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# U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

November/December 2013

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## **2014 REUNION**

**The reunion is still in planning stage. Site and date are yet to be finalized.**

**Info to follow.**

## **SURPRISE APPEARANCE OF BUILDER'S PLAQUE KICKS OFF FALL RIVER REUNION; RECORD ATTENDANCE**

Interesting programs have always been a feature of Emmons Family reunions, but none as surprising and dramatic as the one that greeted attendees and set the tone for their annual gathering in Fall River in September.

When the Emmons group gathered at Battleship Cove for their traditional Friday morning memorial service Rich ANGELINI, assistant curator at the Cove, was introduced for welcoming remarks. His remarks, however, didn't end with his official welcome.

### **Plaque Makes Appearance**

He went on to recount involvement in the journey of the *Emmons'* builder's plaque – stolen from the wreck, then recovered and returned to the Navy. As he did, reunion hosts Al and Donna CAPPELLI stepped up and removed a coverlet from the plaque itself, on loan for our reunion from the Navy's History and Heritage Command in Washington, DC (see photo on outside panel).

The assembled Emmons group briefly showed wonderment, then broke into applause as they realized this was our very own Emmons builder's plaque.

The memorial service then continued, after which attendees visited the *USS Massachusetts* and the destroyer *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr* and, of course, the Ship's Store before reassembling for lunch in the PT Boat building.

### **Exciting Effect Continues**

Excitement of the plaque's appearance carried over into the rest of the week-end's activities, beginning with the get-together for an Okinawa update Friday afternoon and the informal buffet dinner that evening.

Saturday morning's Association meeting acted on a number of important issues and heard reports on ongoing programs, including the Library of Congress Project and outreach initiatives of the very active Legacy Committee.

### **Four Generations at Banquet**

The enjoyable three days of activity culminated Saturday evening with a record attendance at the annual banquet. The 100 persons attending included four generations of the Emmons family. Highlight of the evening's program was recognition of this year's Emmons/Griffin Scholarship award recipients, Sara HOFFMAN and Eileen KORNEY.

## **PLAQUE'S LOAN NEARLY ABORTED BY DC SHOOTING**

The surprise appearance of the Emmons builder's plaque that brought such elation to Reunion attendees almost didn't happen, an improbable consequence of the Washington Navy Yard shooting in September.

During their early planning, Al and Donna CAPPELLI envisioned acquiring the plaque for surprise display at the Reunion and reached out to Emmons friend Rich ANGELINI for possible assist. In addition to his volun-

teer work at Battleship Cove, Rich is a regular employee of the Navy Department.

Working through associates at the History and Heritage Command in Washington, Rich was able to give the required assurances of security, handling and return, and received clearance for loan of the plaque. It was to be shipped in time for our reunion in late September.

(continued....see **PLAQUE** on page 2)

**Committee Statement:****EMMONS LEGACY COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS CONTINUE**

The USS Emmons Legacy Committee is pleased to report progress on our continued efforts to preserve the memory of the Emmons and her crew.

The scholarship program continues to serve as a valuable outreach tool, attracting the attention of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of our Emmons Family. The generous response to our scholarship fundraisers and other memorial gifts have made it possible for us to keep up with the rising cost of college education by offering two awards, now totaling \$2500.

Another exciting initiative has been our continued progress on updating the Emmons website, at [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org). There, you'll find among other things, information on Emmons happenings, photos and the Ship's Store, where you'll soon be able to purchase Emmons clothing, blankets and more, allowing us all to show our Emmons pride. Available now in the Store are the Emmons challenge coins (see the insert included with this newsletter).



*2013 Scholarship Award Recipients Sara Hoffman and Eileen Korney with their proud grandfathers, Ed Hoffman and Jim Korney, left and right, respectively.*

For those of you unable to attend the reunions, the website now allows us to bring it to you, thanks to the videos available there, produced by John PALACIO, grandson of crew member Harold Jay.

Other initiatives underway include outreach to members we haven't heard from and the Library of Congress Veterans' History Project, making available personal accounts to help future generations better understand the realities of war ([www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)).

**ASSN. SAYS THANKS TO RICH ANGELINI**

Our visit to Fall River and Battleship Cove provided the opportunity for long-overdue recognition of Rich ANGELINI, thanking him for all his efforts in behalf of the Emmons Association. Rich and his wife, Jen, were guests at the banquet Saturday evening.

Our relationship with Rich goes back 14 years when he set up our first internet website. It was that website that led to contact from Okinawa divers and discovery of the wreck in February, 2001

A son and grandson of Tin Can sailors and an employee of the Navy in Newport, RI, Rich has been an invaluable source of information and guidance to the Association, through his Navy Department contacts and his matchless knowledge of Navy destroyers.

To recognize him and express our appreciation, Rich was called to the banquet podium where Anne Marie PATTON presented him with a large copy of the Shepler painting "Target of Opportunity," signed by all the Emmons Family in attendance.

(PLAQUE.....continued from page 1)

Then came the universally reported shooting at the Navy Yard on September 16 and everything was put on hold, with no timetable for being lifted. It appeared the plaque's appearance would not happen.

But Rich stayed in touch and on Wednesday, two days before our scheduled visit to the Cove, he got word the plaque could be released. But only overnight delivery could make it happen in time.

Rich consulted with Al and Donna, arrangements were made, and the plaque arrived at 4:30 Thursday afternoon, the day before our visit.

**NOW AVAILABLE!!**

**THE LT. JOHN J. GRIFFIN/USS EMMONS  
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

**AT [WWW.USSEMMONS.ORG](http://WWW.USSEMMONS.ORG)**



*Naval Sea Cadet Wentzel holds the original USS Emmons builder's plaque, on loan to the USS Emmons Association thanks to the efforts of reunion hosts Al and Donna Cappelli (on her right and left, respectively), and Rich Angelini, Battleship Cove Assistant Curator.*

## IN MEMORIAM

We learned during the Reunion of the passing of former shipmate **John J. GILLIGAN** on August 26 at his home in Cincinnati, OH.

Lt. Gilligan had served as assistant gunnery officer on the **Emmons** and transferred to the **Rodman** as gunnery officer at the time of our deployment to the Pacific. He was awarded the Silver Star for his action during the attack on both ships at Okinawa.

John GILLIGAN served the people of his state of Ohio in many capacities during a long and illustrious professional and political career and was governor from 1971 to 1975.

## NOTES . . . . . From the Reunion Log

The backdrop of Naval ships and the facilities of Battleship Cove, made available and arranged for us by the volunteer staff, contributed immensely to an especially memorable memorial service.

Our ceremony was enhanced by first-rate participation of a color guard of Sea Cadets from their unit in Quonset, RI. The young sailors-to-be were engaged for the occasion through their CO, Ensign Jose TABOADA, a long-time friend of Michael ESPOSITO.

\* \* \* \* \*

Everyone was pleased to hear of greetings received in a message from Navy Capt. Chris DEGREGORY. Chris is the grandson of shipmate Ted TENEROWICZ and was last year's Banquet speaker. He expressed regret at not being able to attend this year's Reunion and explained his new posting.

Chris was transferred last June from his command in Norfolk to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in Tampa, FL, where he is a division chief. His message included an invitation to everyone to visit and tour CENTCOM.

\* \* \* \* \*

A memorable scene at Battleship Cove was captured in a photo by Cove photographer Ted HAYES, showing one of the Sea Cadets holding the Builder's Plaque, surrounded by Emmons crew members and with **DD850's** fo'c'sle in the background. The picture appeared with a front-page story in Saturday morning's local newspaper which you can view by going to the Reunions page of our Emmons web site..

Quick to act on an opportunity, members of the Legacy Committee made copies of the photo, had them framed and presented one to each crew member at conclusion of the Saturday Banquet program. The photo is also being

sent to all crew members not able to attend the Reunion.

The eyes of banquet attendees were treated to a unique wall hanging that formed a backdrop for the speakers' rostrum -- a colorful, full-size, hand-made quilt, crafted in the form of our Flag with the **Emmons** in the center. Commissioning of the quilt was made possible by our reunion hosts, Donna and Al CAPPELLI.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kurt REESE again provided a video of the 2013 memorial dive held at the Emmons for viewing at the reunion, which can also be seen on our website; however, this year, he surprised everyone with his story of salvaging a darken-ship lamp from the decimated No. 3 gun mount.

During an October dive, he discovered a recent typhoon had unearthed the lamp, which was now in plain view to less-scrupulous divers who wouldn't hesitate to take home a trophy. Preferring that it be in the hands of the Em-

mons Family, he rescued it from the sea bottom.

He worked tirelessly restoring the metal cage to remove any sign of the 68 years it spent on the ocean floor, then sent it halfway around the world to have a new red glass lens custom made, then back to Okinawa, where he finished the assembly and forwarded it on to the Emmons Association.

The result was the "unveiling" of the light fixture on Friday, and the viewing of a video documenting the restoration process. The light made its rounds among crew members, who exhibited their appreciation for the effort that made it possible.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once again, there was generous response among attendees to the appeal for personal items for needy veterans, a project that was inaugurated last year.

The items were again delivered to the Rhode Island Veterans Home by Wendy and Peter CIPARELLI and Armand JOLLY.



*Paying a visit to Ed HOFFMAN during their stateside visit in August were Chuck DECESARI and his wife Katsuyo. Chuck, a key participant in the annual Emmons memorial dives at Okinawa, shared his experiences of diving on the Emmons and his sincere respect for the ship and her crew.*

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*USS Emmons (DD457, DMS22)*

**We're on the web at**  
**[www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org)**

### HONOR AND MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The USS Emmons Association wishes to acknowledge honor and memorial gifts received since our last notice in August 2013. The following gifts celebrate the lives of loved ones, while providing support for our ongoing efforts to keep the Emmons memory alive.

Anthony Esposito	In Memory of Elizabeth Esposito
The Esposito Family	In Memory of Elizabeth Esposito
Leon Horwitz	In Memory of S. Gerald Horwitz
Armand & Elsie Jolly, Peter & Wendy Ciparelli, Jessica Ciparelli	In Memory of Elizabeth Esposito
Eunice & Sue Kaminsky	In Memory of Kenneth Jacoboski
Lucretia Martuscelli	In Memory of Elizabeth Esposito
Nancy & Rick Slimmer	In Memory of Shirley Hoffman, shipmates and their family members who passed away this past year.
Cindy Wagner	In Memory of Robert C. Wagner
Donna & Ted Wells	In Honor of Warren Sparks

**BEST WISHES FOR WONDERFUL HOLIDAYS AND A HAPPY, HEALTHFUL NEW YEAR**