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The USS PYRO
Association

Contacts

Editorial:

Jared Cameron

3808 Brighton Ct.

Alexandria, VA 22395

scuttlebutt@ae-24.org

Membership/Circulation

Doug Wisher

1022 Winding Way

Covington, KY 41011

wisherdj@fuse.net

Money Matters

Bill Hogan

PO Box 40

Farmville, VA 23901

bhogan@kinex.net

Web site

www.usspyro.com

Reunion 2011

May 18-22, 2011

Washington, D.C.

Holiday Inn Rosslyn

More info soon!

In this Scuttlebutt

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Shocking!



**Strunks forced to eat
Vietnamese food in DC.**



USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

Rocky Mountain High reunion brings together ships, families

The recipe for a great reunion: Begin with the 'regulars,' who bring good friends and fun to most every gathering come Hell or high water. Add in a surprise visit from the family of a deceased AE-1 Pearl Harbor vet. Introduce AE-24 plankholders to our very first participant from the second Pyro's final crew.

Stir in a truly moving memorial service at the Air Force Academy's dramatically beautiful chapel. Season with an auction featuring fine quilts by the House of Strunk that put the association firmly in the black.

Finish with a moving retirement ceremony for Treasurer-emeritus Sanborn and a touchingly generous gift from Tom to the AE-1 Sinatra family. And spice with truly super arrangements and true grit in making it all happen exhibited with good cheer by reunion host/hostess Gary and Ruby Jaeger.

That — and much, much more — is the story of Rocky Mountain High, the 2010 USS Pyro Association Reunion. See page seven for photos and reunion tales. And watch for an 2010 Reunion Memory Book chock full - if early returns are any indication - of great photos.



Left: **Kisses for Gary:** A grateful throng thanks reunion host Gary Jaeger for a job well done; Center: **Kiddy-cruise skipper!** Nikki Sinatra, the granddaughter of AE-1 veteran S. John Sinatra, models a captain's hat that once belonged to AE-1 Skipper Vytlacil, a gift from Tom Sanborn; Right: **Plank-owners and snipes all:** Kynaston Parrot, Eddinger, Peregrin and Hansen with 'their' ship.

Mr. Pyro goes to Washington, DC, in 2011



The USS Pyro will — if hotel arrangements, which are 90+ percent complete at this writing stay on course — set sail for Washington, D.C., May 18-22, for A Capital Bash: Reunion 2011.

With no little help from Jake Strunk, who attended the USS White Plains reunion in the nation's capital this month, the association

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Membership Matters

Association to offer scholarships for kids, grandkids of Pyro vets

With an eye to building a bridge between the future and our Pyro past, the association will offer scholarships to offspring of AE-1 and AE-24 vets.

The plan — approved in general terms by the membership and then substantially enhanced thanks to the passion and enthusiasm of John Wichtrich — is to provide one, perhaps two, if funding is available, \$1,000 annual scholarships to children and grandchildren of Pyro vets who are association members.

Funding will come from the association treasury and from contributions of individual members. Some \$8,000 was pledged for the scholarship fund by John and other donors, who will remain anonymous for the time being.

The work-in-progress plan: To qualify, a candidate would submit a report describing his or her parent or grandparent's involvement with the USS PYRO and how they would use the scholarship funds. Qualified candidate would be selected by "raffle" — each candidate's name would be put in a hat and one (or two) would be selected during the course of the annual reunion.

Watch upcoming Scuttlebutts for details on the program, how to contribute and, perhaps, even how to help your kids get a Pyro scholarship.

Bill Hogan elected new treasurer

William E. Hogan, a lifetime association member who served on AE-24 at as a BT3 from 1964 to 1967, was unanimously elected treasurer at the membership meeting in Colorado Springs. Bill's calm and quiet good humor, arguably the result of working as an emergency services dispatcher in Farmville, VA, will serve him

and the association well in his new post.

Bill, who attended every reunion in recent memory, missed Colorado Springs to help an ailing friend through cancer treatments.

He replaces retiring treasurer Tom Sanborn.

Pyro archive to go electronic — if we can figure out how

Our association is the 'curator' for a large and rapidly expanding collection of memorabilia from the two Pyros.

As the collection grows, getting materials to and from reunions around the country is an increasingly tough job — especially now that airlines are charging for baggage and heavy parcels. Unless an association historian drives to a reunion, Pyro memorabilia must be shipped, leaving these treasures vulnerable to damage, misrouting and even outright theft.

The good news: Much of the material can be preserved and protected by storing the originals in a secure location after transforming the bulk of the documents into electronic format.

With this mission in mind, the warlords of Pyro have decided to take on this transformation and are willing to pay to get the job done right.

Unfortunately, neither current historian Tom Moulton nor folks at the membership meeting have any concrete ideas on how to get this job done reliably and professionally.

Never volunteer for anything was taught as a Navy sacrament, tho, thankfully, not a tenet of our group.

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or would be willing to honcho this project, contact any officer.

PYRO heroes, 'she-roes' honored

These members received awards for outstanding service to the association at the 2010 reunion.

TOM SANBORN

As the frugal captain of the association's financial ship, Tom Sanborn indicated turns for full speed ahead and steered us through dangerous waters, leaving the association on his retirement with sufficient funds to survive rough monetary seas and accomplish its mission.

For this and his service to shipmates as 'serial' reunion chairman, the USS PYRO Association recognizes and thanks Tom Sanborn for exceptional service to the association and to the entire Pyro family.

VANCE WORRELL

In transforming himself from 'snipe' to 'sky pilot,'

(Continued on page 6)





Dynamic leadership is the key to our association's survival and success, but dynamic as he is, the president can't go it alone.

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From the president's desk

By Jared Cameron

Your Scuttlebutt editor usually spends the final moments before going to press scrambling to find material to fill a final blank space. The post-reunion edition is an exception: An 'embarrassment of riches' with more stories and pictures than can possibly be crammed into eight pages.

Being editor means you never have to say you're sorry, but if your photo didn't make the final cut, take heart: We'll take up the slack in future editions and publish a photo-filled memory book as soon as all the pix arrive from our great volunteer photographers. Now on to more reunion memories and breaking stories:

NEW MEMBERS. We welcome two new members of the Pyro family as honorary associate members: The AE-1 **John Sinatra family**, whose photos are on page 7, and **Jeanne Desilets**.

Jeanne is the daughter of **LTJG David McLean Desilets**, who died aboard AE-24 in the South China Sea shortly before she was born. Ms. Desilets contacted the association in the hope of learning more about her father's life and death. Thanks to help from John Wichtrich, Fred Aquilina, Tom Murphy and David (Smith) Kovacks, we were able to connect Jeanne with officers who served with her dad. This was 'the miracle I was seeking,' Jeanne says. They're in touch now and we'll follow up with any information that the parties wish to share.

DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP. Dynamic leadership is the key to our association's survival and success. But dynamic as he is, the president can't go it alone. While awards capture a snapshot of leaders who contribute to the group, I want to sing about some unsung heroes. There's a deep pool here: Bob Smiley, Billy Eckstine, Al Hansen, Doug Wisher, Loyd Ellis, Bob Hauge, Lud Miller to name just a few who always do more than their share. But perhaps first among equals is John Wichtrich. The new Pyro scholarships are a representative example: John picked up the ball on a general idea, put his money where his mouth is, sold the enhanced program to shipmates and brought this good work to the brink of reality. Ditto in lending a hand to Jeanne Desilets: It was John who reached out to his 'private list' of shipmates and made it happen. Next time you see or write John, please join me in saying, 'bravo zulu and thank-you!'

WONDER WOMAN. Let me put it this way: If Karen Shepline had been in the service, she wouldn't have been a supply officer like husband Larry. She'd have been a Seal. Or in Marine Force Recon. This talented musician and noted artist is tough! She celebrated completion of a God-awful regimen of chemo-therapy, three bouts with treatment-induced pneumonia and other medical horrors with a trip to the Colorado Springs reunion. Mid-reunion — thanks, one imagines, to the



dearth of oxygen and lack of healthy nicotine-filled smoke in mile-plus high Colorado Springs — Karen came down with yet another case of pneumonia. "Spent," per Larry, "three days in a lovely room with a panoramic view of Pikes Peak" at a local hospital. After Karen 'spun' out of the hospital, the Sheplines are now back home in Hershey, PA, Karen is off oxygen and, one can only hope, firmly on the road to recovery. If one time wasn't enough, we hope she'll give us another chance on the road to Washington in 2011. If we only had a true grit award!

MEMO TO THE MISSING. *Ellie Fricke, Ed Stone, Don Green, Marge Knapp, Connie MacDonald, Iversens, Bob Hauge, Tullys, Bob Smith, Golays, Betty Gillman and all of you who have never attended a reunion: Come home in 2011, all is forgiven.*



Pyro memories (AE-24)

Editor's note: How many times have you said, "I wish I could remember more details about my time on the Pyro?" Shipmate Bill Peregrin foresaw that and kept a journal of his Pyro days. In the previous Scuttlebutt, we sailed with Plankholder Peregrin through the Pyro's commissioning to October 5, 1959. Here is the next installment — just as Bill wrote — through February 1960.

WILLIAM PEREGRIN'S JOURNAL

Memories of PYRO from letters sent home, talking with other shipmates and mostly entries from my log book, May 1959 to January 1961.

25 FEB – One year to go in the Navy. I had turned down a new shaft for the fire flushing pump, but had no way to cut the key ways. My mentor Al Holkenbrink had supervised me with the making of the shaft, but the milling cutters were not small enough. We took the old beat-up and the new shaft over to the yard machine shop to see if they could cut the key ways. They said, 'yea, in a couple of weeks.' I told them the ship was leaving for a WESPAC Cruise within 6 days on March 1st. Holkenbrink said that we had a 10 or 20 lbs can of coffee and some other stuff. They said in that case they would try to work on it.

26 FEB – 20 years old today, called home and the folks wished me Happy Birthday.

29 FEB – The ship yard called to say the shaft was finished and can be picked up. WOW! Nice job, the shaft was packed in a wood box with the keys inserted and (2) haker proof nuts.

1 MAR – At 1200 Departed Port Chicago CA. for Pearl Harbor HI. Past San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. We won't be back for six months.

6 MAR At 1415 Hrs. arrived Pearl Harbor. Went on liberty in Honolulu Hawaii, saw Diamond Head from Waikiki Beach and tried surf boarding on the waves. Wow! 80 cents for a pack of cigarettes and 95 cents for a gallon of gas.

7 & 8 MAR Radm Campbell (CON SERV PAC) inspection of the PYRO.

9 MAR – Fire in the Anchor winless, delay in getting underway. Took a tour of Pearl Harbor and the U.S.S. Arizona BB-39 Memorial.

11 MAR – Departed Ford Island P.H. underway for Guam Marianas islands.

12 MAR – Buggeln started painting OSCAR on the

intake condenser pipe.

13 MAR Crossed the international date line — went from the 13th to the 15th lost the 14th. Then passed Wake Island.

21 MAR – Arrived at Guam. We had to anchor on the far side of the island away from the base, then take a motor launch to the pier. We would then wait for a tractor-trailer cattle car with bus-like seats to take us to the base. What a ride, the road was like a snake.

Up the mountain back and forth until we got to the top and then it was the same thing coming down. The E.M. Club was great, air conditioned, beers at 10 cents and mixed drinks were a quarter. All you needed was 2 packs of cigarettes in your socks and a five dollar bill. Boy, you were set for the night. Man, did I get shit-faced drinking sloe gin & 7-UP. Came out of the Club and that heat hit me in the face, I was selling "BUICKS" before getting on the cattle car for the ride back to the ship. I could hardly make it up the gangway. The next day after muster, the Chief told me to hide down in the lower level.

23 MAR Tour of Guam and went to see the sharks feeding on the garbage that was dumped over the side of a cliff. The sun glare was horrible, bouncing off of the water surface you could not see the sharks.

28 MAR Stood second Shore Patrol at E.M. Club Macombo, Guam.

30 MAR – Departed Guam, sailing toward Japan.

1 APR – Passed by Pajaros (volcano) and Iwo Jima

3 APR – 800 Miles east of Tokyo, Japan.

4 APR – Waiting to rendezvous with carrier Ticonderoga CV-14 near Okinawa.

5 APR – Never did rendezvous with Ticonderoga, Steamed up and down the coast of Japan for (3) days.

8 APR – Steaming for Sasebo, Japan. First Liberty Port in Japan.

9 APR – Saturday, arrive Sasebo, Japan 0830 Hrs. Rain, rain, and more rain.

13 APR – Departed Sasebo still raining.

14 APR – Underway for operation area, cleaning station evaporator added 100 lbs H-100 scaling solvent to #1 evaporator.

15 APR – Underway as before, speed 30 RPM 6.5 knots. Injection temperature at 50 Degrees evaporators making 700 gal. of water per hr.

Next time: Easter at Sea...



Pyro memories (AE-1)

Hauge recalls VJ Day on AE-1



By Bob Hauge

During the recent Memorial Day week end my thoughts wandered back to the recent Reunion where no AE-1 sailor made the scene including yours truly. So researching the AE-1 past I thought I would bring ya'll up to date on how

we celebrated the end of WW 2.

When the news of VJ-Day reached us in the Admiralty Islands, namely Manus Island, we assumed it was celebration time: "Wrong" we were not permitted to celebrate. Period! We requested permission to blow the ships whistle not granted ! Then how about firing some flares? Again, not granted. Well, *when in doubt run around and shout* and so we did with the assistance of unauthorized beer we broke out of stowage where it was stored for "consumption ashore" for our customary liberty parties ashore in those Beautiful South Sea uninhabited Islands that we had the pleasure to visit.

Needless to say the night was long but yes, we celebrated in a fashion of sorts. Yes, VJ night on the old Pyro was exciting to some extent as we were drinking beer and having fun raising Cain on the run. Bos'n Mates (ship's master at arms) hid out in the aft sky 40 mm gun tubs slugging down beer in fear of getting busted if detected. The gangway PO stood guard over the beer stowage hatch, looking the other way (Natch!). The Chief MAA made the scene and silently retreated as words were exchanged as the crew continued to celebrate with beer cooled with CO2 bottles.

The XO appeared and pleaded to break it up or else Marines would be requested, but that failed as Marines appeared aboard a ICM alongside and requested some beer which they promptly received via MT beer cans. The Navigator buckled on a 45 and started up the wardroom ladder and said break it up, but sailors standing top side shouted down,

"How many shots you got?" He then silently retreated.

The celebration continued through out the evening, waiting for Sam {Pyro CO} to return from celebrating from the "O" club on the beach as his faithful Capt's Gig Cox, old Irv Palm, nervously sweated standing by for the return trip to the ship.

Next morning as Quarters was held, R Division Officer, and old Chief Warrant Bos'n, fuming mad poked each person on the chest as he questioned each "R" Division personnel in regards to who participated and received no replies as the Chief MAA stood glaring facing us. Officer's call was held and as the Old Bos'n returned, all red faced and ready to blow a gasket, but nothing was said regarding the previous evening's events. The Skipper figured enough was enough, as he couldn't hang the whole crew as he and fellow officers were ashore celebrating VJ night. Thus, I and old shipmate, Ski replaced all MT CO2 bottles as normal ship's work routine commenced. Thus, you now can understand why we old AE-1 sailors are not going to go quietly, to quote old Doug-Out Doug; "we shall return," as we continue to reminisce on quiet WW 2 escapades of the past.

Sick Call

Dewayne Taylor, 720 E. Worth Ave., Spc 31, Porterville, Ca. 93257, underwent major surgery at the V.A. Hospital in Fresno, Ca. for cancer in his stomach on Apr. 20. Since then, he has been in therapy at the same hospital and was scheduled for discharge May 21.

The surgery was extremely difficult and it would be very nice if the Pyro people from the Association could just let him know (by way of note or card), they wish him well and a speedy recovery.—*Ellie Fricke*

Then and now

Not older, better!



Machinist's Mate Bob Parrot



Electrician's Mate Ron Kynaston



Radioman Ed Stone



Signalman Steve Henderson

Capital Bash set for Washington, DC, May 18-22, 2011

(Continued from page 1)



has made arrangements with the Holiday Inn in Rosslyn, VA, for the 'full monty' of reunion musts: Under \$100 rooms in a really nice hotel located (for the benefit of those who know The

Center of the Free Word) one block from the Metro and a brisk walk across Key Bridge from the Flesh Pots of Georgetown; free Internet; free breakfast for Priority Club members; free hospitality room with the right to bring in association adult beverages/food; free banquet room... These folks *really like veterans and really want us to come!*

Once the hotel arrangements are set in stone, we'll turn to tours, which will likely include visits to military-



related venues Arlington National Cemetery, Viet Nam Veteran's Memorial, World War II Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Women in Military Service to America Memorial, the U.S. Navy Memorial Museum, the Pentagon and maybe even Jethro Gibb's office at NCIS if Deb Ruttenburg will help. Plus the obligatory 'civilian' sites



including the U.S. Capitol, White House, National Mall (not that kind of mall, Myra and Mary!), Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials...the list goes on and on.



Other tour possibilities include a day or night boat trip to Mt. Vernon and a shopping trip to famous (or infamous) Potomac Mills Discount Mall for shop-aholics.



Do you have other touring ideas? Let us know!

Washington, DC, is convenient by car from much of the East, South and Midwest. Folks who book early can likely find inexpensive direct flights (even from non-hubs like Raleigh-Durham and maybe even Allentown) to one of three airports: Baltimore (BWI), Dulles (IAD) or 10-minutes-from-the-hotel Reagan National (DCA).

Of course one element of a truly outstanding reunion is still missing: **YOU!** So block May 18-22, 2010 on your calendars now and warn spouses, parents, children, grandchildren, parole officers and medical practitioners that those days are off limits!

Pyro Association heroes and 'she-roes' honored

(Continued from page 2)

Vance Worrell combined the same hard work, commitment, conscientiousness, selflessness and true grit that made him an outstanding Navy Chief Petty Officer with the good and giving heart that makes him a fine human being to become our Chaplain extraordinaire. A true representative of his faith, Vance – with considerable help from his 'sky co-pilot,' Bev – gives of himself to make life better for all them members of the Pyro family.



With gratitude and tremendous affection, the USS PYRO Association presents this Lifetime Achievement Award to Vance Worrell.

RUBY and GARY JAEGER

Combining the grace of 'show horses' with the

muscle of a work horses, the Jaegers worked with skill, determination and smarts to welcome us to their hometown for the 2010 reunion.

For their hard work in making our Rocky Mountain High Reunion a good trip, the USS PYRO Association awards with gratitude this certificate of appreciation to Gary Jaeger and his jewel of a wife, Ruby.

JASPER STRUNK

Jake followed Ellie Fricke as the second annual winner of the Glue Pot Award, conceived by Tom Sanborn to honor members who 'provide the glue that holds our association together.'



Colorado springs a great reunion on the Pyro

A camera's eye view of Reunion 2010

Hospitality Room Hijinks



Loyd Ellis, Bev Worrell, Linda Wisner, Ruby Jaeger and folks with covered faces share a glass of cheer; John Wichtrich turns off his hearing aid (well that's what it looks like!) while Bob Smiley speaks; 'Pyro Good Time Girls' Mary Ellis and Myra Eckstine 'initiate' reunion newbie Ken Stokes with an introduction to Oscar the Octopus.

Memorial Service



The Jaegers lead Eckstines, Ellises, George, Hamblins, Wisners, White et al to the bus; Chaplain Worrell and MAA Strunk read the roll of departed shipmates at the Air Force Academy chapel; the crew bows its heads to honor the fallen.

Awards Banquet



Vanessa Miera (R), a FN in AE-24's final crew with wee bairn and husband, Mark, a National Guard Lt. Colonel; (The drinking hand of) Jon Sinatra, son of AE-1 vet E. John Sinatra, wife Zan, daughter Nikki and Nikki's friend Kayla; the Moultons prepare to cut a rug with inset of what AE-1 guys called 'a fine set of gams' belonging to Carol.

USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

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

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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

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