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USS EMMONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

October/November 2018

FAIR WEATHER, SARATOGA COUNTY PROVIDE SETTING FOR ANOTHER ENJOYABLE REUNION

The 2018 reunion is in the books as **Emmons** crew members, family and friends gathered for the annual get-together at the Hyatt Place Saratoga/Malta, NY, in September.

52 persons, including 2 crew

members, took part in activities during the four-day event covered by local newspapers and television crews.

Following Thursday's arrival of many of the guests, Friday's outing included a guided tour of the Saratoga Battlefield, followed by our annual Memorial Service at the Saratoga National Cemetery, complete with Military Honor Guard, Color Guard and Bugler.

Lost Shipmates Honored

Following the tolling of this past year's lost shipmates and family members, a memorial wreath honoring the 60 lost shipmates was presented by Cindy ALLWELL and Donna WELLS, daughters of the late shipmate Warren SPARKS, followed by an Honor Guard rifle salute, taps and the playing of the Navy Hymn.

Afterwards, everyone enjoyed lunch together before returning to the hotel.

Friday afternoon's program shared several videos. Of particular interest was the moving video of our Okinawa divers' memorial service as filmed and edited by Kurt REESE. Visit our website's Reunions page to see all the videos and photos.

A Friday evening buffet dinner closed out the long day, along with social time in the hospitality room.

Saturday started off with the annual Association business meeting, followed by free time to see the sights the area has to offer.

Once again, activities climaxed with Saturday's reunion banquet
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ANCESTOR OF REAR ADMIRAL EMMONS ADDRESSES REUNION

Assigning the name to a naval ship is personally decided by the Secretary of the Navy. Destroyers came to be named for American naval leaders.

The **USS Emmons** was named after Rear Admiral George Foster EMMONS. As previously outlined in this Newsletter, GF Emmons had a distinguished naval career exploring and charting the Pacific Ocean in 1838-42, later serving as a commanding officer in the Civil War and finally assisting in the takeover of Alaska from Russia before retiring in 1873.

His granddaughter, Francis Emmons PEACOCK, christened the **Emmons** in 1941, sending her off to do battle defending our freedom.

Francis' grandson and GF Emmons' great-great-grandson, Donald Emmons PEACOCK, honored us as our keynote speaker for Saturday evening's dinner banquet. Attending with wife Nancy, Donald had everyone's undivided attention as he spoke with pride, love and honor about his family.

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SHORT, BIERMANN PRESENTED WITH SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

A highlight of the reunion banquet is always presentation of the Griffin/Emmons Scholarship Awards and reading of the winning essays. This year was no different as both recipients, Alaina SHORT and Troy BIERMANN were present to accept their awards and share their essays with everyone in attendance.



Alaina Short with parents Ann & Tom

This year's essay prompt asked the students to address excerpts from one of FDR's 1942 Fireside Chats regarding the status of the on-going global war. Their essays discussed how they felt that generation of Americans rose

to meet FDR's challenge and how his words are still relevant today.

Alaina is the granddaughter of the late shipmate Paul DODD and Troy is the grandson of the late shipmate Joseph POMYKALA.



Troy Biermann with brother Tyler and mother Cyndy

(PEACOCK...continued from page 1)

Providing an overview of GF Emmons' naval career, he displayed photos of his GG-grandfather as both a young lieutenant and rear admiral. He also had with him Emmons' lieutenant uniform, as well as a set of his uniform epaulets and his book containing hand-drawn maps and illustrations.

Donald also spoke of his grandmother Frances' christening of the **Emmons**, showing the photo of the christening party which included his father. He spoke warmly about her and recalled how she always

referred to the men on the **Emmons** as her "boys" and cared and worried about all of them. She later preferred to not speak about the events of April 6, 1945, as it was too painful for her.

And finally, Donald shared with us his passion for the sea and tall ships. His Lynx Educational Foundation, of which he is President, today sails the Tall Ship Lynx, inspired by the original Privateer Lynx from the War of 1812. With son Alex as Captain, the Lynx provides the means to teach children and adults about the role played

by privateers in American history.

The USS Emmons Association is grateful that Donald and Nancy were able to join us in Saratoga and share with us his family story. It is what we hope is the start of a long-lasting relationship.

(REUNION...continued from page 1)

when four generations of **Emmons** Family members enjoyed dinner together and a program which included the reading of the **Emmons'** Navy Unit Commendation by Lillia JACOBSON, Tony ESPOSITO's great-granddaughter, presentation of the 2018 scholarship awards and our keynote speaker, Donald Emmons PEACOCK, great-great-grandson of George Foster EMMONS, the ship's namesake.

Events concluded with a breakfast buffet Sunday morning before everyone said their goodbyes until next year.

SUPPORTING OUR YEAR-LONG EFFORTS

Membership is the lifeblood of our organization. You can show your support in helping us continue our work throughout the year through payment of your 2019 dues. Dues are \$25 or a discounted \$40 for couples and \$5 for junior members (18 years of age and under).

Checks payable to USS Emmons Association may be sent to Thomas Hoffman, Treasurer, 3136 Northampton St., Bethlehem, PA 18020. Your support is greatly appreciated!

SCHOLARSHIP ENHANCEMENTS GO INTO EFFECT FOR 2019

Now in its 9th year, the scholarship program continues to evolve. Beginning in 2019, the Association membership voted to eliminate the 1st Place and Honorable Mention awards and replace them with two \$2500 awards, one going to an undergraduate/vocational school student and one to a graduate student. In the event one or the other results in no applicants that meet the minimum requirements, both scholarships will be awarded to the top two qualifying scores.

Also, while the full-time credit requirement will remain, candidates will now be considered full-time if so defined by his/her Office of the Registrar, rather than based on a set number of credit hours determined by the Association. This will address the finding that the definition of "full-time" varies from school to school and across different areas of study.

The 2019 scholarship application will be available on our website by January 1st.

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- MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**
- ★ **In Memory of Robert Glutting**
 - ★ Tony Esposito
 - ★ **In Memory of Edwin Krom, Sr.**
 - ★ Tony Esposito
 - ★ Beth, Andy, Hayley and
 - ★ Madison Gannon
 - ★ **In Memory of Bill Patton**
 - ★ Susan McLeish
 - ★ **In Memory of Joseph Pomykala**
 - ★ Tony Esposito
 - ★ **In Memory of Warren Sparks**
 - ★ Anne Marie Patton
 - ★ Tony Esposito
- *****

Notes....from the Reunion Log

For those of you unable to attend the reunion, there's no need to miss out on the videos presented at the Friday program.

Visit the Reunions page of our website at www.ussemmons.org to view all the videos shared at the reunion.

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Friday's reunion program included the first screening of Kurt REESE's video of the 2018 **Emmons** Memorial Dive led by Kurt and Chuck DECESARI, with 16 total giving their time to honor our fallen heroes.

This year's video included a special introduction by Dan Wildman, who hosted the History Channel's "Cities of the Underworld" which featured the **USS Emmons** several years ago.

As if the time and expense incurred by them on these dives isn't enough, the showing of the

video was followed by the announcement of the receipt of another \$2,050 check representing funds raised by our Okinawa friends for the Griffin / Emmons Memorial Scholarship.

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The Legacy Committee thanks everyone who helped make this year's scholarship fund raffle a success. Funds totaling \$440 were raised.

Phylliss REITSMA made off with the top raffle prize, a beautiful handmade USS Emmons wreath donated by Jessica CIPARELLI.

Numerous other lucky winners went home with prizes thanks to the generosity of Cyndy BIERMANN and Mary Kay MAKUSKA who donated Navy suncatchers, **Emmons** mugs and several gift cards, all done in honor of their father, the late shipmate Joseph POMYKALA, and all his shipmates.

We were pleased to have Mary Kay and husband John attend their first **Emmons** reunion last year and Cyndy, along with her sons Tyler and Troy this year.

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Among business conducted at Saturday's USS Emmons Association meeting, Major Dennis J. YECKE, USMC (Ret.) was elected Vice President, filling the vacancy created by the passing of shipmate Warren SPARKS, who served faithfully since the Association's inception.

Denny is the nephew of shipmate Donald L. YECKE, who gave his life aboard the **Emmons** at Okinawa. His commitment to the organization and passion for preserving the **Emmons** legacy is unsurpassed and makes him a valuable addition to the future of our organization.

Congratulations Denny!

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USS Emmons (DD457-DMS22)

Visit us online at

www.ussemmons.org



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USS EMMONS REUNION



*Shipmates Tony Esposito (left) and Armand Jolly (right) presented banquet keynote speaker Donald Emmons Peacock with a copy of *The Emmons Saga* signed by those in attendance (see story, page 1).*