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# U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

August 2016

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## 2016 REUNION

Portsmouth, NH  
September 22 - 25

DEADLINES  
Hotel - August 31  
Registration Form - Sept 4

For information, visit our website at  
[www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org)  
or email us at  
[ussemmons@gmail.com](mailto:ussemmons@gmail.com)

## PLEASANT WEATHER, NEW ENGLAND SETTING BECKON FOR UPCOMING REUNION IN PORTSMOUTH

With the record warm (hot) spells of Summer, 2016, now behind them, Emmons Family members are looking forward to next month's annual gathering in the setting of New England autumn weather.

The 2016 Emmons Association Reunion will be held September 22 to 25 in Portsmouth, NH. Our hospitality headquarters will be at the Portsmouth Holiday Inn.

Though activity planning has been focused on the historic Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the city of Portsmouth itself – which lays claim to status as third oldest in the US – offers an array of attractions in its parks, restaurants, museums, scenic and historic sites.

### Tour and Memorial Service

The program of activities will begin on Friday with our visit to the Shipyard, starting with our traditional Memorial Service in Thresher Chapel, followed by a tour of the extensive facilities and lunch.

Our Association planning committee reported receiving unmatched assistance from personnel of the Shipyard's Office of Public Affairs in arranging every phase of our visit.

Returning to the hotel Friday afternoon, we will gather in the hospitality

room for an update on activities from the Okinawa chapter of the Association and ongoing programs of the Association. That evening we will enjoy a buffet dinner, hosted by the Association.

President Armand Jolly will preside at the annual Crew/Association meeting Saturday morning, with all Association members invited to attend. Saturday afternoon will be open to enjoy the aforementioned attractions of the area.

### Climax Saturday Evening

Activities will conclude at the Reunion Banquet Saturday evening including formal announcement of this year's recipients of the John J. Griffin/USS Emmons Memorial Scholarships.

Everyone is reminded to make reservations directly with the hotel, either online at their website or by calling 603-431-8000, using Group Code USS. Deadline to receive our group rate is August 31. The Holiday Inn is located just off I-95.

Deadline for returning registration forms to the Reunion Committee is Sept. 4. Registration/information packets were mailed earlier this summer, but anyone who needs a registration form can download it from the website: [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org).

## 2016 EMMONS SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The USS Emmons Legacy Committee is pleased to announce Alaina SHORT as the recipient of the 2016 \$2000 Lt. John J. Griffin/USS Emmons Memorial Scholarship award. Alaina is the granddaughter of shipmate Paul F. DODD and daughter of Ann & Thomas SHORT. She is a graduate of Assumption College and begins work this fall in the Doctor of Optometry program at Massachusetts

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Also, Isaac BIRD, a 2015 scholarship recipient, was selected as the recipient of the \$500 Honorable Mention scholarship. Isaac is the son of Lawrence and Sandra BIRD and grandson of Josephine MORROW, sister of shipmate O'Neil L. Infanto, who gave his life aboard the

(continued....see SCHOLARSHIP on page 2)

## PERSONNEL DATA FOR ALL WHO SERVED ON *EMMONS* WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING IN ONLINE DATABASE

The Emmons Association will soon have an invaluable, and possibly unique, online reference document at their disposal.

Jon HOFFMAN, Tom and Diane's son, has constructed a database that provides personnel information for every person who ever served on *USS Emmons*.

During *Emmons'* relatively short life – three years, four months – 633 Officers and Crewmen served aboard the ship for varying lengths of time and most advancing in rank or rate. This record of individual activity was reported regularly to the Navy's Bureau of Personnel and, thankfully, was retained in the Naval Archives.

Working from Archives copies, and with an assist from Grandad Ed, Jon was able to convert this personal information into a database that includes the following:

Name and last rank or rate

Plank Owner (if applicable)

Date reported on board

Date left ship

Status (If on board April 6, 1945)

At this writing, the database is complete except for a small block of personnel data yet to be recovered. Another third-generation Family member, Kelli Ann WILSON, has also stepped forward to help with the project, supplying some missing Archive copies and searching out other info. Kelli is the granddaughter of Shipmate William COPELAND.

Once completed, the database will be accessible and searchable to everyone on the website.

(SCHOLARSHIP...continued from page 1)

*Emmons* in the Battle of Okinawa. He continues his undergraduate work this fall at Fordham University.

Five applicants submitted their applications, complete with letters of reference, academic transcripts and essays. The essay asked them to address the following regarding our diver friends in Okinawa: ***“For the past 10 years, a group of men and women has found itself to be the guardian of the resting place of the 60 men who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country aboard the USS Emmons at Okinawa on April 6, 1945. What do you feel inspires these divers of today to protect, memorialize and record the Emmons at the bottom of the ocean? What does this mean to you personally as a member of the Emmons family?”***

The essays will be available to read at the reunion and a formal announcement and presentation of awards will take place at the reunion's Saturday evening dinner banquet, including Alaina's reading of her winning essay.

## INTEREST GROWS IN EMMONS DIVER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Spring issue of this newsletter reported that retired Naval Aviator and Okinawa scuba diving instructor, Kevin KING, established a diving specialty allowing divers to become certified in diving on the *USS Emmons*. The course is offered by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors ((PADI), the world's leading scuba diver training organization.

Kevin designed the program to promote the historical importance and impact of the *Emmons* and the bravery and sacrifices of her crew, and to educate divers on specifics of the wreck during guided tours, emphasizing preservation and respect for the wreck site.

As part of the program, Kevin designated \$50 of each certification tuition to go directly to the Lt. John

J. Griffin, Jr./USS Emmons Memorial Scholarship Fund. As of that reporting last Spring, the first seven certifications were awarded, resulting in a \$350 contribution to the scholarship fund. Since that time, 14 more divers have successfully completed the course and were awarded certifications, resulting in an additional \$700 for the scholarship fund.

Like our friends who watch over the ship and honor the *Emmons* and her lost shipmates through their annual memorial dives, the Emmons Association is grateful for the ongoing support of our scholarship program and the initiative taken by Kevin to share the *Emmons* story and to help ensure the proper respect is shown by those who dive on her.

**REMINDER;** If you're attending the reunion, we'll once again be collecting personal items (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, combs, etc.) for a local veterans' home.

## MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

### In Memory of Elsie Jolly

- Armand Jolly

# IN MEMORIAM

A message from his wife, Lorene, advised us of the death of Shipmate Clyne C. VEAL April 22 in Buford GA. Clyne was a Water Tender on the *Emmons* and a survivor who performed invaluable service in rescue efforts on April 6, 1945. He was one of the last to leave the ship aboard the *PGM-11*.

Heartfelt sympathy is extended from all the Emmons Family.

## Now HEAR This!

The visit of the Emmons Family to Portsmouth for next month's Reunion will be their first visit to New Hampshire.

Since the first latter-day Reunion in Elmhurst, Long Island, in 1974, the Reunion has been held in nine different states and the District of Columbia, but never in the Nutmeg State.

We look forward to our visit!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard has often been mistakenly called the Ports-

mouth Navy Yard – and for good reason: It has been the construction site of an enormous number of U.S. Navy vessels, dating back to early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Its first was the *USS Washington*, a 74-gun ship-o-the-line, built in 1814. Construction of sailing and then steam vessels went on into the next century and, as our Navy grew, adapting to the changing propulsion methods.

Beginning with World War I, construction converted almost entirely to submarines, producing most of the S-

Class boats of the 20,s and 30, the Fleet Class that carried the load in WWII and, more recently, our nuclear-powered submarines

Today, the Yard is responsible for overhaul, repair and modernization of the Navy's entire submarine fleet.

\* \* \* \* \*

We will have the opportunity to greet and welcome Edwin J. KROM from Kingston, NY, a Crew Member who will be attending the reunion for his first time.

## BATTLE STAR CONFUSION REMAINS -- -- HOPE FOR RESOLUTION IN THE WORKS

Discussion of the *Emmons'* history of WWII action often ends with the question: "How many battle stars is *Emmons* entitled to?"

The "battle stars" at issue are World War II Service Stars that were issued to Navy warships for meritorious participation in battle. They were authorized by the Chief of Naval Operations and entitled personnel of those ships to wear them on the service ribbon of the Theater of Operation in which they occurred.

### Varying Source Reports

Reason for the query lies in the fact that different reference sources have reported it differently, some for more than 50 years:

-- The *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships* (DANFS), the official publication of the Navy's Historic and Heritage Command cites four.

-- *Wikipedia*, lifting its info from (DANFS), as do all other online, unofficial sites, also credits only four.

Baxter BILLINGSLEY, in Chapter

XVI of *The Emmons Saga* wrote that the *Emmons* earned five battle stars for participation in the following engagements:

1. North Africa, Algeria-Morocco Landings
2. Class B Submarine Assessment - Mediterranean
3. Invasion of Normandy (including Cherbourg bombardment)
4. Invasion of Southern France
5. Okinawa Gunto Operation

The Destroyer History Foundation website of our friend and recognized Naval historian, the late Dave MCCOMB, also credits five stars. So does the late Captain Hal HEMMING, second Commanding Officer of the *Emmons*, in a book he wrote and published privately about the ship and the Emmons Family.

Your writer has a recollection of Adm. BILLINGSLEY explaining at a reunion crew meeting, probably in the early 1980's while working on *The*

*Saga*, that the Submarine Assessment was recognized as an Action Engagement sometime after the others. He wrote in *The Saga* while working on the book: "A document hidden in the files of the Naval Historical Center in Washington is the official history of the *Emmons* compiled much later, in February, 1952. New material of interest included are a list of honors won (five battle stars) and the text of the Navy Unit Commendation."

### Corrections and Updates

DANFS was published in eight hard-cover print volumes beginning in 1959 and completed in 1981 and was more recently made available online. In 1991, NHHHC began a project of corrections and updates that is ongoing – very slowly. When, and if, the project is completed and re-published, the updated version will properly show *Emmons is entitled to five battle stars!*



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*USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)*

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



*Pictured underwater at the Emmons dive site are the latest graduates of the PADI Distinctive Specialty USS Emmons Diver Certification program (see story, page 2).*