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Association

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# USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

**Reserve now or forever hold your peace**

**Lock in YOUR reservations now for  
A Blast in the Desert**



OK, we admit it. The final *Scuttlebutt* prior to a Pyro reunion often reflects the chairman and officers' worries about turnout best described as "What if we held a reunion and no one came?"

Not so for the **Blast in the Desert 2009**: Thanks to a great deals negotiated by Gunner Bob Smith, a fun location and dedicated nagging, at this writing we have nearly 65 signups and commitments that the check is in the mail from even the most blatant procrastinators. Great turnout — a mix of the regular suspects and new faces — is assured. So, this year the worry warts are losing sleep over a new issue: Will there be rooms and tour seats for last minute shipmates and friends?

The deadline is fast approaching. Don't miss out. Heave out, trice up, turn to and turn to page six and make **your** reservations now before it's too late!

## Bob Hauge: 'Time to slip the anchor chain'

I reckon it's time to slip the anchor chain that has bonded together the crews of the AE-1 and AE-24 for the past twenty some years. We have rejoiced in our acquaintances through our reunions, sharing stories of our post-Navy days, always looking forward to the next, reunion and the next. However, time age and illnesses have taken their toll, unfortunately creating waves and disrupting the way of life for sailors of the WW II generation. Their unexpected departure from earth to the higher heavens creates a large void in the ranks of Pyro sailors, leaving the few remaining Twilight Sailors to mark time.

As the ranks of the AE-1 sailors diminish and AE-24 sailors carry on the traditions of the USS Pyro, I reckon it's time to say *sayonara, y'all*. It has been a delightful cruise! Here's wishing you one and all pleasant ventures and voyages in your future reunions. Thus, during the Reno Reunion let us join one another and salute our departed shipmates and try to avoid retelling those uproarious sea stories with so many versions depending on the individual who's repeating them. Take care and God bless all Pyro survivors everyone! May you enjoy a blessed life and happiness. — **Bob Hauge (AE-1, 1942-46)**

# PYRO PEOPLE

## TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

### SANBORN HEALTH IMPROVES, WILL SEEK ANOTHER TREASURER TERM

It's a 'good news—good news' scenario. The medical conditions that earlier led Tom Sanborn (shown to the right in his salad days with every snipe's favorite octopus, Oscar) to announce that he would not seek another term as USS Pyro Association treasurer have taken a turn for the better. And his distinctly better half, spouse Elaine, has agreed to lend a hand with the bookkeeping work to fill in any gaps that might pop up in Tom's physical condition down the road. So — assuming his reelection at Reno, which seems a shoe-in — the association will get two Sanborns for the price of one: Tight as a Tick Tom, dedicated to filling our group's coffers, and smart, computer-savvy Elaine to keep the books (and Tom!) in A-one (but not AIG) order.

The association is grateful to Tom and Elaine for taking on the Chancellorship of the Exchequer for another two years and to shipmate Bill Hogan, who had offered to assume the post before the Sanborn 'unretirement.'



## Ruttenberg deploys to Iraq



Most of you are aware that I am a Navy reservist and some of you may already know that I recently mobilized back to active duty for 14 months commencing 06 Feb. I am now assigned to DOD's Criminal Investigative Task Force (CITF) headquartered at Fort Belvoir, VA working as an analyst on investigations relating to terrorists.

After I reported to my new command, I learned that I will be spending my first 6-months deployed to Iraq. I depart for Iraq on 26 March. I will be at Ft. Benning, GA, for training from 14-21 March. This is my second mobilization since 9/11. I'm proud and honored to be a Reservist and have this opportunity to make a difference in the Global War on Terror.

I think this is a unique opportunity and I am looking forward to it. Luckily, it is only a 6-month deployment, so I will be back in time to catch the end of sailing season :-)

My only regret is that I will miss all of you while I'm gone – and I am missing summer and much of boating season. You know how much I love summer and boating season :-)

And I hope you keep in touch. I will hopefully be on email at [deborah.ruttenberg@us.army.mil](mailto:deborah.ruttenberg@us.army.mil) or [druttnberg@aol.com](mailto:druttnberg@aol.com). Peace and Love,

*Debbie Ruttenberg*

*Former Pyro Navigator Deborah Ruttenberg served on AE-24 from 1989 to 1993, rising from ensign to lieutenant. When she is not trailing terrorists on active duty, she is a consultant at the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C.*

## Smith Takes a spill in the line of duty

Previous reunion chairmen have come away with the thanks of grateful shipmates, a certificate of appreciation and — more often than not — a severe hangover. Leave it to 2009 Reunion Chairman Bob Smith to rise above the norm: Usually reliable sources say Gunner Bob Smith took a nasty spill on some ice while in or on route to Reno to check out facilities for our annual gathering. We wish him a speedy recovery!



## Welcome to new members

Ron L. Kynason AE-24 (1959-60); Gary Jaeger. new lifetime member



**“Tom Sanborn will do nearly anything to put bucks in the association account... so sharpen your tongue and get ready for the Sanborn Non-Retirement Roast in Reno!”**

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**USS PYRO ASSOCIATION**

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*Second Vice President*

**Tom Palmer**

*Secretary*

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**Jared Cameron**

*Chaplain*

**Vance Worrell**

*MAA*

**Jasper Strunk**

*Historian*

**Robert J. Smith**

*Nominating*

*Committee*

**Gary Golay**

**Jasper Strunk**

## From the president’s desk

By Jared Cameron

**The Pyro Chronicles.** On the top of the association to-do list from the past several years has been assembling an oral history of life — both ridiculous and sublime — aboard the two Pyros.

Like so many of the best laid plans of superannuated sailors, this project lingered too long on the back burner.

Enter Tom Palmer. After a distinguished career as AE-24 navigator (see the Winter 2008/2009 Scuttlebutt for all the embarrassing details), Tom a.k.a. “Magellan” spent his civilian career as a guidance counselor and teacher of film and photography in Concord, CA, near the erstwhile Pyro homeport. Thanks to Tom, this project will finally be launched in Reno. Tom will record video interviews with selected volunteers — we plan to start with AE-1 WWII vets, but anyone with a story to tell and a bit of time is welcome to share a sea story or tale of life at on the ocean blue.

Magellan will then give copies of the interviews on disk to participants for sharing with kids and grandchildren and we will post a version of the interviews on the web. Remember, the mission of our association is to make sure the Pyros ‘live on in the hearts and minds of the men and women who served on her. ” Your recollections will help those memories live on.

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**This turkey is ready to roast!** Tom Sanborn will do nearly anything to put bucks in the association’s bank account. So when he decided to retire (see story on the left), we figured that the least he could do was put his body on the line to raise some money for the group. Thus, the Sanborn Retirement Roast was born. The idea: Charge folks five bucks to tell a tale on Treasurer Tom or simply make him the butt of a joke. When Tom decided to run for another term after all, the idea was too good a potential money maker to give up over a small detail like non-retirement. So as part of the Reno reunion Awards Banquet, we decided to include a non-retirement roast. At \$5 per insult, the association should stay solvent for the foreseeable future. And if only Ray Gillman could have joined us in Reno, we could buy a private jet.

Now you may be thinking, “Why pick on Tom, a man who has served his country and his association well?” Here’s why: Tom loves it — the spotlight and the contributions. He’s already started working on his reply speech. So hold back some cash from your slot machine fund, sharpen your tongue and get ready for the Roast in Reno!

### THE OLD AND THE NEW AT RENO

**Oldies, but goodies**

- **Memorial service for fallen comrades at historic Boot Hill Cemetery;**
- **Unlimited adult beverages in the hospitality room throughout the reunion;**
- **A great mix of old friends and new faces.**

**Pyro ‘first evers’**

- **‘Pay for play’ Tom Sanborn Non-retirement Roast**
- **First tapings of a Video History of the USS Pyros with thanks to VP Tom Palmer**
- **More than you ever wanted to know about Oscar the Octopus and the snipes that loved him.**

Built for Nuclear Age**Pyro Assumes Place In U.S. Defense Line**

**PORTSMOUTH** — The Navy commissioned another of its missile age ammunition ships with the blessing Rear Adm. Paul D. Stroop, ordinance chief, in ceremonies at the Naval Shipyard Friday afternoon.

Rear Admiral F. Massie Hughes, Fifth Naval District Commandant, read Navy Department orders commissioning the USS Pyro (AE-24).

This new, missile capable ammunition ship follows her sister ship, USS Nitro (AE-23) into service. The Nitro was commissioned May 1.

**Last Vital Link**

“Pyro,” Rear Adm. Stroop said, “will serve as the last, vital link in the supply chain from factory to customer.”

The Pyro’s newest replenishment gear, increased deck heights, greater capacity holds and capability of delivering all the Navy’s latest weapons make her the Navy workhorse which will help the United States maintain control of the seas, Rear Adm. Stroop said.

The Pyro is the fourth and latest commissioned in a long line of ammunition ships beginning with the USS Suribachi (AE-21). She holds double elevators carrying ammunition from four storage decks to replenish ships at sea on both sides simultaneously. Forklift trucks bear larger ammunition from shelf to elevator and elevator to deck area. Constant stabilizing devices hold

transfer lines from ship to ship on a nearly straight line under all conditions.

Built at the cost of \$17 million dollars, the Pyro has built into her the ability to supply the nuclear Navy’s future missile carriers.

In her commissioning exercises Friday, Capt. Robert A. Paton, Pyro’s commanding officer, read the commanding officer’s orders after Rear Adm. Hughes presented the commissioning orders.

In the the traditional Navy ceremony, Executive Officer Cmdr. Thomas J. McTiernan ordered the navigator to set the final watch.

Capt. Paton read greetings from Mrs. Stuart Ingersoll, ships sponsor, and accepted Mrs. Ingersoll’s gift of a silver cup for the Pyro.

**Other Felicitations**

L.B. Sinclair, chief engineer of the Pyro’s Builder, the Bethlehem Sparrows Points Shipyard, Inc., at Sparrows Point, MD, wished the ship and its crew well and expressed confidence that she will be of ‘outstanding credit to the Navy.’

The invocation was by Capt. Roy E. Bishop, Fifth Naval District chaplain, and the benediction by Anthony T. Wallace, chaplain, Portsmouth Naval Hospital.



*Reproduction of an article from The Virginia Pilot, Norfolk-Portsmouth, VA, Saturday, July 25, 1959, with thanks to plank holder Bill Peregrin, who provided a copy of the original article, which, unfortunately, could not be reproduced in a legible form.*



*Capt. Robert A. Patten, USN, receives a silver cup presented to his ammunition ship USS Pyro at its commissioning ceremonies Friday in the Naval Shipyard. The cup was given by the sponsor, Mrs. Stewart H. Ingersoll, wife of Admiral Ingersoll. YN1 Guy A. Paye hands the cup to Capt. Paton.*

**History of Naval Weapons Station Concord scheduled for April release**

*Behind the Barbed Wire: History of Naval Weapons Station Concord* by John Keibel will be released in April.

Here’s the background and details on the book from Author Keibel:

“My interest in NWSC began with a curiosity as to what sorts and variety of wildlife thrived on the base. 13,000 fenced-off acres ought to host an interesting menagerie of plants and animals, I reasoned. With a letter of introduction from the local chapter of the Audubon Society, I gained access to the base to photograph as many of the plants and animals as would cooperate. By 2000 my contact with Navy personnel and civil servants and curiosity regarding the demise of the town of Port Chicago expanded my interest into the history of the weapons station. With permission of the Navy, I now turned my camera lens toward the station’s facilities. For the next seven years and when not working as a historian for Wells Fargo Bank, I put in personal time visiting archives and interviewing people who lived where the station would expand, were stationed at the base and who were employed at the base. Gradually I pieced the station’s history together so that by August 2007 I could arrange to turn fulltime to writing a history of NWSC.

*Behind the Barbed Wire: History of Naval Weapons Station Concord* (soft cover; 352 pages; 284 images; 15 maps; 8.5" x 11") should be available in April 2009 for \$28.95 plus sales tax (CA residents only) and shipping & handling. Since the printing is limited (1000 copies), I will be selling the book directly and through local retail outlets only. Your readers may inquire/make orders by contacting me directly: tel - (925) 686-0525 [between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Pacific Time]; e-mail - [jakeibel@hotmail.com](mailto:jakeibel@hotmail.com)”

## Cobos crafts cool Pyro memorabilia

When Jack Cobos, who served as a signalman on AE-24 from 1962-1965, stopped going down to the sea in ships, he ended up in Kansas, making a career in the printing and graphics arts business.

Now he's turned his considerable talents toward creating Pyro memorabilia, t-shirts, porcelain tiles, coffee mugs and mouse pads, all bearing some of the clearest, most detailed photos of the Pyro we've seen.



The photo (right) shows examples of Jack's work and the real deal will be available for inspection at the Reno reunion. Prices range from \$24 for the porcelain tile to \$12 for the Pyro mug. Want to add an item to your collection? Write Jack at 220 SW 33rd Street, Topeka, KS 66611, give him a call at

786/266-8787 or write jackcobos@aol.com



## Navy changes policy on uncovered, indoor saluting

When old salts were young pups in boot camp or OCS, learning when and how to render a hand salute properly was a big step in the transformation from civilian to sailor.

Those of us who served in the Navy soon learned one rule: Though soldiers and airmen saluted both uncovered and indoors (at least to the extent those Air Force, Inc., folks saluted at all), sailors didn't.

No more: Effective in March, members of the Naval service *may* — but are not required to — salute indoors and uncovered.

The new rules are apparently too nuanced for Marines: Shortly after the ALLNAV on saluting policy appeared, USMC warlords sent out a Jarhead-gram ordering Marines to ignore the Navy directive.

Which brings us to my sea story: Your Scuttlebutt editor's saluting record — both covered and uncovered — is mixed. Tom Moulton recalls that said editor 'saluted everyone,' much to the annoyance of junior officers and lifers alike. (Mission accomplished!)

Later when stationed in Japan, I ran afoul of one Capt. Hartigan, commander, U.S. Fleet Activities Yokosuka. The good captain was approaching retirement and, arguably, had a little too much time on his hands and a little too little on his mind. He took to spending his lunch hours fostering discipline, respect and comradeship among Naval personnel by springing out from behind buildings or trees (really!) to surprise less-than-alert tars and writing up those who failed to render a speedy, crisp hand salute.

Out of self-preservation, I resumed the custom of saluting everything that moved and several things that didn't. Failing to get this target on non-saluting charges, the frustrated captain wrote me up for allegedly saluting a garbage truck. I persuaded an attractive Navy nurse with whom I occasionally fraternized to testify that I was, in fact, saluting her and beat the rap at XO's mast. Capt. Hartigan retired with a major career goal unsatisfied. — *Jared Cameron*

### From the online Blue Jacket's Manual

One required act of military courtesy is the salute... founded on military custom deeply rooted in tradition. The salute is a symbol of respect and a sign of comradeship among service personnel. It is a time-honored demonstration of courtesy among all military personnel, and it expresses mutual respect and pride in the service. Personnel should never resent nor try to avoid saluting persons entitled to receive the salute."

**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](http://www.USSPYRO.com) or [www.ae-24.org](http://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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www.usspyro.com



<b>Association dues</b>	
<b>Annual:</b>	<b>\$ 20</b>
<b>Lifetime membership</b>	
<b>Age 50 or under</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>51 ~ 55</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>56 ~ 60</b>	<b>\$175</b>
<b>61 ~ 65</b>	<b>\$150</b>
<b>66 ~ 70</b>	<b>\$125</b>
<b>71 ~ 75</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>76 ~81</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>
<b>82 PLUS</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>

**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**