



Spring 2011

**Published by  
The USS PYRO  
Association**

**Contacts**

**Editorial:**

Jared Cameron  
3808 Brighton Ct.  
Alexandria, VA 22395  
[scuttlebutt@ae-24.org](mailto:scuttlebutt@ae-24.org)

**Membership/Circulation**

Doug Wisher  
1022 Winding Way  
Covington, KY 41011  
[wisherdj@fuse.net](mailto:wisherdj@fuse.net)

**Money Matters**

Bill Hogan  
PO Box 40  
Farmville, VA 23901  
[bhogan@kinex.net](mailto:bhogan@kinex.net)

**Web site**

[www.usspyro.com](http://www.usspyro.com)

**See ya in  
Louisiana, Cher!**

**Reunion 2012  
Ragin' with the  
Cajuns**

**May 16-20, 2012  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Holiday Inn South**

**See page two  
for details**

**First ever  
AE-1 photos!  
See page nine**



# USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

## Memories of 2011 reunion linger on

Some 60 members of the Pyro family along with several school groups and assorted tourists looked on as soldiers of the Army's Old Guard presented arms and shipmates Ed Stone, Bob Hauge, Bob Smith and Vance Worrell lay a wreath honoring our dead at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery May 20.



This memorable wreath-laying ceremony was the 'jewel in the crown' of a Capital Bash, the 2011 USS Pyro Reunion May 18-22 in Washington D.C. The gathering included the 'regulars,' folks who muster at reunions every year come rain or shine. They were joined by old friends like Jack Patsch and the Tullys whose participation in recent years had been limited by health, mobility or geographic issues. Add a generous sprinkling of new faces

including Capt. James McPheeters, AE-24 skipper during 1986-89 who delivered a moving 'thank-you' to earlier crews for delivering his crew a mint-condition ship; Plankowner John Fox; Alex Palmer, son of the late Tom Palmer; Jeanne Deslats, daughter of the late Lt(jg) David Deslats; a drop-by by decommissioning crew Navigator Tom McDaniels; and Adam Sternglass (EMFN, 79-80). For more on new faces, tours, dancing, visits to the Viet Nam and WWII memorials, hospitality room hijinks and much more, check out the photos on pages 5-7

### Nolan Bodah earns first Pyro Scholarship

Student athlete Nolan R.K. Bodah, who will enter Binghamton University in Fall after earning an associate of science degree from Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY, is the first winner of a \$1,000 USS Pyro Scholarship.

Noah is grandson of Elaine and Tom Sanborn. Pyro scholarships are the brainchild of John Wichtrich and Larry Shepline. The



*(Continued on page 9)*

## 2011 membership meeting highlights

Here are the highlights of the 2011 association membership meeting May 21:

- **Officers.** Jared Cameron, Billy Eckstine and Doug Wisher were reelected as president, vice president and secretary, respectively. Lud Miller was elected second vice president. (Treasurer Bill Hogan was elected for a two-year term in 2010 and will be up for reelection in 2012.) All appointed officers were reappointed. In accordance with the bylaws, Bob Smith rejoined the audit committee.
- **Scholarships.** Rick Tully joined Chairman John Wichtrich and Frank Fanning on the Scholarship Committee. The membership unanimously endorsed the selection of Noland Bodah (see story on page one) for the first Pyro scholarship. Ideas for refining scholarship rules were submitted; subsequently, those ideas were incorporated into the scholarship guidelines and are currently under review by the executive committee.
- **Reunion 2012.** The members selected Baton Rouge, LA, as the site for the 2012 Pyro reunion. With uncharacteristic speed, arrangements for a memorable reunion were finalized or nearly finalized. See story below for details.

## Reunion 2012 in Baton Rouge

As *The Scuttlebutt* headed for the presses, basic arrangements for reunion 2012 'Ragin' with the Cajuns' are in place.

Per the still somewhat tentative schedule below, the reunion will include such unique and exciting events as a visit to the moving and memorable World War II Museum in New Orleans and a memorial service with a five gun salute to the departed aboard the USS Kidd, a restored WWII destroyer. To help old tars stay in touch with their feminine side and in good graces with spouses, there's shopping in New Orleans, a discount mall not that far from the hotel, a

Baton Rouge doubled in population after Katrina drove New Orleans folk to all corners of the earth. While many have returned home, they left behind several top-notch Big Easy eateries and music venues that add to the city's small-town charm.

Watch the next *Scuttlebutt* for final details, sign-up forms and the beginning of breathless, but generally ignored requests that you register early to reserve your place.

### Tentative schedule of events

5/16/12	1800	Welcome reception in hospitality room at Holiday Inn, South Baton Rouge
5/17/12	0900	WWII Museum and New Orleans shopping tour
	1630	Return to Holiday Inn South, Baton Rouge
5/18/12	1000	Depart for USS Kidd; tour downtown Baton Rouge and military museum
	1100	Crew piped aboard USS Kidd; memorial service including gun five salute for the departed; tour of the Kidd and shopping at museum.
	1200	Lunch and Cajun cooking demonstration
	1300	Depart for plantation tour
	1600	Return to hotel
5/19/12	1000	Association business meeting in hospitality room
	1800	Cocktails and photos



**USS Kidding around:** Susan Scanlan uses the USS Kidd deck gun to enforce good order and discipline while checking out Baton Rouge in Spring

(still tentative) Cajun cooking lesson and lunch, a tour of well preserved plantations along the Mississippi River, time at a casino in downtown Baton Rouge, dancing to a real, live Cajun band...and more.

Plus under-\$100 rooms, free rides between Baton

Rouge Airport and the hotel, unlimited adult beverages in the hospitality room and (a few) smoking rooms for the Wretched of the Earth.



**...scads of former Gunner Bob's shipmates had written to express affection for him and pleasure at having served with or under Smith..**

---

#### USS PYRO ASSOCIATION

##### Officers

*President*

**Jared Cameron**

*Vice President*

**Billy L. Eckstine**

*Second Vice President*

**Ludwig F. Miller**

*Secretary*

**Douglas Wisher**

*Treasurer*

**Bill Hogan**

##### Appointed Officers

*Scuttlebutt Editor*

**Jared Cameron**

*Chaplain*

**Vance Worrell**

*MAA*

**Jasper Strunk**

*Historian*

**Tom Moulton**

*Nominating Committee*

**Gary Golay**  
**Jasper Strunk**

## From the president's desk

By Jared Cameron

Delays in post-reunion issues of the *Scuttlebutt* have become a Pyro custom. This year is no exception as your editor grasped every possible excuse — waiting for photos, seeking additional information or just being 'Pyro-ed out' after a great reunion — to delay getting the paper to the presses. Well, July 4 isn't *that long* after the end of Spring and our association is all about honoring customs.

In return for the wait, we have a newsletter that is really stuffed with news and photos...I hope it's worth waiting for!

**Check the Pyro on Facebook.** If you believe as I do that there was something special that transcends generations about ships named "Pyro," if you'd like to get in touch with folks who served on A-24 in her later commissioned days and if you're a Pyro Internet jockey, be sure to check out the USS Pyro pages on Facebook. Most of the regulars are from the 1980s and 90s, but you will be surprised to learn that these relative young'uns are a lot like us — Pyro special. And if you're one who thinks about the future of our association, these latter day Pyro saints are the folks who will keep the group going after we depart this vale of tears. Reach out to them!

**Gunner Bob fan club.** While mostly younger, many Facebook Pyro fans are from are from the 60s, 70s and 80s. When I posted photos of the Arlington National Cemetery wreath-laying on Facebook, Bob Smith was listed as one of the official party. In a few hours scads of former Gunner Bob's shipmates had written in to express affection for him and pleasure at having served with or under Smith, who was the Pyro cargo officer from 1970-74. As I said, a great place to get in touch with old and new friends.

**Information, please!** Helping young people get a good education is a goal in and of itself, but the Pyro Scholarship program has already returned another benefit to our group: Interest in the AE-1 and AE-24 from those who served as well as the children and grandchildren and even great grandchildren of Pyro sailors. Wearing his scholarship chairman hat, John Wichtrich has been in touch with a number of people seeking information.

One of them is Dawn O'Brien Taylor. She is the great-great granddaughter of Ralph L. Elliott, who was the pay clerk on AE-1 in 1945.

Dawn would like to hear from anyone who knew Ralph Elliott (Think, AE-1 folks; he's the one who likely handed you your princely salary every month!) If you have any recollections to share, drop me a line and I'll pass them along to the family.

Wishing you a great Fourth of July and a cool summer!

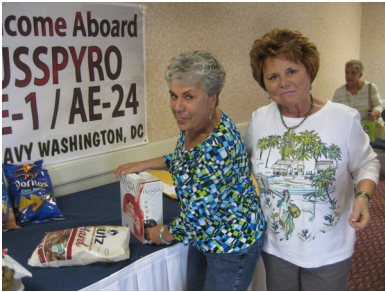
### Richard K. McDonald

Richard K. McDonald, who served as a seaman second class aboard AE-1 from 1944 to 1945, died May 14 while visiting his son in Grand Rapids, MI. He was 90.

A native of Sand Lake, MI, Dick McDonald had been living for the past several years in Mishawaka, IN, with his daughter. Mishawaka is also the home of Pyro veteran Harold Cook, who reports that prior to Mr. McDonald's death the two AE-1 vets had been meeting frequently for lunch and Pyro reminiscences.

## A picture is worth 1000 words:

### Welcome reception



Myra Eckstine and Mary Ellis decant the wine; Doug Wisner meets the McPheeters and Lud Miller samples the pretzels.



Karen Shepline, Helen Golay and Rita Tully endure Cameron; Bob and Betty Smith arrive; John Parker, Mike Driscoll and Angel Otero chat.

### Touring the Nation's Capital



The crew musters in front of the White House; gathers at the World War II Memorial and poses with the lone sailor...



...then gathers at the Vietnam Memorial; visits the Lincoln Memorial; and views the Iwo Jima monument.

# Memories from *A Capitol Bash*

## Arlington National Cemetery



Top: The changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns; the sergeant of the guard greets the Pyro representatives; Hauge and Smith look on as Worrell and Stone present the Pyro wreath. Bottom: All hands render a salute; Chaplain Worrell reads the names of the departed; Rick Tully rings memorial bell as crew looks on.

## Awards Banquet



Susan Scanlan (R) celebrates purchase of Sharon Hamlin (R) jewelry creation; Mark Grimmer dances with his best girl, Bonnie; Don McClurg adds Sparkle(s) to the occasion



Karen and Larry Shepline dance cheek to cheek; Ed Stone and Betty Smith show how it's done; and Lynn Sullivan trips the light fantastic with husband Don.

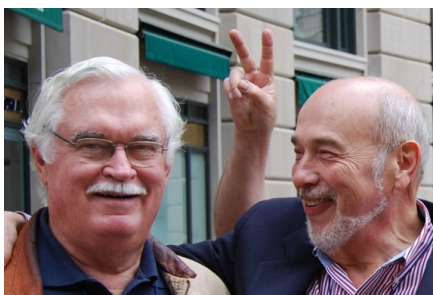
# More memories from *A Capitol Bash*

## Salutes and awards



Top: The crew (center) renders hand salutes to two members of the Pyro family deployed in harm's way: Former AE-24 Navigator Cdr. Debra Ruttenberg (L) and Lt. Col. Mark Miera, (R) husband of Vanessa Miera, are on active duty in Afghanistan at this writing. Bottom: Sharon and Fred Hamlin (L) earned a salute for their True Grit in making the reunion after Fred's toughing his way through cancer surgeries. Center: Scholarship Chairman John Wichtrich, Bob Smiley and Bob Hauge earned salutes for their contributions to the scholarship program; and Jared Cameron (R) was presented with the Pyro Association Glue Pot award.

## Outtakes and shenanigans



TOP: Bob Hauge as politically incorrect master of ceremonies (L) and with the Pyro "Good Time Girls" (C); Bottom: Tom Sanborn and Jared Cameron share a laugh while (we think) Gary Michael illustrates his maturity in the background; Pyro spouses thank Ed Stone for his service. Box: Ken Stokes introduced wife Jeane (top right) to the crew before modeling what looks like 'lady's unmentionables.'

## New faces



Among the new AE-24 faces at the 2011 reunion: Top: Plankowner Mark Grimmer; David (Smith) Kovacs; David Curtis; Plankowner John Fox; Plankowner Harold Wolf; decommissioning crew Navigator Tom McDaniels; Bottom: Plankowner David Trask; Capt. Jim McPheeters; Plankowner Edwin Walters; Mike Driscoll; John Parker; and Adam Sternglass.

## Pyro families



(L-R) The Jaeger Clan: Ruby Jaeger, Gary's sister Sandra Roberts and Gary Jaeger; The Patsch Clan: Gay Vroble, John Vroble and AE-1 vet Jack Patsch, the father and grandfather, respectively; The Hauge Clan: Dave Hauge, 'a good guy for an Army man,' and Uncle Bob Hauge.



Kiddie cruisers: (L) Jenn McCartney and Alex Palmer, son of the late Tom Palmer; and (R) Jeanne Deslats, daughter of the late Lt(jg) David Deslats;

## Encore: Bill Peregrins Journal Part III

*Editor's note: Ever 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 Peregrin (shown on right with fellow plankowners) through the Pyro's commissioning to early 1960. Here is the next installment — just as Bill wrote it — from late February to mid-April 1960.*

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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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) shaker 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 USS 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 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> lost the 14<sup>th</sup>. Then past 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 so horrible, that 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 – Past 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 three 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 #2 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.



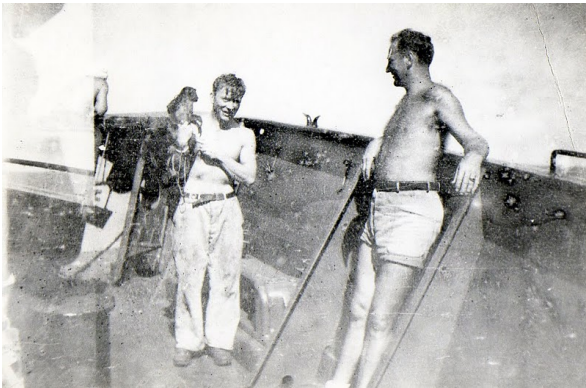


## AE-1 memories

Since cameras were banned for security reasons on the AE-1, there is a dearth of photos of the greatest generation at work and play.

Now, thanks to retired Chief Linda Lamach, daughter of the first Pyro's Joseph Lamach, we have a selection of snapshots of AE-1, taken, it is said, with Mr. Lamach's (illegal) homemade camera.

Tho we guess the first photo depicts Joseph Lamach, no captions are available from us 'young'uns,' but if you can provide any names or other information, it would be appreciated.



## Pyro scholarships

*(Continued from page 1)*

2011 award honors the late Tom Palmer, an educator after Naval service who spent his life teaching and helping kids. Scholarships are funded by a small grant from the association treasury and large, really generous donations from individual members.

Nolan was selected by the scholarship committee, currently comprised of John Wichtrich, Frank Fanning and Rick Tully. Their recommendation was approved by the



membership at the annual meeting May 21. Chairman Wichtrich (right) joined Tom's son, Alex Palmer (center) in presenting the scholarship to grandfather Tom Sanborn (right) at the 2011 Awards Banquet.

John Wichtrich called Nolan Bodah's credentials 'truly impressive.'

Nolan is a pitcher and infielder for the Cannoneers baseball team and an exemplary scholar athlete who has earned President's List honors each semester he has completed at Jefferson. As a senior participating the Honors Program, Nolan completed a research study in sociology, two laboratory research studies in organic chemistry, and two laboratory research studies in general physics.

Always willing to lend a hand to help others, Nolan recruited fellow members of the baseball team to volunteer on a weekend to help construct the Lucy Colello Memorial Playground at a local elementary school. On campus, he also assisted other students as a peer tutor for a variety of chemistry classes.

At Binghamton University, he will study psychobiology and behavioral neuroscience. Ultimately, Nolan plans to become a dentist and an Air Force officer.



**College help for Pyro offspring**  
**USS Pyro Scholarships**  
**Tell your shipmates and apply now!**

USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
Address Correction Requested

Forwarding and Return Mail Guaranteed

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

Email:  
wisherdj@fuse.net



\*\*\* THE PRIDE AND TRADITION FOREVER \*\*\*

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

Request permission to  
come onboard!



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