

December 2018

Greetings Shipmates and Associate Members,

Well another year and reunion have come and gone. Special thanks to Karl and Phyllis Weber for being our reunion hosts in Milwaukee. I would also like to thank Karl for updating us at the business meeting on e-mail addresses. He informed us that a number of you had bad e-mail addresses. So we are asking you to update your e-mail addresses by contacting the webmaster at our website ussbasilone.org or send it to me at my e-mail address at the bottom

This year was the 45th Anniversary of the worst day on the Basilone. Seven shipmates eventually died from the boiler explosion. Their names were Charles Hearold, Mike Zajochowski, Jim Raun, Gordon Hardin, Charles Kelley, David Thimmer and David A. Rogers. There was a special table and book with things concerning the boiler explosion with newspaper clippings, PODs, a reminiscence from Jim Elliott of that day in February and a family perspective from Barbara Clark, a wife. There was also a poem by Gary L Misch that was dedicated to our deceased shipmates called Steam World. To those of you who were not engineers it gives a brief glimpse of what it is like in a boiler room. We also honored Anthony Servideo who was lost during the grounding of the Basilone off Fort Story in Virginia. Articles about the grounding were included in the same book.

We had an excellent group this year with the usual suspects as well as a number of shipmates that returned after missing a number of reunions. Most of the impressive were the newbies (first time reunion attendees) that we had this year. You may remember some of them Michael Moscynski, Russel "Scott" Rogers, Ronald Pfalzgraf, John Hunter, Joe Py, Leonard Cerzosie, Edward Sauter, Joe Fischer, James E. Barry II and Walter Smith. If you were a newbie and I failed to mention your name I am sorry for the error. Barbara Demilt again represented the associate members. Remember associate members are always welcome to our reunions even if it's only to come to the Memorial Service.

Monday was sign in day with getting up to speed with old shipmates and telling sea stories. The welcome dinner was in the hospitality room with Black Angus Burger and Brats.

Tuesday we went to the Wisconsin Maritime Museum which was quite interesting with it's WW II sub the USS Cobia and it's other exhibits about the Great Lakes maritime history.

Wednesday to the Experimental Airplane Association Museum. It had a ton of interesting planes and opportunities for photos. The movie explaining about the museum was very informative. On a side note for those of you who watch the American Pickers on the History Channel the pickers picked this museum. After we went to the Wisconsin Military Vehicle Museum for a look at all the vehicles from the different conflicts we were in. It was opened especially for us. Frank Stepka had a movie trivia contest with prizes.

Thursday we toured the Case Tractor Factory plant. The tour showed how quickly a tractor can be built using state of the art machinery. There was an opportunity for photos and shopping. Then we proceeded to one of the anticipated tours the Miller Brewing Company tour. There were free samples available for taste testing. We had Bingo with prizes run by Karl Weber. The business meeting was held and will be discussed later.

Friday we had our Memorial Service at the Milwaukee Veterans War Memorial. We then proceeded to another anticipated tour the Harley Davidson Museum for a guided tour. There were some amazing machines to be seen. We had the Farewell Banquet at the hotel with entertainment supplied by Ron Larson. There were door prize drawings from Tuesday through Friday.

Saturday we cleaned up and every one headed home.

The business meeting was held on Thursday. We held the annual election of officers with the following there were no nominations from the floor. So the following were elected by voice vote Phil Poplaski, President, Geoff Bender Vice President, Fred Gehrish Treasurer, Historian/Chaplin Frank Stepka, Secretary is a group function.

The webmaster Geoff Bender announced that the old website has been shutdown and a new one is up and running. The old site had numerous problems that would require too much time and money to keep it running. So he built a new one and it is ussbasilone.org. The webmaster asked for a small fund for buying updates and other necessary items for the website. After some discussion the members approved a \$200.00 fund, and things costing more will have to be discussed and approved by the association officers unless it can be put off to the next business meeting. Geoff also told us that the forum pages postings have to be approved by him before posting so he can avoid inappropriate comments on the website's Forums pages. Now a password will be required in order to post a comment. That password will be ????????, all lower case. If anyone has a problem posting a comment, please contact the webmaster. The password will be effective February 15, 2019.

Treasurer's report was read and accepted.

There is no new news to report from Bath, Maine about the new USS Basilone DDG122. It is hoped that we can have a reunion or some type of gathering at both the launching and commissioning.

The ship's storekeeper is looking for someone to take his place. The person taking over would have help from the current storekeeper and the treasurer. If anyone is interested the function of this position is to store our sale items, be in charge of sales at the reunion, mail sales that are received over the internet and by mail and possibly order new items for the store.

We approved the following annual donations John Basilone Foundation \$250.00, Tin Can Sailors \$100.00, John Basilone Parade \$100.00 and The Navy Memorial \$100.00. We also approved these one time donations \$100.00 to the Wisconsin Military Museum, which was opened

for us to tour. \$100.00 to the Milwaukee Veterans Memorial, where our memorial service was held. \$50.00 to the pipe band that played at the service. Finally, \$100.00 to Vietnam Vet Radio, they play songs from the Vietnam era and you can call in and request a song. In our case we requested the Sloop John B (which is our association's adopted song) and they would ask a question or 2 and in our case we got our reunion info out over the radio. We don't know if this resulted in our getting the attention of any of our shipmates but hopefully it did

The Historian was informed that the DAV may have a post in New Jersey named for John Basilone. There is musical group that recorded a song called Basilone Bridge and I believe it's on I tunes. I have written the Post Master In Raritan, New Jersey for a cancelled letter with the new John Basilone Postal Station cancel as the post office is now officially named for him. The historian reminded me that I had failed to mention that there is a K-9 Basilone patrolling New Jersey. I informed the membership that there is a housing project of some kind named for John Basilone in the Los Angeles area. I found out the one of John Basilone's nieces', Diana Hawkins, went on a trip following his trail during the war and supposedly has put it up on a platform called Vemio. I don't know if it's free or not but you might want to see if it's available.

We voted to have another reunion and Fred Gehrish stepped up and we'll be having our reunion next year in Atlanta, Georgia the week of September 23, 2019. There is more information as to what Fred has planned enclosed in this letter. Fred will be sending out 2019 reunion information sometime next year. Fred's address is shown here because DUES IS DUE. The dues remains the same \$25.00 for one year or \$125.00 for a life membership. Fred also reminded everyone that we are a 509C19 not for profit so donations are tax deductible. Dues can be sent to Fred Gehrish 5640 Whistling Cove Rd Gainesville, GA 30504.

One new item of business was brought up, Geoff Bender presented Vietnam Veteran lapel pins to us They are for any veteran that served between November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975.

On a sad note we lost the following shipmates this year Robert Lockwood, Gary Price, Warren Bayreuther, Thomas Morgan, Vincent Ferina, Robert Beck, Robert Paccioretti, Orville Greives, Steve Green, James Connelly, Ronald Nance, David Zoscin, John Pavlik, Greg Perkins, John Roth, Lonny Pottroff, Raymond Kentro, David Munise, Glenn Stubenrauch, Jarold Modeen, Melvin Newell, John P. Johnson, Carroll Bourn, Donald Griffin and Walter Cremens. At the reunion we also learned of the passing of the following shipmates Bill Py, Thomas English, Anthony Abbatello and James D. Wepplemman. On returning home I also learned that the first and long time treasurer of the association, Frank Crouse had passed away.

On a more pleasant note we have found the following shipmates Franklin Sweeney, Christopher Nelson, Michael Bacigalupo, George Haskins, Russel S. Rogers, Frank Hoffman and John Yeutter.

If you happen to be in contact with any of our old shipmates or know of any that have passed away. Drop us their contact information, if living or their name if deceased.

We hope to see you at the next reunion in Atlanta this coming September 23rd.

Your Shipmate,

Phil Poplaski

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