

The Pyro Returns to Dubuque 2008



“Is this heaven? No, it’s Iowa”

**USS PYRO Association
Association
Dubuque, Iowa**



**Dedicated
to
the life and memory
of our friend and shipmate
Robert P. Mahan**

**What can we do but emulate his infectious smile, cheerful attitude,
boundless energy and lust for life?
Living is, indeed, a skill and Bob Mahan mastered it to an enviable degree.**



Shove off Coxswain and take your orders from your bow hook ...

Remembering the fallen

The most solemn moment at any USS Pyro reunion comes as shipmates remember their fallen comrades. Dubuque 2008 was no exception. As the crew gathered aboard the Spirit of Dubuque for the annual memorial ceremony, the chaplain read the names of the departed and the master at arms consigned a wreath to the river.

Junior L. "Bill" Carey
Don Hunt
Robert R. Kelly
Clayton Labar
Joseph Lamach
Terry Schearer
Stanley V. Waldo
Van C. Yoder

To be honored at the next reunion
Harold Gilliatt (2006)
Allisin D. Deal (2006)
Warren Crosland (2001)
Ralph Thompsen
Robert P. Mahan (2008)



Dubuque 2008 Reunion

Participating members and guests



Murray Brown and Dick McDonald; Jared Cameron and Ellie Fricke; Frank Fanning; Billy and Myra Eckstine



Bailey George, Art and Millie Derry; Loyd and Mary Ellis; Gary and Cindy Fahrmiel



Bob and Dave Hauge; Johnny and Barbara Hinson; Al Hansen; Bill Hogan and Linda Fox



Charlene and Howard Iversen; Robert Mahan and Marge Knapp; Ann and Lud Miller

Participating members and guests



Ruby and Gary Jaeger; Ruth and Joe Nalle; Angel and Diane Otero; Tom Palmer



John and Jean Patsch; Frank and Pearl Ryan; Tom and Elaine Sanborn; Larry Shepline



Bob Smiley; Robert and Betty Smith with Lyla Smith; Gary Golay and Ed Stone; Lavonne and Jasper Strunk



Robert White; Linda and Doug Wisher; John Wichtrich; Vance and Bev Worrell

A Sentimental Journey



Wednesday, May 14

- Arrive Dubuque and check in at the Dubuque Holiday Inn
- 1800-2000 Beer Blast From the Past Welcome Reception in the hospitality room. Enjoy refreshments limited only by good sense and spousal regulation at this Welcome Reception and in the hospitality room throughout the reunion plus a free Holiday Inn Happy Hour in the main floor bar.

Thursday, May 15

- Explore Dubuque on your own. Shop on Main Street, ride the cable car, explore the Grand River Center, check out the suds at Dubuque Star Brewery or swap sea stories with shipmates in the hospitality room.
- 1730: Depart hotel for Memorial service and Mississippi buffet dinner cruise including prime rib with entertainment on the Spirit of Dubuque

Friday, May 16

- 08:30 Dubuque area tour by motor coach including the National River Museum and Aquarium, River Park, downtown, deli lunch at Country Junction Restaurant and a visit to the Field of Dreams Movie Site
- 13:30 Return to hotel.

Saturday, May 17

- 10:00 Association business meeting
- More quality time with your shipmates or time for shopping and exploring
- 16:30 Cocktails (cash bar), group and individual photos
- 17:30 Awards Banquet
- 19-23:00 Dancing to the music of our youth with disk jockey

Sunday, May 18

Check out and head home...



SALUTING THE MAN WHO MADE IT HAPPEN



Great USS Pyro Association reunions don't just happen. They're the result of thoughtful research, thorough arrangements and – above all else – hard work. Here's a salute to those who worked so hard to make this reunion a success.

"Twilight Sailor" Bob Hauge was the driving force behind the selection of Dubuque and once the association decided on Iowa, he put his money where his mouth is, joining Tom Sanborn and Larry Shepline in the Reunion Chairman's Hall of Fame. Along with the late Bob Mahan, Marge Knapp and Jared Cameron, Chief Hauge journeyed to Dubuque to check out facilities, contact vendors and negotiate arrangements. And at the reunion, with 'striker' and nephew Dave Hauge on call 24-hours a day, his hands-on leadership was a sight to behold.

The result: A reunion that ran like clockwork.

Reunion pro at work



"Chief" is more than a rank: Hauge explains and arcane point; makes a list and checks it twice; keeps the chaplain on the straight and narrow; checks in shipmates; keeps Sanborn and Golay in order; and is honored for his service.

Welcome reception

Things got off to a rousing start with not one, but two welcome receptions: First came the Holiday Inn Manager's Reception in the lobby, followed by the association's Beer Blast From the Past in the Hospitality Room. When Dubuque's mayor missed the event, Bob Hauge, Tom Sanborn, Ed Stone and Jared Cameron led an 'open mike' session, earning laughs, cheers and good natured (?) heckling from members.



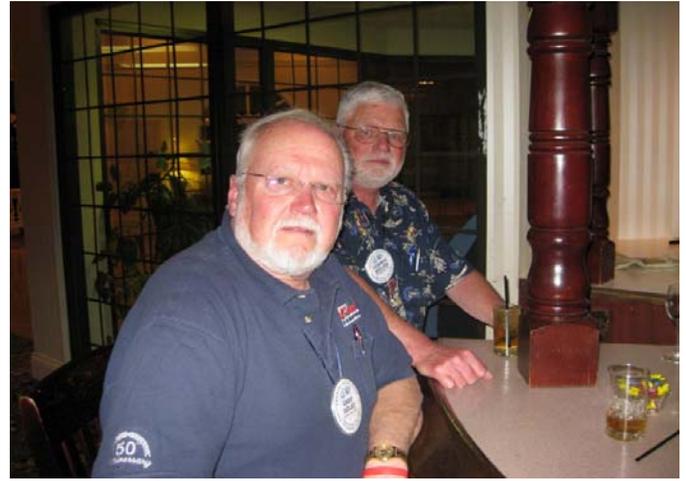
Howard and Charlene Iversen check out the crowd; plenty of signs ensure that everyone gets the word; Dick McDonald and daughter enjoy food and drink; Larry Shepline, Vance and Bev Worrell, Bill Hogan, Linda Fox and Billy Eckstine at the manager's reception; Tom introduces Elaine Sanborn to Larry Shepline; Lyla, Betty and Bob Smith chat with Frank Ryan.

Welcome reception



Marge Knapp, Millie Derry and Ellie Fricke keep an eye on the door; Ruby Jaeger, Barbara Hinson Ellie and Ellie Fricke chat as Johnny Hinson looks on; Myra Eckstine, Millie Derry and Art Derry deliver a grin for the cameraperson; Gary and Cindy Fahrmeier take in the speeches; Ann and Lud Miller, Ruby Jaeger and Linda Wisner at the lobby reception.

Welcome reception



Dick McDonald and his daughter chat with Ed Stone; Gary Golay and Lud Miller muster at the lobby bar; Ed Stone shares a reminiscence; the crew listens respectfully to Ed Stone; Larry Shepline chows down; and Bailey George chats converses with Ellie Fricke.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'

The place for sailors is on ships, as AE-24 Bosun's Mate Harold Stark was wont to say, and the place for ships is at sea. Well, you can't get much farther from the sea than Dubuque in CONUS, but we had the Mississippi River for our 'deployment.' And two hours on the Spirit of Dubuque sure beat sailing under kamikaze-filled skies on AE-1 or lingering for months on Yankee Station during a later Asian dust-up while prime rib outshined SOS and the booze was legal...



Bob Hauge checks in John Wichrich, Wishers and Cameron; the Sanborns board the bus; the Jaegers pier side; Dave Hauge and Murray Brown; the Patschs, Nalles and McDonalds prepare to board.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



Ellie Fricke, Larry Sheipline and Tom Palmer prepare to board; Bill Hogan, Jasper Strunk, Linda Fox, Lavonne Strunk, Angel Otero and Diane Otero on the dock; Baily George and the Derrys head for the gangplank; Loyd and Mary Ellis, Linda Wisner, Myra Eckstine and Ann Miller await boarding call.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



The big wheel starts turning and we're underway; a view from the dock; Tom Palmer and Larry Shepline sit back and enjoy the ride; a photographer snaps the bridge; Cindy and Gary Fahrmeier in the 'mess hall'; Bob Mahan and Marge Knapp wait for chow call.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



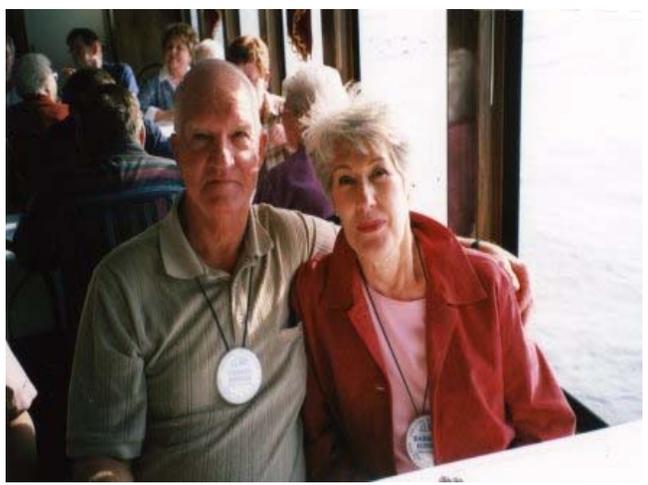
Pearl and Frank Ryan sip the Saratoga water; Linda Wisner and Ruth Ann Nalle smile for the camera; Loyd and Mary Ellis seated starboard; Vance Worrell and Elaine Sanborn get acquainted as the Strunks look on; Ruby and Gary Jaeger; and Angel and Diane Otero listen for the dinner bell.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



Dave Hauge, Barbara Hinson, Johnny Hinson and Ellie Fricke navigate the chow line...oops buffet; Linda Fox and Myra Eckstine share a laugh; Tom Sanborn Chats with the McDonald and daughter Millie Derry; while Elaine Sanborn learns submarine rituals from Ed Stone; Vance and Bev Worrell look like honeymooners; and Jean Patsch converses with Bailey George.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



The Fahrmeiers and the Smith Clan check out the Mississippi scenery; the Millers, Wishers and Ruth Ann Nalle get their picture taken; Bob White, Loyd Ellis, Marge Knapp; Mary Ellis and Bob Mahan see the sights; the Hinsons pose in American Gothic style; John Wichtrich befriends the natives; and Bob White tests his sea legs.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



Dick McDonald, Murray Brown, McDonald's daughter and Frank Ryan cruise; John Wichtrich, Larry Sheipline and Al Hansen sample the suds; Lavonne and Jasper Strunk share a story; Doug Wisher cruises for photography subjects and Jasper Strunk prepares for the memorial service.

Cruisin' and Smoozin'



Channel fever? Cameron, Patsch and Hauge chat on the weather deck; Patch, Hauge, Worrell, Hogan and Golay guide the ship into port. And then... as the sun sets in the west, our faithful Dubuque trolley arrives to shuttle the Pyro crew — at least those who did not linger at the Casino —back to the hotel.

Dubuque area tour

They built it, so what could we do but come?



Now hear this: Bob Hauge takes the mike to make sure everyone gets the word; the crew is reminded of Navy days; Pyro sirens Myra Eckstine and Mary Ellis lure sailors to the bus; the crew enters the museum; Billy Eckstine busses Ellie Fricke; and Diane Otero is 'charmed' by an Angel.

Dubuque area tour



The William Woodward Discovery Center is the aquarium component and newest addition to the River Museum. Established as the Mississippi River's national headquarters interpretive center, it serves as the only facility of its kind in the world. Large fresh water aquariums, live animals, touch pools, stream tables, interactive theaters, living history demonstrations, the National Rivers Hall of Fame, a changing exhibit gallery and public archives make up the center. Animals include alligators, otters, turtles, fish, snakes, and much more.



A photographer you can look up to: Billy Eckstine shoots Doug Wisner and Mary Ellis; Vance Worrell; and assorted crew members from the second floor. Back on the ground, Bailey George and Ellie Fricke; and Ruth Ann Nalle tour the exhibits.

Dubuque area tour



I wonder why Gary Jaeger, Jasper Strunk and Billy Eckstine are standing around in front of the gift shop? Dianne Otero, a sailor in her own right, brushes up on unrep skills. Loyd Ellis gets a 'special' tour from the museum guide. Jared Cameron and Larry Sheipline search in vain for coffee. Dave Hauge chats with Billy Eckstine; and Billy and Myra Eckstine return from taking aerial photos.

Dubuque area tour

The Pyro crew with the big wheels in Iowa!



Dubuque area tour

They built it, so what could we do but come?



Scenes from the Field of Dreams Movie Set

Dubuque area tour

They built it, so what could we do but come?



Did you hear the one about the plank holder and the farmer's wife? Al Hansen with Mrs. Lansing, the farm's owner; the farm house; Mahan, George, Wisher, Cameron and Otero skylark; Sheipline, Hansen, Otero, Hinson, Ellis and Wisher in the bleachers; Sheipline teaches Fricke baseball without a bat; and Sanborn, Hauge steps up to the plate.

Dubuque area tour

They built it, so what could we do but come?



Gary Fahrmeier checks out the real estate; the crew checks out the souvenirs; the Oteros pose at the sign; the Millers do too; as do the Wishers; Sanborn, Hauge and Golay stay at home.

Dubuque area tour

They built it, so what could we do but come?



Barbara and Johnny Hinson pose at the wall; Billy Eckstine seeks out photo opportunities; Bob Mahan and Doug Wisner check the infield; Linda Wisner and Diane Otero chat at the picket fence; Vance and Bev Worrell at home; and Johnny Hinson scores with Barbara at his heels.

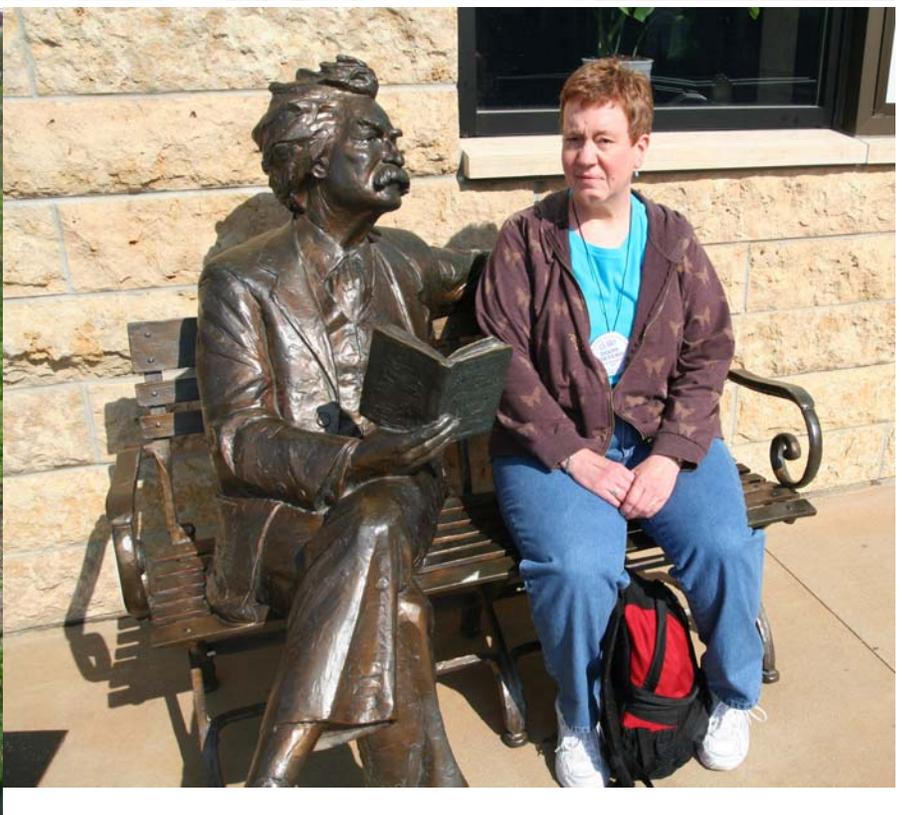
Dubuque area tour

Lunch for the crew: If they cook it we will come!



The crew disembarks; Cameron pretends he's in charge; Bob and Betty Smith pose in the parking lot; and the chow line.

Views of Dubuque



Views of Dubuque



The Hinsons and Myra Eckstine 'take it downtown;' the Fahrmeiers and Oteros take a coffee break; Billy Eckstine and Ed Stone at the Dubuque Festival; Myra Eckstine, Billy Eckstine, Linda Fox and Bill Hogan lunching out; 'Dubuque Bachelors" Wichtrich, Fanning, Hansen, Shepline, Palmer and Cameron at Pepper Sprout; and Barbara Hinson and Billy Eckstine at the festival.

Membership meeting



Cameron, Wisher and Sanborn call the meeting to order.



Vibrant with enthusiasm...



...the members review documents...



...mull reunion sites...



...and share insights...



...driving Frank Fanning to drink.

Membership meeting



The chaplain offers a prayer...



...Doug Wisner delivers the secretary's report...



...Tom Sanborn reports on financial matters...



...members introduce themselves...



...the officers receive the thanks of a grateful membership...



...and we all go home for the first time in recent memory without blood on the floor.

Awards



Bob Hauge received the Ray Gillman Award for extraordinary service.



Ellie Fricke receives a lifetime achievement award.



Hauge 'double dips,' receiving the new Gluepot Award from Tom Sanborn...



...then presents the award to co-recipient Bob Smiley.



Bob Hauge received a well-earned round of applause.



Bob Smiley, Doug Wisher and Billy Eckstine present a Ray Gillman Award to Jared Cameron as co-presenters Tom Sanborn and Larry Shepline look on.



Lifetime Achievement Award

This certificate is awarded to

ELLIE FRICKE

In grateful recognition of her valued service as Association photographer, hard work on numerous reunion memory books and good cheer as unofficial Pyro 'den mother.'

USS PYRO ASSOCIATION



Certificate of Appreciation

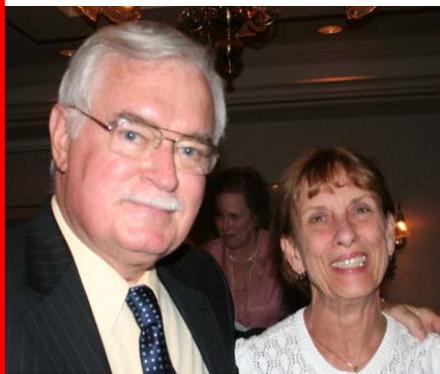
This certificate is awarded to

C. RAY NICHOL

In grateful recognition of his valued service as Association web master and for the time, effort, skill and passion he has expanded in making the USS Pyro Association website the envy of reunion associations.

USS PYRO ASSOCIATION

Welcoming new brides



Banquet



Tom and Elaine Sanborn.



Ann and Ludwig Miller.



The Minnesota Mafia: Dave Hauge, Gary Golay and Bob Hauge.



Betty and Bob Smith.



Barbara Hinson, Ann Miller and Linda Wisler.



Murray Brown greets Charlene Iversen and Jean Patsch.

Banquet



Lavonne Strunk, Bill Hogan and Ed Stone



Cindy Fahrmeier, Linda Fox, Mary Ellis and Myra Eckstine



The Fahrmeiers



Jean Patsch, Bob White, Marge Knapp and Bob Mahan



Is Bill Hogan proposing to Betty Smith as (L-R) Lyla Smith; Pearl and Frank Ryan and Bob Smith look on?



Jasper Strunk and Billy Eckstine

Banquet



Linda and Doug Wisner



Bailey George



Vance and Bev Worrell



Charlene Iversen and Jean Patsch



Jack Patsch and Murray Brown



Myra and Billy Eckstine

Banquet



Bob White, Marge Knapp and Bob Mahan



Larry Sheipline and Tom Palmer



Johnny and Barbara Hinson



Pearl and Frank Ryan



Elaine Sanborn and John Wichtrich



Lavonne and Jasper Strunk

Banquet



John Wichtrich, Bob Smiley and Jared Cameron offer a toast...



..as Frank Fanning and Larry Shepline join in.



Table talk...



Charlene Iversen



Bob Mahan, Howard Iversen, Jack Patsch and Charlene Iversen



Ellie Fricke, the Derrys with Lyla, Betty and Bob Smith

Shall we dance?



Ann and Lud Miller



Betty and Bob Smith



Ed Stone and Linda Fox



Eliane and Tom Sanborn



Jared Cameron (!!) and **Lavonne Strunk**



Mary and Loyd Ellis

The Lamach Legacy



WWII Vets Howard Iversen, Bob Mahan, Ed Stone, Bob Hauge, Joe Nalle, Jack Patsch and Murray Brown show off the framed watercolor of USS Pyro (AE-1). The frame was crafted by the late Joseph Lamach and contributed to the association by his daughters.

Joseph Lamach served on AE-1 as a metal smith and played on the 'famous' R Division basketball team. In his spare time, he transformed shell casings and scrap metal into decorative objects — including a frame for the much-loved watercolor of AE-1.

His daughter, Linda Lamach, a retired Navy AZC (AW) writes of his life after the Pyro:

"After getting out of the Navy after WWII dad returned to Montana and went to work with his brothers in their auto repair shop. He later met and married my mother, Alice Sevier Lamach. He loved to tell the story of how he and some friends went into the restaurant where Mom worked in the family business. Mom walked up to him and wanted to know his name.

When he asked why, she told him she wanted to know what her name was going to be. They married and moved to Missoula, Montana, where he worked in the sheet metal field. Alice had a daughter Nancy and then they had Kathy and me. After several years Dad decided that he needed to find better fields of work and we did a lot of traveling until we finally ended up in Kennewick Washington. During that time dad worked on the dam above Libby Montana, he worked in Moses Lake, Washington on some project (he had to work as an apprentice because they wouldn't accept his previous work), then he worked on the Nuclear Power Plants in Richland, Washington, where he finally retired. Dad developed Parkinson's disease which caused numerous other problems. He died at the VA Hospital in Seattle, WA, two days after his 81st birthday. I still miss his wisdom and guidance. Dad never talked too much about the war, but he would pull out the box he had of coins he had collected from places he had been and show them to us. He used to tell us that he didn't really like to drink so he would be the one to make sure his buddies got back to the ship. He had made a camera and we have pictures of some of the places he was. Cameras weren't allowed on board I guess at that time."

Chief Linda Lamach (L), who served at Naval Air Stations in Detroit, Alameda during the big quake, Widbey Island, North Island and a staff job in New Orleans before her retirement in 2005 and a contractor job at NAS Fallon, NV. Her sister, Kathy Weatherly (R), owns a company that produces medical garments used to reduce lymphadema and promote healing after surgeries in West Allis, WI. In 2008, they decided to donate the exquisitely framed watercolor to the association in their father's memory.

USS PYRO Association 2008 Memory Book



This 2008 USS Pyro Association Memory Book was edited by Jared Cameron who is solely, if reluctantly, responsible for all miscaptioned photos, incorrectly spelled names and mismatched spouses. Photos were shot by volunteers including Ellie Fricke, Billy Eckstine, Doug Wisher, Tom Palmer, Angel Otero, Ed Stone, Bailey George, John Wichtrich and Jared Cameron. We 'shot 'em like they saw 'em' — often with a cup of cheer in hand and using viewfinders designed for younger eyes. Married photographers — with some notable exceptions — tend to snap more shots of *their* wives than *your* wives out of longstanding affection, a desire to assemble background material for post-reunion department critiques and the hope of surviving to attend future reunions. The editor and photographers are **not** responsible for odd expressions, excessive gyrations of nether parts whether dancing or not, dubious department brought about by reunions with bad role models from your youth, dress inappropriate to traditional gender roles, silly head coverings, the actions of sailors whose spouses allow them to attend reunions without adult supervision or pounds added since your salad days of Naval service. We believe we included at least one photo of every participant, but if we missed you (or your best angle), we apologize abjectly.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jared'.

The editor

