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The USS PYRO  
Association



# USS PYRO Scuttlebutt



## Reunion 2013 - Sign up now!

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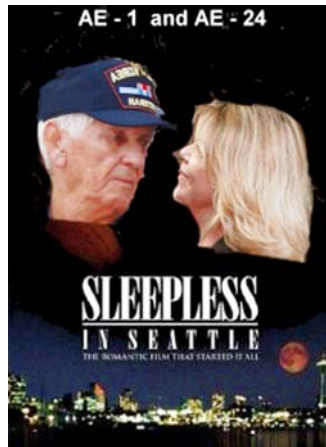
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Y'all have been — well, you say you've been — chomping at the bit to sign up early for the 2013 Seattle Reunion. Well, consider your bluff called!

After nagging suppliers to come up with firm prices for the reunion activities (many don't want to set a rate until six months before the event...what can I say?) we finally have our ducks (and Ducks) in a row.

On Pages 7, 8 and 9, you'll find detailed information on booking your hotel room, reunion tours and activities and a handy-dandy sign-up form. (You can type in the information so we don't have to read your handwriting and, if filled in on the computer,

the 'smart form' will even add up the cost of your selections.) If you have trouble opening the attached form, you can get the same one at:

*(Continued on page 6)*

Is your check in the mail?



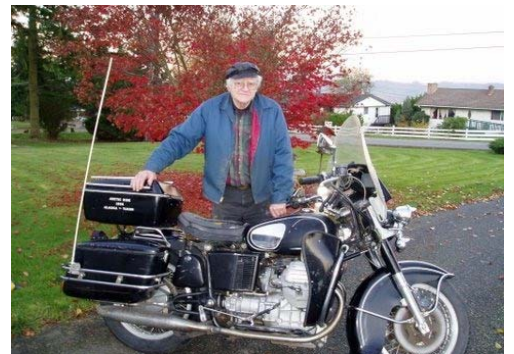
Remember annual 2012 Association dues are due in January.

## Remembering B.J. Nolan

Legendary AE-24 Engineer Bob (BJ) Nolan died December 13 at Panorama Family Home in Auburn, Washington. He was 85.

Earlier, that week he had been hospitalized for internal bleeding, according to his wife, Marian Nolan.

*(Continued on page 4)*



## Pyro News

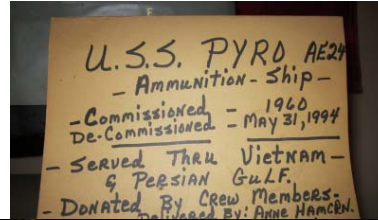
### AE-24 Model Found at American Legion Post

"My name is Loren Brothers from Concrete, WA. up in the North Cascades.

"The other day while up at the American Legion post in Concrete I happened to notice a large model stuck away gathering dust on one of the display cabinets. It was of the USS Pyro. I'm not sure of how it ended up here except for what it says on a hardboard sign. Would you have a clue?

"She is in rather rough shape and needs repairs and a good cleaning! I do model ships and will probably take on the task if they let me. I would like to redo their little sign also.

"I noticed that your 'reunion' is going to be in Seattle in May. If I get her shipshape again would your group be interested in me bringing it down for the reunion? It would be my pleasure."



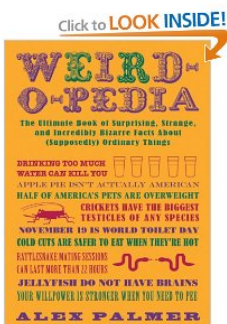
## Pyro People

**Scholarship update:** Vanessa Joslin, granddaughter of Shirley and Al Hansen and a 2012 David M. Desilets USS Pyro Scholarship winner, reports she is working hard at school and living on campus in San Francisco.



Devoted to helping people, Vanessa has joined the American Sign Language Club, I Choose Life Club, Autism Speaks Club and the Best Buddies Club, which works with Autistic children.

**Alex Palmer Published:** The latest book from Alex Palmer, son of the late Tom Palmer, is now available at Amazon.com and other booksellers for about \$10. *Weird-o-pedia: The Ultimate Book of Surprising, Strange, and Incredibly Bizarre Facts About (Supposedly) Ordinary Things* includes



such vital facts as: Did you know that drinking too much water can kill you? Psychologists can assess your personality from how you dip fries in ketchup...

**Seeking information on AE-1 vet:** "I'm looking for any information on a Frank William Bennett who served on the US Pyro (start date unknown). He finished and left the ship around 1934/44 when it went to Australia. Frank got permission to marry my grandmother, Grace Lillian Rand, and to stay in Australia.

"They were married in Glebe, Sydney on Oct 17, 1944.

"William Bennett's brother was Frederick Ernest Bennett and their father was Frederick Ernest Bennett (SNR). All were in the U.S. Navy."



Do you know anything about the Bennetts? Please drop a line to Donna Whitehouse-Pike ([myinfo@donnawp.com](mailto:myinfo@donnawp.com)) or *The Scuttlebutt* editor.





Well, I haven't exactly been asleep at the helm...

# From the President's Desk

Well, I haven't exactly been asleep at the helm...Two things are required to create a newsletter: The first is news and we had precious little of that, either good or bad, until the beginning of the Holiday Season. Second, *Scuttlebutt* production was delayed by the unwillingness of reunion supplier to provide firm quotes on reunion activities until six months before the event. Sure, I felt guilty, but as shipmate Angel Ortero noted, "the world won't come to an end if *The Scuttlebutt* runs a little late."

All things — or at least most things — come to those who wait. The reunion is all set up and a pretty good deal for participants in very pricey Seattle. And fun too: the tours are quite good, the all-suite hotel comes at a reasonable price with free breakfast, free parking and free Internet. So the rest is up to you...book your hotel and tours now or forever hold your peace!



**TO-DO LIST.** 1) I have vowed to limit nagging about reunion sign-ups to the bare minimum, but — as mentioned all too often — we need to get our Duck Tour ducks in a row due to the seating capacity of the chartered Duck boats. To avoid disappointment, please reserve this tour as early as you can; to avoid unnecessary expense, please book your room before the hotel deadline for the Pyro rates. 2) Our previous USS Pyro Scholarship recipients are hitting the books with great success. We'll be awarding, depending on funding, one or two more scholarships at the 2013 reunion. If you have kinfolk who are setting out on a path to higher education, please get the application forms (see below) into their hands and encourage them to send in the application before April 10, 2013. 3) We'd like to include your news in upcoming (and more frequent) *Scuttlebutts*. Here's the rub: You are this publication's reporting staff, so if you don't report, we don't know! Please send any info you like to share with the Pyro family to the editor. Pictures are most welcome!



Here's wishing all Pyro-maniacs and the extended Pyro family a happy, healthy and prosperous 2013!

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*Committee*

Gary Golay

Jasper Strunk

## Donations needed, applications open for 2013 USS Pyro Scholarships

Are you a USS Pyro vet with a child, grandchild, great grandchild or other kin heading off to college in 2013?

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

Applications are now open for 2013 Scholarships. Details and applications are available at: [http://www.ae-24.org/Scholarship\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ae-24.org/Scholarship_2012.pdf). Applications are due by April 10, 2013.

Do you want to help worthy Pyro offspring further their education?

Your contributions to the USS Pyro Scholarship Fund are need to continue with this worthy program: Please send you checks to Treasurer Bill Hogan and indicate the contribution is for the Scholarship Fund.

# Remembering B.J. Nolan

Born in Boise, B.J. followed his family to Washington at a young age. His father worked on the Grand Coulee Dam

in the 1930s. They moved to Roy, where Bob attended high school.

At 18, his search for adventure took root. He joined the Navy. He was at boot camp in San Diego in August 1945 when the Enola Gay dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. What ensued was a 25-year career in the service, working as a repairman on ships at ports near and far. The seaman recruit eventually became a lieutenant commander.

He served a tour of duty during the Korean War and was deployed for four more during the Vietnam War.

It was during his time in Vietnam that Bob's first wife died suddenly of cancer.

He rebounded, met Marian, retired from the service in 1970, and began an odyssey of travel and business stints.

Bob pursued the logging business, then went to work for 10 years as a repairman for his good friend and partner, Don Small, at his family-run oil company in Auburn.

Dan Small, son of the company's late patriarch, recalled the resourceful Nolan in a 2008 article in the *Auburn Reporter Editor*.

"He always had something going on in his garage," he said. That included his love for well-built motorcycles and a restored cyclecar.

"There isn't anything he can't build or fix," Marian said. "You turn him loose in the garage right now to do something ... and he remembers how to do it. There are some things you never forget."

## Wardroom Colleagues Recall B.J.

Bob (BJ) Nolan came aboard PYRO within a few months of my arriving fresh from TDA at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, DCA school. The difference in our Navy career up to that point was as different as night and day. At that time, BJ came from 18 years of combined service both as an enlisted sailor, and as an officer. I was just months out of OCS and what I knew about the Navy and the



engineering duties I was about to undertake would fit in BJ's shirt pocket.

Meeting Bob for the first time, I immediately sensed that here was a man who, if there was the technology then, they would find that his DNA had gears and oil in it. As I remember it,

BJ was chief Engineering Officer shortly after I came aboard. I believe he replaced Lou Sedoris at that billet probably about May '63.

Bob didn't so much as work at his role as Chief Engineer, he personified what I would soon come to know him to be, an engineering authority and friend that I could turn to for guidance. Even though many times, not wanting to show my 'wet behind the ears' demeanor when Bob was nearby, he would give me that sideways stare with his jaw clenched, and I would know I had better ask for his advice or I would never forgive myself.

Bob came up to Officer Country through the enlisted ranks, LDO and so on. He seemed to be the mother hen of the other LDO guys (Bob Lynch, Roy Pierce, Ted Wyle, etc.). He had a gruff, stern appearance at times, but he was deeply respected by officers and enlisted alike for his loyalty to Pyro's engineering group. You earned his regard if you at least attempted diligent service to the Navy and accomplished good team work.

I hope you can tell from these thoughts, I liked the guy a lot.

**Tom Moulton, LTjg/LT USNR**

As a junior officer fresh out of Officer Candidate School I was blessed to be assigned to the same ship Bob "BJ" Nolan was serving on. From the minute I reported on board, I immediately recognized him as a mentor and model for what I should aspire to be. He was kind, considerate and highly respected by every shipmate on board the USS Pyro AE-24. If I had a question...the first person I would approach was BJ. He'd always take the time to give me a sincere answer - he was patient with all of us who looked up to him. His focus was not only the engine room but the ship, in general. It was apparent that the Captain of the ship

## B.J. Nolan, R.I.P.

admired and respected BJ as well. He was the epitome of what a Naval Officer should be, in every regard. I have been fortunate to have had a number of role models in my life. None was valued more than BJ Nolan.

**John Wichtrich, LCDR USNR**

Sea-stories describing Bob Nolan's technical and leadership skills, as well as his humor, could fill this issue of the Scuttlebutt. "B.J.", through his technical ability and leadership skills was a primary contributor to the success of the PYRO during those 63-65 days in WESPAC. Bob's initiative, willingness to use his resources to support others and his leadership style helped mold many young P.O's and junior officers that had a lasting influence on their leadership traits.

**Larry Sheipline, LTjg/LT USNR**

I'll always recall BJ getting on Rollie Stratton's ass for lack of professionalism. Add to that his comments about us ensigns playing Monopoly. Those of us involved will pick up on this thought, but we had better not put it in writing. BUPERS can still make you forfeit all your ensign's pay, retroactively. He was a great guy and a true leader. His "can do" attitude was an inspiration to me and many others. I think he rubbed off many good qualities on us "officers", including dedication to work, pride in the Navy, and loyalty to the USA.

**Frank Fannin, LTjg/LT USNR**

I can remember being terrified by Bob (BJ) when I first came aboard.

He had zero time for or patience with me. He found my questions absurd and dismissed them/me out of hand.

One day the XO asked me to find him and I located him fast asleep in his stateroom. I told him the XO needed to see him. He told me to "go to hell and get the f\_\_\_ out of my stateroom!".

No one, not even the CO, intimidated him. Everyone knew that he had no equal in the engine room and treated him like a demi-god; except for Chris, Gary and Wichtrich who always kidded him about his manner and dress (he was always smeared with oil/grease).

After about a year, he finally tolerated me and we then became friends.

What a guy!

**Tom Murphy (Murph), LTjg/LT USNR**

## Robert J. Morris

Robert J. Morris, WWII veteran and member of the USS Pyro Association for years, passed away Thursday, August 9, 2012, in Odessa, Florida.

He would have turned 92 on August 27th

He set sail on the USS Pyro AE-1) May 20, 1942 and was honorably discharged from service on December 3, 1945.

He lived with his daughter and her husband for the last two years.

Bob was born and raised in Clarion, Iowa, and continued to tell people he was from Iowa, not Florida.

If life were perfect, he would have continued living in Iowa, but his health was such that he could not live on his own, his daughter told *The Scuttlebutt*.

## 'Emotional Three' Remember Gillman



Betty Gillman, Ellie Fricke and Bob Hauge honored the late Ray (Rags) Gillman by rooting for Rags to Riches in the June Belmont Stakes.

If they put their money where their mouth is, this act of respect for a departed shipmate paid off 4-1 odds.

## David L. Cornwell

He wasn't a Navy man and never served on the Pyro, but Vietnam era veterans should offer a salute to former Rep. David L. Cornwell, who died in early November.

David, an Army combat medic, was the first Viet Nam veteran to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. He worked hard and effectively on the House Veterans Committee to win the respect Vietnam veterans deserved, but were so often denied.



# Seattle Points of Interest

Seattle has many unique points of interests people identify with. Here are a few ideas and links to help you plan your visit:

## Seattle Icons

[Space Needle](#)

[Seattle Great Wheel](#) Waterfront Ferris wheel

[Famous Graves](#)

[Original Starbucks](#)

[Fremont Troll](#)

[Bill Gates House](#)

[Experience Music Project](#)

[Hammering Man](#)

[Hat N' Boots](#)

## Views

Amongst the best things about Seattle are the wonderful mountain and water views. Here are links to some of the best places to enjoy Seattle's views.

- **Columbia Tower Observation Deck** There is an observation deck on the 73rd floor of Columbia Tower, at 701 Fifth Avenue, which offers views of Seattle and environs, along with a Starbucks coffee shop.
- **Smith Tower Observation Deck** The Smith Tower was once the tallest building west of the Mississippi. Its location near the downtown waterfront and Pioneer Square provides fantastic views of the City.
- **Space Needle Observation Deck** On the grounds of Seattle Center, the Space Needle Observation Deck provides 360 degree views from 520 feet above sea level. You can also view the webcam from the top of the space needle at this site.
- **Viewpoints** There are lovely viewpoints all over the City maintained by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. This site provides a comprehensive list of viewpoints with photos and directions.

## Downtown Seattle and Waterfront

[Pioneer Square](#)

[Pike Place Market](#)

[Myrtle Edwards Park](#)

[Seattle Art Museum](#)

[Seattle Aquarium](#)

[Seattle Public Library](#)

[Seattle Waterfall Garden](#) Secluded waterfall garden in Pioneer Square, located at 219 2nd Avenue South

[Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park](#)

## International District

[Uwajimaya](#)

[Wing Luke Museum](#) →

**Gunner Bob Smith poses with the ship's bell from the first Pyro (AE-1) at the Bremerton Naval Museum**



## Sign up now!

(Continued from page 1)

[http://www.ae-24.org/Reunion\\_activites\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ae-24.org/Reunion_activites_2013.pdf).

The usual (and usually ignored) nagging aside, we really need folks **to sign up early** for the Seattle tour and Duck boat ride. As noted in the message: *Our charter bus from the hotel downtown accommodates 46 or 53 people; the Duck only holds 39. So we can only guarantee a seat on the chartered Duck for the first 39 folks who sign up. If we only get a few more than 39 reservations, we can arrange to book them on a scheduled Duck. If we get 12 or so more participants, we can charter a second Duck. So — tho contrary to the Pyro spirit — early booking can save disappointment. Please sign up for this tour ASAP!* Don't be one of the five percent who never get the word!

## Capitol Hill

[Seattle University](#)

[Volunteer Park](#)

[Seattle Asian Art Museum](#)

[Seattle Center](#)

[Seattle Children's Museum](#)

[Space Needle](#)

[Seattle Monorail](#)

[Pacific Science Center](#)

[Experience Music Project](#)

[Queen Anne Hill](#)

[Seattle Pacific University](#)

[Golden Gardens](#)

# Sleepless in Seattle

**Reunion 2013  
May 15-19, 2013**



## Hotel Information



## Reunion headquarters

### **DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport - Southcenter**

6500 Southcenter Parkway, Seattle, Washington, 98188-3388, USA TEL: 1-206-575-8220

The rate for a **one-bedroom suite** with free Internet, free breakfast, free airport transfers, free parking, free shuttle bus to nearby shopping/dining venues and free parking is \$109. With tax, that comes to about \$120 a night, a pretty good deal for very pricey Seattle.

**Here's how to book:** (Lot's of choices, but we recommend calling the hotel directly. And be sure to use the group code!) Why not book now?

**Group Name:** USS Pyro AE-1 and AE-24 Association

**Group Code:** PYR

**Check-in:** 15-MAY-2013

**Check-out:** 19-MAY-2013

**Hotel Name:** DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport - Southcenter

**Front Desk:** 206-575-8220

### **TO MAKE RESERVATIONS BY PHONE:**

Toll-Free Reservations Assistance: 800-222-8733, Please provide your Group Code as indicated above

***Information on this and the following pages is accurate at the time of publication;  
times and other details may change as the reunion nears!***

## ***Sleepless in Seattle***

### **Reunion 2013 May 15-19, 2013**

### **Activities**

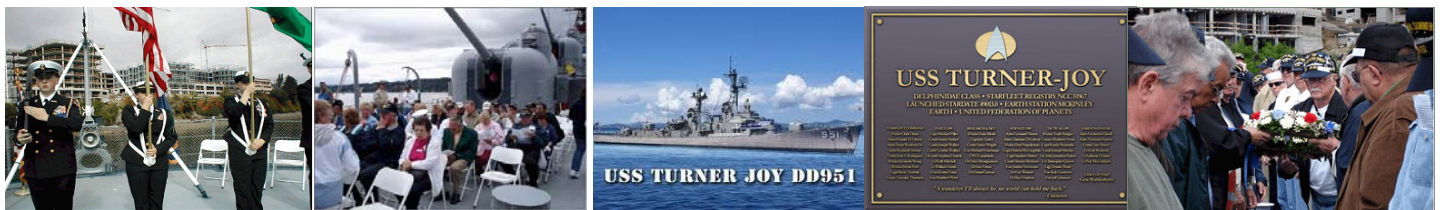
**Registration and Welcome Aboard Registration.** (All participants in any reunion event must register!)

This covers the hospitality room — with free adult and non-adult beverages plus snacks — throughout the reunion period the welcome reception. \$25 per person.



**Seattle Duck tour, Space Needle and Seattle City Tour:** Since you're in Seattle, you really should see Seattle' area's top attractions. You'll see all the major sights of Seattle including the Space Needle, the Seattle waterfront, historic Pioneer Square, Pike Place Market, the downtown shopping district and funky Fremont neighborhood. Then, SPLASH into Lake Union for a look at Gasworks Park, the Sleepless in Seattle houseboat and a breathtaking view of the skyline. Along the way, the captains will play music, share jokes and tell you about the city! Every shipmate who has done the Duck — even 'wet-blanket, anti-tourism President Cameron — thinks this is fun! After the Duck, we'll have time for lunch and/or to tour the Space needle (on your own nickel; we're trying to keep costs down in not-so-cheap Seattle) before heading downtown to check out the shopping at Pike Street Market and see other area attractions the Duck didn't quack at. 9:30—3:30-ish.

**(Here's the rub:** Our charter bus from the hotel downtown accommodates 46 or 53 people; the Duck only holds 39. So we can only guarantee a seat on the chartered Duck for the first 39 folks who sign up. If we only get a few more than 39 reservations, we can arrange to book them on a scheduled Duck. If we get 12 or so more participants, we can charter a second Duck. So — tho contrary to the Pyro spirit — early booking can save disappointment. Please sign up for this tour ASAP!)



**Remembering the departed on the USS Turner Joy, Bremerton Naval Museum.** As always, the Memorial Service is the emotional heart of our reunion. We'll depart our hotel by chartered coach and head for Bremerton, WA, on the other side of the water (by auto-ferry, weather permitting.) We'll board the USS Turner Joy for the traditional remembrance of departed comrades and tour the ship. After departing the Turner Joy, we'll visit the Bremerton Naval Museum, where if Bob Hauge is believed, the ship's bell from the USS Pyro (AE-1) is on display with other Navy memorabilia. 9:30 — 3:00-ish.

**Awards Banquet – Group photos, cocktail, great dinner and dancing.** We'll gather for cocktails (free, if we can get Washington State's arcane liquor laws worked out) at about 6:30, then pose for group and individual photos before sitting down to a great dinner, award presentations, roasts (?), raffles and auctions. Then we'll have entertainment, dancing and the general misbehavior that is a Pyro-maniac reunion tradition.

**Now hear this!** I've heard folks are chomping at the bit to sign up for this great reunion. Now you can! The next page is a form upon which the computer literate among us can type in information — even add-up your total for those mathematically challenged. Sign up now for a really memorable reunion!





USS PYRO Scuttlebutt

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

Email:  
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\*\*\* THE PRIDE AND TRADITION FOREVER \*\*\*

We're on the Web:  
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:**

**Bill Hogan, Treasurer**  
**PO Box 40**  
**Farmville, VA 23901**