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USS PYRO Scuttlebutt



It's Dubuque in 2008 for a Blast From the Past

Reunion 2007 Memory
Book mailed

Saw yah in Philly!



REUNION 2007
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 2-6, 2007

If you don't have one, learn how
to get one... Page 6

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The arrangements haven't been quite finalized at *The Scuttlebutt* deadline, but, if the good Lord's willing, the creek — or more accurately, the Mississippi — don't rise, and the final contracts mesh



"Is this heaven?" "No, it's Iowa..."

with the verbal estimates, the USS Pyro Association will descend upon Dubuque, Iowa May 14-18 for our 2008 reunion.

'River City', the site of the very first Pyro reunion in 1983, was selected for the 25th anniversary venue based on back-to-the-future sentimental value, a rich variety of attractions, stunningly reasonable prices, a central location and its proximity to

water. Dubuque came in first in the membership survey (see page 7 for details), narrowly beating out Seattle and Nevada.

Proving that age and wisdom are not necessarily connected, Bob Hauge has graciously volunteered to serve as reunion chairman. Bob has honchoed six previous reunions for ships on which he has served including Pyro and knows the territory, having attended three previous Pyro gatherings in Dubuque.

Whether you backed Dubuque from the start and 'got your way' or were rooting for another city, you'll be surprised at the wide range of activities that complement traditional association reunion activities. Whether your cup of tea is a cup of fancy espresso at a coffee shop, riding a riverboat, playing the high roller at a casino, shopping on Main Street, visiting The Field of Dreams Movie Set or simply catching up with friends in the hospitality room, *You really ought to give Iowa a try* May 14-18, 2008.



A Blast From the Past



Light off all boilers and make preparations for getting underway for the 25th USS Pyro Reunion!

During WW2, no one ever wanted to be close to the USS Pyro because it was an ammunition ship — a situation repeated during Vietnam for the modern Pyro.

Well, here we go again: We will hold our 25th reunion in the middle of a corn field in Dubuque, Iowa — where our USS Pyro reunions were first launched in 1983, and where the corn grows as high as an elephant's eye. But will anyone make the scene?

If we hold it, they will come!

History repeats itself: In the movie of the same name, Kevin Costner's character built a *Field of Dreams* not



far from Dubuque. The fans came and they loved it. We're betting Pyro 'fans' — our shipmates and spouses — will come too, just as they came to Dubuque reunions during the 1980s.

(And maybe, they'll will save gas money by cruising down home on a tank full of ethanol corn gas.)



So, just for old times sake, Dubuque has been selected. And just like the *Field of Dreams*, this reunion will attract both old, faithful fans who remember earlier Iowa reunions as well as new folks who are attracted by the very reasonable cost, nice people, fun tourist attractions and the Midwestern atmosphere Dubuque offers. Whichever group you fall into, I guarantee you'll be surprised by the low cost, atmosphere and amenities of this small town where you arrive as a stranger and leave as a friend for life.

We never promised you a rose garden, but Dubuque's home-town atmosphere will charm you as you stroll down Main Street enjoying the fresh air which is one of the Seven Wonders of the Dubuque area. So start packing your ditty bag and chart your course to attend the 25th USS Pyro Reunion — right where it all began: May 14 - 18, 2008, in Dubuque, Iowa.

Sadly, the majority of the original founders of our association will not make the scene as their time on earth has expired. However, it's up to the living to honor their absence by showing up, expressing our Pyromaniac heritage and making this reunion a Blast From the Past!— *Bob Hauge*



Dubuque memories then and now...(Left photo) Bob Hauge and Len Rozycki at the first Pyro reunion at the then-Holiday Inn in Dubuque. (Center photo) Jim Hudson, Fred Allen, Raymond Galbrith and Bill Burgert at the second Dubuque reunion. (Right photo) 2008 Reunion Chairman Bob Hauge calls on Char Simon, widow of USS Pyro Association leading light and repeat Dubuque Reunion Chairman Paul Simon.



“Is this heaven?” “No, it’s Iowa.”

A quick look at Dubuque attractions



The Mississippi Mississippi Mississippi — oh you know, that big river that runs through the center of the United States — and on its banks, a River Walk where river boats land, shops (selling, among other things, t-shirts bearing the legend *‘My grandparents went to Dubuque and all I got was this lousy shirt’*) and...



...to further satisfy our nautical urgings, the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium where you can check out the river boats, stare at sturgeon or put your hand in a fake catfish’s mouth like Marge Knapp and Bob Mahan did when the 2008 Reunion Committee checked out Dubuque...



...plus a real cable car, mansions on the hillside, a main street reminiscent of 1950’s small town America, greyhound racing and chi-chi shops along with good restaurants and — how to say this diplomatically? — drink prices also reminiscent of 1950’s small town America.



“You really otta give Iowa a try, provided you’re contrary.”

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From the president’s desk

By Jared Cameron

Many of you know your president’s preferences: If I had my druthers, we’d hold the next reunion in New York in the heart of Manhattan, stay at Trump Towers and stage the awards banquet at Club 21. But the membership survey on reunion venues delivered several messages loud and clear:

While Pyro people had various opinions on *where* to hold the gathering, the vast majority wanted reunion planners find a site where we could find hotel rooms under \$100. That pretty well eliminated New York, Washington, DC, Seattle and most any big city – even Las Vegas, where the era of free drinks and dirt-cheap hotel rooms is, alas, gone with the wind. Also, folks said their big priority is spending time with shipmates in a hospitality room where liquid refreshments are abundant and inexpensive, if not free. That’s something that is difficult, if not impossible to find in big city, hidebound hotels.

As the site of the very first Pyro reunion in 1983, Dubuque was always the sentimental favorite for the 25th reunion. So when Bob Hauge grabbed the bull by the horns, volunteered to be reunion chairman, laid on a lot of guilt about Twilight Sailors and checked out the rates, the scales tipped toward Dubuque.

Still, when we decided to muster in Iowa for an inspection tour in August, this big city boy was a bit nervous – even accompanied by Chief Hauge, ‘native guide’ Bob Mahan’ and Marge Knapp. The last time I’d trod those cornfields was in 1964 when AE-24 yeoman John Laraway – weary of being teased about his Midwestern roots -- arranged a ‘basket leave’ for us (Sorry, Commander Batten!) and talked Lonnie Fry into dropping us off in John’s hometown, Decorah, Iowa. We had a blast, but that was then and, well, how can you keep us down on the farm after we’ve seen Paris, Bangkok, Olangapo and Port Chicago?

Well, I came to laugh, but stayed to pray. Dubuque was charming. The folks at the Holiday Inn and the chamber of commerce acted like they really wanted us to come and to have a great time while we’re there. They put their money where their mouth was, offering us a great deal. The mayor even promised to drop in for a beer and welcome us to town.

Downtown Dubuque is like a trip back to the 1950’s with parking on Main Street, fools who say ‘good morning’ when they pass you on the street, neat little shops, a \$10 dollar check for two beers and four sodas — all that plus a big hospitality room overlooking the Mississippi and nice rooms at the Holiday Inn for \$79 plus the inevitable taxes (which adds up to under \$90 a night!). And where better to relive memories from the 40’s, 50’s, 60’s and 70’s than in a town that reminds you of that era?

Despite that déjà vu element, Dubuque has all the modern conveniences: Good restaurants, a decent dry martini, its own brewery and wineries and plenty to do including boat rides, casino gambling and dog racing for those so inclined.

In the old Broadway show, *The Music Man*, a song tells listeners, “*You really ought to give Iowa a try, provided you’re contrary.*”

Well, I’d never dare suggest that AE sailors are a contrary lot.

But, *You really ought to give Iowa a try.* So plan now for the 2008 USS Pyro Reunion on Armed Forces Day weekend May 14-18, 2008, in Dubuque, Iowa!

A Blast From the Past
USS Pyro Association 2008 Reunion
Dubuque, Iowa
May 14-18, 2008
Tentative schedule

Wednesday, May 14

Arrive Dubuque and check in at the Dubuque Holiday Inn: **It's official: Nightly rate is \$79 plus tax for an estimated total under \$90!**

1800-2000 Beer Blast From the Past Welcome Reception in the hospitality room

Afterwards, you're free to dine on ribs at the Holiday Inn or check out Midwestern and river cuisine on Main Street

Thursday, May 15

09:30-14:00 Dubuque area tour including the National River Museum and Aquarium, River Park, downtown, lunch at a Potters Mill and a visit to the Field of Dreams Movie Site

Dinner on your own, a visit to the casino or go to the dogs — test your canine speed gauging skills at the Greyhound Park

Friday, May 16

Explore Dubuque on your own. Shop on Main Street, ride the cable car, explore the Grand River Center, check out the suds at Dubuque Star Brewery or swap sea stories with shipmates in the hospitality room

Evening: Memorial service and Mississippi dinner cruise with entertainment on the Spirit of Dubuque

Saturday, May 17

10:00 Association business meeting

More quality time with your shipmates or time for shopping and exploring

(Possible) March in Dubuque's Armed Forces Day Parade (watch this space for news on whether or not a parade will be held in 2008.)

18:00 Cocktails (cash bar), group and individual photos

19:00 Reunion Awards Banquet

20:00 Dancing to the music of our youth with disk jockey

Sunday, May 18

Check out and head home...

MORE FINE PRINT. THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES ARE TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. MORE DETAILS, INCLUDING THE VERY REASONABLE CONTRACT COSTS FOR A TOURS AND OTHER GROUP ACTIVITIES, WILL – WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS – APPEAR IN THE NEXT *SCUTTLEBUTT* EDITION. *REUNION ACTIVITIES WILL TAKE PLACE FROM WEDNESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY SO YOU CAN HEAD HOME ON SUNDAY.*

DUBUQUE HAS A POPULATION OF AROUND 50,000 AND IS LOCATED ON THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER APPROXIMATELY 200 MILES WEST OF CHICAGO'S O'HARE AIRPORT. ALL AIR SERVICE TO DUBUQUE — CURRENTLY ABOUT 175 SEATS DAILY — IS PROVIDED BY AMERICAN AIRLINES FROM CHICAGO O'HARE.



Membership Matters

Saw Yuh in Philly Memory Book

The association's 2007 reunion memory book, *Saw Yuh in Philly* was mailed on disk in electronic format to all participants in that gathering and to members who had preordered.

It is the biggest memory book to date with more than 50 pages of high resolution photos. The package also included as many of the raw photos shot by our very talented volunteer photographers as would fit on the disk.



**REUNION 2007
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 2-6, 2007**

Saw yah in Philly!

Why an electronic memory book? Prior to her 'retirement' as association photographer, Ellie Fricke handled the publication

of memory books. They cost about \$20 and countless hours of Ellie's time.

Since most of our members either use or have access to a PC these days, and lacking a volunteer willing to undertake this big yearly job, the association shifted to an electronic memory book.

The advantages: Members content to view the memory book PDF file on their computers get it for free. (The association pays for disks, labels and mailing as a membership perk.) Folks who print the memory book on their personal printers get a hard copy for the price of ink — a lot less than the cost of the old way. Anyone who wants a professionally printed version can take the disk with the PDF file to most any copy center and get it printed at their own expense, but a large memory book costs more to print than a small one.

Even if you didn't attend the reunion, you're eligible for a free copy of the disk. E-mail scuttlebutt@comcast.net, write Jared Cameron at 3080 Brighton CT, Alexandria, VA 22307 or call 703/587-3658 to order. If you're having technical trouble with your copy, e-mail, write or call one of the above addresses and we'll do our best to help.

Reunion site survey results

In an effort to increase attendance at future reunions, a member survey was included with the Summer edition of *The Scuttlebutt*.

Some 25 members returned the survey, proving that the primary rule of Naval service, *never volunteer for anything* remains strong.



The bulk of the returned surveys came from members who usually attend reunions. Those who don't attend reunions say it's because of their or their spouses' physical limitations and the travails of modern travel, not cost.

Here are the conclusions drawn from that relatively small sample:

- Most of the folks who took the trouble to do the survey will go most anywhere except for two or three who cannot travel and will only go to places they can drive to. Those are divided between the West Coast and the Midwest.
- Several entered two or more site preferences, Among those who entered one preference, Dubuque, the sentimental option for the 25th anniversary reunion, was the heavy favorite, especially among AE-1 sailors. Equally weighting multiple preferences, Dubuque was first by a narrow margin, followed by Pacific NW; one of the health-limited persons will drive to Dubuque; one to the Pacific Northwest.
- Two thirds of the respondents expressed a preference for a venue with 'rooms under \$100.' Nearly everyone who preferred the Pacific Northwest also preferred under \$100 rooms, something scarce in Seattle or Portland.
- Those who filled in the survey said almost unanimously that they go to the reunions for 'the people,' not tours and vacation packages.
- Spending time in the hospitality room with friends and shipmates is the most popular reunion activity, but most respondents want some other activities to spice up the long weekend.



Remembering fallen shipmates

Donald M. Hunt

CMM, USN (Ret)

1922-2007

The sun set on yet another Twilight Sailor with the death August 29 of Pearl Harbor survivor Don Hunt. Don, who fought and seemingly won a bitter battle with cancer after undergoing treatments that led to his being declared cancer-free, succumbed to an unexpected stroke on 29 August 2007.

One of the few remaining AE-1 Pearl Harbor survivors, Don will always be remembered as a loyal reunion attendee, always clad in his trademark suspender overalls. He rarely missed a reunion over the years. Jason, the grandson who recently turned twenty-one, attended many of the reunions with Don, has taken the loss of his grandfather very emotionally, which is understandable in light of their close relationship.

Don was buried at the National Military Cemetery at Grafton, WV, with full military honors including a twenty-one gun salute. The salute was especially poignant in light of grandson Jason's recent 21st birthday and will no doubt will be long remembered.

Farewell, Don! I treasure our friendship over the years including being transferred off the AE-1 in 1946 together for duty on the USS Blue Ridge (AGC-2) out of which you bailed and left me to make the Crossroads Bikini Operation without you. The reunions, however, rekindled our friendship, which will be everlasting.

Smooth sailing up yonder and save a place for your old shipmate. God speed always and forever.—*Bob Hauge*



Clayton Labar

1926-2007

Clay Labar, who served on the AE-1 during WWII, passed away in his sleep after a short illness June 23, 2007.

Clay was born in Eatonville, PA, on Jan. 23, 1926. His family moved to Oakland Park, FL, in the 30's. A decorated veteran of World War II, Clay joined the Navy at the age of 17. After he was honorably discharged, he went on to attend University of Florida in Gainesville, FL, on the GI Bill. Always a jazz lover, Clay played drums in many bands during his life. A master carpenter by trade, Clayton's contributions to South Florida architecture remain a tribute to his skill— most notably the all wood spiral staircases that adorn many multi-million dollar estates in this area. The work he was most proud of, though, was his work helping others in Alcoholics Anonymous. Always available when needed, he helped hundreds of people to a better life. He will be deeply missed by many. —*David Wimberly*

Stanley V. Waldo

1943-2007

Stan Waldo, who served as a seaman on the AE-24 during 1963 and 1964, died in California June 8 after suffering a massive heart attack. His shipmates send sincere condolences to his widow, Fran Waldo, and his entire family.



News you can use

Items of interest to veterans and retirees

Travel for less with veterans' discounts

Before you start planning your next trip, check out http://www.moaa.org/serv/serv_travel/serv_travel_offers/index.htm for offers on travel, lodging and activities.

Following are some of the current offers:

Battleship Missouri Memorial: During each service branch's birthday week, active duty, reserve, and retired military personnel get complimentary admission (half-off for family members) to the Battleship Missouri Memorial at Pearl Harbor. "Mighty Mo" salutes the USN Oct. 13-21. If it's not your branch's birthday, military admission is \$10. Military members in uniform always get complimentary admission. Guided tours are \$7. Exclusive \$29 tours go below deck to restricted off-limits areas. For more information, call (877) 644-4896 or visit www.ussmissouri.org. Also, on 2 SEP, ceremony commemorating the 62nd anniversary of the end of World War II will be held on the ship's deck with patriotic music, Color Guard, a military salute and keynote speaker Adm. Timothy J. Keating, commander U.S. Pacific Command. Call (808) 423-2263 and press 7 to learn more.



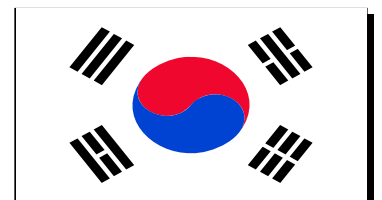
Cirque du Soleil: If Las Vegas is in your travel plans, you will want to see Cirque du Soleil, a gravity-defying unbelievable spectacular. *Mystère* at the Treasure Island Hotel & Casino is the original Cirque du Soleil production. Since 1993, its high-energy acrobatics and inspiring imagery have amazed spectators. *KÀ* at the MGM Grand is newer and even more awe-inspiring, with acrobatic feats, dance, puppetry, martial arts, and aerial adventures on a colossal, 360-degree rotating stage. Military members and veterans get a 50% discount. Your price for *Mystère* ranges from \$30 to \$47.50; for *KÀ*, \$49.50 to \$75 -- half the regular ticket price. Call (877) 274-6958 or visit a Cirque du Soleil box office and ask for the military discount (not available online). You'll need proof of military service ready when you call and when you pick up your tickets.



Choice Hotels: Travelers over 50 can save 10% at participating Choice hotels with the 50+ Mature Travelers Rate; those over 60 can save 20% to 30% with advance reservations by requesting the Sixty-Plus Rate when they book. For more information or to make reservations, call (800) 424-6423 or visit <http://www.choicehotels.com/ires/en-US/html/MatureProgram>. Offer subject to availability; expires 31 DEC 07. Advance purchase requirements, minimum/maximum stays, blackout dates, and further restrictions may apply.



Revisit Korea: The Korea Veterans Association in Seoul, Korea, has substantially expanded eligibility for veterans and their families to visit Korea on the official Republic of Korea government-subsidized "Revisit Korea" tours. Effective immediately, widows and children of Korean War veterans killed during the war are eligible to participate in the Revisit Korea program. In addition, widows and children of Korean War veterans who have died since the war, or of veterans who because of health reasons cannot travel, also are eligible to participate in the name of their veteran husband/father. The name, unit, and dates of service of the veteran will be required to register for an official Revisit Korea tour under this revised eligibility criteria. For more information, call Military Historical Tours, (800) 722-9501 or e-mail mht@miltours.com.



(Thanks to Lt. James "EMO" Tichacek, USN (Ret), Director, Retiree Assistance Office, Baguio, for these tips)



More photos pfrom Philly



(Top left) Linda Wisher; Carol Moulton; Marge Knapp; Myra Eckstine; Rita Tully; Don McClurg, Lynn and Don Sullivan; Lud Miller; Rick Tully; Ann Miller; Bob Mahan; and Joe Nalle at Philadelphia Museum. (Top right) Lud Miller; Doug Wisher; Helen Golay; Myra Eckstine; Lavonne and Jasper Strunk; and Billy Eckstine on the New Jersey. (Middle left) Sanborn, Sanborn, Sheipline, Moulton, Jaeger, Jaeger, Wichtrich, Hansen, Hogan, Nalle and George dining Cuban. (Middle right) Eckstine, Hauge, Ellis, Nalle, George, Nalle, Sanborn and Strunk at the Kentucky Derby pool. (Bottom left) Since sailors sail, not walk, the 'crew' takes a breather during the walking tour. (Bottom left) Right hard rudder: Tully takes command of the New Jersey.

USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

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Rate/rank(s) aboard Pyro: _____ Highest USN rate/rank: _____

Dates aboard USS PYRO (AE1 or AE 24) _____ to _____ Retired USN?

Separated under honorable conditions? Yes ___ No ___

To join: Send this completed application and a check payable to the USS PYRO Association for either annual dues or the lifetime membership amount appropriate for your age to:

Tom Sanborn, Treasurer
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Association dues

Annual:	\$ 20
Lifetime membership	
Age 50 or under	\$250
51 ~ 55	\$200
56 ~ 60	\$175
61 ~ 65	\$150
66 ~ 70	\$125
71 ~ 75	\$100
76 ~81	\$ 50
82 PLUS	\$ 25