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# USS BASILONE 824



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Greetings Shipmates and Associate Members,

I hope you have had a safe holiday season. Since it's the start of the new year association dues is due. The \$10.00 annual dues can be paid by either cash or check. If you pay by check you can make it out to USS Basilone or Frank Crouse (51-55). The address to send your dues to is Frank Crouse, 3103 Mt. Carmel Rd, Upperco, Md. 21155. Just a reminder that associate members DO NOT pay dues.

The reunion committee has told me that several people have asked why there have been no reunions in the South or out West. Well this reunion coming up is only the 4th reunion that we have ever had and every year I ask for anyone interested in hosting a reunion to contact me and so far only shipmates in the East have volunteered. I have had a couple of shipmates ( 1 in Carolina and another in Texas) that said they would think about hosting a reunion but as of this time we have no firm commitment for next year. In an effort to give potential reunion hosts some idea of what goes into a reunion the current reunion committee is going through all the material that has been accumulated and is developing a Reunion Passdown Book that will be given to the host of the next reunion. I hope to have an extra copy that can be passed on to potential hosts while the next host is using the other one. So if you are interested in hosting a reunion let me know.

My company sent me to do a job in Rhode Island and that gave me an opportunity to meet with the reunion committee. John Moreau (70-73) and his wife Terry hosted Tom Bembenek (69-73) and his wife Gail and of course myself. We covered a lot of ground and got a lot of things settled. Things are right on track and the reunion packages will be going out at the end of January. I will say this if everyone comes that says they are we may takeover the entire hotel.

For you plank owners I have a sad announcement. The first Captain of the Basilone, Captain Mark E Dennett, USN Retired, passed away in September. He had suffered a stroke when I talked to him last year. I sent him a DDE824 hat and a mug after the reunion and received a nice note from his daughter saying that her father was pleased to get the card and items we sent him.

I want to thank Robert Riggi, the nephew of John and Lena Basilone, for sending us pictures and information form John and Lena's wedding. I also want to thank Doug McGoon (69-71) for the picture Of the Basilone road sign that is at Camp Pendelton, Ca. These items have been passed on to the ships' historian George Christenson (65-67).

John Basilone is not forgotten. The state of California has named a 17 mile section of Interstate 5 starting from the main gate at Camp Pendelton and ending at the Basilone Road sign that Doug McGoon got us the picture of. The official name of this section of Interstate 5 is Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone Freeway. A scenic rest area called Vista View Point may also have had it's named changed To Vista to Freedom, Basilone Point but I can not confirm that this change actually took place. Maybe Doug McGoon can get us a picture of the new road signs and can check out as to whether the rest area name has actually been changed. All this came about just 3 days after Mrs. Basilone died in June. The obituaries that I received contained so information about John and Lena that we didn't have before. They were married on July 7, 1944. Lena was notified of Johns' death on March 7, 1945. It was her 32nd birthday. Mrs. Basilone could have been buried near John at Arlington National Cemetery but she declined. Barbara Garner a friend of Lena's sent me the clippings from which I got this information. She also sent along a personal letter to me. In it she told me that Lena was actually 86 when she died not 84 as I had originally

stated also the date of her death was June 11. The other pertinent part of the letter is as follows " She received the package from you after she came home from the hospital and surgery. She really enjoyed the card - please can you put in your next newsletter that she did receive the cup, brochure - etc. It was perhaps the last thing she was pleased and excited over . So you can be content to know you brought some joy to the last days of a grand lady - a great American and a wonderful friend." Mrs. Garner also sent me a picture of Mrs. Basilone in her uniform with some roses. Since she is in uniform I think that it was taken at the keel laying down in Orange, Texas. Mrs. Basilone had told me that she had attended the keel laying in her uniform. I'm sending all this down to the ships' historian.

Now to other bits and pieces of information that I've found. Chuck Tatum has informed me that he is in the process of negotiating with New Jersey PBS to try and get his documentary on John Basilone on there on February 19, 2000. The anniversary of his death. As of now though no firm date has been set. Frank Stepka (70-73) has informed me that he has started work on our website but that progress right now is slow. Tom Pelton of the Tin Can Sailor organization has been good enough to put a minisite for the Basilone on the TCS website. It has 2 pictures of the Basilone one pre-FRAM and the other post-FRAM. The e-mail address there is for Frank Stepka who bugged Tom into doing the minisite for us. If you would care to join the Tin Can Sailors drop me a line as I have applications for that organization. The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation has a perpetual memorial scholarship for John Basilone. I was surfing the web and came across a ships' history of the USS Salvager ARS (D) 3 it was the ship that pulled the Basilone off of Point Story where she went aground. I also came across another reference to the Basilone as being scrapped in November of 77. I e-mailed the guy running the webpage and he sent a nice e-mail saying that he would correct the error. When I last checked he had made the change.

The ships' roster continues to grow. We have identified over 650 shipmates living and deceased. The size of the roster has forced me to change the format that was originally given to me by Charles Davis (58-59) to the format that was used by George Christenson (65-67) at the reunion in Baltimore. The new format now includes room for your Nickname, if you had one; your wife's name or significant other; as well as a section for a second phone number or e-mail address. So if you want to add any of this information to you entry in the roster drop me a line or an e-mail with the information. Also since I had to get a new program to accept the new format I can now print the roster by state or by year. I did a year one for Joe Gamboa (62-65) and I found a few oddities, it printed all the guys who only on board or gave us one year first. Then for some reason it split up the 2 entries for Charles Davis with one right after the single years and one in its' proper place. After that everything seems to be all right. Anyone who didn't give us a date on board is listed alphabetically after the years 76-77. Now as to the lost and found. The following 10 shipmates were dropped from the roster because they either moved or died and we were not notified so we have to start searching for them again. Rae S Barber, Thomas E Berry, Ralph L Bradley, Henry J Dionne, Jimmy R Glenn, Lou Kemp, Joseph Koonce, Jerry Sullivan, Clarence Sutton, Jr., and Freddie L Wilson. So please remember that if you move or change your e-mail provider or have any other change in your entry please let me or someone know so that it can be passed on to me.

The following shipmates have passed away since I last wrote to you Mark E Dennett (The first commanding officer of the Basilone), John Tansey, Richard Crouthamel, Preston Crummitt, Eugene Pogenza, Bernard Davidson, and Roy Dunshee

The following have consented to be new associate members Katherine Tansey, Bernard F Davidson, and Janet Dunshee.

The following shipmates have been found since I last wrote. Leonard E Barbaro (72-73), Russel H Kingsland (59-62) Ronald Pfalzgraf, Dennis McKay (75-77), Robert A Burckle (55-57), French E Johnson (55-58), Eric Lindahl (60-61) Cletus Long (54-57), Ed

Linehan (71-73), Owen L Carter, Jr. (57-59), Donald Clary (54-56), Jarold A Modeen (60-61), Loren Sommerfield (54-55), Roger W Flann (56-57), Gerald Grote (58-61), Maxwell Glaze (62), Otis A Hauge (59-61), Donald J Wensinger (50-54), Donald P Heyel (56-58), J Leonard Hornstein (51-52), Charles Kletecka (53-55), Edward G Spotila (53-55), Ralph E Springer (53-55), Benny Hudnell (53-), Walter Lanners (56-57), Kenneth E Launer, Jr. (70-73), Charles Petkevich (57-60), Wendel C Roeschke (55-57), Herman E Schickel, Jr., Carl P Stinnett (54), Allen Woodhouse.(53-57), Norm Beznoska (60-61), Rich Tomasky (57-60), James Barbow (60), John W Weye (59-60), Abdiel Yingling (60-62), Edward J Goebig, Jr., Vernon J Marion (59-62), and Albert E Lindt (52-56). If you would like a copy of the roster which will include a of the list of deceased shipmates, that we know about, it is available from me for \$5.00 to help cover the cost of printing and postage.

I hope to see many of you at the reunion in Newport, Rhode Island the weekend of June 8-11.

Your Shipmate,



Philip E Poplaski  
On Board (69-70)

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