



USS YosemiteAD-19 Association

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Post 2023 Reunion Newsletter

May 22, 2023

Fellow Association Members, Former Sailors, Friends, & Family,

I am happy to report the 2023 Jacksonville Reunion was a great success. I believe we all had a good time. For those who missed it, I hope you look at our website in about a week and see the pictures. The Reunion pictures are very telling.

Our Banquet Dinner was very special, and the food was excellent. Having a room with over 60 people having a good time makes it all worthwhile. As all of you know, the Dinner is the prelude to the Raffle and Auction that allows almost everyone to leave with a unique gift. We were fortunate to have items from families with loved ones previously active at our Reunions.

Some may remember G.B. "Smokey" Honermann, a long-time member that held many positions in our Association. His Daughter (Jane Honermann – Sonnabend) was in contact with me and has provided lots of items that were once Smokey's for us to Raffle off. That is why we had a wonderful group of items from the past. He is still alive, and his daughter reads our newsletters to him.

Additionally, we had the 2004 Reunion Quilt that was donated back to us by Don & Patti Quintenz. It had pictures of the Ship from all different periods and included all the prior Commanding Officers. The Quilt is a work of art that Ann Williams made. Now I am not discounting all the unique items that individuals brought that we could Raffle off and those that were Auctioned off.

Last year we also had some exceptional items donated to us that went into members' hands. This year I asked Alan Koepeke, our Historian, to look in his garage, find those boxes we have been storing Yosemite Items in, and break out those items other members would like. Essentially share the wealth! The pictures, notes, postcards, trinkets, flags, and pendants are not doing anything but getting shuffled around whenever he moves or perhaps even lost or damaged. So, he brought many of these artifacts; some went in the Raffle, and the others were auctioned off. Lots of our members went home with Yosemite Memorabilia treasures.



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Speaking of members, please take a moment, and if you are not a life member, send in your dues for 2023. If you have fallen behind, I am not asking you to play catch up; just send in \$15.00. We will send out reminders to members in the future if they forget to pay their dues. No matter what, we still want you with us!

Also, we must ensure the information we have on file is current. If your phone number has changed, your address has changed, or your email has changed, please let us know ASAP. Janice, our Secretary, is your contact to update membership information. If your contact information has changed, please don't hesitate to email Janice at janicerodrigue439@charter.net with your most current information. We will update our master file so you can receive our communique. We want to inform you of the news about our Association and the men and women who served aboard the "Busy Lady".

Please visit our website, ussyosemite.net, as often as possible to get the latest G-2 (association intelligence), sailors' stories, and scuttlebutt. Remember, when it comes to money, our goal is to use it to support our mission and members. Our Ships Store, once again, during the 2023 Reunion, donated \$500.00 to fund the Hospitality Room, and the balance of what was needed came from our Treasurer so that drinks and snacks were free. We use the money we have to support our Association. That means on you; we all think that is a good cause.

Here's some detail, we offset the Banquet Dinners' cost this year, keeping last year's price even though the hotel raised it. Between the Raffle and Auction, we were able to collect \$2,017. You may not be aware that our Registration also brought in approximately \$2,000. One of our goals is to expand our Membership. At the 2023 Reunion, we had 13 new individuals attend that are potential Members. I am delighted that some new attendees have already sent their Membership Applications.

We had two days of touring, just like last year; the Tour Company did a great job as expected. The USS Orleck was a big hit. But the best part of the Reunion is the time we spend in our Hospitality Room, making new friends and joining old friends. We had the last Repair Officer, Retired Navy Captain Philip Johnson, and his wife, Monica, with us. I was very lucky to meet and have a warmhearted discussion with at least four people that were on the Ship when I was on it during this Reunion.

Also, we invited the very Special Lady, *Rear Admiral Deborah Loewer*, to join us. She was one of 4 of the first women on US Naval Ships. She was ordered to report to the USS Yosemite as an LTJG with three other young officers junior to her. I had the honor



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of speaking to her by phone. Unfortunately, the Admiral couldn't clear her schedule to join us at the 2023 Reunion. I highly expect she will be our special guest at next year's Reunion in Mystic, Connecticut.

As our special 2024 Reunion guest, it will allow our Association to properly and cordially welcome her to the USS Yosemite. From my perspective, this is a second chance for the USS Yosemite. If anyone has read her story, to put it lightly, she had a difficult start on her first Ship, USS Yosemite. When she reported, the USS Yosemite was the CNO'S special project ship for women at sea. She obviously did well to rise to the level of Rear Admiral. She has many firsts. As the Ship's Association, we represent crew members of all different years and the change of thinking of sailors while aboard the Ship. So it is appropriate that we give her a warmhearted welcome.

During our phone discussion, the Admiral told me that she learned a lot with so many jobs to do aboard the Ship. I will not begin to tell her story; just a heads up, we want her at the 2024 Reunion. As our shipmate, the Admiral has significantly contributed to changing the role of women in the Navy. It will be an honor for all of us to have her attend. I will be on my best behavior to make her feel at home. Hopefully, we will all have the opportunity to welcome her back to her first Ship and shake her hand, hear plenty of sea stories, and enjoy drinks and snacks in our Hospitality Room with her.

Now, let's discuss Association business. During the Board of Directors Meeting, we established a Nominating Committee (4 people) to look for potential candidates to fill positions that will be vacated soon. Mike Polyniak resigned as Treasurer in a letter he sent me in January. The Special Committee provide me with Cooper's name after reviewing his Bio. I discussed the recommendation with the Executive Board, and after we agreed, Cooper was appointed to fill the Treasurer position. He is also an excellent candidate for the position. Even though Cooper is temporarily assigned, I know he is willing to do the job until next April and has said if we find someone qualified that wants the job, he will gladly turn it over. While I am honored to remain your President, if one of you great leaders is ready to take this on, you will have my vote.

When we change key individuals in important positions, we need information and pictures from them to post on our website and store in our master files. Just today, we updated some Ship's Store information. That changes by the week depending on our sales and inventory. Speaking of the Ship's Store, Cooper, who had it forever, turned it over to Wendy Krug last November. Cooper did a great job, and his Daughter Joyce has always been a great help. With our By-Laws changed last year, she is now a member



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and the Chair of a Committee. Remember, we are a Family Association. Anyone in your family can be a member, hold a position, and, most of all, get the credit you deserve for doing the work that often was being done behind the scenes.

I feel like our Association is on the move in the right direction, and I am excited to see new Membership. We had 13 new potential members at the Jacksonville Reunion. Our job is to welcome them and bring them into our group. While I love this group and working for you, we need new blood to get the energy to the Association and key positions. I have had at least one person in mind who would do great things, but he is busy for at least another year. Master Chief, are your ears ringing!

I have indicated I will remain on the job until we find a suitable replacement. It has been made clear to me by Board Members that too much change too fast can potentially interrupt the progress we are attempting to make. Currently, a new Committee is reviewing and updating the BY-Laws. This is beyond our sweeping changes to allow family members to be full members and hold office. Not just do the work behind the scenes. I truly believe in this Association and surely do not want to see the gains we made lost in short order.

One point that should be acknowledged upfront is that anyone seeking a position with our Association must be a member in good standing, of good Moral Character, with standard of conduct reflected in their actions. It was suggested that a person should serve in some position, such as a BOD member, or hold office before being elevated to a senior position. Remember, the person in a senior position is supposed to represent this Association in a positive way at all times. Actions always speak louder than words. The Board will consider prior experience, previous military responsibilities, and what I have mentioned.

Hence, if you know someone who could serve in either of these positions (Treasurer or President), please make their names known. We would need a bio of sorts on the person, and having someone who wants to dedicate themselves to the position is always a big plus. Also, the candidate must be qualified to do the job is critical. Sorry, there is no pay involved. Just the satisfaction of knowing you are serving a great group of Yosemite People! That in itself is worth a lot.

Please send your candidate information to Joyce Gilbreath, email Ceann@comcast.net. The Nominating Committee will review the applications. If the candidates are qualified and willing to do the job to the best of their abilities, they will



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pass the recommendation to the Executive Board. If they make the cut, their names will be on a ballot emailed to our Membership for a Yes or No vote. If you receive this newsletter by "hard copy" in the mail, you need to contact Janice, our Secretary, or call her at (985) 852-1548). Please provide an email of a relative or friend that can receive a Ballot so you can vote expeditiously. We are trying to reach the point where we minimize mailing newsletters. Sending paper by postal mail takes time and money. We can improve our process and reduce costs..

Now I know some senior members deserve it your way, and we respect that. So if you can, please help us streamline our process. Our staff is all volunteers. The Secretary does not get paid for her work. The number of new members we are gaining is small compared to years back. I would like to have the dues lowered. US Postal mailing is expensive, and I would instead spend the money on our members and not with the post office.

Your family members can now all become regular members and hold positions. We all know that some family members are doing the work behind the scenes and not being recognized. We intend to find qualified applicants and send you a ballot so you can say yes or no. Now we went through a process at the General Meeting to Set the Rules aside to allow all of this to happen between meetings. So perhaps these positions will be turned over by the next Reunion, and new leadership will be in place. But you can be sure that this action will be seamless for most of you.

Providence may be where we may stay due to limited hotels in Mystic for our next Reunion. Currently, only two hotels have provided quotes for our group, and they were not meeting our requirements. I am told additional quotes are expected. Most would fly into Providence, and the area offers many more hotels. So, I am hopeful that we will select the best deal for all of us and convenient as well. We can take a day trip to Mystic. Please remember our website (ussyosemite.net) is an excellent source of information. Alphonso Montibello works hard to keep our information current and make the changes we request.

I am also happy to report that the Jacksonville Hotel for the 2023 Reunion was very attentive to our needs, and our people worked with them. Previously, we have been fortunate to be allowed to have our food and beverages, including Alcohol (Beer, Wine, Hard Stuff) that we procured outside and brought in. The hotel also had complementary drinks daily (Cocktail Hour) from 5:00 – 7:00. So between our



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Hospitality Room and beverages supplied by the hotel, we had no shortage of spirits! I am working to find a similar Hotel that will afford us the same privileges.

I am planning out details for our next Reunion even as this newsletter is being written. We voted and approved our next Reunion to be in the North East in Mystic, Connecticut, preferably with Providence, R.I. as a fallback if we can't get what we want in Mystic. from 24 – 27 April 2024. The Reunion will be held Wednesday through Saturday, with most people departing Sunday morning. Tours are planned for Thursday and Friday, and hotels are being looked at.

I have all the hotel information, and working on the process to get the best deal and value for our members. Some of it depends on the daily rate and what the hotel will allow us to do. For example, we need the ability to bring in our food and drinks to support our Hospitality Room to lower costs and include alcohol. Also, not being charged for meeting space. What will the hotel offer and charge us for the Banquet Dinner. This year we subsidized the cost of the Dinner. There are lots of little details that make the difference between things going smoothly and things being complicated. We are working to make our 2024 Reunion the best it can be.

Now, let's get back to the 2024 Reunion; please mark your calendar for 24 – 27 April 2024 so no other commitments supersede this time. It was easy for the past two years for the Florida people to come, which made it tough for tour numbers, but overall, it helped us increase our membership numbers. Now I am asking all of you to talk to your prior shipmates. You have many more contacts collectively than I do. Get the date out; details will follow on the Hotel and Tours. A successful Reunion is not just about my preparations and planning; it takes getting the word out to attend and your support, which means getting members to be there!

Every year we all have things that pop up that impact our lives. For those who have not attended the last two Reunions, I am asking you to commit to joining us, with no ifs, buts, or excuses. Your involvement is what it is all about. If you hold office coming to the Reunion is a requirement. If you have a family emergency while you are here, no questions asked; just head home or where ever you need to be.

I will share all the information on the 2024 Reunion as soon as decisions are made available. The Hotel information will undoubtedly be first, with tour information to follow. In Florida, much of this was faster as we had a relationship with the tour



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company, and they worked with us in the past. I also want to do things that will encourage local people to join us and not feel like they have seen it all.

I hope this finds all of you well and in good spirits. Pictures are being put on the website, with more to come.

All the Best,

William C. Krug III (Bill)

President USS Yosemite Association