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U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

April/May 2017

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2017 REUNION

Buffalo, NY
September 14 - 17

DEADLINES

Hotel - Aug. 25
Registration Form-Aug. 25

For registration information,
visit our website at
www.ussemmons.org
or call 610-691-7770

PLANS IN PLACE FOR BUFFALO REUNION; SPECIAL GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

After 25 years, the USS Emmons reunion returns to the Buffalo, NY, area. A new venue awaits this time, as the Emmons Family will gather September 14-17 at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo.

The hotel is in downtown Buffalo, convenient to the many attractions, restaurants and shopping the area has to offer. But most importantly, it will be the gathering point for the Emmons Family members as they reconnect (and connect for the first time!) throughout the weekend.

Visit to Naval Park

The weekend will include a Friday morning visit to the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park. There, we will honor the lost Emmons shipmates with our traditional memorial service, have the opportunity to tour three WWII ships and related exhibits and have lunch together.

Other area attractions can be visited during free time including Buffalo's "waterfront playground," Canalside, Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino, Pierce-Arrow Transportation Museum, Teddy Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House, and shopping at the shop-lined streets of Elmwood

Village. And of course let's not forget Niagara Falls, only a 30 minute drive.

In addition to the Naval Park, the itinerary includes the usual Friday night and Sunday morning buffets and Association business meeting Saturday morning.

Special Keynote Speaker

A highlight of the weekend will be the Saturday evening banquet and program including, not only presentation of the 2017 Griffin/Emmons scholarship awards, but also an address by Kevin King, Okinawa diving instructor who established the specialty USS Emmons Diver Certification Program. Kevin, who is retired from the U.S. Navy, will be in attendance all weekend with his wife CDR Jody King, NC, USN.

Reunion registration information was sent out in March and is also available on our website at **www.ussemmons.org** or by calling 610-691-7770.

You must make your hotel reservations with the hotel by August 25th. A block of rooms have been set aside at the \$129 group rate but availability after that is not guaranteed, so don't delay! The registration form must also be submitted to the Emmons Association by August 25th.

LOST SHIPMATES HONORED WITH 72nd ANNIVERSARY DIVE

Led by Kurt REESE and Chuck DECESARI, 13 members of the Okinawa diving community once again carried out their annual memorial dive April 15th at the Emmons' resting site, honoring the shipmates who gave their lives for our country aboard the Emmons.

Extensive planning and preparation goes into these memorial dives and there's never a concern with finding divers interested in honoring our fallen heroes. This year

was a prime example being that a last minute postponement for logistical problems failed to affect the number of participants. And Susan Lammer, despite having moved thousands of miles back to the states several years ago, again made the beautiful floral wreath used in the service.

Kurt reported back that the day started when they met

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

FAMILIES SEEK INFORMATION ON THEIR BELOVED CREW MEMBERS SHIPMATES ASKED TO RESPOND

The Emmons website continues to put Emmons Family members in touch with us as children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews look for information on their loved ones' time aboard the Emmons.

We ask that any crew members who knew any of your shipmates listed to the right to please contact Eleanor Yates at eleya@optonline.net or 845-266-4361 and we'll put you in touch with their families.

Homer Tittle, F1c, 11/24/42 to 3rdQtr43, transferred to USS New Jersey

Harold Leistman, GM2c, 12/5/41 to 4/6/45 Survivor

Robert (Bob) Hunter, S2c, 8/11/43 to 4/6/45 Wounded

Marvin Balthrope, F2c, 12/14/44 to 4/6/45 Survivor

Russell McCullough, F1c, 12/6/41 to 2ndQtr42, transferred to USS Hermitage

Robert Shea, RM3c, 1/27/44 to 4/6/45 KIA

(MEMORIAL DIVE...continued from page 1)
at 0700 and made their way out to the *Emmons* in 2 foot seas. As Kurt explained, anything under 3 feet would generally allow the dive to take place.

Kurt had to stay top side because, as he said, "Too sick to dive, but not too sick to be on the boat." Other participants this year included Chuck DECESARI, Darlene FONG, David CATANGHAL, Lindsay BUF-FUM, Dale FARIA, Danny ZEDEL, Ryan PARSONS, Rob WICKINGHAM, Matt LEWIS and Richard KEARNEY, Jr.

Carrying out the service involved two dives. During the first, Chuck placed the wreath above the memorial plaque followed by Dale and Matt who unfurled the American flag below the plaque. Following a brief tour of the *Emmons*, the divers made their ascent.

The second dive included group photos around the flag, wreath and plaques before collecting the flag for return to the surface.

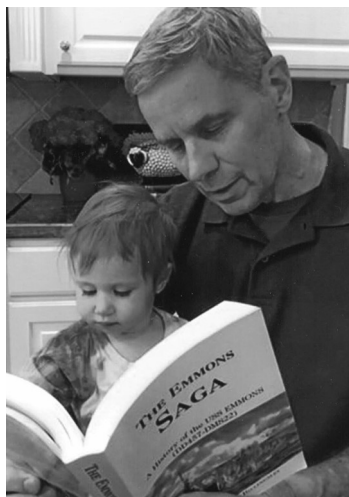
As if the honor and respect shown by their actions isn't enough, we've also learned challenge coin sales and donations made during the memorial dive have raised another \$1,880 for the Griffin/Emmons scholarship fund.

The Emmons Family extends our sincere appreciation to Susan, Kurt Chuck and all those involved for their ongoing support.

JR. MEMBERSHIPS BRINGING NEW GENERATION ON BOARD

Membership recognizes those who believe in the purpose of a given organization and the values associated with that community of people. The Emmons Association is no different as we work to maintain relationships among the shipmates, families and friends and strive to preserve the legacy of the *Emmons* and the memory of those who gave their lives at Okinawa.

To that end, growth in the membership and looking to the future are ever so important. Most promising has been the increased interest exhibit-



Grandpa Dennis Yecke reads *The Emmons Saga* to our most recent member, 18 month old granddaughter Bridget, great-grandniece of crew member Donald L. Yecke (KIA)

ed by our third-generation Emmons Family members. And thanks to the recent offering of junior memberships, the number of members 18 years and under has grown to 15.

As Emmons Association Director Dennis Yecke said, "It's important to start them young!" It's clear our children are one of our most valuable resources in assuring preservation of the *Emmons* legacy. The junior membership is a great way to introduce them to the *Emmons* story and that special bond we all share with one another.

2017 DUES: Treasurer Tom Hoffman extends his appreciation for the notes and updates included by many of you with your checks. Every dollar of dues received directly supports our efforts throughout the year. If you have not yet sent yours, it's never too late!

Annual dues is \$25 (discounted to \$40 for both husband and wife) or \$5 for junior members 18 years and younger. Checks should be made payable to USS Emmons Association and sent to: Tom Hoffman, Treasurer, 3136 Northampton St., Bethlehem, PA 18020.

DON'T DELAY IN MAKING YOUR REUNION RESERVATIONS!!
VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CALL 610-691-7770 FOR INFO
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

IN MEMORIAM

We received word from wife Patty of the passing of shipmate **Peter J. TINKOVICZ**, December 15th. Aboard the Emmons, Peter was a Torpedoman and served from October 1942 through the 4th quarter of 1944.

Patty shared how proud he was to have served in WWII and how he often spoke of his time aboard the Emmons and of his buddies who meant so much to him.

Peter was fittingly buried with the rendering of Military Funeral Honors, including a flag presentation, taps and 21-gun salute.

Paul DODD passed away January 4th at a Providence, RI, hospice facility. His daughter, Ann SHORT, said he passed peacefully with his family at his side.

Paul served as a Water Tender aboard the Emmons, boarding in January, 1942, and was a survivor of the Okinawa attack. He was a regular attendee at the annual reunions until health issues intervened.

Two granddaughters, Jennifer Tucci and Alaina Short, made Paul proud as past recipients of the Griffin/Emmons Memorial Scholarship, Jennifer in 2010 and Alaina in 2016.

Virginia HAPPEL, daughter of crew member **Harold YOUNG**, notified us recently of her father's passing January 17th. Harold served as Seaman aboard the Emmons.

Having boarded the Emmons December 5, 1941, he holds the distinction of Plank Owner. Harold served aboard the Emmons for her entire life and was a survivor of the April 6, 1945, Okinawa attack.

After suffering a stroke earlier in the month, shipmate **Bill ROBERTS** passed away January 28th, while at home with his family. Prior to his illness, Bill could be found at the annual

reunions with his daughters.

He boarded the Emmons in June, 1942. Serving as a Quartermaster, he was a wounded survivor of the Okinawa attack.

Bill is the subject of a 2015 documentary done by his grandson, sharing his experiences while aboard the USS Emmons during World War II. The documentary is available on our website.

Wendy CIPARELLI, daughter of shipmate Armand JOLLY, passed away March 1st following her courageous 16-year battle with cancer.

Wendy was an enthusiastic and passionate member of the Emmons Association, coordinating and hosting annual reunions and always looking for an opportunity to share the Emmons story with anyone who would listen. Her passion for fundraising was instrumental in helping establish and grow the Griffin\Emmons Memorial Scholarship fund.

Wendy served as a member of the USS Emmons Legacy Committee.

Bill PATTON died April 8TH at his home in Cape May Point, NJ, following a hospital stay and rehab for a recent illness. Bill was buried with an honor guard detail rendering Military Funeral Honors.

Bill served aboard the Emmons from December 1942 to December 1944, departing when the Emmons was being converted to a high-speed minesweeper in Boston. From there, he was sent to Water Tender school and finished out his six-year Navy career aboard other ships.

Bill was a faithful supporter of the Emmons Association, attending reunions with wife Margaret until her death in 2001, then with his children thereafter.



Now HEAR This !

We're happy to report the database of all 664 Emmons officers and crew is now available on the Emmons website. As reported in the December issue of this newsletter, Jon HOFFMAN, working with his grandfather, crew member Ed HOFFMAN, compiled the data from various sources, resulting in a valuable resource which includes time aboard the Emmons, rank/rate and more. See for yourself at www.ussemmons.org.

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We recently heard from Scott SHEA, great-nephew of shipmate Robert SHEA, who died at Okinawa. Scott shared his deep pride in Bob's service and that of Bob's older brother, Harry, who was captured and spent over 6 months in Stalag 3 B.

George FLORY's son, Mike, checked in with us. George and wife Carol have been sorely missed at the past several reunions, but we're happy to learn their absence is due only to travel difficulties and both are doing well at their home in Florida.

While he does get to visit George and Carol, Mike expressed how he misses attending the reunions with them and seeing everyone. You may recall from an earlier newsletter, Mike donated *The Emmons Saga* books to his Broadhead, WI, middle school, high school and city library in doing his part to help keep the Emmons story alive. Well done Mike!

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Russ McCULLOUGH III of Charlotte, NC, wrote to tell us he had recently discov-

ered his father, Russell McCULLOUGH Jr., served aboard the Emmons.

Prior to the Emmons, Russ Jr. served on the Battleship USS Oklahoma but was reassigned off the Oklahoma just before Pearl Harbor, where the battleship suffered nine Japanese torpedo hits and the loss of 429 crew members.

Following the war, Russ served on the design team for the Navy's super carrier catapult systems beginning with the USS Forestall.

Russ III proudly shared that his one memento of his dad's time on the Emmons is a gift his dad gave his mother, a 1923 Peruvian silver dollar with the back shaved off and engraved with their names and "USS Emmons, South American Cruise, February 11, 1942."

USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION

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USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

We're on the web at
www.ussemmons.org



Participants in this year's USS Emmons Memorial Dive pause for pictures at the Emmons site. (story, page 2).

Photo courtesy of Danny Zedell