

DD 457

U.S.S. EMMONS

DMS 22



Volume XXXIV, No. 2

USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

July/August 2022

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2022 REUNION

Annapolis, Maryland
September 22-25

For registration information, visit the **Reunions page** on our website at www.ussemmons.org or call 610-417-5163.

Registration Deadline:
August 25th

REGISTRATION DEADLINE NEARS FOR EMMONS FAMILY REUNION

All systems are GO for our September 22-25 USS *Emmons* Family Reunion at the Crowne Plaza Annapolis.

Registration information went out with April's newsletter but you may also access it as noted in the box at the left. The deadline to register and to book your room is August 25th.

We remind everyone to book rooms ASAP to take advantage of the \$149/night group room rate before all the rooms are gone. Rooms may be cancelled until September 20th.

Come When You Can!

If your schedule doesn't permit attendance for the entire weekend, come when you can! Arrivals begin Thursday when the hospitality room is opened for the weekend allowing plenty of opportunity for fellowship with your *Emmons* Family.

A highlight will include Friday's Naval Academy tour where we'll also honor the lost shipmates, followed by lunch together before we return to the hotel for a short program and

dinner buffet.

Everyone's welcome at Saturday morning's *Emmons* Association business meeting, which will be followed by free time to explore all the Chesapeake Bay region has to offer.

Saturday evening's banquet will include the opportunity to honor our scholarship recipients. Sunday morning we'll say our goodbyes at a breakfast buffet.

First-Time Attendees Welcome!!

We're looking forward to seeing you and hope to see our streak of first-time attendees continue this year (19 at our last two in-person reunions).

Remember, you must 1) submit your registration to the Association and 2) book your hotel room. The deadline for both is August 25th.

Any existing CDC and local COVID restrictions will be adhered to. We ask all those attending be fully vaccinated out of an abundance of caution for everyone's safety.

EMMONS ASSOCIATION AWARDS \$5000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

Following the Legacy Committee's review of all application materials, including letters of reference, cational expenses for the upcoming 2022-23 academic year.

grade transcripts and essays, Layne Fry and Isaac Bird have been awarded the 2022 Lt. John J. Griffin, Jr./USS *Emmons* Memorial Scholarships. Each received a \$2500 scholarship to use toward their edu-

Layne is the great-granddaughter of shipmate Stanley Layne Fisher, who gave his life aboard the *Emmons* at Okinawa. She will be starting her under-

(Continued—See SCHOLARSHIP on page 2)

ANNUAL TRIBUTE HONORS SHIP, LOST SHIPMATES

The final resting place of the *Emmons* and 60 of her crew members was once again the site of our diver friends' annual Memorial Dive.

Led by Kurt REESE and Chuck DeCESARI, this year's service honoring the lost ship-



Our diver friends take a moment to pose for a photo during their annual Memorial Dive.

Photo courtesy of Mike Boring

mates was held April 10th with 13 divers plus Chuck who, as always, provided his boat.

The beautiful wreath, designed by Mary Breshike, was placed above the memorial and builders' plaques, with the American and Navy Flags on either side.

The Association recognizes and deeply appreciates the significant amount of time and expense incurred by the divers in honoring our fallen heroes. In addition, we've learned \$1300 was raised that day for our scholarship fund. Kurt notified us that those funds, along with additional monies raised last year and this, means a check for \$3,205 is on its way to us!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those involved in honoring the memory of the lost souls and for their ongoing support of the Griffin/*Emmons* Scholarship Fund.

APPEAL FOR VETERANS DONATIONS

Again this year, the Legacy Committee is asking attendees to bring toiletry or other personal items to the reunion for distribution at a local Veterans' Home and Hospital.

This will be the 10th year for this continuing project in which *Emmons* family members have shown generous concern for others who have served our country.

McMICHAEL CELEBRATES 99 YEARS!

Grover McMichael, the sole known shipmate still with us today, and still sharing his *Emmons* stories, turned 99 years young in June.

He and daughter Lesa extend their sincere appreciation to all his *Emmons* Family who made his birthday extra special with their well wishes.



(SCHOLARSHIP from page 1)

graduate work at Kent State University, majoring in Fashion Merchandising.

Our other recipient is Isaac Bird, grandson of Josephine Morrow, sister of O'Neil Infanto who also gave his life aboard the *Emmons* at Okinawa. Isaac, a previous scholarship recipient as an undergraduate, begins his graduate work at the University of Sussex, UK, where he will be working toward his Master of Arts in Development Studies.

Official announcement of the awards will occur at the reunion's Saturday banquet when the recipients' essays will be shared.

Congratulations to Layne, Isaac and all applicants for your work in honoring the shipmates through your participation in the scholarship program.

REUNION TO INTRODUCE CREW MEMBER "WALL OF HONOR"

To honor the lives and memories of the crew of the USS *Emmons*, the Association will have a "Wall of Honor" located in the hospitality room so all can see which crew member is attending in spirit through family and friends.

Family members and friends of a crew member will be invited to write his name, post his photo, and write a few words about him or his service aboard the *Emmons*. Then, you'll be invited to share some thoughts or memories about him during our Friday program if you wish. Photos may go back home with you following the reunion.

OUR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS - WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Since its inception, the Lt. John J. Griffin, Jr./USS *Emmons* Scholarship Program has awarded scholarships totaling \$41,750 to *Emmons* Family students.

Just as important, the essays submitted by each and every one of the 33 applicants over that time have exhibited sincere honor and respect for the service of the *Emmons* shipmates and the sacrifices of the 60 men who gave their lives for our country at Okinawa, April 6, 1945.

Of those 33 applicants, 14 were awarded scholarships based on their letters of reference, grade transcripts and essays submitted. After 13 years, the Legacy Committee felt it's time to check in with them to see what they've been up to and to learn how this scholarship has helped them achieve their goals and bring them to where they are today.

Over the next several newsletters, we will update you on just that. In this issue, we begin with two prior recipients below. As you'll see, we all have reason to be proud to call them '*Emmons* Family.'

Jennifer Tucci - 2010 recipient; granddaughter of Paul F. Dodd WT1c.

After earning her BS in Animal Science and Pathobiology from the University of Connecticut, Jen went on to earn her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Florida in 2014. Following her internship in NJ, she settled in Colorado where she started her own veterinary business in the Denver area. Her love of the outdoors allows her to enjoy hiking and mountain biking on weekends.

Her business, Balanced Animal Wellness, specializes in acupuncture, chiropractic care and physical therapy for dogs and cats. Her work focuses on improving function and quality of life for aging pets with arthritis or degenerative conditions, relief of chronic pain, and rehab for pets after surgery.

"The scholarship was a blessing for me to help subsidize my higher education. The acupuncture, chiropractic and physical therapy training has all been additional time and financial commitment after the 4 year doctorate degree. But more than the financial help, being awarded an Emmons scholarship meant a great deal to me, because I know my grandfather was extremely proud of me and my achievements."

Asked if she had any words of encouragement for those students thinking of applying for the Griffin/*Emmons* Scholarship, Jen replied, *"I would definitely encourage students to apply for the Emmons Scholarship. By awarding me the scholarship, I felt like the committee was welcoming me into the Emmons family."*

Eileen Pollina - 2012, 2013 & 2014 recipient; granddaughter of James Korney WT3c.

Following her graduation from Roger Williams University with a graphics design communications degree, Eileen worked in a variety of graphic design roles in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Having gained experience, she began her own greeting card company.

In 2020, Eileen married her college sweetheart, Brett Pollina. They currently live in Newport, RI.

Today, she owns her own stationery and gift store, Eileen on Thames, located there in Newport. You can see her work on her website at www.eileengraphics.com. Eileen says her plans going forward are to expand her business throughout New England and beyond, buy a home with Brett, hopefully on Aquidneck Island, and start a family.

"To me, the scholarship award meant discovering more about my family history and sharing a bond with my grandfather, Jim. Through the experience, I gained a better understanding and further respect for the sacrifices made by the men aboard the USS Emmons and all who served during WWII. The Emmons legacy continues to shape future generations in this way, and for that I am extremely grateful."

Asked of her experience with the scholarship program, Eileen stated, *"Receiving this award benefited me greatly and relieved my family of some of the financial burden of sending me to a four year private college....We miss my grandfather deeply, but knowing that the memory of him and his crew lives on through this scholarship is comforting."*

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USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

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JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP
USS EMMONS REUNION

USS *EMMONS* REUNION ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND SEPTEMBER 22-25

Have you registered yet?

(See story, page 1)