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# USS PYRO Scuttlebutt



## A Baton Rouge Blast

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Old friends and new faces gathered in Baton Rouge for the 2012 Pyro Reunion May 16-20.

The reunion combined hospitality room fellowship and hijinks, a memorable memorial service and tours: A Thursday road trip took the crew to New Orleans for a visit to the World War II Museum, shopping in the French Quarter and a Cajun food lunch.

Friday at the USS Kidd, Bill Hogan (R) and Jasper Strunk (L) led a memorial service honoring fallen shipmates as a bugler played *Taps* and a bag piper's rendition of *Amazing Grace* echoed through the memorial area.



*(Continued on page 4)*

### Desilets Added to Vietnam Wall

*(Story on page 2)*



## Sleepless in Seattle? Not!

You want Seattle for the 2013 Pyro Reunion? Well, you have it! The association has selected DoubleTree Suites By Hilton, Seattle Airport/Southcenter. The reunion will run on the usual Wednesday-Sunday schedule from May 15-19, 2013. The rate for a one-bedroom suite with free Internet, free breakfast, free airport transfers, free shuttle bus to nearby shopping/dining venues and free parking is \$109. With tax, that comes to about \$120 a night, a pretty good deal for very pricey Seattle. Best of all, no \$8 hotel-supplied beers: the association won rights to provide 'outside' adult beverages in the hospitality room. See the president's column on page three for more, if still sketchy details.

## LTJG Desilets's Name Added to Vietnam Memorial Wall

LTJG. David McLean Desilets was one of 10 service members honored on May 13, 2012, with the inscription of their names on the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial.

He served as the USS Pyro's Communications Officer from April 1966 until his death on Sept. 4, 1966. He died of meningitis on board the USS Pyro while underway in the South China Sea.

As reported earlier in *The Scuttlebutt*, the unveiling of LTJG Desilets's name came after a year-long campaign by his daughter, Jeanne, and was made possible by new regulations expanding the official warzone to include other deaths within the areas of Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and other coastal regions.

The photo of Jeanne Desilets and her father's name on the memorial wall (right) appeared in on the front page of *The Washington Post*.

New names on the Wall



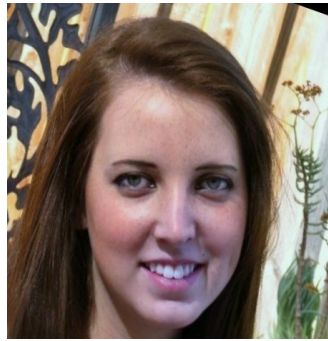
PHOTOS BY MATT MCCLAIN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



Jeanne M. Desilets of Los Angeles cries after seeing the name of her father, David M. Desilets, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Mall. Desilets was a Navy lieutenant junior grade when he died in 1966 of meningitis while serving on the USS Pyro in the South China Sea. His daughter was born after his death. His name was among 10 added to the Wall on Sunday.

## 2012 USS Pyro scholarships awarded to Hansen, Hogan Kin

Two USS Pyro Scholarships have been awarded for 2012.



2012 USS Pyro Scholars

Brandy Hogan and Vanessa Joslin

This year's scholarships are named in honor of Ltjg David Desilets, whose story appears above.

2012 David M. Desilets USS Pyro Scholarships have been awarded to: Vanessa Joslin of Concord, CA, granddaughter of plank owner Al Hansen, and Brandy Hogan, granddaughter of Association Treasurer Bill Hogan.

Up to two scholarships are awarded each year. Scholarships are funded by the association treasury

and by direct contributions to a special scholarship fund. They are available to relatives of AE-1 and AE-24 sailors. Top applicants are selected by the association's scholarship committee and approved at the annual membership meeting.

Applications and updated selection criteria for the 2013 awards will be available in Fall.

Meanwhile, 2011 scholarship recipient Nolan Bodah (right) has written on his year in college:

*"Binghamton is going great! I am a junior, majoring in Integrative Neuroscience. I have spent a good portion of this semester beginning to study for my Dental Admission Test and will spend the greater majority of the upcoming summer doing the same. I hope to take the test sometime in August. I plan to apply to dental school in June and am hoping to hear back sometime in December. This semester, I also interned at a local dental office, where I spent 10 hours a week shadowing and working alongside dentists. Next year I will be conducting research at Binghamton on the chronic adolescent alcohol use and the effects on the brain."*





**“...now is the time to reserve the dates — May 15-19, 2013 — and inform spouses, children, grandchildren, healthcare professionals, parole officers and such that you WILL NOT be available for weddings, christenings, operations, hospital vigils, drug tests or casual illnesses during the reunion period...”**

# From the President’s Desk

They said it couldn’t be done...well actually I said it couldn’t be done.

But as announced on page one, we have booked the DoubleTree Suites By Hilton, Seattle Airport/Southcenter for the 2013 USS Pyro Reunion. The selection was made after reviewing nearly 50 proposals from Seattle, Bellevue and the Everett, Washington areas and some really tough bargaining on room charges and outside adult beverages in the hospitality room. DoubleTree Suites is an airport hotel, but near shops and restaurants with free transportation to light rail connecting the airport with downtown Seattle. Plans for a tours and the annual memorial service, likely on the USS Turner Joy in Bremerton, Washington, are in progress at press time. Keep an eye out for the next *Scuttlebutt* for details.

While it’s still a bit early to begin (usually futile in any case) entreaties for early booking, now is the time to reserve the dates — May 15-19, 2013 — and inform spouses, children, grandchildren, healthcare professionals, parole officers and such that you **WILL NOT** be available for weddings, christenings, graduations operations, hospital vigils, drug tests or casual illnesses during the reunion period.



***A special note to shipmates who have lobbied for and/or threatened to tear up their membership cards unless we schedule a reunion in the Pacific Northwest: You asked for it! You got it! So remember, the association gavel can be used for more than maintaining order at meetings. No excuses. Be there!***



**Facebook.** Do you have access to a computer and possess minimum computing skills? Then check out the USS Pyro Facebook group for good sea stories, great photos and enjoyable, if virtual companionship with Pyro-maniacs from plank owners to the decommissioning crew. Check it out:

[http://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn\\_tnmn#!/groups/54355461508/](http://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/groups/54355461508/)



**Enough of this nice guy stuff.** 2012 Glue Pot Award winner Kimberly Box (MM-3, 88-90) is the association’s new membership committee chair. She is also the Official Attendance Enforcer for the 2013 reunion. If you haven’t joined the association yet, are behind on your annual dues or are vacillating on attending the next gathering, be warned: Kim does not take no for an answer: She will hunt you down like a dog! While having a blonde snipe and a killer Chihuahua stalking you may be fun for a while, it will get old fast. If I were you, I’d just do what she says!



**Memory book? I forgot.** Well not really, but we are on the verge of placing photos from the 2011 and 2012 reunions on the Web. Watch for your mail/e-mail inbox for progress reports.

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# A Baton Rouge Blast

*(Continued from page 1)*

Later Friday, it was a visit to historic Nottaway Plantation on the banks of the Mississippi.

Saturday saw the annual membership meeting where members awarded two scholarships for 2012 and assigned association officers the task of arranging the 2013 reunion in Seattle, Washington. (Missions accepted, missions accomplished: See page one for preliminary details.)

The annual banquet was a ball with auctions of truly beautiful handicrafts created by Lavonne Strunk, Dianne Otero and Sharon Hamlin. Richard "Country" Stiles and Anita LeBlanc provided the entertainment and erstwhile ET and professional photographer Joe Valenzuela, assisted by Rick Hiatt, joined the Oteros, Wishers and Strunks in capturing great shots of the reunion festivities.

Some of the best of those photos chronicle the 2012 reunion below and on pages five to nine.



## Saluting reunion heroes and 'sheroes'



Joe Valenzuela, Pyro Association Official Photographer For Life (tho he doesn't know it yet!); Diane Otero for snapping and sewing; Lavonne Strunk for exquisite quilting that as made the association solvent; Jake Strunk for diligent master-at-arming..



Shirley and Plank Owner Al Hansen for supporting Pyro Scholarships and flying to the reunion despite a selfish grandchild who insisted on graduating during reunion weekend; Glue Pot Award Winner Kimberly Box for Shanghaiing shipmates to this and future reunions, acting as a presidential smoking buddy and making kissing snipes acceptable even when Tom Sanborn is absent.





# Saluting more reunion heroes and 'sheroes'

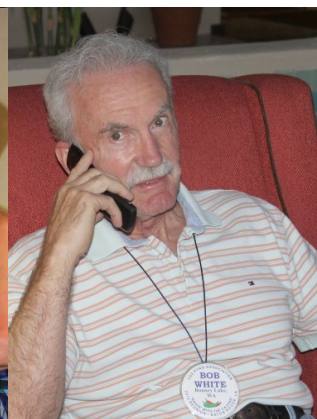


### TRUE GRIT AWARD

Last year's winners, Sharon and Fred Hamlin share the 2012 True Grit Award with Marilyn and Jim Hale for not letting 'small stuff' like cancer interfere with reunion attendance.



Bill Hogan for paying the bills, filling in for ailing Chaplain Vance Worrell and always wearing his name tag; John Wichtrich for leading the Pyro scholarship program; Frank Fanning for providing samples of his outstanding new trilipiderm® (<http://www.trilipiderm.com/>) all-body moisture retention cream to protect Pyro women from frying up in the unremitting Louisiana sun.



*Hey Sailor, You Like Cookie Award* to Heather Day (R) and Staci Cali of the Holiday Inn and Jennye Snider of Visit Baton Rouge; *The Annual Good Time Girls Award* to The Good Time Girls, champion raffle ticket sellers Mary Ellis and Myra Eckstine; *The Annual Bob White Calls Home Award* to, who else, Bob White; and *The Not Bad Patience for an Officer Award* to Lud Miller, who only had to wait two years for his lifetime membership card.



# Ragin' with the Cajuns



Top: Chatting and sipping in the hospitality room; Tafoya and Michael gang at WWII Museum; the French Quarter; Row 2: Strunk reads the names of the deceased; USS Kidd Orientation; Row 3: The crew at the 2012 memorial service; Ed Schmidt takes aim; "This isn't hard!" says gunner's mate's gal Diane Otero; Bottom: The garden at Nottoway Plantation; checking out Nottoway's lights.



# More Baton Rouge Memories



The Kidd's 'captain' tells tales of DD 661.



Lud Miller shares a sea story on the Kidd; Angel Otero (C) demos an iPad for Hogan (L) and Wisner (R)



Raffle winners: Cameron 'tries on' his quilt; Anita LeBlanc (L) and Quilt Queen Lavonne Strunk laugh as Richard 'Country' Stiles (C) wears his prize. Richard and Anita later made a gift of their quilt to Jim and Marilyn Hale.



# Party time in Baton Rouge



Some belles of the ball



Mary Ellis says, 'You will buy a raffle ticket!'" Myra Eckstine puts the arm on Frank Fanning.



Angel Otero gets a little extra with his ticket purchase; Bill Hogan and Linda Fox cut their cake.



# Party time in Baton Rouge



Linda Wisner, Mary Ellis, Susan Scanlan and Myra Eckstine get down with Joe Valenzuela,



Don and Joann McClurg reunited with AE-24 navigator Joe Hill after nearly a half century. Shipmates Adam Miller, Kimberly Box and Brian Cambron reunite after two decades.



Albert and Sue Duplantis; Linda and Doug Wisner; Lavonne Strunk and Joe Valenzuela; and the McClurgs cut a rug.



USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

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We're on the Web:  
www.usspyro.com



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

**USS PYRO AE-1 & AE-24 ASSOCIATION**  
Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

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:**

**Bill Hogan, Treasurer**  
**PO Box 40**  
**Farmville, VA 23901**