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# U.S.S. EMMONS

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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

March/April 2019

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## 2019 REUNION

Gettysburg, PA

September 26-29

Registration  
Information Coming  
in May!

## HISTORIC GETTYSBURG AWAITS EMMONS FAMILY FOR 2019 REUNION WEEKEND

Watch your mail in May for registration information for the upcoming **USS Emmons** reunion! We're headed to Gettysburg, PA, site of the Civil War battle often described as the war's turning point which sadly involved the largest number of casualties.

With its history and small-town charm, Gettysburg proves to be the perfect setting for our 2019 reunion where we'll gather for the weekend at the Courtyard Marriott Gettysburg September 26-29.

### Friday Memorial Service

After Thursday's arrival and socializing in the hospitality room, Friday morning's outing will take us to Gettysburg National Cemetery, where we'll honor the lost **Emmons** shipmates with our annual memorial service.

From there, we'll travel to Gettysburg National Military Park, site of the Battle of Gettysburg, where

we'll experience the Cyclorama, view the film, *The Birth of a New Nation*, narrated by Morgan Freeman, and tour the Gettysburg Museum of the Civil War.

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

### Saturday Sightseeing

Saturday starts off with our annual Association business meeting in the morning. The remainder of the day is free for taking in the sites and activities Gettysburg has to offer (this would be your opportunity to return to the Military Park to tour the battlefield).

The weekend's activities climax with the Saturday evening banquet program, followed by Sunday morning's 'until next year' breakfast buffet.

Registration information will be mailed in May. We hope you're able to join us!

## FUNDRAISER RESPONSE ASSURES MEMORIAL PLAQUE'S PRESERVATION

Response was overwhelming to our recent campaign raising funds to move the **USS Emmons** memorial plaque to a secure place of honor.

Preservation of the plaque that was placed on the ship in 2003 to honor the memory of the 60 lost shipmates has been a concern as a result of the ship's increasing rate of deterioration.

The Association made the decision to replace the plaque with an exact replica, moving the original plaque to a permanent place of honor, on loan at the USS Emmons Training Center at Camp Shields, Okinawa. The plaque will be an addition to the Emmons photos, videos and other items already on

(continued...see PLAQUE, page 2)

## EMMONS ATTRACTS ARTIST'S ATTENTION

John DAWKINS is an accomplished artist whose maritime paintings were inspired through his early years growing up near the Thames Estuary, where the River Thames meets the waters of the North Sea in southeastern Great Britain.

As with many artists, his interest spread into other crafts, in his case model ship building. His visit to the Model Engineering Exhibition in London years ago, together with his life-long interest in U.S. Naval history, as well as his own Royal Navy, moved him to branch out into the modelling genre, specifically naval ships.

Last fall, we learned the **USS Emmons** is one of four U.S. WWII model ships built by John, each being hand crafted from scratch, built with basic materials such as wood, plastic card and brass. Photos reveal this 1/192 scale model to be an extremely detailed and accurate replica of the **Emmons** as a fighting machine. The model earned a bronze medal at the Model Engineering Exhibition.

Asked why the **Emmons** was chosen as one of his projects, John explained that after building two WWII cruisers, the USS San Francisco and USS Oakland, he wanted to build a destroyer, one with a distinguished record. He felt the **Emmons** and her crew gave their all, notably serving in both the



John Dawkins' USS Emmons model

Atlantic and Pacific Theaters, more than other destroyer classes. He compared the **Emmons** to his country's HMS Warsprite, a battleship which served in both world wars and had a career which far exceeded all expectations in defense of her country.

The fourth and final U.S. model built was the USS Indianapolis. Photos of all his works, including several of the **USS Emmons** model, can be seen on his website [www.johndawkins-artist.co.uk](http://www.johndawkins-artist.co.uk).

The USS Emmons Association extends its appreciation to John for sharing the **Emmons** story through his creative skills and for helping preserve the **Emmons'** reputation as a fighting machine, thus helping others learn of her history.

(PLAQUE, continued from page 1)  
display at the Center documenting the **Emmons'** history.

Fundraising to cover fabrication of the replacement plaque was organized in November by our Okinawa diver friends with a GoFundMe campaign established by Mike BORING. Also included in the fundraising was an eBay auctioning of a complete 15-volume

set of *History of United States Naval Operations in WWII* donated through the generosity of Dennis and Donna YECKE.

Arrangements for the replacement plaque were made with the fabricator of the original and recently the replica was delivered to Kurt REESE in Okinawa. Plans are to place the new plaque and relocate the original in conjunc-

tion with the 2020 memorial dive, the 75th anniversary of the ultimate sacrifice made by the 60 **USS Emmons** shipmates.

The Association thanks all who, through your generosity, helped us raise \$4636 toward the effort, as well as our Okinawa friends who continue to watch over the ship and are committed to see this through.

**2019 DUES** Response to the recent dues letter has been very positive. Treasurer Tom HOFFMAN extends his appreciation to all who remitted their dues, and the notes that accompanied them, helping to make all we do possible. If you have not yet sent yours, it's not too late! Annual dues are \$25 (discounted to \$40 for couples). Also, \$5 junior memberships are available for those 18 years and younger.

Checks payable to the USS Emmons Association may be sent to USS Emmons Association, c/o Tom Hoffman, Treasurer, 843 S. American St., Unit B, Philadelphia, PA 19147 (note "2019 Dues" on the memo line of your check).

# IN MEMORIAM

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

A recent inquiry by Wendy COUILLARD about her grandfather, **USS Emmons** shipmate **Harold J. HEATH**, led us to learn of his passing in 1996, having been previously diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Harold served as Chief Machinist's Mate and, as a Plank Owner and survivor of the Okinawa attack, was one of the relative few who served aboard the **Emmons** her entire life.

Harold had 4 children and many grandchildren. Wendy expressed her disappointment at not learning sooner of the USS Emmons Association formed by his shipmates.

Son Roger FEURA notified us of the June 28, 2018, passing of his

father, **Raymond F. FEURA**, nephew of late shipmate Joe GOCELLA, who sacrificed his life at Okinawa.

The Feura's, including Ray's son Richard, have been long-time supporters of the Association and our efforts to preserve the **Emmons** legacy. Ray had 4 children and nine grandchildren.

**Jackson TITTLE**, son of late shipmate Homer D. TITTLE, passed away in November, 2018. We were excited to meet and get to know Jackson and members of his family at the 2017 reunion, his first, when the proud grandfather accompanied his granddaughter, Alexandra STACK, a recipient of that year's Griffin/Emmons scholarship award.

We found Jack to be quite knowledgeable and passionate about the **Emmons'** history and very proud of his dad's service during WWII.

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- MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**
- The Association respectfully acknowledges the following memorial gifts received:
- In Memory of Paul F. Dodd**  
Ann & Tom Short
  - In Memory of Charles P. Melcunas and Henry S. Cielenski**  
Eleanor Yates
  - In Memory of Edward I. Kurtzman**  
Daniel Kurtzman
  - In Memory of Donald L. Yecke**  
Bridget Yecke Brooks  
Dennis E. Yecke
  - In Memory of Robert A. Shea**  
Roger Shea
  - In Honor of William Bayless, (USS Sustain)**  
Karen Merlino
  - In Memory of Homer D. Tittle**  
Jackson Tittle Family
  - In Memory of David Horwitz and S. Gerald Horwitz**  
Jeffrey Horwitz
- \*\*\*\*\*

## Now HEAR This!

An inquiry was received recently from Stephen MOORE, author of several WWII books, whose latest work centers around U.S. fighter pilots vs. Admiral Ugaki's kamikaze forces.

His research of the Okinawa campaign led him to the Emmons website and was asking to interview any destroyer veterans who fought kamikazes from their decks.

We put Steve in touch with Tony ESPOSITO and Armand JOLLY. Stay tuned for updates....

\* \* \* \* \*

We welcome Ken REDIFER to the Emmons family. Ken is currently

teaching the USS Emmons Specialty Dive Certification Course in Okinawa previously established and taught by Kevin KING.

Ken retired from the Marine Corps after 20 years and has been in Okinawa for 10+ years. He's been teaching scuba since 2010.

He cited the Emmons' historical significance and its contribution to the community there in Okinawa as reasons for his desire to teach the course. He stated, "People who have dived the Emmons have a different look after sitting through the classroom portion. It actually means something more to them!"

Thank you for your work Ken in sharing the Emmons story and honoring the men who served. We're happy to have you aboard.

### 2019 SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Applications for the two \$2500 Griffin/Emmons Memorial Scholarship awards are still being accepted. Deadline for submission is May 31st. Visit our website at [www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org) for information.

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Visit us online at

[www.ussemmons.org](http://www.ussemmons.org)



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USS EMMONS REUNION

# 2019 USS EMMONS REUNION HISTORIC GETTYSBURG



We hope you can join us at this year's USS Emmons Reunion, September 26-29. Registration information will be coming in May. See story page 1.