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USS BASILONE

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December 2003

Greetings Shipmates and Associate Members,

Well we will start this letter with an apology to the 23rd MEF. I failed to mention in the last newsletter that they provided us with all the raffle prizes at the Placerville Reunion last year. This year the 23rd's Public Information Officer provided us with a video that had footage of John Basilone and a number of other Marine heroes from World War II. So thank you again.

Jack Price has finalized the dates for the reunion next year in Branson, Missouri. We will be there the 22-26 of September. You will be getting the official reunion packet from a company called Gatherings Plus and your checks will be sent directly to them. Enclosed is a little flyer I put together with the basic info. I expect you to receive the packet from Gatherings Plus by the middle of January be sure to read it as it will have all the information about the hotel, tours and whatnot.

The Reunion in Buffalo was well attended with familiar faces from past reunions and a lot of new faces. We had 67 shipmates from commissioning to decommissioning and a total of 140 people. We hope that the wives and children enjoyed themselves.

Our homeport was the Adams' Mark Hotel in Buffalo. Wednesday and Thursday were basically for check-in, looking over the ships' store material, raffle prizes, the ships' memorabilia, and renewing old friendships and making new ones. However, for those who arrived early we did have a tour of Historic Buffalo, which looked at some of the historic buildings in the area as well as seeing some of the works of 2 of the United States most famous architects, Frank Lloyd Wright and Frederick Law Olmstead. This tour also stopped at the Pierce Arrow Museum where you could see the cars that were built in Buffalo, the Pierce Arrow and the Thomas Flyer. That evening we had a dinner cruise aboard the Niagara Clipper and cruised on the Niagara River out into Lake Erie and everyone sang Happy Birthday to Jack Price.

Friday we traveled to Canada to see Niagara Falls and have lunch and check out some of the other things on the Canadian side like the Floral Clock and the whirlpool and Aero-car. After we got back on the American side we stopped at the newly opened Niagara Aerospace Museum. The Maid of the Mist was shutdown because of the Blackout and the power plants were drawing down the water levels to generate power. Contrary to all the rumors going around the Basilone Electricians Mates didn't drop the load, this time. Jim Goodspeed had a short seminar for people, who might like to host a reunion in the future,

Saturday we visited the Buffalo and Erie county Servicemen's Park. We toured the Park, which has the USS Sullivans and USS Little Rock among other things to see. The Memorial service was held aboard the Little Rock and we had a luncheon on board also. Before the memorial service Special Assistant to the Mayor of Buffalo, Thomas

Gleed presented us with a Proclamation from the Mayor, which was accepted by the ships' Historian. After the reading of the names of those shipmates that passed away this past year Plank Owners Ernie Stressel and Mike Ryan assisted by decommissioning crew member Wayne Severance placed the wreath over the side. The business meeting and banquet were also held on Saturday. At the Business meeting we voted to have a reunion in 2004 and Jack Price volunteered to set one up in Branson, Missouri. Frank Crouse, the Treasurer reported that the association is solvent. George Christenson, the ships historian, showed everyone the Proclamation from the Mayor of Buffalo that we received at the Memorial service as well as a citation that Richard Hadley, the co-chairperson of the reunion received from the office of the Erie County Executive, Joel Giambra. Richard also donated a matted copy and dust jacket of the Beach Boys song Sloop John B that is the associations' theme song that he won at the Little Rock reunion this year. We discussed looking into special event liability insurance for the reunions and at this point Richard Hadley seems to have found the cheapest rates so far. We are waiting on a couple of other options in this area.

Our website webmaster Bob Talamo couldn't make this reunion so I represented him. Bob informed us that we should probably go and put the website on a commercial server as opposed to his personal one. If something should have happened to Bob the website could have vanished and we would have had to start all over again. The association voted to go with Bob's suggestion. We are now on the commercial server that Bob recommended. I have paid for set up and 1 full year of service, which saved us some money and have been reimbursed by the Association. We discussed contacting a company called paypal and setting up an account for the ships' store but at this point it was decided to table it for further discussion and research. We approved the following donations \$250.00 the Tin Can Sailors paid for from association funds. \$500.00 to the Buffalo and Erie County Serviceman's Park specifically for the Restoration of the USS Sullivans and \$100.00 to the Sea Scouts. I understand that the Sea Scouts may be using the money to purchase new flags. These last 2 donations were paid for from Reunion funds. We had a short discussion about the 2006 Reunion in the New York City area. With so much to do in the area do we want to only have 2 planned events, the Memorial service and banquet or do we want a fully planned schedule. Also discussed was where to stay in New Jersey, the City or Long Island. We are looking into tax-exempt status and are working on coming up with a constitution and by-laws. After the business meeting the raffle for was held and Art Soule was the big winner. We are still waiting for one prize that Les Carter won sorry Les I called the Naval Institute and the book has been pushed back until the end of March maybe I'll have it for you in Branson. Saturday night was the Banquet, which opened with the posting of the colors, and Pledge of Allegiance followed by some comments by co-chair Richard Hadley who introduced our speaker for the evening Louis Palma, Erie County Veterans Service Office. Mister Palma also presented us with another Proclamation from the Erie County Executive. After Mister Palma finished there were a couple of other presentations. Marydel Gaiser from the Buffalo Convention and Visitors Bureau was instrumental in helping us set up the reunion and we presented her with a matted set of ships patches to hang on her office wall. Unfortunately, she had a prior commitment and Richard Hadley delivered it to her by hand. Frank Sikorski was presented with a gift certificate to the Tin Can Sailors ships store for his services as "Jack of the Dust". The company Frank works for, Jubilee Foods

donated the munchies and soda and bottled water and when we ran out of diet soda and the munchies got low Frank found us more. Finally we presented a get well card to Richard Hadley for his wife who was recovering from major surgery and a Men of the Basilone sweatshirt for all the work he did on the reunion. After the meal the entertainment started with the traditional playing of Sloop John B and it went on from there.

On Sunday we gathered in the hospitality room and said our good-byes and left for home or to continue our vacations.

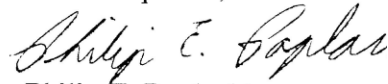
A couple of after thoughts, if you are interested in joining the Tin Can Sailors, the national destroyer veterans organization or getting a Men of the Basilone sweatshirt contact me.

The following shipmates have been found and added to the master roster Dennis Charette, Pat Sullivan, Paul Winburn, Peter Parker, John Roth, Dan Krell, Peter Thompson, Charles (Jerry) Boles, Jack Brimmer, Tom Cleeg, Harry Archilbe, Alan Doherty, Ralph Bradley, Joseph Gray, Roy L. Ivey and David Beach.

It is my sad duty to inform you of the passing of the following shipmates Benny Hudnell, James McCloskey, Billy Picket, Steve Swoyer, Frank Falzoi, Ronald Epps, Don Hood, Roland Komorch, H. Dudley Mills, JR, James Pennington, JR, Ronald Pierce, Ronald Otlman, Lawrence Wilson and Hubert Barnes.

Well that's it for this newsletter I hope to see you in Branson next year.

Your Shipmate,



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