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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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2019 REUNION

Gettysburg, PA
September 26-29

ANTICIPATION BUILDS FOR UPCOMING REUNION

Plans are being finalized as registrations continue to arrive for our upcoming *USS Emmons* reunion in historic Gettysburg, PA, September 26-29.

The Hospitality Room will open Thursday afternoon as guests begin to arrive and will remain open throughout the weekend.

Friday, we'll travel together to Gettysburg National Cemetery to honor the lost *Emmons* shipmates with our annual memorial service, then on to visit the Gettysburg National Military Park, site of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Following lunch at the Park, we'll return to the hotel for an afternoon program and evening dinner buffet.

Saturday morning starts off with our annual Association business meeting with the remainder of the day free for sightseeing, shopping or simply relaxing.

Saturday evening we'll all come together for our annual banquet program, followed by Sunday morning's breakfast buffet giving everyone the opportunity to say their goodbyes.

Registration information was sent in the spring but if for some reason you didn't receive it, it's also available on the Reunions page of our website at www.ussemmons.org. Please note that you must submit the registration form AND book your room by August 29.

RETURN TO NORMANDY BEACHES MAKES FOR EMOTIONAL VISIT

Most go through life feeling as though they've made little, if any, impact on the world. *Emmons* shipmate Armand JOLLY clearly is not one of them.

75 years ago, off the beaches of Normandy, he and his fellow shipmates were part of the largest amphibious assault during WWII. Opening the way for the Allied campaign to Berlin and the ultimate end of the Third Reich, it resulted in the liberation of Europe and secured the freedoms we all enjoy today.

Part of a dying generation, the number of veterans who bore wit-



Emmons shipmate Armand Jolly with son Dennis at the US Navy Day Monument

ness to the invasion becomes fewer each day. Many are returning to Normandy this year, to mark the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord; JOLLY was one of them.

Enlisting in the Navy in January, 1942, he became a Gunner's Mate 3rd class on the *Emmons*, participating in five invasions: Africa, Normandy, Cherbourg, Southern France and Okinawa.

The trip was made possible by local businessman Joseph MASSARO, whose desire it was to honor a local Normandy veteran with the all-

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WREATH-LAYING TRADITION CONTINUES

Those paying their respects for the lost *Emmons* shipmates at this year's memorial dive included eight Marines, former Marines and a Soldier. Participating were Kurt Reese Chuck DeCesari, Michael J Duenas, Mike Boring, Matt Rudolph, Charles Lombardi, Hunter Pratt and Troy Whitehurst. And as always, Susan Lammer was there in spirit through her providing of the memorial wreath.

Kurt expressed his joy that, unlike the past few years, the weather finally cooperated, allowing the memorial to be held on April 6, the 74th anniversary of the attack.

Honoring the men lost that day in 1945, the U.S. flag and wreath were placed on the ship at the builder's plaque and the *Emmons'* memorial plaque, which lists those killed or missing in action. In addition, a U.S. flag draped over a 20mm AA gun made for a moving silent tribute to the Sailors.

Photos of the memorial are posted on our website. And as always, Kurt has promised a video for it's initial public screening at the reunion.

We are forever grateful for the continued oversight and respect our Okinawa family provides year in and year out.

DEVERS, BIERMANN AWARDED 2019 GRIFFIN/EMMONS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Legacy Committee has been proud of the academic achievements of our scholarship applicants in the past, as well as the honor and respect they exhibit for the *Emmons* and her crew. All of this year's applicants were no exception.

Receiving the 2019 awards of \$2500 each are Lyuka Devers, great-granddaughter of John H. Devers, RdM1c, and Troy Biermann, grandson of Joseph P. Pomykala, S1c. Lyuka begins her studies in Nursing this fall at Cal State University, Long Beach, and Troy continues his work at Northwestern University where he's majoring in Neuroscience, with a minor in Philosophy.

The Committee congratulates all the applicants and looks forward to sharing the winning essays at the reunion banquet in September.

(NORMANDY Continued from page 1)
expense-paid trip on this 75th anniversary of the invasion.

While there, JOLLY visited the beaches that served as the stage for the invasion, as well as the memorials placed there in honor of all those who sacrificed everything to assure our freedom. He was especially moved and grate-

ful to see the *Emmons* listed on the U.S. Navy Monument at Utah Beach. Overwhelmed by emotion, he shared handshakes, hugs and tears with visitors from across Europe expressing gratitude for his service. His final day there, he was honored to participate in the flag lowering ceremony at the American cemetery.

EMMONS SHIPMATE SHARES WWII EXPERIENCE

Twice yearly, Newnan (GA) High School's history and social studies department hosts its Student-Vet Connect Event, during which veterans set up displays and speak with students about their military experiences.

Anyone who knows *Emmons* shipmate Grover McMICHAEL won't be surprised to learn he has attended the last 10 years, sharing his WWII experiences aboard the *Emmons* with Newnan students.

McMichael, who went aboard the *Emmons* November, 1942, served as a Sonarman 3rd class.

His passion to help educate these students is in keeping with our determination to share the *Emmons* story and preserve the *Emmons* legacy for future generations. McMichael was quoted as saying, "I want the young people to understand and know what went on at the time."

Well done Grover!! And kudos to Newnan HS for bringing to your students the realities of war and sacrifices made by so many defending our freedom.

The *Emmons* Association is excited and especially moved to see the honor and respect given one of our beloved shipmates through the opportunity to return to Omaha Beach. We must always keep in mind, the only reason he could stand there today is because he and the Allied forces were there 75 years ago.

IN MEMORIAM

The USS Emmons Association extends our sincere condolences to the families of the following Emmons family members:

Jeffrey HORWITZ advised us of the April 20 passing of his father, **Leon HORWITZ**, at the age of 84. Leon was a regular attendee of our annual reunions until failing health prevented his attendance the past two years.

Leon was the brother of Em-

mons shipmate Lt. (jg) David HORWITZ, who gave his life aboard the Emmons at Okinawa. He was a passionate supporter of the Association and was instrumental in establishing and raising funds for the Griffin/Emmons Memorial Scholarship Program.

Emmons Shipmate **Raymond E. O'CONNELL**'s daughter, Eileen, notified us of his passing March 21. Ray, a Signalman 2c, went

aboard the *Emmons* December, 1942. He was 96.

Shipmate George AVERY, Jr. informed us of the February 24, 2019 passing of his wife, **Mary Frances AVERY**.

George boarded the *Emmons* December, 1944 serving as Fireman 2c. After surviving the Okinawa attack, George and Mary Frances were married, celebrating their 73rd anniversary this year.



Now HEAR This

The *USS Emmons* was recently featured in a program broadcast by a news station in Okinawa. The Emmons Association allowed the use of our photos in producing the story centered around a Japanese Zero pilot who attacked the *Emmons* at Okinawa, the pilot's fiancé, and her son.

The son dove to the site of the *Emmons*, where he honored the lost pilot, and all who gave their lives there, through a memorial service at the site of a Japanese fighter plane engine resting near the ship. Before leaving, he collected sands to give his mother as a memorial of her lost fiancé.

The news division extended its appreciation for allowing the use of our photos in this story introducing many to the tragic history of war.

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The production company that produces National Geographic Channel's documentary series 'Drain the Oceans' reached out to us recently with plans to feature the *Emmons* in an upcoming program.

The series producers work with archaeologists and maritime historians around the world to analyze shipwrecks and sub-sea geological features.

They are currently at the initial stages of a program focusing on 1945 and the final campaigns of both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. The aim is to commemorate the end of the war and all those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The producers specifically inquired about the memorial dives and we have since put them in touch with Kurt Reese for video. They are currently at the research stage, so we'll keep you updated.

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In support of the amazing work done by Rich Angelini at Battleship Cove, Fall River, MA, working tirelessly at preserving our country's naval heritage, especially that of the U.S. Navy destroyers, the Emmons Association recently contributed \$1000 to support the renovation project of the Admiral Burke National Destroyer Museum and Memorial aboard the USS Joseph

P. Kennedy, Jr. DD850. Visit their website www.battleshipcove.org.

Rich, a long-time friend and supporter of the Emmons Association, expressed his gratitude, going on to say, "...the *USS Emmons* is one of our shining stars in history. Though lost in combat, she is well remembered by the *USS Emmons* Association, Navy divers in Okinawa, and will be a part of our renovated National Destroyer Memorial along with every other destroyer in our nation's history. Long live the *Emmons* and her men...we remember the 60 still on station."

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We continue to receive inquiries from family member looking for information about their loved ones who served aboard the *Emmons*. If anyone has information on the following crew members, please contact us and we'll put you in touch with the family:

—Carl E. Sutorius, FC2c
—Thomas D. Orton, Jr., SK1c (KIA)
—Arthur J. Coppola, S2c
—George C. Border, F1c
—Charles Peck, SF3c (KIA)

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USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

Visit us online at
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Referencing artist Dwight Shepler's *Emmons* Normandy paintings, shipmate Grover McMichael shares his D-Day experience with a Newnan (GA) High School Student (see story page 2).