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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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☆☆
☆☆ THE 2023
☆☆ SCHOLARSHIP
☆☆ APPLICATION IS
☆☆ NOW AVAILABLE!
☆☆

☆☆ \$5000 IN AWARDS!
☆☆

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☆☆ WEBSITE AT
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☆☆

2023 REUNION

Reunion is still in
planning stage.
Site and date are
yet to be finalized

EMMONS FAMILY RESPONDS TO CALL FOR RETURN TO IN-PERSON REUNIONS

47 members of the *Emmons* Family came together once again at the Crowne Plaza Annapolis to celebrate the *Emmons* legacy, rekindle friendships left idle the past two years, and create new ones with 11 attending their first reunion.

The weekend was truly a family event, with our second, third and fourth generation in attendance with two first generation members, Fern SPARKS and Dennis YECKE. An early highlight of the weekend was a Friday Zoom get together with shipmate Grover McMICHAEL, who, at 99 years young, charmed the group with his wit, wisdom and *Emmons* stories.

Activities Kicked Off Thursday

The newest addition to our reunion, and one which will clearly become an annual tradition, was introduced Thursday....the USS *Emmons* Wall of Honor (see story, page 2).

Scheduled activities began Friday morning with a tour of the U.S. Naval Academy, including our Memorial Service in St. Andrews Chapel with Lt. Vanessa PLATEK, CHC, USN, presiding. From there, the group moved outside to observe the impressive noon meal formation before heading to the Naval Academy Club for lunch together.

Following lunch, everyone had free time to explore the "Yard" on their

own before boarding the bus to return to the hotel.

Friday afternoon's program included Kurt REESE's much anticipated video of the April Memorial Dive followed by an evening buffet dinner.

Business Meeting Elections

The Association's vacant president position was filled at Saturday's annual business meeting with an enthusiastic, unanimous vote for Eleanor YATES, a long-time and passionate supporter of our efforts. Members also voted to add Mike ESPOSITO and Anne Marie PATTON to the Board of Directors. The remainder of the day was free time to visit the attractions of the Chesapeake area.

The weekend's climax came at Saturday evening's banquet, with scholarship recipients Layne FRY and Isaac BIRD sharing their essays and this year's keynote speaker, Lt. Michael Ross, USN, who spoke of the call to selfless service, exhibited by the crew of the USS *Emmons*, as a common thread throughout Navy's history.

The weekend came to an end with a farewell breakfast Sunday morning.

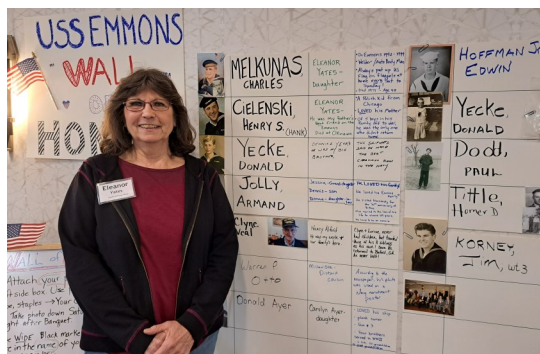
Visit our website's Reunions page for photos from the weekend.

The Association regrets that hotel internet issues resulted in preventing some of you from enjoying the banquet program via Zoom as planned.

THE USS *EMMONS* WALL OF HONOR...A NEW REUNION TRADITION

The wall of the reunion's hospitality room was filled with photos, thoughts and memories of our beloved shipmates. The newest addition to our reunion, the "USS *Emmons* Wall of Honor," provided members the means to showcase their loved ones with those in attendance.

Kudos to Eleanor YATES who saw the need for members to have a way to better the service and sacrifice of the shipmates, the Wall connect at the reunions by sharing their pride in of Honor is sure to return again next year and every year thereafter when the *Emmons* Family comes together to honor and celebrate the *Emmons* and photos and note how they're related and tidbits her crew.



Eleanor Yates with the Wall of Honor

about, not only their time of service, but their personal family life as well.

In addition, members were provided the opportunity at the Friday afternoon program, to share thoughts and memories about the shipmates they honored.

A wonderful way to honor

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

This second part of our series on past Griffin/Emmons Scholarship recipients features our 2011 recipient Hayley WELLS, granddaughter of Warren G. SPARKS.

Following her graduation from Bridgewater State University, Hayley worked a couple of years as a paraprofessional at Hingham Middle School, while also babysitting and coaching High School girls' varsity basketball.

In 2013, Hayley earned her Masters degree in Special Education. The following September, she started her career as a Special Educator at Brookline High School where she is currently in her 10th year. She also co-teaches 9th grade Geometry/Algebra and teaches a course called Racial Awareness Seminar to 10th graders, something she says is one of the highlights of her career thus far.

Having always been an ocean girl, Hayley now gets to experience living on a lake where she

currently resides in Atkinson, NH. She and boyfriend Tom met in October, 2020, and they look forward to their future together.

Hayley, who continues to attend the reunions each year, expressed the importance of earning the scholarship, as she was paying for graduate school herself. In addition, she tells of how honored she was to receive the award in honor of her Papa, her "shining star," who she thinks of always.

To current *Emmons* Family students, she urges them to take the opportunity to apply for the scholarship, to dive into the legacy of the *Emmons* that they might not otherwise take, in turn, helping to keep the story alive for generations to come.

Visit the **LEAVE A LEGACY** page on our website to see how you can honor and memorialize your *Emmons* shipmate for generations to come.

LEWIS TAKES REINS OF DIVER SPECIALTY

Having moved back to the states, Kevin KING, who in 2015 established the USS *Emmons* Diver PADI Distinctive Specialty in Okinawa, tells us he has officially handed over the course to Matt LEWIS, a Master PADI Instructor.

The course allows divers to become certified in diving on the *Emmons*, focusing on the ship's historical impact, preservation and respect. To date, 112 divers have been certified.

Matt, an instructor at Marine Corps Community Services in Okinawa, is prior Army. Kevin tells us he has a deep affection for the USS *Emmons* and that he asked to take on full ownership of the *Emmons* specialty with plans to re-energize the program that took a back seat to Covid for the past two years.

We extend our gratitude and best wishes to Matt as he looks to continue honoring the *Emmons* through this program.

Notes....from the Reunion Log

Response to the reunion's annual initiative collecting personal items for donation to local veterans homes resulted in an overwhelming response from those in attendance.

Roslyn JONES of the Maryland Dept. of Veterans Affairs left the hotel with her car filled to the roof and expressed her sincere appreciation to the *Emmons* Association on behalf of the local veterans.

The Association extends its thanks to all who participated to make this effort a success once again.

* * * * *

Present for the first time were several items of *Emmons* historical interest, including Ross ELLIOTT's Navy Cross, a photo of the *Emmons* ship signed by the shipmates in 1943, Capt. FOSS' Bronze and Gold Star certificates, the original 1873 certificate appointing G.F. EMMONS Admiral, a photo of the shipmates at their

first reunion, a copy of Doug GRUBER's memoir and, presented to the Association at the reunion by Nancy ALFORD, was her uncle Clyde VEAL's Navy-issue pea coat.

We thank the families of Ross ELIOTT, John McCARTHY, Gene FOSS, Doug GRUBER and Clyne VEAL for entrusting us with these historical *Emmons* treasures.

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Also making its first appearance was the wardroom clock retrieved from the ship, refurbished and presented to the Association last year by Mike BORING.

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In helping to share the *Emmons* story, at Friday's Memorial Service, Dennis YECKE presented the new edition of the survivor accounts book to USNA Nimitz Library Director Larry CLEMENS.

Then Saturday, following banquet keynote speaker Lt. Ross' inspiring talk, Jim KORNEY presented him with a personalized copy of Admiral Billingsley's *The Emmons Saga*.

* * * * *

The Legacy Committee is happy to report \$525 was raised for the scholarship program through its reunion raffle. The committee extends its appreciation to all who supported the raffle through donations and the purchase of chances.

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At Saturday's business meeting, we learned that a \$3205 check was recently received from Kurt REESE representing funds raised by the divers for our scholarship fund.

Never to be taken for granted, the Association is forever grateful for the ongoing support of our Okinawa friends.

MEMORIAL BOOK DONATIONS PROVIDE MEANS TO HONOR SHIPMATES

Helping to share the *Emmons* story.

The USS *Emmons* Association invites you to honor an *Emmons* shipmate, or the entire crew, with a lasting memorial gift of an *Emmons* book to your local library or other institution.

When you donate a copy of the Association's survivor reports book or *The Emmons Saga* book, most libraries will insert a commemorative book-

NAVY LIBRARY AND NAVY MEMORIAL ADD SURVIVOR REPORTS TO THEIR COLLECTIONS

Cheri YECKI's compilation of transcribed survivor reports is now part of the collection of naval and maritime history at the Naval History & Heritage Command's Navy Department Library and the Navy Memorial's library.

While the NHHC donation was handled through the mail with Archivist Eden Marie Picazo, Cindy Wagner, daughter of shipmate Robert 'Doc' Wagner, had the honor of personally presenting the Navy Memorial's copy to Admiral Frank Thorp, President and CEO of the U.S. Navy Memorial.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

★ The USS *Emmons* Association
★ respectfully acknowledges the
★ following gifts received:

★ In Memory of Tony Esposito
★ Mike & Judy Esposito
★
★

★ In Memory of George Flory
★ Fern Sparks

★ In Memory of Dick Shaub
★ Don & Michelle Krueger

★ In Memory of Clyne & Lorene
★ Veal

★ ★ Nancy & Mike Alford

★ In Memory of all *Emmons*
★ Shipmates

★★ Okinawa Diver Friends

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USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

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JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP
USS EMMONS REUNION



Some take a photo break during the Emmons reunion's U.S. Naval Academy tour (see story, page 1).