

Winter 2008/2009

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The USS PYRO
Association

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- **Sign up now for the Blast in the Desert 2009**



Reunion info

[Pages 6 & 7](#)

Golf, anyone?



When shipmate [Lawson Barrett](#) (GMG1, AE-24,70-74) a self-described 'golf fanatic,' suggested a round of golf during the 2009 Pyro reunion, Gunner Bob sprang into action: He'll check out what's available in Reno when he and Betty take an inspection tour in February. Interested in 18 holes during the reunion? Let Bob know. Write:

pyrobbob1@comcast.net



USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

Reunion 2009

Lock in YOUR reservations now for A Blast in the Desert



You've already marked your calendar. Now it's time to head for the phones and make reservations for the 2009 USS Pyro Reunion, May 13-17 at the Sands Regency Hotel in Reno, NV.

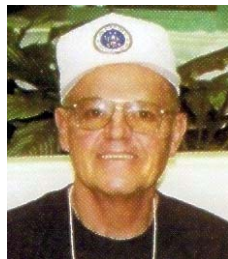
Sure, as noted on these pages over the years, folks like Gary Golay love getting in just under the deadline. And it's fun to torture nagging officers and reunion chairmen by waiting until the last minute to make reservations. Chairman Smith is cool under fire, but even laid back "Gunner Bob" is worried that shipmates may wait too long and miss out on the terrific 'recession-proof' rates he's negotiated for the 2009 gathering.

So what are you waiting for? Heave out, trice up, and turn to [page six](#) now!

MESSAGE FROM THE REUNION CHAIRMAN

Attention All Hands!

The Reunion Deadline is Fast Approaching from Port and Starboard!



Mid-May seems a long way down the pike now, but to make the Blast in the Desert a success, we want your reservations to the hotel and checks to "Treasurer Tom" ASAP — the sooner the better! — but at least 30 days prior to the "official cut-off" of 10 April.

We need to know if we are going to have enough sign-ups for the tours to ensure we can pay for the bus. (The Virginia City tour and Carson City w/memorial service is a "must" for all hands — you won't want to miss it.) Also, I need names early on so we can make the name tags; we get that info from the room reservation list and checks sent to the Treasurer.

Making the call to the hotel at 1-800-233-4939 (Group code USS513) is toll free and you are not charged until check-in. Make those reservations NOW - Today - via the 24-hour desk service. Not sure of attending? Make the reservation now and you can cancel later. Note to smokers: Even though this is Sin City, only a limited number of smoking rooms are available. Get yours while they're hot.

Don't be a straggler!

Membership matters

HELP WANTED: TREASURER

\$anborn to retire at Reno reunion. Can you fill his shoes?

"Tight as a Tick Treasurer Tom." "The Bagman." "\$nipe \$anborn." "Snipedale." And on occasion, some names not fit for inclusion in a family newsletter.

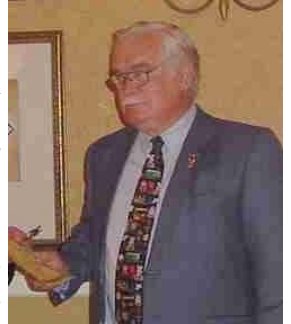
But whatever you call him, it's hard to understate Tom Sanborn's service to the USS Pyro Association as our group's money maven, a serial reunion chairman and as the scribe of snipedom in the Scuttlebutt. His goal has been to leave the association's bank accounts bulging when he drives his classic car into the sunset and he has accomplished that goal — even when it meant financing reunions out of his own pocket to avoid early withdrawal fees on an association certificate of deposit.

So there was no joy in Mudville when the crusty chancellor of the exchequer announced he would not seek or accept reelection in 2009. Tom will be honored for EXtraordinary service and roasted for his other 'interesting' traits at the Reno reunion, yet another good reason to attend that gathering.

The joy of the roast aside, Sanborn's surrendering the seals of office leaves the association with a major leadership gap.

Since they broke the mold when Sanborn was smelted, Messrs Golay and Strunk of the nominating committee have a tough task ahead in finding a replacement — especially since we all learned during our Naval service never to volunteer for anything.

Which brings us to you, dear member. Are you good at sums, able to juggle books, ready to write checks, able to plan a budget and up for serving on the association's executive committee, which oversees our groups day-to-day affairs? Are you a 'regular suspect' at reunions and willing to serve? Then why not break the *never volunteer rule* and sign up? Or volunteer a friend? If you have a candidate, please contact [Gary Golay](#), [Jasper Strunk](#) or [Jared Cameron](#).



Mike Dodge finds a shipmate

Mike writes: Just got a business card originally given to a Guam friend for delivery to me in Nov 05 - things are slower in the tropics (!) for a PYRO (AE-24) shipmate. Work details below (didn't see his name on the roster.). This info is over two years old, but hopefully will get him connected: He is T. Stephen Henderson General Manager, The Family Club.

The Family Farm	The City Home
1400 Portola Road	545 Powell St
Woodside, CA 94062	San Francisco, CA 94108

Welcome aboard a new member

Ron L. Kynason
Island Park, Idaho

2008 MEMORY BOOKS AVAILABLE BY MAIL OR DOWNLOAD

If you missed out, you can still get a free copy of the USS Pyro Association 2008 Dubuque Reunion Memory Book. Click on this link to download your copy: <http://www.usspyro.com/Reunion.htm> or write Jared Cameron (president@ae-24.org) for your very own copy on disk.

ASK INSTEAD WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION

If you are receiving the electronic Scuttlebutt without problems, save the association big bucks that can be used for other member benefits by unsubscribing to the printed edition. It's easy: Just write Secretary Doug Wisher—wisherdj@fuse.net — and say "*unsubscribe print edition.*"

Cameron examines the Year of the Ox and other 2009 matters of dubious taste and importance...

From the president's desk

By Jared Cameron

What? Another Year of the Ox? Ok, that's an 'Old China Hand' joke and you probably had to be there. In any case, the Lunar or Chinese New Year, which arrived on January 26, gives cause for a bit of optimism during these troubled economic times.

According to the lunar calendar, the Ox is thought to be the sign of prosperity through fortitude and hard work. The Ox is unswervingly patient, tireless in his work, and capable of enduring any amount of hardship without complaint. **Just like USS Pyro sailors!** Pyro Association members Bobby Sutton, James Thurmon, Thadie Bowen, John Schuler, Norm Hancock, Stanley Sears, Joseph Curtin and Phil Dickey were all Pyro warhorses born in a Year of the Ox and are entitled to a free beer in the hospitality room if they show up in Reno.



Whether you were born in the Year of the Horse, Rat, Ox, Dog, Rooster, Monkey, Sheep, Horse, Snake, Dragon, Rabbit or Tiger, we wish you *Shin Nyen Kwai Lo*, a happy and prosperous Year of the Ox — and that's no bull!

•••

TECH TOPICS. In the association's — or at least its president's lust — to help members enjoy all the benefits of this technological age in which we live, *e-Scuttlebutt* readers — if they choose, of course — may take advantage of several new, stunning features: Click on any officer's name to send a (preferably non-abusive, but we'll settle for anything) e-mail to that Warlord of Pyro; or click on front-page links to go directly to an inside page listed. All members with Internet access can go to www.USSPYRO.com or www.ae-24.org, open the reunion application online, fill it out from their keyboard and then print out the form for transmission along with their check to the treasurer. Are we some tech-savvy old salts, or what?

•••

MAILBAG. Letters from *Concerned Pyro Spouse* and *Randy Radioman* indicate that the photo (right) depicting a standard room at the Reno has caused some confusion. No, *Concerned Pyro Spouse*, the standard rooms at the Sands do NOT come with nubile young women ready to steal your loving husband of three decades. Yes, *Randy Radioman*, each room at the Sands reserved by a Pyro reunion participant (pay grade E-5 or O-3 or above) DOES come with a nubile young librarian. See you in Reno!



USS PYRO ASSOCIATION

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Tom Palmer

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Jasper Strunk

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Nominating Committee

Gary Golay

Jasper Strunk

Remembering the departed



LCDR (Ret.) John R. Christopher, SR.

April 14, 1919 – Nov. 7, 2008

LCDR John Christopher, whose service aboard AE-24 is recalled and praised by Tom Palmer in the adjacent column, died November 7, 2008. He was 89.

A veteran of 30 years of Naval service LCDR Christopher is survived by three children, 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, two great-great grandchildren and a brother.

He was preceded in death by 'the love of his life,' his wife Patricia in 2007 after 62 years of marriage.

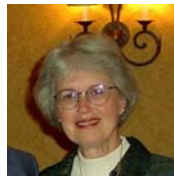
Jean Patsch



Jean Patsch, wife of AE-1 shipmate Jack Patsch, passed away on October 24, 2008. She was 81.

She was interred at the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies in Washington County, PA.

Marianne Sanborn



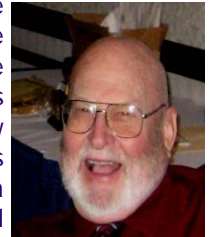
Marianne Sanborn died on December 22, 2008.

According to Tom Sanborn, with whom she attended the 2007 Pyro reunion in Philadelphia, Marianne, suffered from cancer and passed 'quickly, thank God!'

AE-24's Magellan remembers John Christopher

Thanks to John Christopher, Tom Palmer's 'little navigation error' turned out to be no big thing in the PI...

My first cruise on the mighty "P" was as assistant first lieutenant/First Division officer. When we returned to beautiful Port Chicago, the Navigator, Tom Moulton, was due to be relieved. His relief, 'Fred A.,' came to us from flight school. He really didn't know the pointy end from the blunt end - all his stuff was airdale! Captain Dawson made a decision to have me, rather than Fred relieve Tom.



It was musical chairs: I spent 2.5 weeks in San Diego at school, which came a week after my wedding!! Guess what I spent more time on: schoolwork or "homework?" I actually spent ZERO time underway learning how to aim the ship. Remember, this was the time of radar, LORAN and sextants - GPS/satellites were not an option. We left for WESTPAC with a navigator who thought he knew what he was doing!!

The tale the late RMC Ray Gillman tells on the web page about Scarborough Shoal is basically correct though it was RD1 Partridge who discovered the situation in the middle of the night, came down and told me. We were planning to arrive at noon in Subic and we were south of track.

I was looking really good - khaki shirt, boxers & boots!!! I went out to the bridge told the OD we needed to make a course change - 90 degrees to port NOW!!! I notified the Captain and he was on the bridge in about two seconds. I was a RD3 in the reserve for 4 1/2 years prior to being commissioned. That helped us determine the ship's position. We revised the night orders and I went in the chart room, dug out all of the stuff from school and started through it. After about an hour, I discovered the problem, a mathematical error I was making after we crossed the date line.

I went back and refigured all the star sites I had done and everything came out fine. The other thing was that no one else on the ship had a clue about navigation - not even my two senior Quartermasters. In the morning I went down and informed Captain Gersuk what I had discovered.

Captain Gersuk had planned to toss me off the ship — he had done it to Supply Officer Ron Tidball — but Chris intervened: He said it was the Captain's fault because I had no underway training and I had no qualified assistance.

After we got back to Subic, we had a meeting in the Captain's cabin. The FTGW folks told the Captain we had it under control and the Captain told me what Chris had said - he then told us that we were starting. He also said that he trusted us not to screw up again!! We didn't!

That is how Chris-one of the best damn officers I ever had the pleasure of working with-saved my ass!!! - *Tom Palmer*

PYRO PEOPLE

When we were young and sure to have our way

Snipes sip suds in Guantanamo Bay



Sept-Oct, 1959

Tom Gabos (Hazelton, PA, deceased 2/13/02); Mark Grimmer (Kenmore, NY); Larry Buggeln (Torrance, CA); and Bill Peregrin (Langhorne, PA) drinking One Eyed Indian beer at the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, EM Club.

Plank holder Al Hansen passed along this E-MAIL and photo from M Division MR2 Bill Peregrin, aka 'Little Willie,' noted 'Oscar the Octopus' artist.

"Wifey found this picture in basement.

"My duty was cleaning the evaporators, making fresh or feed water. I worked with David King and William Hanna and was the Water King when Hanna became the MAA of the mess hall.

"I have been in touch with Larry Buggeln, Jim Thurman and Harold Wolf. Larry, Jim and I are planning on making it to the 2009 Reno reunion and hope to taste your (Al's) wine."

John Wichtrich on the bridge...



...and gone fishin'...



John Wichtrich, who rose from ensign to lieutenant commander during his days on AE-24 from 1963 to 1966, allowed *The Scuttlebutt* to scan photos from his Navy album for occasional inclusion in this publication. Here are two of those photos. For a free subscription to the e-Scuttlebutt, identify John's fishing buddies.

Blast in the Desert
2009 USS Pyro Association reunion

Facts and figures

When: May 13-17, 2009

Where: The Sands Regency Hotel Casino, Reno Nevada <http://www.sandsregency.com/home>

"The Sands Regency offers over 800 guestrooms, including the largest standard guestrooms in downtown Reno, and 700 non-smoking rooms. All hotel guests receive valuable food, beverage, and gaming offers...and much more! We have everything you are looking for in a vacation spot! "

The hotel offers:

Gaming - Terrible's Sands Regency has 600 loose Slots, Video Poker Machines, Table Games, Sports Book, Keno, Bingo and Live Poker.

Hotel Rooms - Over 800 spacious rooms in three connecting towers. Largest standard rooms in Reno. Full service 24 hour casino, beauty shop, bike and ski shop, flower and wedding chapel on premises. Free garage and surface parking.

Entertainment - There is free live music every friday & saturday night.

Penthouse Jacuzzi & Health Club - The penthouse health club is free to all hotel guests.

Pool - We have the largest pool complex in downtown Reno.

Agape Wedding Chapel & Flowers - A full service wedding chapel and flowers for every occasion.

Deuce Beauty Salon & Boutique - A full service salon with unique boutique and gift items.

Sundance Ski & Board Rentals - Reno's only downtown ski, snowboard & bike rental.

Convention & Banquet Center - 12,000 square feet of meeting space for all your entertainment needs.

Dining - A variety of dining choices including Fuzio Universal Bistro & Steaks, Mels Diner, The Buffet, Cabana Café and Arby's.

Transportation - Free Airport Shuttle departs from the hotel to the airport every hour, on the half hour (6am – 11pm).

How to reserve your room at the special Pyro rate: Call **(1) 866-386-7829**. **USE Group code: USS-513**

What the hotel costs: Rooms are \$36 a night for Wednesday and Thursday and \$69 a night for Friday and Saturday. For the full four days of the reunion, that adds up to \$210 for four night's lodging or \$238.35 with tax for a *very reasonable* average per night of less than **\$60**.

How to sign up:

- Call the hotel directly to reserve your room
- Fill in the *reunion registration sheet* (next page), add up the damage and send a check to the association treasurer. His address is also on the next page.

What's the deadline? Torturing your reunion chairman by waiting until the last minute (Drop dead date: 10 April 2009) is a Pyro tradition, but why not create a new tradition by locking in these great deals now?

**USS PYRO Association
2009 Reunion: Blast in the Desert
May 13-17, 2009 The Sands Regency Hotel Casino Reno, NV
REGISTRATION WORKSHEET**

Name

Spouse/Guest

Address

City State ZIP

TEL: E-mail

REUNION OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Wednesday 13 May 2009

- **6:00 PM Welcome Aboard Reception.** Arrive in Reno at your leisure. Log in and get reacquainted with old (and young) shipmates in the hospitality room. Reception and Hospitality Room membership with unlimited **adult refreshments included throughout the reunion.**

\$20.00 per Person

Number of Persons @ \$20 Total \$

- Remainder of the evening free to explore Reno's exciting dining, gaming and entertainment

Thursday 14 May 2009

- Morning free for exploration, shopping, mischief or relaxing with shipmates in the hospitality room.
- 1:00~4:00 PM **Reno City Tour: All That Glitters:** No visit to Northern Nevada is complete without touring the "other side" of this delightful city. See lavish residential areas, historic highlights and learn some naughty tidbits. Great shopping in local boutiques is included. (Note: Tour requires 30 participants; if fewer than 30 people sign up by the cutoff date, the tour will be canceled.)

\$33.00 person

Number of Persons @ \$33 Total \$

Friday 15 May 2009

- 9:00 AM ~ 3:00 PM **Carson City/Virginia City Tour and memorial service**
See the town that "hit it big" in 1859 with the richest discovery of silver and gold ever found. No reproductions here...this is the real thing, so don't forget your camera! Next, a driving tour of Carson City, Nevada's capital, including the city's historic district and admission to the Nevada State Museum, the Carson City Mint. Honor departed comrades in a memorial service at the Old Boot Hill Cemetery in Virginia City. Lunch, memorial service expenses included.

\$60.00 per person

Number of Persons @ \$60 Total \$

- Remainder of the day free to explore Reno's exciting dining, gaming and entertainment

Saturday 16 May 2009

- 9:00-11:00 AM Association business meeting
- 11:00 AM~ 6:00 PM Free to explore Reno's exciting dining, gaming and entertainment
- 6:00 - 7:00 PM Group/individual photos; cocktails [Cash Bar],
- 7:00 **Awards Banquet:** Entrée choices: Prime rib or salmon hollandaise
- 8:00 - 11:00 PM **Dancing,** with DJ couple

\$45 per person

Number of Persons @ \$45 Total \$

Total Amount of enclosed check payable to USS Pyro Association \$

Sunday 17 May 2007

Total up your winnings, saddle up and head home or stay on for a few extra days at special reunion rates.

To register: Mail this form with appropriate payment to:

Tom Sanborn, Treasurer, 114 Long Point Drive, St. Simons Island, GA 31522

Or download an electronic fill-in form at www.USSPYRO.com or www.ae-24.org

USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

USS PYRO ASSOCIATION
Douglas Wisher, secretary
1022 Winding Way
Covington, KY 41011

Email:
wisherdj@fuse.net



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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

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:

Tom Sanborn, Treasurer
USS PYRO Association
114 Long Point Drive
Saint Simons Island, GA 31522