



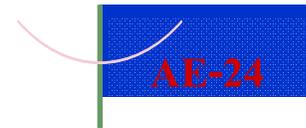
Winter 2013-14



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The USS PYRO
Association



USS PYRO Scuttlebutt



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2014 Dues Due Now

If you are an annual USS Pyro Association member (or not a member yet!), please be reminded your yearly \$20 dues are due now.

Please use the form on Page 10. Thank you!

Sign up Now for Reunion 2014

While you've been waiting, Reunion Chairman Bill Hogan has been working. And his hard work paid off with a great downtown, waterside hotel, impressive tours to places where America's story started, a battleship memorial service and harbor dinner cruise all in place for the 2014 Pyro Reunion May 7-11, 2014, in Norfolk, VA.

But rooms and tour seats are limited so now is the time to make your room reservations and book tour space. See pages 6-9 for details, contact numbers and your sign-up form. Move it sailors!

Sad Tidings for the Pyro Family

News of the deaths of an AE-1 vet, two AE-24 plank owners, a 1960s sailor and two spouses have arrived since last edition of the Scuttlebutt.

AE-1's Howard Iversen died June 28, 2013 shortly before his 93rd birthday.

Retired Commander Harold Vail, part of AE-24's original crew passed October 13, 2013. He was 86.

Plank owner Lew Steele died March 8, 2013 at age 85.

Kelly Tyrell, a machinist's mate on AE-24 who served from 1962-1966 died

(Continued on page 2)

Mourning Fallen Shipmates

(Continued from page 1)

after a two-year battle with cancer on Nov. 6, 2013.

Karen S. Sheipline, wife of Larry Sheipline, lost her battle with cancer September 8, 2013 just two days shy of her 73rd birthday.

Harriette I. Groth, 56, wife of shipmate Karl Groth, died February 3 in Everett, Washington.



Howard Iverson

Howard Iversen served aboard AE-1 for — as he was fond of saying — “three years, nine months and fourteen days.” So in 2006 when the Pyro reunion went to sea on Carnival Cruise Lines, folks called Howard and Charlene to encourage them to sign on for the cruise. No luck!

“Howard has spent all the time on the water he’s going to,” Charlene reported. “I don’t think I could get him to onboard a car ferry!”

What Howard didn’t tire of was farming: He was born on a farm in Schleswig, IA, on July 19, 1920, and raised on a farm in Morgan Township, IA. After school he worked at home and for area farmers. After WWII, he returned to Schleswig where he worked on, managed or owned farms until retiring in 1982.

In 1952, Howard married fellow veteran Charlene Moeller in San Antonio, Texas. They had five children.

Howard and Charlene were regular and active Pyro reunion participants and association mainstays until health problems limited Howard’s ability to travel.

Even then, Charlene remained the association’s virtual den mother, sending off periodic missives full of news about the Iverson and Pyro clans.

Harold W. Vail

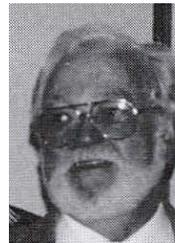
Commander Harold W. Vail, USN Ret., 86, of Washington CH, OH, died Thursday, October 3, 2013, at the WPAFB Hospital in Dayton. A 1951 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy he served in the U.S. Navy from 1951 until retiring in 1974.

Cdr. Vail was a plank owner of AE-24, serving aboard the ship from 1959-1961 as a lieutenant.

He is survived by wife, Lois Watson Vail; daughter, Marcia (Bruce) Schreiber of Columbus; a son, David (Kathleen) Vail of Miamisburg OH; five grandchildren; several great grandchildren.

Messages to Mrs. Vail may be transmitted through son David:

dvail@miamisburg.k12.oh.us



Lew Steele

Retired Signalman and commissioning crew member Lew Steele served on AE-24 from 1959-1961.

His daughter, Sherry Bedford, wrote: “Lew passed away March 8, 2013. My mother passed away 90 days later. He loved the Navy.”



Gary Tyrell

Gary Edwin Tyrrell passed away on Nov. 6th 2013. He served from January 1962 to May 1966.

Gary’s son, Kelly, wrote:

“I know his time while in the Navy was some of the best days of his life.

“He was a Machinist Mate (MM3) while serving on the Pyro and spent a lot of his time in the Philippines.

“Since I started getting your newsletter, he looked forward to reading it. He loved looking at the pics of his ship and reminiscing about the days he served our great country.

“The Navy was a huge part of his life and he definitely loved the U.S.A.

“He left this earth too young and battled cancer for the last two years of his life, but never gave up and would never just sit around and feel sorry for

(Continued on page 3)



“Everyone talks about the weather, but I’m doing something about it. As the powerful president of a national veteran’s organization, I am calling for an immediate moratorium on cold weather!”

From the President’s Desk

They say, ‘April may be the cruelest month,’ but for many Pyro people, January and February comprised the *Winter of Our Discontent*.

True, the Golays and Oteros in the frozen tundra of Minnesota expect tons of snow and Artic vortexes circulating through their living rooms. Perry Francis and the Stokes in frigid Montana made their ice-cold beds and no doubt lie in them without complaint. Ed Stone in Syracuse, NY? Zero sympathy! Hell, everyone else in the state over 45 moved to balmy Florida years ago.

But when Adam Miller in New Orleans needs to look for the overcoat he stored 10 years ago, Texans are encased in ice, Tom Sanborn and the Hamllins see their Georgia byways turn to ice skating rinks, enough is enough. I mean even the Pennsylvania contingent like the Eckstines and Perigrins are grumbling about the snow, ice and sleet. And listen up whoever is in charge, in Washington State, it’s supposed to rain all winter on the Michaels, Sundes, Mangans, Norirngtons and Nolans. Snow is only for the Strunks in Klamath Falls.

Sure, if you’re John Wichtrich, you can always jet down to Costa Rica for some fishing before a storm ices over the Tar Heel state and Mike Dodge is presumably tripping along the beaches of Guam in his Bermuda shorts. But what about the rest of us?

Granted, being snowed in for two days did make it possible for me to finally finish this *Scuttlebutt*, but don’t go telling me that every snow-filled cloud has a silver lining — that’s the sleet leaking out. Everyone talks about the weather, but I’m doing something about it. As the powerful president of a national veteran’s organization, I am calling for an immediate moratorium on cold weather. Failure to comply with this order is a violation of the Patriot Act. Hop to it, weather bureau...we want change now!

(Continued from page 2)

himself. He was sent off by the Navy performing *Taps* and will be placed to rest at the Holly National Cemetery in Holly Michigan.

Karen Shepline: Wonder Woman has Left the Ship

Karen Shepline was a renaissance woman. A talented artist, she worked in oil, watercolor, and pastel and won awards in shows organized by both the Art Association of Harrisburg, PA, and the Hershey Area Art Association. Her enthusiasm for creating and viewing art was contagious. She and Larry designed their home to showcase a mouthwatering collection of canvases, crafts, and beautiful objects. Guests lucky enough to visit them enjoyed food for both eye and stomach: magnificent meals at historic Hotel Hershey that were preceded by an appetite-inducing tour of the Hotel’s incomparable rose gardens.



For most of her life, Karen performed four-part harmony in Sweet Adelines International choruses and quartets in Red Rose City, Lancaster; and Greater Harrisburg. Even her speaking voice was melodic. And watch out for the toe-tapping Mrs. Shepline when the band struck up a tune!

Appropriate to her accomplishments, Karen collected Wonder Woman memorabilia. She donned WW’s patriotic outfit – compete with tiara, power cuffs, and Lasso of Truth – for costume balls and Halloween parties. Personal notes came handwritten on Diana Prince/Wonder Woman stationery. Adopting such a powerful alter ego demonstrated Karen’s wry sense of humor and love of fun. I salute a life well and beautifully lived!....*Susan Scanlan*

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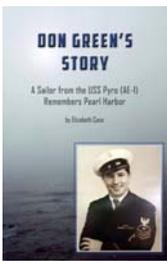
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**Gary Golay
Jasper Strunk**

Don Green's Pearl Harbor Recollections Published 10 Days Before His Death

by Gordon Weeks — *Madison County WA Journal*



Seventy-two years ago on Saturday, 19-year-old Don Green was awakened in his bunk aboard the ammunition ship USS Pyro by the sound of bombs exploding in Pearl Harbor.

"I jumped into my slacks and shoes and high-tailed it to my gun station on a 3-inch, 50-caliber anti-aircraft gun, located on the Pyro's starboard side," Green recalled. He spent the morning first battling a locked, unloaded machine gun; firing on Japanese planes; and then watching a bomb narrowly miss his ship.

Five years ago, Green — now an Allyn retiree of three decades — entered the office of the *Belfair Herald* and found freelance reporter and office manager Elizabeth Case.

"He walked in with a limp, and he was hunched over," Case recalled. "He wanted an article done. I talked with him, and I thought, 'This needs to be in book form. It needs to be preserved in a more permanent form.'"

The result is Case's debut book, "Don Green's Story: A Sailor from the USS Pyro (AE-1) Remembers Pearl Harbor." The self-published book was printed Feb. 15; 10 days later, Green died.

Saturday's anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor will be the first since the death of Green, who since the mid-1980s spoke about the attack at observances of Veterans and Memorial days, and in local classrooms.

Green didn't want people to forget about the significance of the Pearl Harbor attack, and the importance of his ship, the USS Pyro, Case said.

"Don Green's Story" is available at Sage Books in downtown Shelton, and on Nook, Kindle and Amazon. Case was born and raised in Bremerton, and graduated from East High School. She graduated from Olympic College in Bremerton in 1977, and completed a bachelor's of arts degree in business administration from the University of Puget Sound in 1982.

For four years, Case worked as the office manager of a nuclear training office at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton. She then wrote freelance articles for the *Belfair Herald* for 14 years.

Case spent several years interviewing Green and collected, copied and photographed his memorabilia. A brief autobiography written years ago "was exactly what I needed," Case said. "It gave me the human insight I needed."

Green talked about his childhood with twin brother George in New Bedford, Mass.; the death of his

mother at age 7 in 1929; and enlisting with his twin in the Navy at age 18.

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, Green was sleeping aboard the Pyro when the attack began. Two-thirds of the crew members were away on liberty. At Green's gun station, the box that normally held 36 rounds was empty, and the magazine was locked. An officer with a key finally opened it.

Green believed they fired off about 42 rounds at Japanese planes before they ceased fire because of the presence of U.S. planes. A Japanese plane circled back to target the ammunition ship.

In the book, Green is quoted as saying, "The plane was so close, I could see the pilot's features ... the leather helmet and scarf. The plane banked to the right and then came the bomb. I watched it come out of the bomb bay."

The bomb missed the Pyro and hit and exploded on a concrete dock. Green said he believed "the effect of a direct hit would have been similar to an atomic explosion."

During the interviews, Green's memory was "excellent," Case said. "He kept his marbles up to the end."

So maybe it was selective memory when Green told Case he had been married three times. Green's daughter corrected the author: her father had been married seven times, twice to the same woman.

"He had three different wives who slipped his mind," Case said.

Green was using his second pacemaker and struggled to stay conscious during their last sessions, Case said. In December 2012, he checked himself into the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil, outside Port Orchard.

Case conducted a lot of military research for the book. Many of the photographs in the book were shot by Case's son Mark Case, the owner of Flying Eagle Photography and a junior at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. Case had 500 copies of the book printed.

When Case held her first copy in her hands, "It was wonderful," she said. "I was floating." The book is primarily aimed at World War II buffs, she said.

When Case presented the book to Green, he asked questions about the marketing of it. Case said his final words about the book were, "You know, I'm getting kind of excited about this!" He died 10 days later.

Editor's note: Thanks to Gary Michel for finding this article and to the *Madison County Journal* for permission to reprint. Don's book is available for the Nook e-readers at [Barnes and Noble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com).

Applications Open for 2014 USS Pyro Scholarships

Are you a USS Pyro vet with a child, grandchild, great grandchild or other kin heading off to college in 2014?

If so, the USS Pyro Association may be able to help with a \$1,000 scholarship.

Applications are now open for 2014 Scholarships. Details and applications are available at: http://www.ae-24.org/Scholarship_2014.pdf.

Eligibility: Applicants must be accepted or enrolled

as full-time undergraduate students at an accredited college or university or as a full-time student at an accredited trade or technical school. An applicant's father, mother, aunt, uncle, grandfather, grandmother, great grandfather, or great grandmother, including step-parent and step-grandparent, shall have served honorably aboard the USS PYRO AE-1 or AE-24.

Completed applications are due by April 10, 2014.

Meet the USS Pyro Scholarship Winners and Their Proud Grandparents



Samantha Singer and Gerston Singer; Katie Ward and Jasper Strunk; Emily Borum and Bill Hogan



Nolan Bodah and Tom Sanborn; Vanessa Joslin and Al Hansen; Kayla Cragun

The Pyro Association and its annual gatherings are about honoring the past. That we accomplish with our memorial services, tributes to departed shipmates in *The Scuttlebutt* and — less formally, but equally importantly — with tales of days gone by and the men and women who manned the Pyro.

For the past three years, we've added another facet to honoring the memories of the Pyro crews: Scholarships for worthy offspring and relatives of Pyro crewmembers. So far, six Pyro grandchildren have earned \$1,000 scholarships.

The 'apple' not surprisingly doesn't fall far from the

tree: All six Pyro scholars plan to use their education to benefit society — just as their grandparents did aboard ship.

Help Keep a Good Thing Going!

The association needs **your** help to keep the scholarship program strong!

Please send your checks in any amount, large or small, to Treasurer Bill Hogan and indicate the contribution is for the Scholarship Fund.

USS PYRO Reunion 2014
Fact Sheet and Schedule
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny
Dates: May 7-11, 2014



Headquarters Hotel

Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel

777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, VA 23510

(757) 622-6664 telephone

In walking distance of downtown Norfolk attractions

Reservations: Toll free: 1-800-325-3535

Pyro Rate: \$114 plus 14% tax and \$2.00 per night Includes: Breakfast, Self-parking, Wireless Internet

Schedule of 2014 Reunion Events

May 7 -- Wednesday

14:00 **Check-in and registration** as you arrive

18:30 **Welcome Reception**

May 8 -- Thursday

0830 **Where it all Began – Williamsburg and Jamestown Tour (Eight hours)**

May 9 – Friday

0930 **Remembering the departed** at the Nauticus /USS Wisconsin.

18:15 **Down to the sea in ship(s) – Spirit of Norfolk dinner cruise**

May 10 – Saturday

10:00 **USS Pyro Association Membership meeting**

18:30 **Awards banquet**, individual and group photos, auction, dancing and the traditional bad behavior that is the Star in The Crown of all Pyro Reunions,

May 11 – Sunday

Cast anchor and head for home or stay on for an extra day or two at the reasonable reunion rates.

The closing dates for the tours are early, so please book early so you can be guaranteed a seat.

Tour and Activity Details

Where it all Began – Williamsburg and Jamestown Tour



Depart via motor coach for the Colonial capital city of Williamsburg. Your tour guide will provide interesting and informative narration during your ride about the historic Virginia Peninsula and the Hampton Roads area.

Upon arrival, step back into the 18th century as your historical interpreter guides you through the past and the events that helped shape America's history on a one and one half hour leisurely walking tour through the restored district. (Actual distance is approximately 4-5 blocks, and is appropriate for those in wheelchairs).

Following your overview tour, enjoy free time to shop and browse in the many unique specialty shops in Merchants Square. High quality apparel, gifts, jewelry, unusual quilts, beautiful furniture and holiday decorations are but a few of the offerings found in this quaint, picturesque shopping area.

Enjoy lunch on your own in Merchants Square. Your guide will point out all of the dining options as you pass through town.

Spend the afternoon on Virginia's historic peninsula touring Jamestown Settlement - established in 1607, this was the first permanent settlement in the New World.

Guests will enjoy touring the re-created village of Jamestown which chronicles the nation's 17th century beginnings in Virginia in the context of its Powhatan Indian, English and western central African cultures. Jamestown represents an enduring legacy of language, culture and government.

Through an introductory film, "1607: A Nation Takes Root", and expansive 30,000 square foot indoor exhibition galleries, you will discover the political, social and economic factors that led to the colonization of the New World, the culture of the Powhatan Indians of coastal Virginia at the time of the English arrival, and the first century of the Virginia colony when Jamestown served as its capital.

Outside, history comes alive in re-creations of a Powhatan Indian village, a colonial fort, and the three ships - Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery - that transported English colonists to Virginia in 1607. Costumed historical interpreters demonstrate work and everyday life of the era and engage visitors in a variety of activities.

Enjoy shopping in the beautiful gift shop for unique items for home and garden as well as "Made in Virginia" items.

MEMORIAL SERVICE AND NAUTICA TOUR

We'll take a short walk (alternative transportation will be available for those who can't make the hike) to the Nauticus the National Maritime Center. Nauticus is a unique and thriving campus of visitor attractions that explores the economic, naval, and natural powers of the sea. Features here include a series of ingenious interactive exhibits, shows, and theaters with various films. Also housed here is the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, one of ten museums officially operated by the U.S. Navy. Highlights of the naval battles and exhibits of detailed ship models, artwork, and memorabilia are showcased in the museum.

A true highlight of your visit to Nauticus the annual USS Pyro Memorial Service will be a tour of the battleship Wisconsin, one of the famous Iowa-class ships. This great ship saw action in WWII, the Korean War and most recently in the Persian Gulf War. Wisconsin is permanently berthed beside Nauticus where it is accessed by a connecting walkway. Explore the main deck and recently opened portions of the interior to learn about this famous ship, those who fought and served on board and the role that this mighty warship has played in the defense of our nation.

Down to the sea in ship(s) – Spirit of Norfolk dinner cruise



To keep all you old salts out of Norfolk sailor bars: Walk the short distance from your hotel to the magnificent Spirit of Norfolk for a two and one-half hour dinner cruise. The ship leaves the Waterside pier area and travels north on the Elizabeth River, passing Nauticus, The National Maritime Center, Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Portsmouth Marine Terminals, the Lamberts Point Coal Piers, and Norfolk Naval Base, the World's largest operational naval base and home of the Atlantic fleet.

The Spirit features a top-of-the-line buffet with several hot entrees. The selection includes beef, poultry, and seafood, fresh vegetables, potato, salad, rolls and butter, and dessert.

During the cruise, Pyromaniacs will be entertained by talented staff who perform popular hits that you are sure to recognize! The interactive DJ will kick off the cruise with an energetic send off and performance. The ship has two fully enclosed, climate-controlled lower decks and an open-air upper deck.

Norfolk/Hampton Roads Area Tourism Resources

Use these links to plan your free time activities

Visit Norfolk

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

Colonial Williamsburg

<http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com>

Virginia Beach

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

Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel

<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=171>

Nautica/ USS Wisconsin

<http://www.nauticus.org/>

Spirit of Norfolk

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

Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, VA

(.Birthplace of AE-24)

<http://www.navsea.navy.mil/shipyards/norfolk/default.aspx>

Naval Station Norfolk

http://www.cnicy.navy.mil/regions/cnrma/installations/ns_norfolk.html

USS PYRO Association
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny
May 7-11, 2013 Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel
REGISTRATION WORKSHEET

Name _____

Spouse/Guest _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

TEL: _____ E-mail _____

REUNION ACTIVITIES
Wednesday 7 May 2014

18:30 **Reunion Registration and Welcome Aboard Reception.** *Participants in any reunion event must register.*

\$25.00 per Person
Number of Persons _____ Per person \$ _____ Total \$ _____

Thursday 8 May 2014

0830 ***Where it all Began*** – Williamsburg and Jamestown Tour

\$65.00 per person
Number of Persons _____ Per person \$ _____ Total \$ _____

Friday 9 May 2014

0930 ***Remembering the departed*** at the Nauticus Museum/USS Wisconsin.

\$15.00 per person
Number of Persons _____ Per person \$ _____ Total \$ _____

18:30 ***Down to the sea in ship(s)*** – Spirit of Norfolk dinner cruise

\$65.00 per person
Number of Persons _____ Per person \$ _____ Total \$ _____

Saturday 10 May 2013

1930 ***Dinner for the crew*** – Awards Banquet – with buffet dinner; dance with Irish music group.

\$65.00 per person
Number of Persons _____ Per person \$ _____ Total \$ _____

TOTAL

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

USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

USS PYRO ASSOCIATION
Douglas Wisher, secretary
1011 Edgehill Rd.
Covington, KY 41011

Email:
wisherdj@fuse.net



*** THE PRIDE AND TRADITION FOREVER ***

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



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:

Bill Hogan, Treasurer
PO Box 40
Farmville, VA 23901