

Preserving the Emmons' Legacy: A Value for All Americans

In this modern day and age, the United States of America is a divided country. Indeed, the notion of "American" values, and what defines them, seems to be at the core of this division. In general, one's criteria of American values corresponds to one's political beliefs. Regardless of one's political orientation, however, it is undeniable that the preservation of human life, respect for those who have perished, and veneration of bravery are three core principles to be upheld by all Americans. These values have certainly been upheld by the valiant members of the US Navy who served aboard the *USS Emmons*. From the moment they stepped aboard the vessel, throughout the harrowing Battle of Okinawa, and to this day in 2017, these Americans have served as shining examples of human excellency that no American can deny.

Those who served aboard the *USS Emmons* have continuously embodied the ultimate amount of each of these values. In the weeks leading up to the Battle of Okinawa, the crew members of the ship displayed radical courage by minesweeping the waters to ensure their fellow vessels' safety, which put their lives in immediate danger. On April 6th 1945, during the Battle of Okinawa, the *Emmons* fought valiantly to preserve American lives by successfully incapacitating six kamikaze planes before eventually meeting her demise, in which sixty crew members perished and 77 left injured. The legacy of these individuals has been cohesively and passionately conserved by the USS Emmons Association through programs like the Lt. John J. Griffin Memorial Scholarship and yearly conference. Truly, the *Emmons* has embodied values that no American can justifiably denounce. Regardless of one's political affiliation, it is not up for debate that the acts of bravery and casualties which took place aboard the vessel, and the efforts of the USS Emmons Association to venerate them, are to be respected. The legacy of the *Emmons* is thus important in our modern world because it serves as an example of apolitical values that all Americans can appreciate. Through admiration of the efforts of the *USS Emmons* and her association, modern Americans can find unification.

Furthermore, the fearless manner in which those aboard the *Emmons* approached their assigned duties is a continually relevant embodiment of admirable values for modern Americans. For example, when her sister vessel *Rodman* was struck by kamikaze planes, those aboard the *Emmons* did not show cowardice – they rather provided fire support until their vessel sank. Though most Americans will not have to face such a deadly situation, the principles exhibited aboard the *Emmons* apply to the daily lives of all Americans. As a personal member of the *USS Emmons* family, I bravely stand for my beliefs and pursue my passions even in the face of imminent hardships because I find pride in knowing that all who served aboard the *Emmons* shared the same motivation in their service. The legacy of the *Emmons* remains relevant to all Americans, however, because its foundational principles are fine examples of the utmost bravery and valorization of one's fellow man. Regardless of shifts in the American political climate, the *USS Emmons* will remain an unwavering example of human excellency in the face of difficulties.

In order to continue to accomplish the goal of commemorating the *Emmons* powerful legacy, the USS Emmons Association must undoubtedly innovate new ways to attract people to learn about the *USS Emmons*. I thus recommend that the USS Emmons Association invests more heartily in social media outreach. Indeed, a more public social media presence would bring the

association into the public realm. Specifically, I recommend that the association creates public Twitter and Instagram accounts – doing so would attract more young individuals to the association and provide a large audience for media relating to the *Emmons*. The legacy of the *Emmons* has the potential to resonate with all who learn of it, and a heightened public social media presence would provide another medium to link the legacy and the public.

Thus, the *Emmons* has not faded in relevancy throughout the years. As the admirable human principles of bravery, preservation, and respect are intertwined within her grandiose legacy, the *Emmons* remains a prime example of humanity to be modeled by future generations. It is thus my sincere hope that more young people become inspired by the *USS Emmons* through new platforms of outreach. Truly, although America may currently be divided over the criteria of American values, all Americans can be united under the principles embodied by the *USS Emmons*.