



Winter 2014

AE-1

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Association



# USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

AE-24

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## 2014 'Bash in Branson'

### Arrangements (Finally!) Complete



After more than six months of glacial, but in the end fruitful negotiations, all the ducks and Duck Rides are in a row for the 2015 USS Pyro Reunion May 13-17, 2015 at the Lodge of the Ozarks in Branson, MO.

Branson and the Lodge of the Ozarks was the site of the 2005 Pyro reunion. This year, the city and the lodge managed to match decade old-prices to deliver room rates and tours that are the lowest we have seen in several years.

The 2015 programs includes 'musts' — a hospitality room with unlimited beverages, adult and not; a fine banquet dinner, a 'water feature,' dancing and a memorable memorial service, but with new some new twists.

Our memorial service will be held at the stunning Shrine of the Holy Spirit, we'll Ride the Ducks in a new venue and a new on-site theater makes a second show possible without spending big bucks on bus transportation.

**True Confessions:** In 2005, your editor was one of the skeptics who feared Branson was a bit too *country* for sea-going sophisticates who has seen Subic Bay and other exotic ports. But Branson turned out to be a good time then and — fellowship with shipmates aside — you'll find it a good time for everyone in 2015. Be there!

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# Remembering Fallen Shipmates and Friends

**Stanley Warren Cox**

*December 24, 1942 - September 15, 2014*



Stanley (Stan) Warren Cox, 71, died September 15, 2014 in Kingsport, Tennessee, surrounded by his family following open heart surgery.

Stan was born December 24, 1942 in Edwardsville, Illinois to Louis R. and Bernadine L. (Hayes) Cox. He was a Roxana

High School graduate and a 1965 graduate of Southern Illinois University with a BS in Sales and Marketing. Stan served four years in the United States Navy, attaining the rank of Lieutenant and served five tours in Vietnam. Then-Ens. Stan Cox came aboard PYRO for the last deployment in 1968 prior to refitting. He was one of the deck officers. After Pyro, he was with the Admiral's staff with several more deployments in Viet Nam and up the Mekong.

Following his discharge from the Navy, he worked in sales and marketing for the flexible packaging business.

Stan is survived by his wife of 49 years, Betty J. (Eardley) Cox of Maryville, Tennessee; a daughter Aimee (Eric) Gibbs of Fredericksburg, Virginia; two granddaughters, Trinity and MacKenzie Gibbs; two brothers, Curtis R. Cox of Marion, Illinois and Robert Cox of Brazil; and a sister, Verna Oakes of Bluffs, Illinois.

Stan Cox will be remembered at the 2015 Pyro reunion memorial ceremony at the Shrine of the Holy Spirit in Branson, MO.

**James F. Smiley**

*August 5, 1948—November 9, 2014*



James F. Smiley, 66, brother of Bob Smiley and a Pyro Association honorary associate member, passed away peacefully on November 9 in Bremerton, Washington, his home.

In addition to Bob and Peggy Smiley, he is survived by sisters Lee Kramer and Mary Helfrich, step-siblings Sheila Ton, Debbie Bonfanti, and James Rex, and stepmother Elizabeth Carroll.

Jimmy was born August 5, 1948, in Reno, Nevada, to parents Rebecca Flint Smiley and Robert W. Smiley, Sr.

Born into a Navy family, his youth was spent in various cities where he attended high schools and a junior college. Jimmy never married. He dedicated his life to his music, friends, and family.

Jimmy was an animal lover and before moving to Bremerton had a wonderful life on his farm with his big black dog and little black kitten. He loved his Seahawks, water sports, and particularly fishing and skiing.

Temperamental and brilliant with a high IQ, he could beat his brother Bobby at cribbage while using his other hand on his keyboard.

Jimmy cut his first original solo CD in 2001 and it has been enjoyed by many who were fortunate to have heard his unique compositions. His beautiful music is often touched with melancholy and is so beautiful.

He will be remembered at 2015 Pyro reunion memorial ceremony at the Shrine of the Holy Spirit in Branson, MO.

## Uncle Pyro (Still Needs You! 2015 Dues Due in January

In these times of \$15 burgers and \$8 beers, a \$20 annual membership in the USS Pyro Association remains one of the best buys in town and a lifetime membership is even a better deal.

Not only do your dues help keep Pyro pride and traditions alive, but they also help support scholarships and other association good works. Whether you served on AE-1 or AE-24, we need your help and your financial support to carry on with our mission.

If you haven't joined yet or have not yet paid your 2015 dues, please fill out the membership form on Page 16 and get your check in the mail now. Pleeze!



# From the President's Desk

We've talked about this before, but I wanted to send a note to the folks who have doubts about Branson.

Below are some of the questions/comments Bill Hogan and I have heard, some accurate, some not so.

“...all it takes for a good reunion is a few Pyromaniacs and a roof over our heads: We'd have a ball in Siberia (or Chicago) in winter!”

### Why can't we go to Lake Charles/Great Lakes/Timbuktu?

At our 2014 Reunion, members voted to go to Lake Charles or Branson. Despite hard work by everyone, especially Albert Duplantis and Joe Hill, Lake Charles just couldn't accommodate us. Branson could, offered great rates, so it was selected.

### You can't have a Pyro Reunion without a military facility nearby.

Wrong! A military connection is good, but not a necessity. To me at least, the essential element of a reunion is a good hospitality room set-up, activities for folks who are combining get-togethers with shipmates with enjoyable vacation activities.

### Branson is difficult to get to...

By air, most folks in the U.S. can get there with one connection. Getting to the hotel from the airport is a bit of a hassle, but we'll make special arrangements for folks who tell us in advance they need help in this area. For Ed Stone, we'll send a limo! Seriously.

### Branson is country and country isn't cool!

In 2005, many — me included — 'came to laugh, but stayed to pray.' The shows were top quality, the service and value were outstanding and there was plenty to do for every taste.

### Reunions are all about location.

Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Pyro reunions are about people, fellowship and fun. As most anyone who has attended a Pyro gathering will attest, all it takes for a good reunion is a few Pyromaniacs and a roof over our heads. We'd have a ball in Siberia (or Chicago) in winter!

### If I miss this one, I can see everyone next year

Would that it were so, but we don't have many spring chickens in our group...look at the photo below from 2005 and count how many folks we don't see anymore.

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#### USS PYRO ASSOCIATION

##### Officers

*President*

Jared Cameron

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*Second Vice President*

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*Secretary*

Douglas Wisher

*Treasurer*

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##### Appointed Officers

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Committee*

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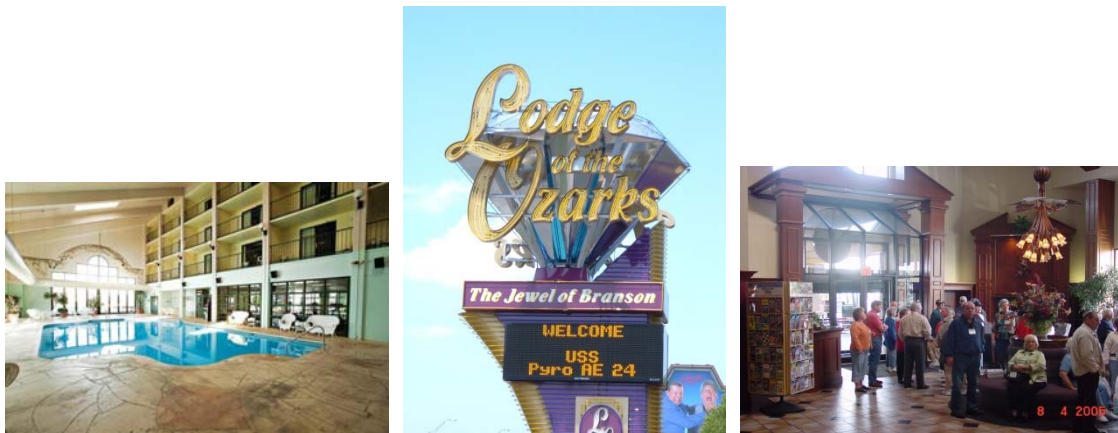
# USS PYRO Reunion 2015

*A Bash in Branson*

Fact Sheet and Schedule

**Dates: May 13-17, 2015**

Headquarters Hotel



## Lodge of the Ozarks

**3431 W. Hwy 76 Branson, Mo 65616**

**Reservations:**

**417-334-7535**

As always, you must call the hotel directly and mention "USS Pyro" to get the Pyro rate.

**Pyro Rate:** \$79.00 plus tax, currently 11 percent, includes:

*Breakfast*

*Free parking*

*Wireless Internet*

*Special arrangements for smokers*

The recently redecorated Lodge of the Ozarks rooms feature:

Cable TV, Free HBO, coffee maker, hair dryer

and, of course

A Pyro Reunion hospitality room with soft drinks and adult beverages limited only by your good sense, fear of your spouse's wrath and the terms of your parole...

## Schedule of 2015 Reunion Events

**May 13, 2015 Wednesday**

14:00 **Hotel Check-in begins**

18:00 **Reunion Registration/ Welcome Aboard Reception**

**May 14, 2014 -- Thursday**

10:00 – 12 noon **Branson Duck Tour**



What would a Pyro Reunion be without a trip to a body of water in a vessel? And what better way – as participants in the Seattle Reunion will testify – to do it than on a shorter-than-Yankee-Station tour with a zany rather than authoritarian skipper Riding the Ducks of Branson? The tour – a good way to get oriented and plan your free time excursions includes Branson Entertainment District Table Rock Dam, Baird Mountain, Historic American Military Vehicles, Scenic Ozarks and, of course, a splashdown into Table Rock Lake.

20:00 **Six – The Show**



Dubbed “An Orchestra of Human Voices”, SIX combines the musical showmanship and boundless energy of six remarkable brothers (Barry, Kevin, Lynn, Jak, Owen and Curtis). Their intense high-octane energy, electrifying stage presence, and powerhouse vocals combine to create a truly amazing entertainment

experience.

Now in their seventh year in Branson Missouri, SIX has perfected the vocal sounds of more than just lyrics, but also instrumentation and sound effects. The playlist for their current show set features everything from Elvis, Frankie Valli, Beach Boys and Tom Jones to Psy, MC Hammer, Kansas, Coldplay and Journey. Captivating audiences with comedy and family stories like only blood-brothers can, the masterful command of their voices take listeners on a roller coaster of emotion.

*No transportation required – the show is on site at the Lodge of the Ozarks.*

**May 15, 2015 – Friday**

**09:30 Remembering Fallen Friends and Heroes – Memorial Service at Shrine of the Holy Spirit and visit to the Branson Military Museum**

### Memorial Service



We'll depart by motor coach for the -- using the term correctly for a change – awesome Shrine of the Holy Spirit. The 2015 memorial service will be both patriotic and spiritual, including an honor guard for the presenting of colors, playing of the National Anthem and *Anchors Aweigh*, the pledge of allegiance and then honoring of recent as well as past deceased shipmates, followed by the release of doves and playing of *Amazing Grace*.

### Veterans Museum of Branson

**(Photos from 2005)**

Following the ceremony, we'll travel by coach to the Veterans Museum of Branson to view memorabilia from our country's military experience from Pearl Harbor to more recent conflicts.



**19:00 Shoji Tabuchi Show with RT Bus Transportation**

Back in 2005, the Shoji Tabuchi show was an evening to remember, winning over Pyro people who previously considered Branson a bit down market for seagoing sophisticates; over the past decade the show has gotten even better. Backed by exceptional vocalists, an incredible band of musicians carefully assembled by Shoji, all of whom hold one or more degrees in music, and superb featured dancers, every minute of each show is a work of art! The show includes a variety of music, including country, Broadway and big band, as well as nostalgic 50's and 60's, and inspiring gospel and patriotic-themed tunes. Entertainment writers and critics heap praise on the "Shoji Tabuchi Show," including *U.S News & World Report* raving that it "...may be unequaled anywhere for showmanship..."

**May 16, 2015 – Saturday**

**10:00 – 12:00 USS Pyro Association Membership Meeting.**

Elect officers, award scholarships, select 2016 reunion site, and chart the future of our group.

**18:30 Awards Banquet – Group photos, cocktails, great dinner and dancing**

We'll gather in the Lodge's Crystal Hall ballroom for cocktails (cash bar) and group photos, then migrate to the dining area for a bountiful, down-home Ozarks dinner, followed by the annual Pyro awards and dancing.

**May 17, 2015 – Sunday**

Check out for the trek home or stay on at the low Pyro rate for golf, more shows...

Explore Branson

<http://explorebranson.com/>

Branson Tourism Center

<http://www.bransontourismcenter.com/>

Lodge of the Ozarks

<http://lodgeoftheozarks.com/>

Shrine of the Holy Spirit

<http://www.shrineoftheholyspirit.com/>

Ride The Ducks

<http://branson.ridetheducks.com/home.aspx>

**USS PYRO Association**  
***A Bash in Branson***  
**May 13-17, 2015 -- Lodge of the Ozarks, Branson, MO.**  
**REGISTRATION WORKSHEET**

**Name**

**Spouse/Guest**

**Other Guest(s)**

**Address**

**City**

**State**

**ZIP**

**TEL:**

**Mobile**

**E-mail:**

**REUNION ACTIVITIES**

**Wednesday 13 May 2015**

**18:00 Reunion Registration/ Welcome Aboard Reception. *(All participants in any reunion event must register.)***

\$25.00 per Person

Number of Persons	Per person \$ 25.00	Total \$
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**Thursday 14 May 2015**

**10:00 Branson Duck Tour**

\$24.00 per person

Number of Persons	Per person \$ 25.00	Total \$
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**20:00 Six : The Show at Lodge of the Ozarks**

Number of Persons	Per person \$ 32.00	Total \$
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**Friday 15 May 2015**

**09:30 Remembering the Departed and Branson Military Museum**

\$42.00 per person

Number of Persons	Per person \$ 42.00	Total \$
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**19:00 Shoji Tabuchi Show with RT Bus Transportation**

Number of Persons	Per person \$ 42.00	Total \$
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**Saturday 16 May 2015**

**18:30 Awards Banquet – Group photos, cocktail, great dinner and dancing**

\$32.00 per person

Number of Persons	Per person \$	Total \$
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**Total amount of enclosed check payable to USS Pyro Association \$**

To complete your registration, please mail this form and check to:

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



# PYRO Potpourri

## Bad Day at Port Chicago

A shipmate dug up this newspaper story about AE-24's run-in with a sandbar in the early Sixties. To put the incident and its impact (pardon the pun) in perspective, below is Jared Cameron's take on the incident based on sea stories by Quartermasters Rick Tully and Tony Sieverin, who were there.



Capt. Beecher Snipes, who commanded the Pyro when I first came aboard might well be described as a 'crusty sea dog.' Now, the 'auxiliary fleet' comprised of ammunition ships, oilers and such — armed freighters — wasn't generally a card that needed to be punched by officers sailing for naval 'stardom. But as a 'deep draft' command, the Pyro and its ilk were stepping stones to commanding an elite ship, specifically an aircraft carrier. That was where Snipes was heading.

Not! Shortly before I graced the Pyro's decks, the ship was returning to its homeport in Port Chicago, CA, outside San Francisco. As required by law, a civilian pilot was steering the ship. To make a long, sad story short, the pilot, slightly tipsy, it turned out, ran the ship aground. Civilian pilot required by law or not, as captain, Snipes was blamed based on the venerable Naval principal that the commanding officer is responsible for everything good or bad that occurs on or to his/her ship. Carrier command: Scuttled. Hopes for an admiral's star: Sunk. Naval career: Effectively over.

## Head Shed Shots

As a Christmas gift for all us erstwhile enlisted types who could only dream of living in the opulent luxury of AE-24 Officer's Country, John Wichtrich has provided some selected photos of Warlords of Pyro quarters. He credits Fred Aquilina with the photography.



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**