seen an actual shinyo boat, displayed at Yasukuni Shrine, so seeing one here stopped me cold.

It appeared to be a reproduction, but the shape was unmistakable. The flat front, the narrow body, and the small opening where the driver would have stared straight ahead towards the intended target. Standing there, peering through the gate, Rob and I exchanged looks. Neither of us had ever seen or heard of one being here, at least since the last time I was here.

One phone call led to another as we tried to track down information about the boat, but every lead came up empty. No answers, just more questions.

The following day, Rob organized an incredible in-town tour to help with my daughter's Girl Scout Gold Award project. Afterward, we went our separate ways, or at least I thought we did. Rob, of course, kept going.

While I was sitting in a car wash, minding my own business, my phone rang. It was Rob. He was excited, slightly out of breath, and clearly had just discovered something important. After our tour, he had taken Eriko [Nishiyama] near the dugouts, where they ran into the port master, Masamitsu Higa, along with an American, Chris Yancey. Naturally, Rob wasted no time launching into questions.

About a year ago, the men at the port had repurposed a boat from the Kadena Marina, modifying it to resemble a shinyo boat for the dugout. While the dimensions aren't exact, its presence brings the site to life in a powerful way. What was once an empty space tied to history now feels complete, no longer just a place where history happened, but a place where its purpose can finally be seen and understood.

© 2026, Steph Pawelski

**Visit Steph's Facebook page, Okinawa Battle Sites, to read more of her experiences exploring the battlefields of one of the most important battles in U.S. history.**



A Shinyo boat reproduction at its dugout.  
Photo courtesy of Masamitsu Higa, port master

# IN MEMORIAM

**Evelyn Greenlaw** passed away in December, 2024. She was the wife of shipmate Edward Greenlaw, who died in 2017. They had been married 71 years.

Evie and Ed were strong, long-time supporters of the Emmons Association's efforts. Together, they attended Emmons reunions annually until Ed's passing.

**Ross Hagstoz** passed away February 23, 2026. Ross was named after his uncle, Ensign Ross T. Elliott, who gave his life aboard the Emmons at Okinawa.

Ross lived in Cinnaminson, NJ, and came across the USS Emmons Association in 2018. Since then, he attended several reunions along with his wife, Bridget.

Ross served in the U.S. Air Force from 1967-1971. He and Bridget were married 50 years. He was 80 years old.

Anne Marie Patton notified us of the passing of her uncle, **Thomas (TJ) Patton**, October 28, 2025. His older brother, shipmate Bill Patton, passed away in 2017. Uncle TJ, as he was affectionately known, made it to several reunions until 2020 when health issues precluded his attendance.

Having joined the Navy in 1943, he quickly learned to master a 36-foot troop carrier, a Higgins boat. With his boat loaded onto a tank-carrying ship, the LST-510, he headed for Omaha Beach to participate in the Normandy Invasion in June, 1944. Uncle TJ was 91.

## Now HEAR This !

We have a new youngest member of the Emmons Family! Sadie Harper SPELLMAN was born to proud mom & dad Hayley (WELLS) & Tom on October 25th. Hayley is the granddaughter of shipmate Warren SPARKS. Welcome Sadie!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Association thanks all who contributed to cover the cost of preserving the Emmons battle flag.

The flag, retrieved from the ship by Ed TOSTANOSKI the day of the attack at Okinawa, will now serve to share the story of the Emmons and preserve the memory of 60 lost souls for generations to come.

Visit our website to see the flag, or better yet, see it first-hand at the upcoming reunion!

We recently had our first contact with family of shipmate John MEHLE, a survivor of the Okinawa attack. Daughter Addie HEELAN and granddaughter Erin discovered our website and quickly took the opportunity to become members.

Erin shared that shipmate James MOONEY was her mother's godfather. She also provided us our first photo of her grandfather. Welcome Addie & Erin!

\* \* \* \* \*

If you noticed our emails have become more professional and polished lately, look no further than Alaina SHORT, granddaughter of shipmate Paul DODD. Alaina has taken charge of our email communications. Thank you Alaina!

- \*\*\*\*\*
- While membership dues continue to arrive, the USS *Emmons* Association takes this opportunity to extend its sincere appreciation to all those supporting our efforts.
- As of this printing, we're pleased to see so many shipmates honored by their families' and friends' 2026 dues remittances, and honorary members, as noted here:
- Donald W. Ayer
  - Frank J. Basile
  - Walter D. Blair
  - William D. Copeland
  - Edwin J. Cornetta
  - John H. Devers
  - Anthony Di Rubio
  - Paul F. Dodd
  - John L. Donaldson
  - James A. Donnelly, Jr.
  - Ross T. Elliott, Jr.
  - Stanley L. Fisher
  - George C. Flory
  - Eugene N. Foss, 2nd
  - Robert J. Glutting
  - Joseph A. Gocella
  - Douglas L. Gruber
  - Earl C. Hobart
  - Edwin L. Hoffman, Jr.
  - David Horwitz
  - Robert E. Hunter
  - David Jensen
  - Charles L. Keller
  - James Korney
  - Edwin J. Krom
  - Arsene L. Lajeunesse
  - John S. Malloway
  - Grover T. & John L. McMichael
  - John C. Mehle
  - Charles P. Melkunas
  - Thomas D. Orton
  - William R. Patton
  - Robert J. Schultz
  - Warren G. Sparks
  - Homer D. Tittle
  - Edward N. Tostanoski
  - Robert C. Wagner
  - Donald L. Yecke
- \*\*\*\*\*



*USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)*

#### CONTACT US:

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Phone: (610) 417-5163

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JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

USS EMMONS DD457/DMS22  
FAMILY & FRIENDS COMMUNITY

## 2026 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues help us cover our annual administrative costs. Thank you to all who have supported our efforts by submitting your 2026 dues.

If you haven't yet had an opportunity to send yours, it's not too late. \$25 individual/\$40 for couples/\$5 junior membership (18 yrs. + under).

Checks payable to the USS *Emmons* Association may be sent to USS *Emmons* Association, 36078 Huntington St., Millville, DE 19967, or visit the [Membership page](#) on our website to remit them electronically.

#### APPLICATION DEADLINE DRAWS NEAR FOR GRIFFIN/EMMONS SCHOLARSHIP

Up to \$6000 in academic scholarships will be awarded for the 2026-27 academic year.

The deadline for submitting applications is May 31st. Visit our website at [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org) for more information.

## TRACKING DOWN LOST SHIPMATES: LOST, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Like the *Emmons*, the destroyer USS *Forrest* DD461/DMS24 suffered casualties from a Kamikaze attack off the coast of Okinawa, resulting in 6 dead, 12 wounded.

Determined to learn about the shipmates who died aboard his grandfather's ship, Brian KOBA, U.S. Army (Ret.), spent years researching the *Forrest* and her crew on the internet. Once that task was completed, he turned his attention to the *Forrest's* sister ships in Destroyer Squadron 10/Mine Squadron 20, including the USS *Emmons*.

Brian's *Emmons* research initially focused on those shipmates lost at Okinawa, but has since moved on to many of the other shipmates.

His efforts have uncovered a wealth of newfound information.

Included are photos, newspaper articles, service records, school records, letters to home and family information regarding the *Emmons* shipmates who gave their lives.

Brian has graciously provided all of this electronically to the Emmons Association as his research continues as of the writing of this newsletter. The Association now has the task of combing through all the information to be shared with the families of those shipmates, and the Emmons Family, and made part of the Emmons Association archives.

Brian retired from a 20-year military career with duty assignments in a mechanized Engineer battalion attached to 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, a radar technician with a Patriot Missile battery in the

108<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery Brigade, and 14 years in the US Army Special Operations Command, with eight overseas deployments.

He earned a Bachelor's in Anthropology from the University of Nebraska and a Master's in Strategic Security Studies from the National Defense University.

Brian is married with three children who range from elementary to high school ages. His wife currently serves in the United States Navy, at the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) - our nation's oldest permanent member of the United States intelligence community.

The USS *Emmons* Association is grateful for all Brian's time and energy put into this project and his desire to help preserve the legacy of our brave sailors.

# USS *EMMONS* ASSOCIATION

www.ussemmons.org



Dear *Emmons* Family Members:

The Legacy Committee is excited to share that we're headed back up north for our 2026 *Emmons* Family Reunion October 15-18, a few weeks later than usual. We'll return to the same base of operations as two years ago, the Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick (Airport), 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick, Rhode Island. The hotel is conveniently located just off Interstate 95 and four miles from T.F. Green International Airport. The hotel offers complimentary airport shuttle service.

A block of guest rooms has been set aside at a group rate of \$169 plus tax, which includes a complimentary breakfast buffet for those booking one of our blocked rooms. **The rooms will be available at that rate until September 10<sup>th</sup> or until they are all gone, whichever comes first, so book early as explained below so as not to miss out on our group rate.** You may extend your stay a few days before and after at that same rate! Reservations may be cancelled up to 24 hours prior.

Our Friday outing will take us to the U.S. Navy's Submarine Force Museum where we'll tour the USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear powered submarine. While there, we'll honor those who gave their lives aboard the *Emmons* with our annual memorial service and enjoy lunch together.

Another highlight of every reunion occurs at Saturday evening's banquet program when we'll have the opportunity to meet and hear from our 2026 Lt. Griffin/*Emmons* Memorial Scholarship recipients.

We hope to see many of you there for what we expect will be another memorable weekend. We're always anxious to meet and welcome new *Emmons* family members. Last year we welcomed 8 first-time attendees and we hope to top that in October.

Sincerely,  
Tom Hoffman  
Email: [ussemmons@gmail.com](mailto:ussemmons@gmail.com)  
Phone: 610-417-5163

To register, there are two steps to complete **no later than September 10<sup>th</sup>**:

- 1) Complete and submit the enclosed registration form and...
- 2) Reserve your hotel room at the \$169 group rate through one of two methods:
  - a. Call the hotel at 401-732-6000. Specify USS *Emmons* Association and group code USE to receive the group rate **or**
  - b. Reserve online at our website's [Reunions page](#).

Please note, you may extend your stay three days before/after at the group rate.

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# **2026 USS *Emmons* Reunion Itinerary**

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL TIMES ARE TENTATIVE. FINAL ITINERARY WILL BE PROVIDED UPON ARRIVAL.**

Hospitality Room – Wickford Room  
Morning Breakfast Buffets – Wickford Room  
Friday Evening Buffet Dinner – Bristol B Room  
Saturday Evening Banquet – Bristol Room  
Emmons Contact: Tom Hoffman 610-417-5163

## **Thursday, October 15:**

Hospitality room opens at 4pm – Wickford Room  
Family & friends are invited to recognize your crew member on our “Wall of Honor” in the hospitality room  
6:30 – 8 p.m. – Hospitality room closed. Dinner “on your own” at our hotel’s Crossings Restaurant (20% discount) or one of the many restaurants in the area  
8 p.m. – Hospitality room will be open until last person leaves

## **Friday, October 16:**

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. - Complimentary breakfast buffet in hospitality room  
8:30 a.m. - Board bus to travel to Submarine Force Museum, tour of the USS Nautilus, Memorial Service honoring our lost shipmates, and lunch.  
2:00 p.m. - Board bus to return to hotel. Hospitality room will be open  
4:30 p.m. - Program in Hospitality Room (Liberty Room)  
6:00 p.m. - Buffet dinner (Bristol B Room)  
Following dinner - Hospitality Room will remain open until last person leaves

## **Saturday, October 17:**

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. - Complimentary breakfast buffet in hospitality room  
9:00 a.m. - USS *Emmons* Association business meeting in hospitality room – all are invited  
REMAINDER OF DAY IS FREE to visit local attractions, shopping and relaxation  
6:30 p.m. - Cocktail hour (cash bar) (Bristol Room)  
7:00 p.m. - Banquet and program (Bristol Room)  
Following banquet – Hospitality Room will remain open until last person leaves

## **Sunday, October 18:**

8:00 – 9:30 a.m. – Goodbye breakfast buffet in hospitality room

### **Donations for Veterans Home**

We will again collect items for a local Veterans Home. Personal items are needed such as: Toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, deodorant, combs, brushes, razors, socks, warm hats, scarves, etc. Please drop donations at the hospitality room by 6pm Saturday.

# 2026 USS Emmons Reunion Registration Form

RETURN FORM WITH PAYMENT BY SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary email address and/or phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate the number of people attending each event below:**

# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 per person registration fee (required for each person attending)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50 per person – Friday Visit to U.S. Navy’s Submarine Force Museum,  
including USS Nautilus tour, Museum, Memorial Service, lunch and transportation      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40 per person – Friday buffet dinner      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Evening Banquet – How many attending? \_\_\_\_\_ (also indicate choices and totals below):

| <b>ENTRÉE CHOICES</b> (includes salad, chef’s selection of potato & vegetable, and dessert) |                 |                 |                                      |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>ENTRÉE</b>                                                                               | <b>QUANTITY</b> | <b>MULTIPLY</b> | <b>PRICE</b><br>Includes<br>gratuity | <b>TOTAL</b> |
| Sauteed Chicken Francaise                                                                   |                 | x               | \$60                                 | \$           |
| Baked New England Scrod                                                                     |                 | x               | \$60                                 | \$           |
| Petite Sirloin                                                                              |                 | x               | \$65                                 | \$           |
| Vegetarian – Mushroom Ravioli                                                               |                 | x               | \$60                                 | \$           |
| Chicken Tenders/Fries<br>(Children 12 and under)                                            |                 | x               | \$15                                 | \$           |

Enter Total Due for Entrée Choices \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday morning goodbye breakfast buffet      no cost  
(Indicate number attending. No charge for this meal, but a count is needed.)

**AMOUNT REMITTED** (make checks payable to USS *Emmons* Association)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed form with payments **by September 10<sup>th</sup>** to:

USS *Emmons* Association  
36078 Huntington St.  
Millville, DE 19967

**REMEMBER: MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATION AND SUBMIT THIS FORM BY SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>!**