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# U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May 2013

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### 2013 REUNION

Fall River, MA  
September 26 - 29

#### DEADLINES:

Hotel - Aug 11  
Reunion Registration - Sept 1

For information, visit the Reunions page at [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org)

## TIME TO REGISTER FOR UPCOMING REUNION IN FALL RIVER, MA; ADJOINS BATTLESHIP COVE

Emmons Family members have already received registration information and itinerary for the 2013 Emmons Association Reunion, to be held in Fall River, MA, September 26 to 29. The registration information is also available on our website.

Reunion headquarters will be the Fall River/Westport Hampton Inn, located a short distance from Battleship Cove, which will be the focal point of reunion activities.

Battleship Cove is home to the world's largest collection of U.S. naval ships, including the battleship *USS Massachusetts*, the destroyer *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.*, submarine *Lionfish*, and several PT Boats, in addition to some foreign small craft.

Our traditional memorial service will be conducted dockside, after which attendees can tour the vessels as they may be inclined, followed by lunch on the pier. Of particular interest to our group will be the Arleigh Burke Destroyermen's Museum on the *Kennedy*. On display here are photos, histories and artifacts about U.S. Navy destroyers, including some from the *Emmons*.

Numerous other shopping and touring attractions are nearby.

Again this year, the Committee is asking attendees to bring toiletry and other personal items to be taken to a local veterans' home or

hospital. This project of recognition and assistance to our former fighting men met with gratifying response when initiated last year.

The gathering is again being hosted by the ESPOSITO and CAPPELLI families. Advising and assisting with arrangements at the Cove is Association member Rich ANGE-LINI, who is assistant curator and superintendent of restoration and maintenance for the *J.P. Kennedy Jr.*

Air and driving directions to the Hampton Inn Fall River/Westport were included with the registration mailing. **Reservations should be made directly with the hotel before August 11 to assure our group rate. Deadline for Reunion registration is September 1.**

### SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Applications for the \$2000 Lt. John J. Griffin/USS Emmons Memorial Scholarship for the 2013-2014 academic year are currently being accepted. The deadline for submission is May 31st. For information and to obtain the application, go to our Scholarship page on our website at [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org).

## DIVER FRIENDS HONOR LOST EMMONS SHIPMATES WITH 68<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL DIVE

This year's 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial dive to the *Emmons* began to take shape in February when Kurt Reese issued a "casting call" to Okinawa friends in the form of a video titled . . . *68 Years on Eternal Picket Duty*.

Limited space on Chuck DECESARI's boat was quickly claimed by 10 divers eager to take part in the ceremony that has become an annual event on the anniversary of the *Emmons* sinking.

Before final planning could begin, maintenance tasks resulting from last fall's typhoon needed to be completed. While

their damaged anchoring system was being reworked, the memorial plaque and builder's plaque had been brought up for cleaning. Both were returned and secured in place during dives in mid-March.

The date of April 5 was set for the memorial dive, but earlier that week, just like last year, the weather service predicted heavy seas for the week-end. The dive was rescheduled for the following week-end, and this time favorable conditions prevailed.

(continued....see MEMORIAL DIVE on page 2)

## Next Generation Emmons Legacy.....

### Inspire, Educate, Activate

By Michelle Martinetti (Granddaughter of Tony Esposito)

I am a member of the “next generation” of the Emmons family – the grandchildren, great grandchildren, and so on of the courageous men of the USS Emmons and their loving wives. This is an appeal, a call to action, in hopes that we can get more members involved. As the grandparents and parents of this next generation, I’m asking that you inspire, educate, and activate your family! Inspiration has already come. We are all inspired by the courage of our grandfathers, the love of our grandmothers, and the generosity of our parents. Educate them about the history of the Emmons, and the strong

bonds of the Emmons Association. Activate them! Encourage your children to come to reunions with their children. It is imperative that we work to preserve, maintain, and promote the legacy of the USS Emmons for generations to come.

*“We are a continuum. Just as we reach back to our ancestors for our fundamental values, so we, as guardians of that legacy, must reach ahead to our children and their children. And we do so with a sense of sacredness in that reaching.”*

Paul Tsongas

## LEGACY COMMITTEE INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

If the second and third generation Emmons family members have anything to say about it, the memory of the USS Emmons and her service to our country will not be forgotten. In April, the Emmons Legacy Committee met at the home of Al and Donna Cappelli to discuss the following initiatives, both old and new, designed to assure the preservation of the Emmons legacy:

- Keeping future generations engaged in Emmons history by way of the Lt. John J. Griffin/USS Emmons Memorial Scholarship.
- A new, updated website. If you haven’t seen it, please check it out

at [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org). It is a work-in-progress as plans are underway for even more enhancements. John PALACIO, grandson of Harold JAY, and Michelle MARTINETTI, granddaughter of Tony ESPOSITO, are two third generation Emmons Family members who have stepped up to design and oversee the maintenance of our USS Emmons website.

- And speaking of third generation members, efforts are underway to get more of our next-generation Emmons Family members actively involved. Stay tuned....
- Adding to our website an

online Emmons “Ship’s Store,” providing all of us the opportunity to show our Emmons pride with shirts, hats, etc.

- Welcome greetings sent to new members and reaching out to other members we haven’t heard from for some time.
- Work on the Library of Congress Veterans History Project continues. Some of the biographical data has already been posted. See it yourself at [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets).

Exciting times are ahead for the Emmons Family! We know you’ll enjoy the ride.

## MEMORIAL DIVE

(continued from page 1)

The divers gathered in early morning, assembled their gear and boarded the boat for the trip to the Emmons site. En route, they received their respective assignments and instructions for carrying out the ceremony. Susan LAMMER had created a commemorative floral arrangement to be placed at the plaques, and mounts had been made ready for unfurling and display of our Colors.

Nine divers carried out the ceremony in two dives, spending more than an hour underwater, with Kurt and Brian ERHLICH behind the cameras. Still photos are already posted on our Facebook page and website, and more can be expected from Kurt.



The memorial wreaths and plaque honor both the 60 shipmates who gave their lives and the 68th anniversary of the **Emmons** sinking.

## I N M E M O R I A M

It is with deep sadness that we pass along notices of the loss of several Emmons Family members.

Shipmate **Kenneth E. HECK** passed away July 5 of last year at the Masonic Home in Elizabethtown, PA. Ken was part of the Storekeeper staff and was the calligrapher for Shellback certificates for our second crossing of the Equator.

A phone call from his wife Jackie advised us of the death of **Richard TOOHEY** in Las Vegas, NV on October 11. Richard was a Carpenter's Mate on the *Emmons*.

A letter from his son read: "My dad, **William G. PARK**, requested that I notify you when he passed away." The enclosed obituary reported that Bill died November 28 in Harrisonburg, VA. Though Bill had transferred from the *Emmons* to attend pre-officer training, he had maintained contact and attended reunions as long as health permitted.

Shipmate Charlie wrote to tell us that his wife **Shirley UNTERBERGER** had died January 21 in Ventura, CA. Charlie and Shirley had been married 62 years.

Shipmate **Edgar R. SIMONEAU** died April 14 at home in Holderness, NH, following a period of declining health that set in following failed treatment last year. Edgar and his twin brother Gerard, who died in 1995, were both Emmons Plank Owners and Survivors. Edgar was a faithful attendee at reunions, usually the first to arrive, most recently with his daughters Linda and Judy.

Edgar was buried with full military honors in the same cemetery plot as Gerard. The plot is signally marked by a large grave-stone, engraved with a bow-on view of the *USS Emmons*.

Ed and Evvie GREENLAW and Phyliss REITSMA attended Edgar's burial service.

All the Emmons Family will be saddened to learn of the passing of **Elizabeth "Betty" ESPOSITO**, wife of Shipmate Tony, on April 26, in Fishkill, NY.

Betty was a regular attendee with Tony from their earliest days of Reunions, missing only during one earlier period of hospitalization. Her warm personality will continue to be present within the Family through the presence and participation of her children and grandchildren.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE USS EMMONS LEGACY COMMITTEE....

The USS Emmons Association is starting a new column on its newly designed website and its quarterly newsletter. It will feature Emmons/WWII memories that have been handed down to second or third generation family members.. There is importance and value in these stories and memories because these individual crew members will be given "a voice" through their family members' stories so we can honor and remember them all. One such story submitted by Eleanor Yates follows.

*My father, Charles Melkunas, died over 40 years ago when I was only 22 years old. As I grew up, my father talked a lot about the Emmons. I especially remember his stories, mostly humorous, about his time spent on the Emmons and his part in WWII. I always knew he was extremely proud of his ship. Every Saturday, he would raise the American flag on the flagpole he put on own front lawn, and on late Sunday night, he would take it down for the next weekend. But it wasn't until only a few years ago that I really understood his love for the Emmons. My brother came across some of my father's papers, and among them was one original hand-*

*written letter he sent home to his parents, my European-born grandparents, in July 1944. In this letter he talked about how proud he was of his ship because it was the first one to fire on D-Day. Enclosed with this letter was a photocopy of a newspaper clipping from a Boston newspaper stating this same fact. One of the guys on board had received it from his wife and copies were given to the crew. Here it was, plain for all to see and read. What a treasure to have found!*

*I attend the reunion each year in my father's place and also to honor him.*

So we're asking this of all second and third generation family members: if you have a story or memory to tell, please consider sharing it with all of us. Email it to **ussemmons@gmail.com** and we'll be sure to publish it in a future column of "Navy Memories" for all our Emmons family members to enjoy..... Our intent is to keep the stories of the Emmons' crew members alive for many generations to come. And what better way to help make that happen than to share one another's memories?

**2013 DUES** Response to the recent dues letter, as always, has been very positive. If you have not yet sent yours, annual dues are \$25 (discounted to \$40 for both husband and wife). Checks should be sent to USS Emmons Association, c/o Tom Hoffman, Treasurer, 3136 Northampton St., Bethlehem, PA 18020 (note "2013 Dues" on the memo line of your check).

## **USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION**

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*USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)*

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE AT

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

# **Our New Website Is Live!**

We're excited to announce that our new website is up and running. Please take some time to look over the new features including:

- ◆ Emmons News
- ◆ Reunion News and Information
- ◆ Memorial Dive Photos & Video
- ◆ Scholarship News & Information
- ◆ Photos
- ◆ And much, much more, including new features yet to be added, so check back often!

**Drop us a line and let us know what you think!**

You can find us at **[www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org)**