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USS BASILONE

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December 2016

Greetings Shipmates and Associate Members,

Well another year and reunion have come and gone with another reunion coming for 2017.

Our thanks to Rick "Pappy" Papesca, his wife Joann and their helpers for being our hosts in Wilmington, North Carolina. Some of you may have thought of coming but changed your minds because of the hurricane. Well Rick was a route planner for some of you that attended, finding ways around the flooded areas. The strange thing was that Wilmington had very little damage that I could see. One of the biggest problems for Rick was getting calls from the USS North Carolina saying that times had been changed because of flooding in the parking lot. The flooding was caused by floodwaters coming down the Cape Fear River and the incoming tides.

Reunion check in began on Wednesday the 12th of October along with the usual catching up with old shipmates and sea stories. The 13th saw us on a tour of Historic Wilmington; we had a guide in period costume (Civil War or Antebellum style) that gave us a lot of information. We had time for some shopping and a nice meal before heading back to the hotel. Those that signed up for it had a sunset dinner cruise. The 14th saw us tour the USS North Carolina as well as have our memorial service on her. Lunch was on board and as special tour called Behind the Hatches tours of engineering and fire control spaces not normally open to the public. The association business meeting was held later at the hospitality room in the hotel. The 15th saw us tour the Fort Fisher Aquarium where they had an albino alligator and a lot of other exhibits. The banquet was also held on the USS North Carolina. The 16th was departure day to home for most of us.

It is my sad duty to inform you that we have learned of the passing of the following shipmates, John Guttman, Marcel Chamberlain, Ronald Evans, Arthur Steed, James Jeffery, Timothy Otte, Dan Matera, Cliff Gorham (Butler), James Talley, Talmadge Hamilton, Morris Holman, Art Huntley, Richard Hadley, Richard Shaneyfelt, Donald "Bub" Dougherty, Donald Piper, John Marymont, John Skehan, Dan Krell, Carl Stinnett, Patrick Finck, Charles Barton, Otis Hauge, Clovis Regis. Joseph Friend, Leonardo Oczon, Lamar Boyer, Bufford Puursley, Douglas Hobgood, George Lappos, Joseph Barcia, James Rankin, Donald Heyel, Jerome Sullivan, Joseph Pucciarello, Luke Sims and Johnnie White.

We have found a few new shipmates and they are Steve Guzsal, Garry Pappas, Ken Bellinder, Robert Miller, JR, Dale Brodsky, Lewis Smith David Taylor and Ted Kinnear. Ted is an interesting story; he and I were on board at the same time till I was transferred. I had been told that he was dead and was about to put him on the deceased list when he showed up at this reunion as he had read about it in the American Legion Magazine and decided to stop in for a short visit.

At the business meeting the ships' store had no new items but if you're interested in whats in the ships store contact George Christenson at glchristenson@comcast.net and the archives had an item or 2 added to our memorabilia. We have a new historian, Frank Stepka 70-73. Frank is also the assistant treasurer. Geoff Bender has consented to continue working on the website. We also have a new treasurer Fred Gehrisch, his address is 5640 Whisteling Cove Rd Gainesville, GA 30504. Dues is still \$25.00 for a year and \$125.00 for a life membership and DUES IS DUE. Checks should be made out to the USS Basilone Association and be mailed to Fred at the above address. Fred informed us that the balance of funds is starting to get low and what was discussed later in the meeting will be dealt with later.

At the business meeting we had a discussion about the size of our donation to the John Basilone Foundation. After some discussion it voted to reduce the size of our donation from \$500.00 back to the \$250.00 we started with. Geoff Bender then made a presentation about the new National Museum of the American Sailor Foundation at Great Lakes. After some discussion it was voted that we make a donation.

These are the following donations

The USS Basilone Foundation \$250.00

John Basilone Parade \$100.00

Tin Can Sailors \$100.00

U S Navy Memorial \$100.00

Nation Museum of the American Sailor \$100.00

We voted to have a reunion next year in Arlington, Texas and our host will be Frank Stepka with a tentative date of October 16-21. Frank hopes to have the reunion packets ready for mailing in April or May. We also floated the idea of having our reunions with the Tin Can Sailors as membership shrinks and operating funds get reduced.

Under new business which Rick and I have been discussing on and off for a while and that is mailings. The cost of mailing reunion packets has become prohibitive and the response is not what it has been because of our aging population. We think that electronically sending reunion packets to those that want them will save a considerable amount of money. So we asked Frank Stepka to come up with a postcard, which is included in this mailing so that we can get your updated information, which hasn't been done since the first Newport reunion. *You can return the postcard through the mail or if you're not comfortable with that you can put it in an envelope and mail it to Frank Stepka whose address is on the postcard.* Associate, life and yearly dues payers will get all of our mailings but if you are not a dues paying member and don't respond you will be put on the inactive list. There are several ways to keep off the inactive list, which is pay dues or make a donation to help offset the costs of mailing the reunion packets. We are also asking life members to make a donation to help us out. If you wish to make a donation make your checks payable to the USS Basilone Association and mail it to Fred Gehrisch 5640 Whistling Cove Rd Gainesville, GA 30504. The annual newsletter will continued to be mailed to everyone as this is the main way that find out who is deceased or moved. There are no plans in the near future to electronically send the newsletter out as my computer is so old many of you may not be able to read it if I sent it. After all the years of delivering the newsletter to non dues paying members we may soon have to do to it

what we are doing with the reunion packets unless you pay your dues or make a donation for postage. This doesn't apply to associate members.

We've looked at the members list on the website and noticed a number of guys have logged in with funny names when the website was first set up so we don't know who you are. You may be on the ships roster where the mailing list comes from but we want to confirm your e-mail if you've given us 2 different ones one for the master roster and one for the website. Karl Weber 67-70 has consented to be our contact with the funky named guys and try to get their real information for us. He will also be contacting the people on the mailing list that we don't here from. In other words he'll be our e-mail address coordinator. His e-mail if you care to contact him is karl1310@yahoo.com with your real name address and rank or rate. Karl won't start his search until after the first of the year.

On the back of this page is the information letter that Geoff Bender put together about the National Foundation of the American Sailor Foundation. Also included is the enclosure postcard that is to be returned to Frank Stepka for the master roster update.

Well that's all for this newsletter. Here's to seeing you at the next reunion in Arlington, Texas in October of 2017.

Your Shipmate,



Philip E. Poplaski

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315-457-6847

Shipmates,

I am a volunteer at The National Museum of the American Sailor, whose mission is to preserve, educate and celebrate the history of the American Sailor and how through their dedication, patriotism and self-sacrifice, they have protected the United States and its citizens from the late eighteenth century to the present. The museum seeks to make the history of the Enlisted Sailor relevant to Navy personnel and local and national audiences.

The National Museum of the American Sailor Foundation is launching a campaign to raise the \$40 million needed to build a new museum. The National Museum of the American Sailor Foundation is a 501(c)(3) corporation. The museum will be the anchor of the Great Lakes / North Chicago's Sheridan Crossing Cultural, Hospitality, Entertainment District, located along Sheridan Road and immediately west of Naval Station Great Lakes' Gate 4 in North Chicago, IL.

The new museum will use traditional and interactive exhibits to intertwine and deliver an influential and educational visitor experience of the broad history, contributions, and impact of the American Enlisted Sailor. Exhibits will be organized into topic areas that may include:

- History and Role of the U.S. Navy
- U.S. Naval Training - From Civilian To Sailor
- The Enlisted American Sailor, Past & Present
- In Their Own Words - The Enlisted Sailors' Story
- Future of the American Sailor

I'm asking all of my Basilone shipmates to consider making a donation to build the National Museum of the American Sailor. To make a donation you can go to the National Museum of the American Sailor Foundation's website, nmasf.org and donate online or mail a donation to:

National Museum of the American Sailor Foundation
610 Farragut Avenue
Bldg. 42
Great Lakes, Illinois 60088

When making a donation please indicate that you are a member of the USS Basilone Association.

Please go to the National Museum of the American Sailor Foundation's website, nmasf.org, to learn more about the new museum.

To learn more about the current National Museum of the American Sailor go to their website: www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmas.html. The current museum is located in Building 42 outside of the Main Gate (Gate 1) at Naval Station Great Lakes. If any shipmate is in the area and would like to visit the museum I will gladly give you a personal tour (to contact me my email address is: gbenderftg2@hotmail.com).

Regards,

Geoffrey Bender FTG2
USS Basilone, January 1970 – June 1974