

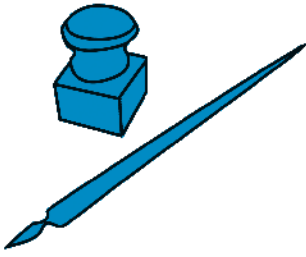
WE REMEMBER

USS St Lo CVE-63 / VC-65 ASSOCIATION

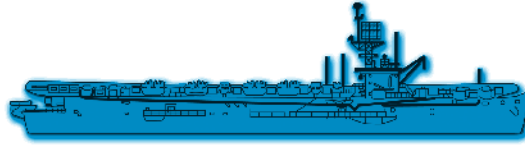
AUGUST 2012



Friends & Family of the USS St Lo
2011 Tulsa, Oklahoma Reunion



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Family and Friends of the Association;

There is only one newsletter again this year (2011-2012) and it's packed with significant amount of important USS St. Lo Association information regarding the 2011 Reunion in Oklahoma and the upcoming 2012 Reunion in New Orleans.

First, a very big thank you to Barbara Odom and Gene Sherrell who hosted a superb reunion in Tulsa. From the Welcome Reception to the Farewell Breakfast were times to treasure with little and big surprises for everyone. But I'll let JoAnn give you all the details in this newsletter.

Second, very soon there will be the 2012 reunion in New Orleans. **Make your registration now using information on this page and continued on page 37.** Registrations and itineraries have been mailed, but if you did not receive one please use the following information to sign up...it's not too late!

The plan is simple: There will be a party down south and all are invited. We promise to treat your taste buds to a culinary delight and introduce your senses to an unexpected surprise. In addition to all the above, we plan on having more fun than the law allows.

Let us all enjoy what New Orleans has to offer. Come early and stay late. Fun will be the order of the day, laughter the spirit that defines our mood, and the happiness that dwells in the light hearted. This week will be dedicated to all our fallen heroes. **LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL** –Rodney Williams (acting)

ABOUT THE COVER: Friends and family of USS St. Lo Association, toured the Will Rogers Museum. I will not try to name everyone shown in the picture...you're on your own!

EDITOR'S NOTE: A number of people contributed photos including: Steve Kolsky (SK), Carol Mayer (CM), Barbara Odom (BO) Dale Orgill (DO), JoAnn Sosa (JS), Dale & Judy Stangel (DJS), and Rodney Williams (RW). Each photo has the photographer's initials at the end of the text box. Special thanks for all those who contributed.



READY ROOM

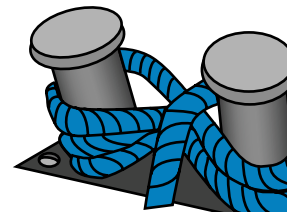
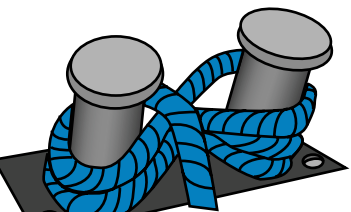


**Planning & Info for the 2012 USS St. Lo Reunion
October 22-26, 2012 in New Orleans, Louisiana
Hosted by Rodney Williams**

ARE YOU READY!!! Well as you can see by the tardiness of this newsletter, I'm not even close to being ready for the 2012 Reunion. However, I can say emphatically and without doubt that Rodney Williams with some major help from Judy and Larry Hoffman has everything under control and on schedule. Now if I can only get my act together!

Reunion registration forms and itineraries have been mailed, but that doesn't mean you can't attend. If you haven't received the mailing and would like to party with us in New Orleans, just let us know. You can make arrangements now by following the **BIG EASY** directions.

(Continued Page 37)





Story of the 2011 USS St. Lo Reunion Tulsa, Oklahoma – Oct. 22-26 By JoAnn Sosa

Another year, another USS St. Lo Reunion! Little did Gene Sherrell remember about all the hard work involved for hosting a reunion and Barbara Odom didn't have clue about all the fun she was about to have when they volunteered to co-host the 2011 Reunion in Tulsa, Oklahoma. However, an absolutely wonderful time was had by all who attend this year's Reunion. Gene and Barbara pulled off a flawless reunion with many treats and surprises along the way.



Embassy Suites – Tulsa, Oklahoma

Barbara and Gene made our lodging arrangements with Embassy Suites located just minutes from the Tulsa Airport, shopping, zoo, various eateries, and other visitor attractions. The moment we entered through the glass doors of the hotel, we felt like we were home. From the staff at the front desk to the food chefs, to the cleaning staff, no reunion hotel has been more accommodating. The entire time I felt like I was at home!

Our hotel suites were extremely spacious with all the comforts of home including free internet service. Each room opened onto the balcony which overlooked the hotel's open air atrium below. Located inside the Embassy Suites were an indoor heated pool and hot tub, fitness room, computer room, video arcade, and Cattleman's Steakhouse restaurant. To begin each morning we were invited to a cooked-to-order complimentary breakfast served in the open air atrium in the center of the hotel. What more could anyone ask for...oh, I forgot about the 'Manager's Special' where the hotel provides complimentary appetizers and beverages each evening. Now that's what I call a hotel!

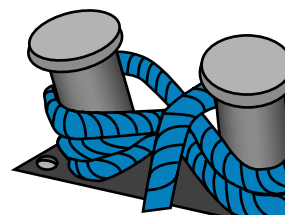
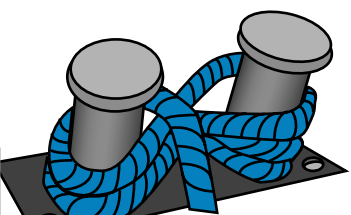
Our group began arriving a day or two before the Welcome Reception, which made it so enjoyable to have a few extra days with everyone. Barbara and Gene placed their weather orders requests well in advance



of the reunion and so we were treated to temperatures averaging in the 70's and no rain during our outings. Now that's what I call service.

Thanks to a trusty GPS and the expert advice of our chief bartenders Nan and Rick Hoffman, and volunteers JoAnn South and Keith Lessard, and Larry and Judy Hoffman we were officially set to kick off the 27th USS St. Lo Reunion. This year these key people shopped, organize, and set up the hospitality room with snacks and liquid refreshments. Located in a room suite on the second floor, the hospitality room sprawled out onto the balcony where everyone congregated around tables set up with snacks.

Although Clo Broussard was unable to attend, she still saw to it that our raffle items were well stocked with



Louisiana treasures. Raffle items, Ship's Store merchandise, and USS St. Lo memorabilia were displayed on the tables on the balcony, easily accessible for guest to view or buy raffle tickets.

Day 1 – Registration & Welcome Reception – Saturday, October 22, 2011



Standing are our resident barkeepers in the hospitality room. Kneale Franco and his sister Rae Rowe join in the festivities of the evening.

Throughout the day packets were handed out to arriving guests. It was great to see some returning faces again, particularly Judy and Larry Hoffman...Larry has been battling cancer for the past year and we were very glad to see them make the trip. Survivor Les Shodo came with family this year after having missed the 2010 reunion in Washington, DC due to health issues. When I asked him what he had on his docket for the remainder of the year, he quickly pulled out a postcard of Tahiti with thatched huts over the ocean. Les, daughter and son-in-law were planning a two or three week vacation shortly after the USS St Lo Reunion. I promptly proposed to him so that I could go on the trip with them, but he reminded me that I'd have to get a divorce first! Les had kept his sense of humor.

(JS)

Notably missing were Clo Broussard whose husband Bruce had just recently passed away, Clo's sister Annette Sonnier, and survivors Bob (Dee) Jaeger, Tom (Carol) Lasker, John (Catherine) Getas, Doyle (Betty) Hoffman, Don (Marie) Mackay, and Robert Meyer. Knowing how disappointed these people were because they were unable to attend, Barbara Odom put together a "Miss You and Wish You Were Here" book for each of them. We were invited to write a personal note in each book and after the reunion Barbara would mail the books to them.

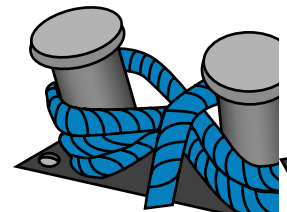
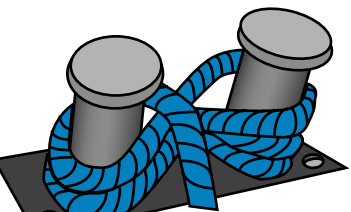
The Welcome Reception began at 6 p.m. in the Diplomat meeting room with delicious hors d'oeuvres fitting for a king and queen. Barbara made introductions and announcements concerning the itinerary for the next few days and then she brought out her big guns!

Proud of her Cherokee Indian heritage, Barbara presented us with a wonderful history lesson about Oklahoma using music and dancing as props. Where was this woman when I was trying to learn about American history in high school! Here is her presentation:

"Oklahoma is a land that reaches far back in time. Recorded history began in 1541 when Spanish explorer Coronado ventured through the area on his quest for the "Lost City of Gold." The land that would eventually be known as Oklahoma was part of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase.



(l-r) Jamie Donaldson and Kerri Smith perform at the Welcome Reception (BO)



DEBRIEFING



(l-r) Kneale Franco with his sister Rae Rowe and her son Matt at the Welcome Reception. (CM)

Many are familiar with the Native American relocation to the Oklahoma Territory in the 1820's, most famously listed as the Cherokee "*Trail of Tears*". The United States government forced the Five Civilized Tribes to endure a difficult resettlement into the lands of Oklahoma and many died in the process.

Much of the western lands of Oklahoma were part of the "*Unassigned Lands*." There were actually several land runs between 1889 and 1895, but the first was the most significant. On April 22, 1889, an estimated 50,000 settlers gathered at the boundaries. Some, called "*Sooners*," snuck across early to claim some of the prime spots of land. Because of this, sometimes Oklahomans are referred to as *Sooners*.

A relatively short time later, November 16, 1907 Oklahoma officially became the 46th state of the Union. The State's name is derived from the Choctaw words "*okla*" and "*homma*," meaning "*red*" and "*people*". The state bird, the Scissortail Flycatcher has a distinctive tail and the State wildflower, the Indian Blanket, symbolizes the State's rich Native American heritage and native long grass prairies that are abundant in wildlife. Oklahoma was formed by the combination of the Oklahoma Territory and the Indian Territory of the Five Civilized Tribes: Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee. The present Oklahoma State flag depicts an Indian war shield, stars, eagle feathers, and an Indian peace pipe, as well as a white man's symbol for peace, an olive branch.

More than 50 languages are spoken in the State of Oklahoma. There are 55 distinct Indian tribes that make the State their home, and each of these tribes has its own language or dialect. The colorful history of the state includes Indians, cowboys, battles, oil discoveries, dust storms and settlement offers of free land.

Oklahoma grew in its early years based largely of striking it rich through oil. People came from all parts of the world to seek their fortunes in Oklahoma's oil fields. Cities like Tulsa, Ponca City, Bartlesville and Oklahoma City flourished. Oklahoma's various oil fields not only brought people to the city; they also brought money. Many people became quite wealthy. Oklahoma continued to expand until the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Perhaps you have read "*The Grapes of Wrath*" written by John Steinbeck about a family from Oklahoma traveling to California to survive. The family plan was to go to California based on flyers they found advertising work in the fields there. These flyers, as Steinbeck will soon reveal, were fraudulent



Welcome (l-r) JoAnn South Keith Lessard, Rodney Williams, Steve & Rita a Kolsky

advertisements meant to draw more workers than necessary and drive down wages. They travelled Route 66, the highway that stretches from Oklahoma to Bakersfield, California. They discovered this was not a heaven of wealth for them.

Oklahoma City was experiencing a wonderful period of time when Timothy McVeigh parked a truck full of explosives in front of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in downtown Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. The explosion would be felt miles from the city. By the time anyone even knew what had happened, 168 people were dead and a building stood cut in half by the horror.

Oklahomans are filled with pride for their land, cultures, hundreds of scenic lakes and rivers, and genuine warmth and friendliness. This proud Oklahoma spirit is echoed through the accomplishments of our citizens, to name a few: "Cherokee Cowboy" Will Rogers, Olympian and American Indian athlete Jim Thorpe, and country music superstars Wanda Jackson, Roy Clark, Reba McEntire, Ronnie Dunn, Vince Gill, Garth Brooks, and Carrie Underwood.

I must go back now to 1939. Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939; other European countries felt they had to act. The result was six long years of World War II. In 1940 President Roosevelt signed a Selective Service law requiring all men ages 21 to 35 to register for possible military service, in other words, the Draft law. Men were to answer 11 questions, sign their names and wait for the results of a lottery that would require them to spend a year in military camps.

The morning of December 7, 1941, could not have been more beautiful at Pearl Harbor, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Eight American battleships sat on Battleship Row. Nearby were five cruisers and twenty-six destroyers and at sea were seven other cruisers and the three carriers.



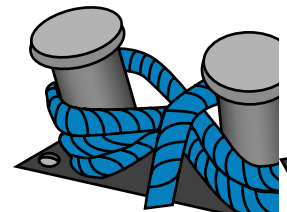
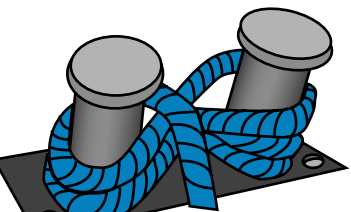
Irene Welch and Tom Petrillo welcome Les Shodo for the first time in two years. Les missed the 2010 St. Lo Reunion in Washington, D.C. due to illness. (SK)



(l-r) Fred Graziano, Rodney Williams, and Bob Schueler at the Welcome Reception (CM)

operators saw their screens indicate approaching aircraft. They notified an officer, who dismissed their concerns with the explanation that it was probably a flight of American B-17s arriving from California; however, the officer was horribly wrong.

The emotion among most Americans in the days after the attack on Pearl Harbor was fear. News was sparse during the early weeks of the war, and rumors and gossip ran wild. Anyone who appeared even slightly foreign was viewed with suspicion and distrust.



You, USS St Lo survivors, decided in your hearts to volunteer in the Navy which you did at a very early age. Dale Orgill, Bob Schueler, Tom Petrillo, Gene Sherrell, Les Shodo, Don Rice, and Fred Graziano – you were 17 or 18 and I believe Don was 16 years old when you chose to enter the Navy.

SONG BUGLE BOY: Dance performed by granddaughter Kerri Smith & Jamie Donaldson

*He was a famous trumpet man from out Chicago way
He had a boogie style that no one else could play
He was the top man at his craft
But then his number came up and he was gone with the draft
He's in the army now, a-blowin' reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B*

*They made him blow a bugle for his Uncle Sam
It really brought him down because he couldn't jam
The captain seemed to understand
Because the next day the cap' went out and drafted a band
And now the company jumps when he plays reveille
He's the boogie woogie bugle boy of Company B*



(l-r) Jamie Donaldson and Kerri Smith perform at the Welcome Reception (BO)

Life in America during the war years was marked by sacrifice. As the war effort increased, Americans learned to live with less and less. Perhaps best remembered among those who lived in wartime America is gasoline rationing. Aimed at curbing the nonessential use of automobiles, the program required car owners to paste ration stamps on their windshields. An "A" stamp meant the car was for nonessential use, a "B" stamp meant it was needed for work, and a "C" stamp was for cars of essential drivers such as doctors. The type of stamp on a car's windshield dictated how much gasoline could be bought for it each week. Quality meat became increasingly difficult to find in civilian groceries, as did butter, sugar, coffee, and cheese. During the war, every family received ration books containing stamps to be given to grocers when buying

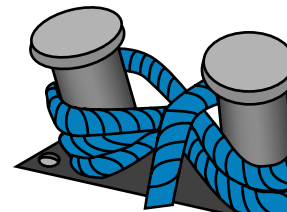
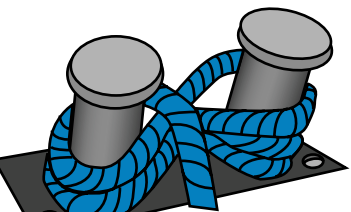
certain items. Red stamps were used for meat (except for poultry, which was not rationed), butter, fats, cheese, canned milk, and canned fish. Green, brown, or blue stamps were used for canned vegetables, juices, baby food, and dried fruit.

Because of the food shortages, Americans were encouraged to plant what became known as victory gardens. An estimated 20 million garden plots were created across the country. I am sure you can remember those gardens.

Music helped servicemen remember what they were fighting for. The music industry started producing patriotic melodies by the dozens shortly after the United States entered the conflict. Patriotic events almost



(l-r) Virgil Odom, Kim Smith, and Barbara Odom at the Welcome Reception. (DO)



always included a medley of songs honoring the armed forces. The most common were “*The Caissons Go Rolling Along*,” “*Anchors Aweigh*,” and “*The Marine Hymn*.”



(l-r) Jamie Donaldson and Kerri Smith perform at the Welcome Reception

disguised as a dairy. A dairy name was painted on the roof; people had to commute to work, parking their cars in others places. Women worked in the building assembling bombers.

The War was in full progress. Many battles fought, October 23, 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf begins; largest sea battle in history. USS St Lo fought the battle, finished its course on October 25, 1944. Of the 889 men aboard, 113 were killed or missing and approximately 30 others died of their wounds. The survivors were rescued from the water by Heermann, John C. Butler, Raymond, and Dennis (which picked up 434 survivors.) USS ST LO (CVE 63) received the Presidential Unit Citation for the heroism of her crew in the Battle off Samar and four Battle Stars for her service in World War II.

April 12, 1945 President Theodore Roosevelt dies suddenly. Harry Truman becomes president of the United States.

In August 1945 the first nuclear weapon ever used in war, “Little Boy,” is dropped on Hiroshima. Three days later a second atomic bomb, “Fat Man,” is dropped on Nagasaki. Finally the order was given to Japanese forces to cease fire.

September 2, 1945 Japan signs the articles of surrender on the deck of the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

What a celebration...The war was over and our servicemen were coming

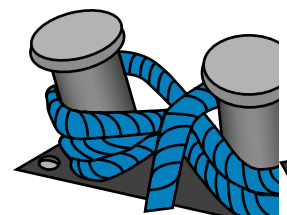
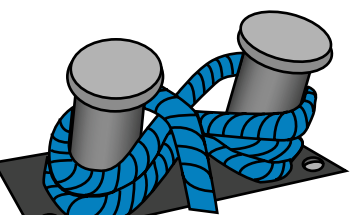
Americans also helped finance the war by buying war bonds. Although the interest was not as high as World War I, Americans did not mind, they were helping the war effort.

The male population of the United States shrank dramatically as millions of men of service age signed up for duty overseas. In some towns, the only remaining males were young boys and old men. As a result, countless women were forced to survive without spousal support. Women worked in aircraft factories thus becoming Rosie the Riveter. When the war effort dramatically reduced civilian supplies of nylon, used for women’s stockings, many women took to drawing lines on the back of their legs to simulate the appearance of stockings.

In Tulsa, as you taxi to the airport, look at the long building to the east. That is the old AF #1 which was used to build bombers for World War II. I have been told; don’t have any facts, that the building was



Dale Orgill with his guest Jean Snow attend the Welcome Reception on Saturday evening. (SK)



home! One of the most famous photographs ever published by Life magazine was shot in Times Square on August 14, 1945, shortly after the announcement by President Truman occurred and people began to gather in celebration. The photographer went to Times Square to take his photographs and he spotted a sailor: "There were thousands of people milling around, in side streets and everywhere. Everybody was kissing each other... And there was also a Navy man running, grabbing anybody and kissing the lady in white."

More than one million awards, decorations, and citations were issued to servicemen over the course of World War II and in the years that followed. I know you survivors all remember coming home, what were your thoughts. Listen to the next song and insert your state in your mind.

If I Ever Get Back To Oklahoma: Dance performed by granddaughter Kerri Smith & Jamie Donaldson

*If I ever get back to Oklahoma,
Gonna nail my feet to the ground.
Too many stones are in my path
I been trippin' and fallin' down
Those Oklahoma City girls are fine
And Tulsa's quite a town
If I ever get back to Oklahoma
Gonna nail my feet to the ground*

*Folks like me heading down the road
It seems to be the only way
If you don't know which way to go
Well you might get lost and stay*

*I don't want to be gone long
There's too many things I know I'll miss
Tryin' to live my life in a country song,
I didn't know it'd be like this.*



Dog Iron Ranch – Will Rogers Boyhood Home

(CM)

WELCOME TO OKLAHOMA AND ENJOY THE NEXT FOUR DAYS AS "WE REMEMBER".



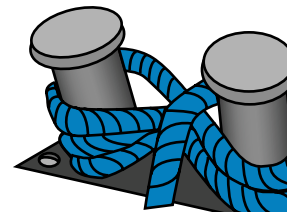
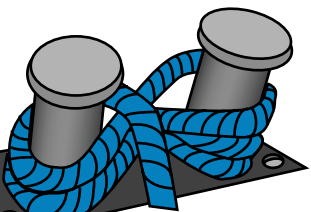
(l-r) Dale Stangel, Nancy Gordon, Phylis Roberts, Dale Gilbert, Michael Getas, and Rodney Williams tour Dog Iron Ranch home of Will Rogers.

What a wonderful conclusion for the end of the first day. Barbara Odom and Gene Sherrell were making sure that this was going to be another memorable reunion.

Day 2 – Tour Will Roger’s Birth Place & Memorial – Sunday, October 23, 2011

Don your blue jeans, boots, and cowboy hats everyone as we prepare to visit best known cowboy and Oklahoman Will Rogers Museum and home. For those of us who were able to wake up on time, our morning began with a complimentary full cooked-to-order breakfast served in the hotel’s open air atrium every morning from 6 a.m. until 9 a.m. There were just a few people that only made it down in time for their eye opening coffee, but not many!

(JS)



DEBRIEFING



Lunch down on the ranch

(DJS)

Buses boarded promptly at 9:30 for the forty minute ride to Dog Iron Ranch, birthplace of Will Rogers. Located just north of Oologah on the shores of the man-made Lake Oologah, the 400 acre ranch has been authentically conserved and is open to the public 365 days a year. Built after the Civil War in 1875, the home was often referred to as the “White House on the Verdigris River” because it was often used for government and community socials and commerce.

Will Rogers was born November 4, 1879 to Cherokee senator, judge and cattleman. His mother Mary America Schrimsher Rogers was a descendent of a Cherokee chief and was well

rounded in music, literature, and modern society. Will had 7 siblings, four of which died before reaching adulthood. Taught by his mother until her death in 1889, Will was a hard working cowboy. He learned the art of using a lasso as a tool to work cattle on the ranch from a freed slave.

Will became a full time cowboy after dropping out school in the 10th grade in 1898. From 1902-1917 Will Rogers toured the world in the vaudeville circuits entertaining audiences lasso skills. During this time he developed his own unique show involving his to favorite things; talking to people and reading. He focused his routine on intelligent and amusing observations about people, the country, government, and life and communicated in a way that his audience could identify with. Soon people were coming enjoy his humor more than his rope tricks.

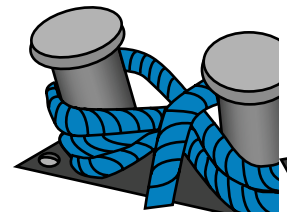
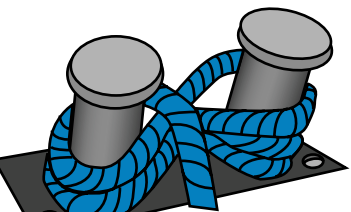
Marrying Betty Blake in 1908, Will had four children. In 1918 Will began his acting career starring in silent films, making a total of 71 movies. In 1934 he was voted the most popular actor in Hollywood.



(Front) Jan Gephardt, Kelly, Emily, & Trudy Wilkinson, Phylis Roberts, and Michael Getas enjoy a cowboy's lunch.

(JS)

His career expanded to writing 4,000 syndicated columns, writing books, radio broadcasting and political commentator. On August 15, 1935 Will Rogers accompanied long time friend aviator Wiley Post on a vacation to Alaska. The pair was forced to land the hybrid Orion Explorer aircraft at Point Barrow, Alaska because of engine trouble and dense fog. Three hours later after eating lunch with the Eskimos and repairing the plane's engine, Wiley and Will took off in the river in which the plane had landed. Tragically the plane only reach an altitude of 50 feet before the engine quit again and crashed into the shallow water, killing both men



upon impact. That day the Will's family lost a husband and father, and our country lost a national treasure.

The era correct barn was originally built on July 17, 1993 replacing the original barn that was destroyed by wildfires probably ignited by lighting. Located just east of the house to use prevailing winds for insect and odor control, the barn has traditional stalls and a classroom for teaching/orientation area that may double for serving food and meals.



Presentation at the Will Rogers Memorial in Claremore

(JS)

Speaking of food, it was lunchtime before we knew it. We were treated to a fantastic luncheon of chopped brisket and chicken with all the trimmings. Best of all were the cookies for dessert.

At 12:30 we boarded the bus once again and headed over to Claremore to visit the Will Rogers Memorial. Opened in 1938 the Museum contains numerous exhibits and artifacts, 2,400 square foot library and archives, and original artwork and sculptures relating to Will Rogers and family. At 1 p.m. we watched



(l-r) Kerri Smith, Michael Getas, Carol Meyers, Judy (hiding) Hoffman, Virgil Odom,

(JS)

Larry Hoffman, and Judy Stangel at the museum of Oklahoma's Favorite Son, Will Rogers. just kidding, everyone was present.

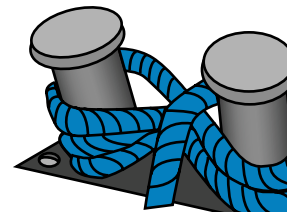
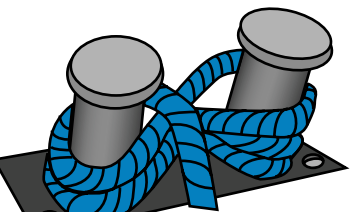
as Virginian Steve Huppert put on an excellent one man show portraying Will Rogers. Following the show, we had an hour and half to walk through the Museum and around the exterior of the Museum's grounds before boarding the bus at 3:15. As usual we still had stragglers in the Museum gift shop that had to be pried out as they made their last minute purchase. Good news is that we returned to the hotel with the same number of people that we came with. Bad news is that they may not have been the same people that we started with...

Was this not a wonderful experience! Topping off a perfect day, we regrouped and gathered in the hospitality area once again to share the day's events and enjoy the company of old friends.

Day 3 – Dinner Banquet and Dancing – Monday, October 24, 2011

Once again we find ourselves enjoying a delicious breakfast. This is our free day to relax and enjoy the hotels amenities or shop until you drop at the nearby malls. Other activities available were the Oklahoma Aquarium in Jenks, Gilcrease Museum, Frank Phillips Mansion and Woolaroc Lodge Ranch in Bartlesville, the USS Batfish submarine adjacent to the military museum in Muskogee, or if someone was really feeling lucky there were several Indian Casinos to help keep the area green! But an advisory was put out to make sure to be ready for a very special evening that was to begin at 6 o'clock.

Early afternoon found a number of volunteers helping me set up the USS St. Lo paintings on



DEBRIEFING

the chair rail in the hotel's Ambassador Room. Following this detail, the room was off limits to ALL guests and became a very secretive and mysterious time. The entrance doors were closely guarded with no entry except for hotel staff!



Six o'clock...Let the evening's festivities commence! Guests eagerly scattered around the Ambassador dining room looking for tables that would adequately seat the number of people in their party. As the dust settled and everyone had a chance to obtain their beverage of choice, guests spotted a lighted ice sculpture displayed on a table against the wall. People were gathering around a table and were in awe of what they saw; the ice sculpture was a replica of the USS St. Lo complete with aircraft on the deck. When the hotel staff learned about our Association, they

went all out. The art work was actually created and hand-carved by a gentleman from the hotel's kitchen staff in honor of the men of the USS St. Lo and USS Dennis.

Enjoying conversations with old friends, viewing the artwork placed around the room, and talking about the reunion itinerary thus far, it was time to be seated and enjoy a royal dinner. I personally believe that this was one of the best USS St. Lo Reunion dining experience that we've ever had. If there was a glitch with food or service, we never heard about it. The food was not only delicious, it was done to perfection.

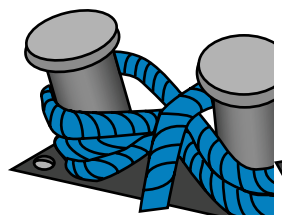
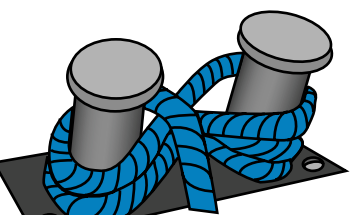
Again this year we had a MIA/POW Table of Honor at the dinner banquet with a few added changes. I incorporated a few of the dinner guest as part of the reading for the MIA/POW Table and we began with a bare tables rather than having the symbolic items set on the table. The room lights were dimmed

and I began reading; *"As you entered the banquet hall this evening, you may have noticed a small table in a place of honor. This table is our way to honor our missing comrades-in-arms. They are unable to be with us this evening and so we remember them. Those who have served and those currently serving the uniformed services of the United States are ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice. Some here in this room were very young when they were sent into combat; however, all Americans should never forget the brave men and women who answered our nation's call to serve and served the cause of freedom in a special way.*



Three generations, (l-r) Barbara Odom, grand-daughter Kerri, and daughter Kim.

There is a **TABLE** with circular proportions – Symbolizing our intent, our unending desire to know and to understand, and believe that our missing guest will someday be present. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]



DEBRIEFING



The **TABLECLOTH** is white [pause as **Phylis Roberts** spreads the tablecloth over the table] – Symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country’s call to arms so their children could remain free. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

This **TABLE SET** for one is small [pause as St. Lo survivor **Bob Schueler** places a small white plate on the table] – Symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against his oppressors.

Remember! [Bell is rung]

The **YELLOW RIBBON** tied so prominently on the flower vase [pause as St. Lo survivor **Don Rice** places a flower vase on the table] is reminiscent of the yellow ribbon worn by those who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper account for our missing. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

The single **RED ROSE** [pause as USS Dennis crewman **Fred Graziano** places a red rose in the flower vase on the table] displayed is sheathed with barbed thorns signifying the blood our comrades-in-arms may have shed to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. The rose also reminds us of the families and friends of our loved ones who keep the faith awaiting their return. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

The **CANDLE** [pause as **JoAnn South** places a white candle on the table and lights it] is lit reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors to the open arms of a grateful nation. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

A **SLICE of LEMON** [pause as **Irene Welch** places a single slice of lemon on the plate] is on the plate to remind us of their bitter fate. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

There is **SALT** [pause as **Judy Stangel** shakes salt on the plate] sprinkled on the plate reminding us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

The **GLASS** is inverted [pause as **Ellen Damron** places a clear beverage glass on the table] they cannot be with us tonight; maybe tomorrow if we remember. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

A **BIBLE** [pause as a family member of recently deceased **Junior Anderson** places a Bible on the table] rests on the table offering us strength gained through faith and reminding us of our country’s roots.

Remember![Bell is rung]

The **CHAIR** [pause as **Dale Gilbert** places a chair at the table] is empty, but saved for their hoped return. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

REMEMBER! – All of you who served with them and called them comrades; who depended upon their might and aid, and relied upon them, for surely, they have not forsaken you. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

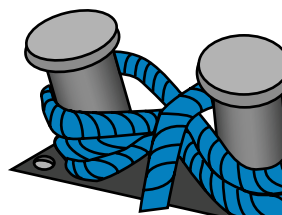
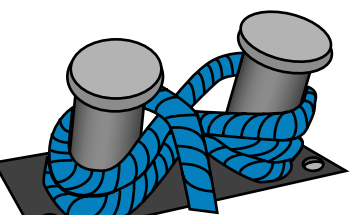
REMEMBER! – Until the day they come home. **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

Let us each raise our water glasses tonight...in honor of America’s Prisoners of War and Missing in Action... **Remember!** [Bell is rung]

There is a Table...”



Good friend of Barbara Odom Rose Damilao-Miles distributes gift cards to USS St. Lo Association veterans. (RW)



Our evening continued with the last minute raffle ticket sales as we enjoyed a delicious cake served for dessert. Special thanks to our returning young ladies Emily and Kelly Wilkinson who sold raffle tickets like no one else could. We really missed them at the Washington, DC reunion and not just because they're great saleswomen! It was great to have their mom Trudy and grandma back again too. And yes the raffle again made a nice chunk of change of over \$500! Thank you to all who donated items and a special thanks to all who purchased tickets.



Don Rice, Tom Petrillo, and Carol Mayer at the Dinner Banquet (RW)

Also making the raffle such an enormous success was a newcomer. In the beginning stages of planning for the Reunion Barbara Odom was speaking to a good friend and telling her about the USS St. Lo Association and all that was involved to pull this off by October. Immediately Rose Damilao-Miles offered to help with the reunion. Rose was instrumental in acquiring prizes for the raffle and Wal-Mart gift cards for ship's veterans. What makes this story even more interesting is that Rose was born in the Philippines' and is married to an Army soldier currently serving in Afghanistan!

It was getting late and we still some dancing to do! The remainder of the evening was spent dancing to the sounds of Big Bands, Country Western, and a little Swing. Tomorrow would be another filled day and you know how we get if we don't get our beauty sleep! All ages were on the floor dancing before the bewitching hour of ten o'clock. It was a wonderful way to end another memorable day.

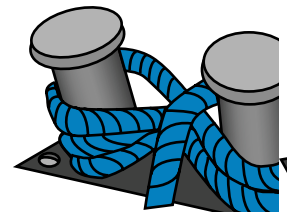
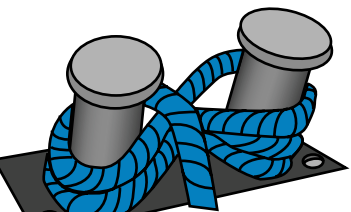
Day 4 – Memorial Service and Luncheon – Tuesday, October 25, 2011

That night before was way too short for many of us as we didn't retire to our rooms, but instead found ourselves in the hospitality area sharing more stories and reminiscing. It was now time for another great breakfast served in the atrium before boarding the bus by ten o'clock and heading to the Memorial Service at the Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) in Broken Arrow.



Barbara and Gene were concerned about where to host a Navy Memorial Service since Tulsa is definitely land locked. Barbara began her search with the military armory in Broken Arrow and was informed that Oklahoma had just completed a two year, \$62 million building project, replacing the old armory. As part of Oklahoma's Base Realignment and Closure plan, the military now had a 260,000 square foot facility that would be home to 1,200 National Guard and Army, Navy, and Marine Reservist.

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Barbara met with the AFRC facility manager, COL Gary Scott and after explaining the details about our group; COL Scott offered to hosts the USS St. Lo Memorial Service and provide a luncheon at the facility. All of the necessities like the Chaplain, Color Guard, ship's bell, auditorium and speaker system, were all built in right there for us to use. An interesting fact is that the 300 pound USS Tulsa ship's bell used for the Memorial Service was acquired by the AFRC when the USS Tulsa gunboat was scrapped in San Francisco at the end of WW II in 1946. All that was left now for Barbara to do was to find a keynote speaker and have Michael Getas work his magic with planning the Memorial Service program.



(l-r) Georjean Schueler, Mrs. Vreeland, and Aaron Larson watch as Emily & Kelly Wilkinson present the wreath at the Memorial Service remembering the fallen hereos. (JS)

Upon our arrival at the AFRC, we were ushered into the main auditorium and took our seats. Michael Getas welcomed everyone and began the program with the presentation of the floral wreath by Emily and Kelly Wilkinson followed by the advancing of the Colors by the U.S. Navy Color Guard. The Pledge of Allegiance was said and the National Anthem was sung by everyone. The Color Guard then posted the Colors. The Invocation was given by the Navy Reserve Chaplain (Chief) Robert Little.

This year our keynote speaker was the Walt Vreeland, Commander of American Legion Post 272. Walt easily identified with his audience and proceeded to tell us his version of **"What is a Veteran."**

"Good Morning Ladies & Gentlemen – Isn't this a terrific building? Nice soft seats, controlled temperatures, polished hallways and floors. Seeing all of this my mind returns to the days when you and I were getting ready for Military Duty. The old armories – high stone walls, usually sandstone or some type of grey stone. Heating? Oh, it was



Walt Vreeland asks, "What is a Veteran"

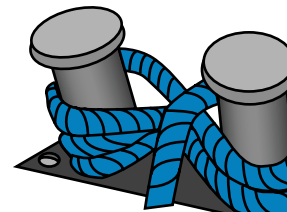
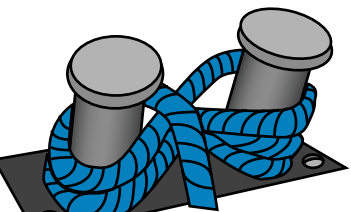
great, a big pot bellied wood stove sitting in the middle of a large high ceiling room. Oh and the summertime – our air conditioners was great especially if we could get the windows open and hope for a breeze. Great memories, weren't they? We must remember though many a good men passed through those buildings and became great Veterans.

*So, what is a Veteran? I checked the new Collegiate Dictionary and found
No. 1 – One who is much experienced in an activity
No. 2 – A former member of the Armed Forces*

I do wish they considered us number one but we can handle this. I will read you a couple verses of "I Am a

Veteran" by Andrea Butt. You may not know me, the first time we met I'm just another you on the street, but I am the reason you walk and breathe. I am the reason for your liberty. I came home and moved on, but forever was changed. The perils of war in my memory remained. I don't really say much, I don't feel like I can. But I left home as a child and came home a Man.

Let me introduce George. He, as a young man, became a steel worker employed in the oil fields of Oklahoma. He



was a riveter building oil tanks and large steel rigs. He met and married a young lady, the daughter of a farmer. They raised six children, three boys and three girls plus one foster son. They all grew up and answered the call to serve their country. Two sons were Air Force Veterans; one son was an Army Veteran. George's oldest and youngest daughters married Seaman and the middle daughter married a Marine. His foster son served the Coast Guard. In midlife he had to change careers due to health and physical problems. Loving the oil fields as he did, he became a plumber. Several years after retirement he was called by the Great Commander from this life. What a legacy – seven children – all involved in the military representing all five branches.



Let me back up, when George was a young man his country called. After a short time of training he was transferred to France. He was at Flanders Fields, a place we all know of, he was in the Battle of Meuse France and on November 11th at 11:00 a.m. he was in the trenches of the Argonne. He was amazed at the eerie silence as word was passed, "The armistice has been signed". Later as he was laid to rest the flag was removed from his coffin. Many friends and acquaintances called him a Veteran. I didn't, I called him DAD.

On a trip to Washington, D.C. I visited Arlington Cemetery. As I stood at the foot of a grave that held my Commander-in-Chief, I thought this wasn't just a president, he was a Veteran.

My granddaughter asked me to her school for a special Veterans Program. As I looked around I saw her teacher standing proud. He is a Veteran.

How many times have you gone to the grocery store and at the checkout saw a person standing tall and proud. He is wearing a flag pin on his lapel—Yes, he is a Veteran.

I had the experience not too long ago that I had to visit my doctor. Hanging on the wall with his License and Certification was a copy of his Discharge. He was a Veteran.

Every once in a while I volunteer at the John 3:16 Mission in downtown Tulsa, a refuge for the homeless people. Recently while there I saw a man, sitting by himself, tattered and dirty. As I went over to visit with him I noticed a dog tag hanging around his neck. I asked if I could take him to the VA center or someplace to get him more help than just a meal. He said "No, I am living the life God had handed me. I hope when I am laid to rest people will see my dog tag and not remember me as homeless but as a Veteran.

As you can see, a Veteran is an everyday person. We meet them everywhere we go. Some we recognize as a Veteran. Some we don't. I am proud to greet you as Veterans: Comrade Shodo; Comrade Schueler; Comrade Sherrell; Comrade Orgill; Comrade Rice; Comrade Petrillo; Comrade Graziano.

You, gentlemen are my generation heroes and Veterans. What is a Veteran? Better yet, look at what a Veteran is and gentlemen, remember these:

It is the Veteran, not the preacher who has given us Freedom of Religion.

It is the Veteran, not the reporter who has given us Freedom of the Press.

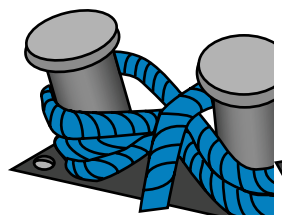
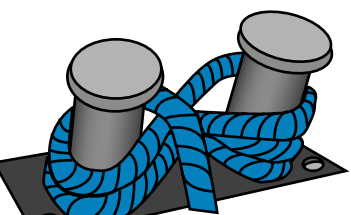
It is the Veteran, not the poet who has given us Freedom of Speech.

It is the Veteran, not the rally organizer who has given us the Freedom to Assemble.

It is the Veteran, not the lawyer who has given us the right for a Fair Trial.

It is the Veteran, not the politician who has given us the Right to Vote.

IT IS THE VETERAN WHO SALUTES THE FLAG.



Your numbers have diminished over the years and not many of you remain in this lifetime. However, we of the Judo-Christian faith look forward to the day the earth and the seas will open and surrender their dead. We will all join together for that reunion in the High Command above with the Commander of us all.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND MAY GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!"

Following Walt's presentation, the names of those who were killed in action from the USS St. Lo at the Battle of Leyte Gulf and recently deceased shipmates were read by Kneale Franco, Steve Kolsky, Phylis Roberts, Trudy, Emily, and Kelly Wilkinson. Recently deceased shipmates were Junior Anderson, Edwin C. Callan, James J. Feuhrer, William C. Janeshek, Harold Larson, John D. Miller, Jack Howard O'Dell, Vernon Eldon Ponto, Lawrence Steen and Wallace R. Williams. The bell used for the ceremony was from Tulsa's namesake the USS Tulsa gunboat which saw action during WW II. In 1946 in San Francisco the gunboat was scraped and the bell was acquired by Tulsa Training Center.

"Eternal Father, Strong to Save," was sung by everyone and *"Taps"* was played by PO3 Beagle. Closing the Memorial Service, the Chaplain gave his Benediction and the colors were retired by the U.S. Navy Color Guard.

The Memorial Service was followed by a wonderful buffet luncheon sponsored by the AFRC. As we admired our surroundings of this new training facility, it was hard to remember that this was a military installation. Following the luncheon, ABC Channel 8 KTUL from Tulsa covered the event and interviewed the veterans, asking them to share some of their experiences. The story aired that evening on the six o'clock news and the following morning news.

We completed the day's event with the traditional photo shoot of the attending Battle of Leyte Gulf veterans. As we boarded the bus to return to the hotel, last minute pictures were taken of the WW II Abrams Tank and the U.S. Navy ship anchor that were displayed outside the Armed Forces Reserve Center.

Day 5 – Farewell Breakfast – Wednesday, October 26, 2011

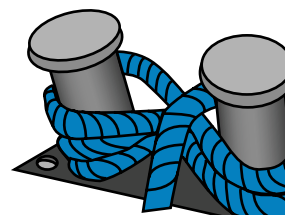
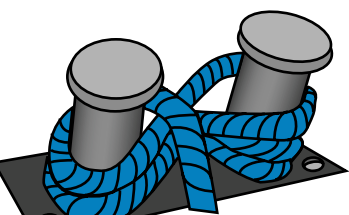
Once again it was time to say goodbye for another year. Those who could get up early enough for their last breakfast at the hotel were taking pictures and sharing those last minute stories. But there was one more important question which needed to be answered...

And where and who will host the 2012 USS St. Lo Reunion? One of the *"good ole boys"* from the South stepped forward and used that *"V"* word again and volunteered to host next years event. With much confidence in his voice Rodney Williams offered to host the 2012 in the *"The Big Easy"*– New Orleans, LA (that's Louisiana-not Los Angeles).

Barbara Odom, Gene Sherrell, and their friends and family were more than happy to pass off the torch; the pressure was now off of their shoulders! I think I heard Barbara say that she was going to sleep for a week! And so we said goodbye for another year with hopes that we will all be able to reunite next year at the same time in The Big Easy.



*(l-r front) Judy Hoffman, Trudy Wilkinson, JoAnn South, Carol Mayer, Rodney Williams and Phylis Roberts
(l-r back) JoAnn Sosa, Keith Lessard, Virgil Odom, and Kneale Franco*





PRESENT & ACCOUNTED FOR

Listing of Tulsa, Oklahoma 2011 Reunion Attendees

Wendy Blackburn, Margie Freund, Nancy Kohl –
Daughters of USS St. Lo Survivor (†)Junior Anderson;
April Blackburn – Daughter;
Brian & Renee Freund – Son & Daughter-In-Law;
Marie (Freund) & Tyson Hazlett – Daughter &
Son-In-Law; Austin & Brandon Hazlett – Sons

Michael Bramel & Viola Bramel –
Children of USS St. Lo Survivor (†)AK Bramel

Kneale Franco & Rae Franco-Rowe –
Grandchildren USS St. Lo (KIA) Chief George Cole;
Matt Rowe – Son of Rae Rowe

Michael Getas – Son of USS St. Lo Survivor
John & Catherine Getas

Barbara & Dale Gilbert – Daughter & S-I-L of
USS St. Lo Survivor (†)Larry Budnick

Nancy Gordon – Daughter of
USS St. Lo Survivor (†)Larry Budnick

Fred Graziano – USS Dennis (DE-405);
Carol Mayer – Daughter

Rick & Nan Hoffman, Larry & Judy Hoffman
Sons & Daughter-In-Laws of
USS St. Lo Survivor Doyle & Betty Hoffman

Steve & Rita Kolsky –
Son of USS St. Lo (KIA) Albert Glazer & Wife

Barbara & Virgil Odom – Daughter & Husband of
USS St. Lo (KIA) Warren Brown;
Kim & Kerri Smith – Daughter & Granddaughter;
Aaron Larson – Guest of Kerri Smith;
Rose Damilao-Miles & Jamie Donaldson–
Guests of Barbara Odom

Dale Orgil & Jean Snow–USS St. Lo Survivor & Guest



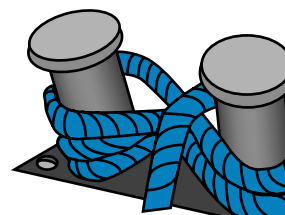
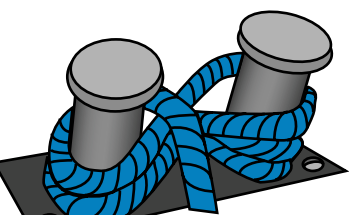
(l-r) Margie Freund, Wendy Blackburn, Kim Smith, April Blackburn, Barbara Odom, and Nancy Kohl attend the Memorial Luncheon at the Armed Forces Reserve Center. (JS)



Judy inspects Larry's cute little head. These two people have been instrumental in seeing that the St. Lo Reunions continue. (SK)



Bob and Cheri Falbo attend the Dinner Banquet (CM)



PRESENT & ACCOUNTED FOR

Tom Petrillo – USS St. Lo Survivor;
Carol Calderone – Daughter

Don Rice – USS St. Lo Survivor;
Gary & Jamie Campbell – Guests

Phylis Roberts – Wife of USS St. Lo
Survivor (†) Glen Roberts;
Trudy, Kelly & Emily Wilkinson–
Daughter & Granddaughters

Bob & Georjean Schueler –
USS St. Lo Survivor & Wife;
Cheri & Bob Falbo –
Daughter & Son-In-Law

Gene & Mary Ellen Sherrell – USS St. Lo
Survivor & Wife;
Jan Gephardt – Daughter

Les Shodo – USS St. Lo Survivor
Ellen Damron – Daughter;
Dalton & Jan Patronek – Family

JoAnn Sosa – Daughter of USS St. Lo
Survivor (†)Joe & (†)Shirley Downs

JoAnn South & Keith Lessard– Wife of USS
St. Lo Survivor (†) John South & Guest

Mike & Judy Stangel–
Michelle & David Londino–
Daughter & Son-In-Law

Irene Welch – Wife of USS St. Lo
Survivor (†)John Welch

Rodney Williams – Brother of USS St. Lo
Survivor (†)Eddie Williams, Jr.



(l-r)Fred Graziano, Dale Orgill, Don Rice, Tom Petrillo, and Bob Schueler(CM)



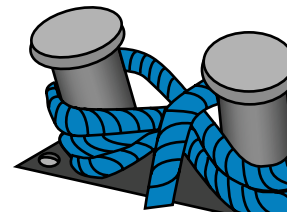
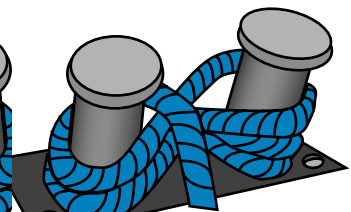
(l-r) Carol Mayer, Fred Graziano, Irene Welch, Don Rice, Tom Petrillo,
Carol Calderone, Bob Schueler, Cheri Falbo, Dale Orgill, and Jean Snow (RW)



USS St. Lo American
Beauty April Blackburn,
Granddaughter of (†)
USS St. Lo Survivor
Junior Anderson. (SK)



(l-r)Michael Getas, JoAnn Sosa, Rita & Steve Kolsky attend the Dinner Banquet (CM)





MAIL CALL

Letters to the Association from Friends and Family

13August2011

Mrs. Carole Wahl,

I received the *WEREMEMBER* Spring 2011. I enjoy looking at it. I doubt if we will try to make the next reunion. We will see how we are then. We live in a Provision Living. We both use walkers, Marie still has problems from her stroke of two years ago. She started a new therapy last Monday. We do not drive. I have fallen maybe five times due to vertigo. Marie is 86, I will be 91 in next October [2011].

I think of many instances on the escort carriers like they just happened. I navigated CVE to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and back. The navigator did not know how; he was used to the Chesapeake Bay. In a dark stormy night, I took the ship into Boston.

I was rated as qualified OOD underway and navigator for 10,000 ton ships. The Navy asked me to stay in, but then I was thinking of getting out. I had a couple forestry jobs, and then worked 30 years for International Paper Company, mostly in Arkansas and Mississippi.

I was fortunate to have three children, two boys and a girl. They all played basketball from the grade through junior college. The youngest also played at Mississippi College. My oldest son was graduated from Mississippi State University, majoring in mathematics. One son graduated from Clemson in medicine and is now at Virginia studying medical research. My daughter finished a business accounting degree at Mississippi State University. She and her husband have their own business in Charleston, S.C.

Best Wishes, **Donald & Marie Mackay**

Dear Mrs. Wahl,

This is to inform you of our new address. I've enjoyed all the publications that you folks have worked so hard on. I've only been able to attend four reunions and really enjoyed them. I was in the "N" division with Gene Sherrell and we are the only survivors left from our division.

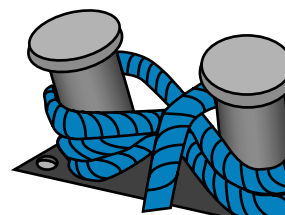
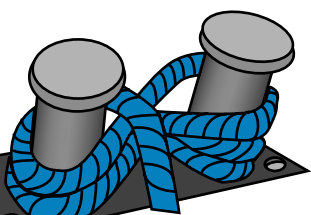
Thank you and God Bless, **Dale Schwager**



Someone is having way too much fun. Barbara dances with granddaughter Kerri. (JS)



Taffy 3 Veterans of the Battle of Leyte Gulf enjoy the luncheon at the Armed Forces Reserve Center. (l-r) Gene Sherrell, Bob Schueler, Fred Graziano, Les Shodo, Dale Orgill, Tom Petrillo, and Don Rice. (SK)



From **Heidy & Bill Brooks**,

I am so sorry that we can't attend the reunion anymore. Bill is not well enough to travel, can't walk fast anymore and his brain doesn't function right most of the time since he fell on his head two years ago. It's not easy to live with someone whose memory is not working right! Getting older is not always fun.

I miss the St. Lo people very much, always had a wonderful time at the reunions. I am doing OK again after the unbelievable scare I had with my heart two years ago! I guess I am very lucky!

Have a great reunion. Best to you all.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: I received a note from Heidy and was informed that Bill passed away on June 12, 2012. Bill requested that there be no memorial service or obituary. A photo may be found in the In Memoriam section of this newsletter]



(Seated) Heidy & St Lo Survivor Bill Brooks with Marie & St Lo Survivor Don Mackay attend the Dinner Banquet at the 2007 Reunion hosted in San Antonio, Texas.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Received this from Nancy Kohl, daughter of deceased USS St. Lo survivor Junior Anderson. In Junior's honor, his family attended the 2011 St. Lo Reunion in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Junior's obituary can be found in the In Memoriam section of this newsletter]

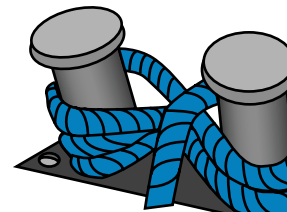
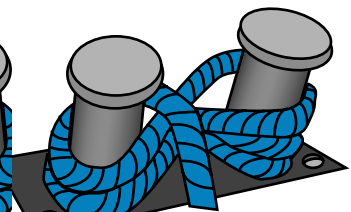
Hi JoAnn,

Sorry this is so late getting to you. My sisters and I had a bit of trouble coordinating the info and remembering to get it off to you between getting ourselves to the reunion and working on clearing out our Dad's house. But we know you're probably in the midst of putting things together for the newsletter by now, and we wanted to make sure you could include a blurb about him in the "In Memoriam" section. I'm attaching a copy of his obituary. I'm sending a picture of him when he was about the age he would have been on the St. Lo, and one of him more recently with our mom. We couldn't find a picture of them dancing at a reunion, though we know there was at least one published. You mentioned



(l-r) Wendy Blackburn, Margie Freund, and Nancy Kohl attend the 2007 St Lo San Antonio Reunion with their Dad St Lo Survivor Junior Anderson.

that they had attended and danced at all the reunions prior to her death 10 years ago, so we thought that maybe you might have a photo of them together. He continued to attend the reunions on his own or with one or more of his children and grandchildren until his health would not allow it. A few years ago (we think 2007 was his last: San Antonio was it, with all three of us daughters and three grandkids, and that



MAIL CALL

was 2007, wasn't it?) people might remember them. Thanks for all you do. My sisters and I really enjoyed being with all of you in Tulsa. Thanks –**Nancy A. Kohl**

P.S. Our Dad was Junior D. Anderson, he was a storekeeper on the St. Lo, survived the ship sinking. Because he was knocked unconscious from the bombing, another sailor put his own life-vest on Daddy and pushed him out to sea, figuring that since he himself was awake he could swim. Both men survived, but never even realized it or met each other until about 20 years ago during one of the reunions. I think it was the Charleston reunion because I was there. Prior to that Daddy didn't realize that it wasn't his own life-vest he'd had on or that he hadn't put it on himself and forgotten before being hit.



Memorial Service Luncheon (l-r) Mike & Viola Bramel, Carol Calderone, and Irene Welch. (JS)

[Note from Lois Williams]

Received your letter today and also Mrs. Odom's. As you may already guessed, we won't be coming to the reunion. And I just don't go traveling alone. Would love to go to another reunion, we had such great times and Wally really enjoyed each one – me too.

September 26th will be nine months since he [Wally] passed away and after nearly 62 years together – it is still hard to believe and try to keep it together. I'm so thankful we had two sons; they have been such a blessing to me and visit often. Also each calls me every day. So thankful they both live in Jacksonville.

And yes, I still love all the info you send. Thanks a million for the write-ups of his passing in the "We Remember." He would be so proud and say, "I don't deserve all that pomp and circumstance." HA!!



Farewell for another year. (l-r) Irene Welch, Carol Calderone, Carol Mayer, Tom Petrillo, Don Rice, Dale Orgill, and Jean Snow. Front and center is Viola Bramel. (CM)

Course the boys and I think so. He was so very special to us three.

I will be thinking of you all next month – and hope all have a great time and reunion. Our love to each and every one. A very special group of folks.

Hope you can read this. At 84 years old something happened to my penmanship. HA!!

Love Always to All – **Lois Williams**

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to space limitation in the Spring 2011 edition of **WE REMEMBER**, this note from Rosemary and Orville Bethard following the 2010 Reunion in Washington, D.C. is being

MAIL CALL



Rosemary and St Lo Survivor Orville Bethard attend the 2010 Reunion Dinner Banquet in Washington, D.C.

published in this edition. Also please note that Orville passed away and his obituary can be found in the **IN MEMORIAM** section of this newsletter.

Dear JoAnn,

Thank you for the love and respect you share with the St. Lo family. You graciously wear many hats and see to it that any job is well done. World War II Memorial is beautiful, a lasting tribute to those who served so long ago. The balcony scene –those guys gathered together – fond memory. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier –silent, respectful, emotional spectators –heel clicks from two highly polished shoes – no words available to describe the emotion. The MIA/POW presentation

during the banquet, another time for unsaid words.

Please thank Nick [Sosa] for his willing enthusiastic help, blessings to him and his family. Hugs to you and prayers for your husband's safe return. – As Ever, **Rosemary & Orville Bethard**

Dear Carole,

I'm enclosing the obituary of my beloved husband William. We had not been to a reunion since the one that was held in Tucson as he had been diagnosed with emphysema and chronic Bronchitis. This meant that he would be on oxygen at night with four to six breathing treatments daily. After being in the hospital for ten days in May, he had to be on oxygen 24 hours a day. He went into the hospital August 15th for seven days, was transferred to another facility for extended care for three weeks and on Monday the 12th to Valley Hospice where he passed away on the 13th.

He always enjoyed the reunions and felt bad when he could not attend anymore. He was proud of being a sailor and serving aboard the USS St. Lo.

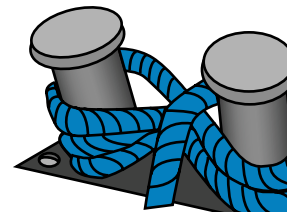
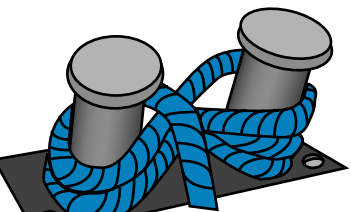
Looking forward to possibly attending the reunion next year, God willing. Sincerely, **Mary Janeshek**

Carole,

Really enjoy the "WE REMEMBER". Thanks for thinking of me, OK. **Joe Monarco, Jr.**



Front (l-r) Keith Lessard, Kneale Franco, Carol Mayer, Fred Graziano, and Rodney Williams. Back (l-r) Kelly & Trudy Wilkinson, Phylis Roberts, Emily Wilkinson, Barbara & Virgil Odom. Farewell 'till 2012. (JS)





Fred and Rose Heinrich at the Dinner Banquet for the 2006 Reunion in San Diego, California.

Carole,

Sorry we missed the reunion. Fred and I are doing pretty good.

Fred and Rose Heinrich

Carole,

FYI-I trained with Leslie Shodo at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 1943. Somehow we were split up and I ended up as a plane captain and not aircrew. After training he [Les Shodo] and others ended up on the carrier and I ended up in a fleet air wing. I went overseas and flew as tail gunner on a PBM Martin Mariner and flew 25 missions from Lingayen Gulf to patrol along the French Indo China coastline. Each mission took 14½ hours and consumed 2,280 gallons of fuel each mission. We had several enemy engagements. Please let Leslie know of this.

PS Would like to know if anyone remembers me. **Don Scheunemann AMM1/c**

Dear Carole,

Just a note to let you know we will not be able to make any more reunions. Al will be 89 this year and I am 85. We both miss the unions where we meet with friends we have made. We enjoy reading the "WE REMEMBER" newsletter.

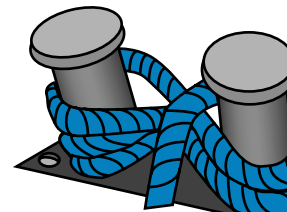
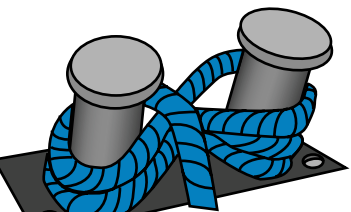
God bless you and all who help you for the work you do and have done. Our thoughts and prayers are for all of you.

God bless you all,

Lydia and Alexander Garasimowicz



Lydia and Survivor Alexander Garasimowicz



IN MEMORIAM



Remembering Lost Family and Crew Members



Junior D. Anderson
1922 - 2011

BOUNTIFUL, UT- Tragedy struck on a fitting rainy afternoon this 9th of May, 2011; *Junior Anderson* was hit suddenly by a heart attack in his favorite chair at home and joined his wife (Marian Crawford Anderson), mother (Mabel Hodges Anderson), father (Clarence S. Anderson), Sister (Constance David) and Grandson (Jeremy Michael Blackburn) in death shortly thereafter at Lakeview Hospital.

Though in memoriam, we will all feel he was returned home too soon, no one can argue that this kind, loving legend had lived a long and adventurous life. He was born in Emporia, Kansas on August 6, 1922. In his hometown he was cradled in abundance of close relatives including both sets of grandparents. This, combined with his family's boarding of many people in their house fostered a love of people and a strong sense of family. At age seven his mother introduced him to his first great passion when she sat him in front of a piano and taught him a foundation in music.

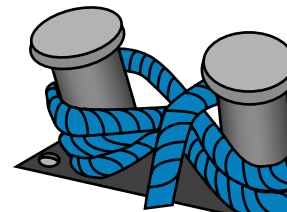
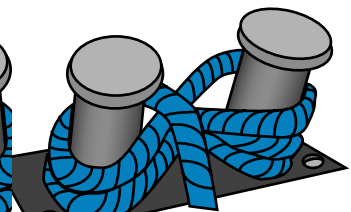
At the age of 17, his immediate family moved away to Denver while he remained in Emporia residing with his grandmother until high school graduation, when he joined his parents in Colorado. Intent on keeping an active mind, Junior never wasted an opportunity to learn and attended schooling in a wide range of fields. In 1941 he got a job working construction for the Denver Remington Arms plant, which he

worked for a month before seizing an opportunity to journey further west to their construction site.

Though the job provided a great segue into further exploring the world, intense physical labor was not his strongest suit and he soon began a series of employment changes that would lead on to his eventual career path, which culminated in 20 years as a Utah State Income Tax Auditor. After arriving in Salt Lake he began attending and participating in the LDS church. While working as a property clerk in the supply division at Fort Douglas he enlisted in the Navy Oct 3, 1942, a day after his Baptism into the LDS church.

In 1944 Junior was aboard the U.S.S. Midway (later renamed the St. Lo.) when it made its mark in history in the battle of Leyte Gulf as part of "Taffy 3" battle group, becoming the first ever major warship to be sunk by a Kamikaze. The attack took 113 lives and earned Junior a Purple Heart.

Following his WWII deployment, he returned to his family, and attended the University of Denver, graduating with his B.S. in Finance in 1949. A year later he returned to active duty in the military as an officer, during the Korean War, (followed by many years in the Reserves and retiring from the Navy in 1982). In 1951 he returned to Utah and met the love of his life, Marian Crawford, while stationed at Clearfield Naval Supply Depot. They married in the Salt Lake LDS temple on August 28, 1952 and raised three loving daughters in the calm neighborhoods of Bountiful. Together as a family they enjoyed many a vacation traveling the country and world. Junior and Marian's passion for travel continued to take them exploring all



IN MEMORIAM



Marian Crawford Anderson
1927-2001


Junior Anderson
1922-2011

corners of the globe. Many of their favorite travels revolved around the reunions of the St. Lo survivors, where they loved to dance together.

In August of 2001, Marian was taken from him; his broken heart cracked his impenetrable shell of invincibility and his health began to slowly decline. In 2006 he had his first heart attack, but his unfailing will to survive carried him on to be there for and with his family for five more years before his body could last no more. A very special thank you goes out to his live in caretaker Renee Jensen, and all of his medical aides, whom helped out in those last months and years more than words can ever describe.

Monday, May 16, 2011 we lay to rest one of the most gentle and loving souls to ever walk this earth. He is survived by his 3 daughters, Marjorie Lynn Freund of Idaho Falls, ID; Nancy Amorette Kohl (Douglas) of Olympia, WA; and Wendy Christine Blackburn (Michael). He is also survived by 10 grandchildren, Arthur (Kelly), Brian (Renee), and Jason Freund and Marie Freund Hazlett (Tyson) of Kansas; Eric

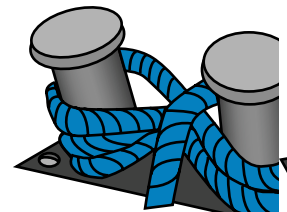
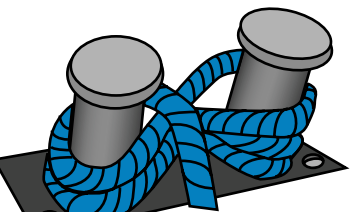
Freund of Singapore; Jeanette Freund Tatton (Michael), Maranda Blackburn Hammack, and Brent and April Blackburn of Utah; and Alan Kohl of Washington, and his 6 great-grandchildren. FAREWELL JUNIOR, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE IN OUR HEARTS!

Funeral services will be held Monday, May 16, 2011 at 1 p.m. in the Bountiful 31st Ward Chapel, at 585 East Center Street. Friends may call at Russon Brothers Mortuary at 295 North Main in Bountiful on Sunday, May 15 from 6-8 p.m. and Monday, May 16 at the Ward Chapel from 11:45 a.m. -12:45 p.m. Internment is at Bountiful Cemetery. 


Arthur Joseph Barton died Wednesday, February 23, 2011. He was born March 28, 1926 in Little Ferry, N.J. to Arthur and Emily Barton. He joined the Navy at 17 years of age and saw action in the Pacific Theatre, during World War II, surviving the sinking of the U.S.S. St. LO, during the Battle of Leyte Gulf on October 25, 1944. After the war, he began working for Public Service Utilities of New Jersey as a lineman- a position he held for 20 years. In 1971, he and his wife, Loretta, moved to Ormond Beach, Florida. He was a co-owner of Seabreeze



Arthur J. Barton
1926-2011



IN MEMORIAM

Camera, worked for Volusia County D.M.V., and the Daytona Beach Airport. He was a life member of the Elk, Daytona Beach and also a member of the American Legion and the Eagles. He was pre-deceased by his parents, wife of 52 years, sisters, Mary (Ted) Killian and Catherine Johansson. Survivors include daughter, Linda (Steve) Brooks, son, Don (Loretta) Clark; grandsons, Brian (Olga) Kohrt, Mathew (Stacy) Seth, Tom and Tyler Clark; granddaughter, Eileen Fiorentino; great-grand-children, Sophia and Ryan Clark, Lauren Fiorentino; daughter-in-law, Debra Clark; brother-in-law, Fred Johansson; niece Cathy (Tom) Marquat; great-nieces, Mary (Steve) Ondros, Terry Johansson; great-nephew, Max Johansson; close friends, Don and Nancy Hillegas; and childhood buddy, Billy Geisler. 

Orville R. Bethard, 88 of Villa Park, CA, went to be with his heavenly Father on March 19, 2012 after passing peacefully. He is survived by his beloved wife, Rosemary, of 63 years, daughters Laurie and Linda, their spouses, eight grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.


Orville graduated from George Washington High School in 1942 and joined the US Navy shortly thereafter. During his tour of duty, Orville survived the sinking of his ship, the U.S.S. St. Lo, the first ship to be sunk in a kamikaze attack during WWII.

Orville attended the University of Southern California and received his Bachelor of Engineering degree in June 1956. He worked for the Department of Water and Power, City of Los Angeles for over 25 years and retired in 1983 as Assistant Rates Manager.

Orville derived pleasure from gardening, and his crops yielded many delicious harvests for family and friends. He was a collector, saying "Once you throw it away, you'll find a need for it." He fixed just about anything. Other hobbies he pursued were reading, fishing, and traveling in his motor home. However, his highest priorities were his family and their endeavors. After continued interest in swimming by his daughters and then granddaughter, Orville supported youth aquatic sports for many years through leadership and encouragement. He helped spearhead the building of the Villa Park High School swimming pool in 1972.

Whatever the challenge, Orville was meticulous, logical, and highly focused in seeking out the solution. He also had a mischievous glint in his bright blue eyes, a smile that reflected his good-nature, and open arms for a welcome hug.

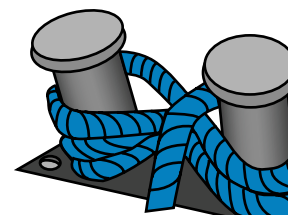
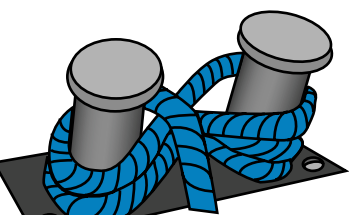
Thank you, Heartland Hospice Services, for encouraging our family and helping Orville remain comfortable during the last six months of his life.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Orville's name to the Heartland Hospice Memorial Fund at www.heartlandhospicefund.org or 333 N. Summit St, P.O. Box 10086, Toledo, OH 43699-0086. Friends are welcome to join us as we celebrate Orville's life at two o'clock on April 14, 2012 at Taft Avenue Community Church, 1350 E. Taft Ave., Orange, CA 92865. 

Hendrickson, Harlowe Dean 7/7/23 of Monticello, formerly of Madison, MN, after a short valiant fight against prostate cancer, lost his toughest battle on 2/2/12. Harlowe proudly served in the US Navy during WWII and survived the sinking of the USS St Lo by a Japanese kamikaze on 10/25/44 in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He was employed by Super Valu and Graco. He enjoyed golf and fishing. Harlowe was an avid sports fan of the Timberwolves, Vikings, "Golden Gophers" and WWF. He was a Lutefisk connoisseur! He is a Life Member of American Legion Post 303, Fridley, Voiture 390 40 & 8 of Anoka and VFW Post 1658




Orville R. Bethard
1924-2012



IN MEMORIAM



Harlowe Dean Hendrickson
1923-2012

in Madison. He was preceded by parents, Henry and Grace Hendrickson; sister, Marcella Welsh and brother, Rolan. He is survived by wife of 66 years, Wanda; daughter, Kathy (Jerry) Pomerleau; grandchildren, Dana (Denise) Pomerleau, Ann (David) Faust; great-grandchildren, Alyx, Lauren, Alyssa, and Ashlyn; also survived by siblings, Curtis (Nell), OK, Bethel (Don) Freese, NE, Donna Thompson, MN; many nieces and nephews he was very close to. He was loved as a husband, father, grandpa and doting great-grandpa. We will grieve his passing, cherish his memory, celebrate his life and be thankful for the end of his pain. We love you. Visitation on Monday 2/6/12 at Gearhart Funeral Home, 552 East River Rd. Anoka, MN from 5-8 pm and 1 hour prior to service at church. Funeral service Tuesday, 2/7/12 at 10 am at Word of Peace Lutheran Church, 21705 129th Ave N, Rogers, MN. In lieu of flowers, memorials will be directed to www.projectfoot.org. Gearhart 


William (Willie) Charles Janeshek, 88 of Follansbee, WV passes away, Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at Valley Hospice Care Center North, Steubenville, OH.

He was born January 25, 1923, in Follansbee, WV, the son of the late John and Anna Kastrevc Janeshek. Two sisters, Rose Renforth and Yvonne Janeshek, and four brothers, Frank, Joe, John, and Tony also preceded him in death.

William was a member of the Laborers Local #809, a member of the American Legion Post 45, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He served in the US Navy from November 1942 to November 1945. He was a survivor of the USS St. Lo (formerly the USS Midway), which was sunk on October 25, 1944 in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He reenlisted in the Navy on November 1946, and served aboard the USS Hamul until he separated in December 1950.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Mary (Brindley) Janeshek, one son Anthony M Janeshek and his wife, Grace, of Lake Jackson, Texas, one granddaughter, Anita Janeshek, of South Charleston, West Virginia, and one grandson, Andrew Janeshek, of Lake Jackson, Texas.

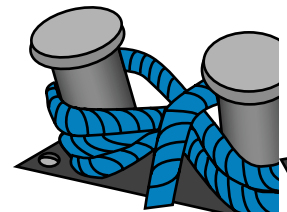
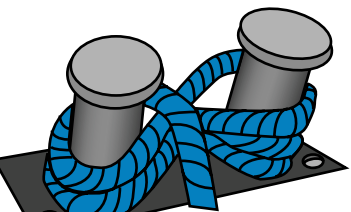
Friends will be received on Thursday, September 15, 2011 from 2:00-4:00 & 7:00-9:00 P.M. at the James Funeral Home, 1245 Main St. Follansbee, WV, where funeral services will be held on Friday, September 16, 2011 at 11:00 A.M. with Father Gene Sheppard, officiating.

Interment will follow in Oak Grove Cemetery, Follansbee, WV. Full military honors by the Ohio Valley Veterans Memorial Squad. Memorial contributions may be made to the Christ Episcopal Church, 1014 Main St. Wellsburg, WV 26070. 

Mr. William H. Kennann passed away on March 6, 2011. He died of natural causes just three months before his 90th birthday. Mr. Kennann was born in 1921 on his father's ranch near Clayton, Union County, New Mexico, one of 11 children. After he graduated from Clayton High School in 1939, he moved to Wichita,



William Charles Janeshek
1923-2011




IN MEMORIAM

Kansas to study and work in the aircraft industry.

When World War II broke out, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served in the Pacific as an airplane mechanic. In 1944 at the Battle of Leyte Gulf he survived a Japanese kamikaze attack in which his ship, the aircraft carrier St. Lo, was sunk and many of its crew members killed.

After the war Mr. Kennann settled in Long Beach, California where he worked for the Douglas Aircraft Company, first on the assembly line and later as a computer engineer. In his retirement he occupied himself with real estate, travel, genealogy, book publishing, and administering his brother John's estate.

He is survived by his wife, Helene, a son, Bill Jr., two daughters, Kristina and Carol, and three grandchildren. He also had "several" nieces and nephews.

His ashes are to be permanently interred at the Navy cemetery at Point Loma, near San Diego. He will be missed by all who knew and loved him. 



William H. Kennann
1921-2011

Bobby Joseph Meyers, 87 of Dassel and former resident of Orono and Minneapolis passed away December 30, 2011. Preceded in death by his sister Bonnie (Meyers)




Bobby Joseph Meyers
1924-2011

Healy. Bob was a long time employee of Minnegasco and a Navy veteran serving in WWII on the USS-Dennis.

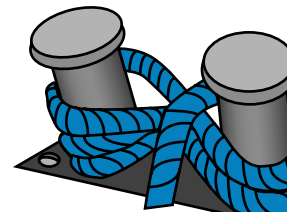
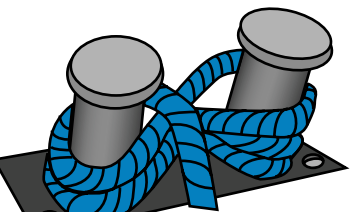
Bobby is survived by his loving wife of 69 years, Irene (Branson) Meyers and children Connie (Al) Draves, Robert (Beth) Meyers, Debbi (Jon) Cashin, and Donald (Terri) Meyers; grandchildren Jeff (Debra) Draves, Kim (Jeff) Larsen, Josh (Andrea) Quandt, Kristen Meyers, Chris Cashin, Amanda Meyers; and great-grandchildren Kevin Draves, Scott and Ana Larsen, Aidan and Isaac Quandt, brother Don (Vivian) Meyers and many nieces & nephews.

Bob had a great sense of humor and was deeply loved and respected by his family and friends. He will be missed by all.

A private burial will be held with a celebration of his life to be scheduled in the future. 

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2012, at a 1:00 PM Mass of Christian Burial in Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Scott, for **LOUISE SONNIER**, 82, who died on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center in Lafayette.

Interment will be in Sts. Peter & Paul Cemetery in Scott. Reverend Thomas Voorhies, Pastor of Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Scott will be the Celebrant of the Funeral Mass and will conduct the



IN MEMORIAM


funeral services. Con Celebrants will be Rev. Gilbert Dutel, Pastor of St. Edmond Catholic Church in Lafayette, Rev. Mario Romero and Rev. David Herbert, Assoc. Pastors of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Scott, and Rev. Glenn Meaux, MAF PAP, SOLT Mission, Haiti. Gift bearers will be Delores Menard and Lou Guilbeaux. Lectors will be Jeanne Sonnier and Lincoln Arceneaux. Eulogist will be Scott Ferguson. Milton Resweber, soloist, accompanied by Karen Broussard, organist, will sing "Amazing Grace", "How Great Thou Art", "On Eagles' Wings", "Hail Mary, Gentle Woman", "J'irai La Voir Un Jour" and "I Can Only Imagine" for the services.

Ms. Sonnier is survived by two sisters, Clothilde Sonnier Hills and Annette Sonnier; one brother, Claude Sonnier; fifteen nieces and nephews; thirty-three great nieces and nephews; forty-four great-great nieces and nephews; one great-great-great nephew; and a host of relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Jean Batiste and Aline Legere Sonnier; grandparents, Euclide and Eugenie Legere and Basile and Philomene Gilbert Sonnier; four brothers, Joseph Sonnier, Ulysses Sonnier, Leon "Doc" Sonnier and Johnny Sonnier and his late wife, Velma "Shu Shu" Prejean; six sisters, Bertha Sonnier, Agnes Sonnier, Eva Sonnier, Iris Sonnier Boudreaux and her late husband Charles, Anna Sonnier Arceneaux and her late husband Magee and Mathilde Sonnier Broussard and her late husband Paul "Pee Wee"; one sister-in-law, Elizabeth "Libby" Sonnier; two nieces, Anne Arceneaux Buller and Carrie Romero Durand; one nephew, Dr. Tuney Arceneaux; two great nieces, Marie Annette Boutin Comeaux and Jenna Aline Broussard; and one great nephew, Norris James Buller.

Louise was a native of Ossun and a resident of Scott for 71 years. She was the owner/operator of Boutique Coiffeurs in Lafayette for over 40 years. Louise was a member of Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Scott, where she volunteered for over 30 years and was instrumental in organizing and co-chairing the yearly Church Improvement Dinner. Louise will be dearly missed by her family, friends and all who knew and loved her.

Pallbearers will be Douglas Sonnier, Scott Ferguson, Russell Arceneaux, Ellender Arceneaux, Bruce Broussard, Frank Durand, Don Guilbeaux and Wes Castille. Honorary Pallbearers will be Claude Sonnier, Neal Hills, C.J. Arceneaux, Earl Arceneaux, Lindon Arceneaux and Dwain Sonnier.

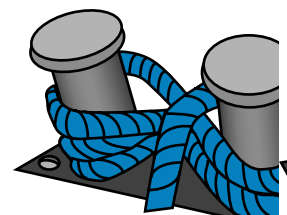
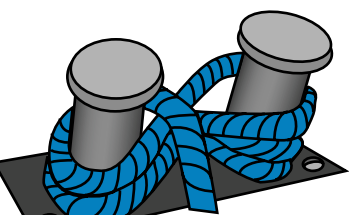
The family requests that visitation be observed in Martin & Castille's SCOTT location on Friday, March 30, 2012 from 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM and on Saturday from 8:00 AM until time of service. A Rosary will be prayed on Friday by Deacon Art F. Bakeler, Jr. at 7:00 PM in Martin & Castille Funeral Home in Scott. In lieu of flowers, donations to SOLT Haiti Mission, P. O. Box 1400, Abbeville, LA 70511 and the Miles Perret Cancer Services, 2130 Kaliste Saloom Rd., Suite 200, Lafayette, LA 70508. View the obituary and guest book online at www.mourning.com Martin & Castille-SCOTT-802 Alfred St., Scott, LA 70583. 

Lawrence Steen, age 86, died Friday, December 04, 2009 at Bob Wilson Memorial Hospital in Ulysses, Kansas. He was born October 29, 1923 in Elkhart, Kansas, the son of John and Kate (Eskew) Steen.

Lawrence grew up in Ulysses and graduated from Grant County Rural School. He moved to Ulysses in the 1930's from Copeland. Lawrence served in the U.S. Navy during 1943-1946. He survived the sinking of the USS St. Lo carrier, on October 25, 1944, in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. USS St. Lo received the Presidential



Orville R. Bethard
1930-2012




IN MEMORIAM

Unit Citation for the heroism of her crew. On July 19, 1959 he married Patricia Getty in Downs, Kansas. Lawrence worked for George Walters, Vic Barbo and Retired from Mesa Petroleum as a gas dispatcher. Lawrence enjoyed all sports, but especially baseball. He coached little league baseball and was a Detroit Tigers fan. He was a carpenter and built the house that he and Pat live in.

Survivors include his wife Pat of the home; two sisters, Arline Isley of Ulysses, Kansas, Doris Roberts of Fairview, Oklahoma; and 18 nieces and nephews. Lawrence was preceded in death by his parents.

Graveside services 2:00 PM, Thursday, December 10, 2009 at Ulysses Cemetery in Ulysses, Kansas with Reverend Wayne Flanders officiating. Military graveside rites will be conducted by Dexter D. Harbour American Legion Post #79. Interment at Ulysses Cemetery in Ulysses, Kansas.

Memorial contributions may be given to the Grant County Senior Center or donor's choice both in care of Garnand Funeral Home, 405 W. Grant Ave, Ulysses, KS 67880. 



Lawrence W. Steen
1923-2011




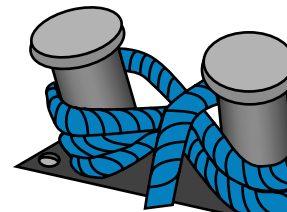
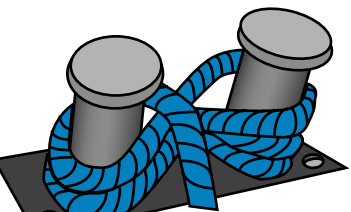
Nancy Gibson Walker
1927-2012

Nancy Annette Gibson Walker, 84, of Ashland, passed away Sunday morning, January 22, 2012, at Kings Daughters Medical Center. Nancy was born July 25, 1927 in Charleston, West Virginia to the late Guy Wheeler Gibson and Edith Mullens Gibson. She had been an Ashland resident since 1949.

Nancy was a Kentucky Colonel and a member of Unity Baptist Church, Order of the Eastern Star, and the Carousel Square Dance Club. In addition to her parents, Nancy was preceded in death by her former husband, James Hart Walker, her sister Francis Gibson Ward, and her brothers Robert Ellsworth Gibson, M.D., and Samuel Joseph Gibson. She is survived by two daughters, Cathy Walker Cremeans and her husband Rusty of Westwood and Navy Captain Carol Walker, D.M.D. and her husband Ron Hunter of Annapolis, MD; one son, James Hart Walker, Jr. of Ashland; one brother, Paul Gibson of Charleston, WV; three grandchildren, Christian Cremeans Spurlock, Sandra Cremeans Pierce, and Ethan Walker; four great-grandchildren, Derrick Spurlock, Devon Spurlock, Jared Pierce, and Caleb Pierce; one great-great granddaughter, Jayden Spurlock, and a host of extended family and friends.

Nancy graduated from Charleston High School and attended James Madison College (now University) in Harrisonburg, VA. She was employed as a social worker by the Commonwealth of Kentucky and later at Sherwin-Williams in Ashland. In her youth she was a talented ballet and modern dancer.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Philip Fioret and the staff of KDMC for comforting Nancy in her final days. Funeral services by Miller Funeral Home in Ashland are pending. 



IN MEMORIAM



William C. Brooks, Jr.
1920-2012

William Brooks, Jr. was the pilot of turret gunner Joe Downs' and radio man RJ Travers' TBM plane during the Battle for Leyte Gulf on October 25, 1944. I first read about Mr. Brooks' accomplishments as a pilot while aboard the USS St. Lo in Jim Hornfischer's *"Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors"* and came to the conclusion that my Dad, Joe Downs, was lucky to be alive. I also truly believe that it was because of Bill Brooks' expertise as a US Navy pilot that I and my brothers and sister are here today.

Although Bill did not want any fanfare when he died, I've included his Navy Cross citation that was awarded to him after the Battle of Leyte Gulf. For me, this reflects the greatest tribute. I cannot thank him enough.
-JoAnn Downs-Sosa

LTCMDR William C. Brooks, Jr., U.S.N.

Citation: Navy Cross

War: World War II

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WILLIAM COSTELLO BROOKS, JR., (then Ensign), United States Naval Reserve. For extraordinary heroism as Pilot of a Torpedo Bomber in Composite Squadron SIXTY-FIVE, attached to the U.S.S. ST. LO, during action against enemy Japanese forces in the

Battle for Leyte Gulf, October 25, 1944. In the face of intense anti-aircraft fire, Lieutenant, Junior Grade, (then Ensign) Brooks pressed home two attacks against the enemy. He single-handedly attacked a heavy cruiser with depth bombs and, subsequently participating in a three-plane torpedo attack, scored a direct hit on an enemy battleship. His courage and devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon Lieutenant, Junior Grade, Brooks and the United States Naval Service. 🇺🇸

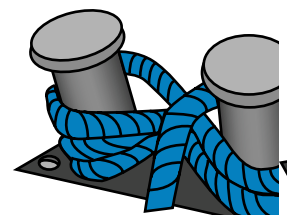
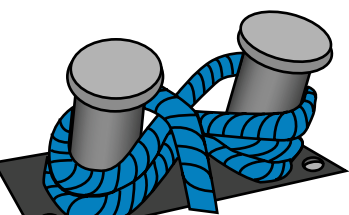
I've had the pleasure of knowing Les and Elva Shodo thanks to my parent's involvement with the USS St. Lo Association. Although the Sosa family attended only a few St. Lo Reunions between 1990 and 2000, it was the 2000 New Orleans Reunion that I truly became aware of this special couple.

Les was (and still is) a walking resource of knowledge when it came to the battles that involved the USS St. Lo, and his recollection of crew members whether they were aircrew or ship's company. A photo presentation was given at the hotel depicting life aboard the USS St. Lo and Les was able to name everyone in each picture by first and last name, and usually what their job was on board ship. I was impressed...I still have problems remembering my own kids' names at times. Les just seemed to be a quiet, thoughtful, and caring person with a twinkle in his eye (he referred to that twinkle as Elva).

Elva was a classy, reserved lady who just happened to be married to Les. We soon discovered she actively worked for different opera and stage companies, but it was her work as a "Rosie the Riveter" during WW II that really surprised me. I just had a hard time imagining Elva in a pair of men's work overalls with a red bandana wrapped around her head...but that was Elva.


The Williams and Sonnier families put on a reunion that no one would soon forget. One of those memories included the Shodos'. Although it was October and Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) was at least four months away, the Welcome Reception was a mini Mardi Gras complete with King Cake, beads, music, food, and the crowning of a king and queen. I don't remember who was king, but Elva was Queen of the Mardi Gras.

Following the Mardi Gras at around 10 p.m., AJ Sosa, JoAnn South, St. Lo artist Uncle John Downs, my Aunt Betty Downs and I decided to head downtown for beignets at the Café Du Monde. In as quiet and orderly a manner that our family could have been, Uncle John, AJ, and I went to Shodo's room to see if they'd



like to join us. Les opened the door and Elva was already in her jammies with her sleep blinders on and had just crawled into bed. We asked if Les could come out and play and she replied that he could do whatever he wanted, but she was going to bed. Before I knew it, Uncle John was right up beside Elva on the bed and all Elva could do was giggle with that little voice of hers. We asked Uncle John what was going on, he said that he wanted bragging rights to say that he was next to the Queen in her hotel room. Needless to say, Les stayed with his Queen for the evening.

Last summer while driving home, I received a phone call from Les telling me that Elva had passed away. I really was stunned. Although Les had attended the last few reunions by himself, it always seemed like Elva was there in spirit...as she will always be.

Elva you will be missed. –JoAnn Downs-Sosa 




Elva and Les Shodo

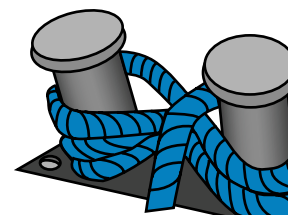
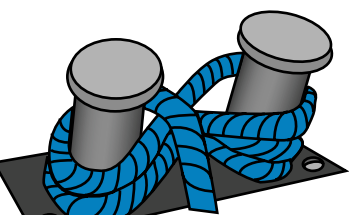
USS St. Lo Dinner Banquet Tucson, Arizona 2001

Note: Michelle Sacora wrote the first note below, on a 2011 Tulsa, Oklahoma Reunion registration form. The second story comes from the USS St. Lo guest book website. Although I have no obituary, I remembered reading this entry a number of years ago about Jim Feuhrer and thought it would be a good substitution; it's a very touching story. USS St. Lo survivor James J. Feuhrer was remembered when names were read at the Tulsa Memorial Service. – JoAnn

My name is Michelle Sacora, daughter of **James J. Feuhrer**. My dad was on the USS St. Lo when it was sunk in the Leyte Gulf. You may remember him from prior reunions. It is with great sadness I need to inform you of his passing on Saturday, September 24, 2011 at the age of 91. He was and will always be my hero, my pop, and I will miss him dearly. Please pass this along at the reunion and say another great man has passed into history and is now resting in the arms of our Savior Jesus Christ. –Michelle Sacora

Tom Protzeller – October 24, 2004 – USS St. Lo Association Website Guest book

Last night my wife and I were at the Outback Steakhouse in Clairemont (S.D.) watching the Red Sox-St Louis game and enjoying each other's company. I noticed this diminutive, white haired man sitting by himself quietly eating a simple dinner. He had a baseball cap with the name of the ship USS St Lo, CVE 63 on it. I asked him his name and he told me "Jim Feuhrer." For the next 30 minutes, he captivated me with the history of your ship. The pride he had was remarkable for a man of 84 years. He remembered names, events, and the emotions of a man who had just recently come back from war. What a remarkable, wonderful man. He told me of the loss of his wife and the loss of his shipmates in these later years. We said our good-bys and he left. When I returned to the bar, a number of people asked about him. When I told his story, we thanked the Lord that there were and still are men like this who sacrificed so much and ask for so little in return. As a US Marine, I think of only Marines having esprit, camaraderie, and a strong bond towards each other. Mr. Jim Feuhrer is a living symbol that the Navy has just as a much elan as her sister service. Good luck veterans and God Bless! 





SCUTTLEBUTT

Additional Stories & Special Notes of Interest

Do any of you Navy sailors out there know what this is? I'm sure every St. Lo survivor treasured their lifebelt. Some of you probably have stories to tell about your time in the water while waiting to be rescued. Rodney Williams forwarded this USN lifebelt and note to me from Kenneth Naversen. I thought some of you might be interested in the story.

Mr. Naversen writes: "I am writing to advise of the passing of another St. Lo survivor: my father-in-law, William H. Kennann. He died on March 6, 2010. [Bill's obituary can be found in the *IN MEMORIAM* section of this newsletter]

Among his souvenirs is a small cardboard box with a St. Lo lifebelt inside. It was the one he wore when the men took to the water after the Kamikaze attack on the St. Lo.

If I remember the story correctly, he [Bill] did not have his lifebelt with him when the attack came. And having grown up on a ranch in New Mexico with few opportunities to learn to swim, he was not



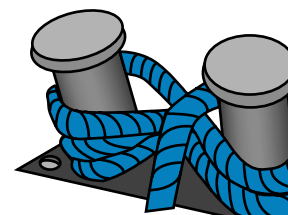
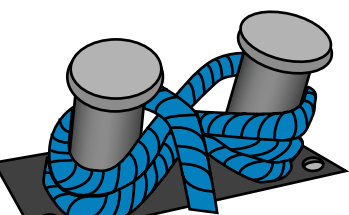
Clair Shoemaker's USN issued lifebelt used by Bill Kennann on October 25, 1944

comfortable in the water. Fortunately for him there was a strong swimmer in the group, Clair A. Shoemaker [†1992] who gave up his lifebelt so that Bill could use it."

The USS St. Lo Association will place it with our other memorabilia and display it at future reunions. 🗨️



Bill and Helene Kennann at the 2006 Reunion in San Diego, California



Thomas Jeff Wilson was a USS St. Lo pilot and survivor of the Kamikaze attack on Oct. 25, 1944. The following biography was written by his mother [Ellen Hair Hughes] and I have included excerpts to tell Thomas Jeff Wilson story. I found it truly amazing and believe even more strongly that everything happens for a reason.

This is a sketch of Thomas Jeff Wilson's life, written by one who loved him very dearly. When he was small he called me "Auntie Mamma", but soon said "Mother". Between the age of 4 and 6 years, he would say to friends, whom he thought did not know, "She is not my real borned mother", referring to me. It was a very cold February afternoon that we received a message from Glenn Wilson of Ft. Worth, Texas, that his mother, Laura Hair Wilson had just died, after giving birth to her seventh child, Thomas Jeff Wilson, on Feb. 6, 1923, in Ft. Worth, Texas. There was 6-10 inches of snow on the ground in Waco, when we received the phone call, and Louise was sick in bed with the "flu". I took an early Interurban car from Ft. Worth the next morning, after we had arranged for a lady to come stay with Louise and the family while I was gone.

According to previous arrangements by Laura, Lillie, Edd Hair's wife, came from Boyd and was with the Wilson's about two weeks after Laura's death. Before leaving home that morning in February, A.B. [husband of Ellen] and I talked it over, and we agreed that we would like to take the baby, if J.D.[biological father of Thomas] would let us have him. The family was not willing just then for the baby to be taken away from home. But on Feb. 18th when Tommy was thirteen days old, Lillie came to Waco on the train and brought the baby to us. Milton, Tommy's brother of 6 years came with her. Glenn, Frank, James, Johnny, and Marie were in school. Lillie returned to her home to care for her family, plant her garden and look after her chickens. They were living on a farm near Boyd at that time.

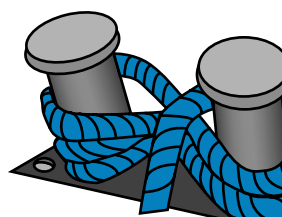
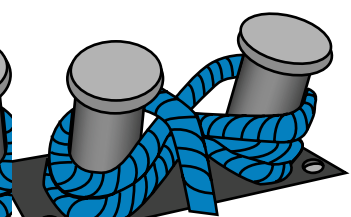
Tommy was a healthy and beautiful baby and always a joy to care for. Everyone loved him. Many of my friends and relatives helped me in various ways. Christine Hair Woodward of Temple sent me Nick Woodward's baby carriage to use. Velma Forbett Livingston let me have Lucy Jane's high chair. Through Mrs. Guy Brown some of Bobbie Callen's little boy clothes were passed on to Tommy. Virge, Jessie, Mamie and many others sent me clothes for him. In September after Tommy came to us, Frank and James [sons of Ellen], both entered Baylor University to take pre-med course. Both boys worked to help their way through school, but they always found time to come by and see their baby brother.

Tommy went with us regularly to Sunday school and church at the First Presbyterian Church. A big time in his young life was when he was promoted on October 1929 from the Beginners Department to the Primary Dept. Tommy attended Sanger Avenue School, entering in September after he was six in February. He also attended West Junior High School. When he graduated from West Jr. High, A.B. and I gave him a wrist watch, which he wore until he entered the Navy in 1942. I got him a new one then, and I wore the old one until 1950 when it wore out. Tom played the clarinet in the West Jr. Hi band.

My husband, A.B. Hughes, died September 22, 1939. Tommy was in Senior Class in Waco High School and graduated in June 1940. In September 1940 he entered Texas Technological College at Lubbock, Texas [studied engineering for two years]. The United States entered World War II on December 7, 1941. The day after school was out in May 1942, Tom Wilson with other Texas Tech students went to Dallas, Texas to enlist in the United States Navy. I met him there.

He also trained at Athens, Georgia. He had 4 months at Pensacola, Florida and received his Commission, Ensign, and Wings there. Howard Hughes, my son, and I went on the train to Pensacola to be with Tom when he received his Commission, Thomas J. Wilson, Naval Aviator, August 3, 1943. We stayed at San Carlos Hotel, where we met the girl, Jerre Meanza whom he seemed to think a lot of. She lived in Birmingham, Alabama, but was there with her aunt. Will write more of her later. On Oct. 26, 1943, he was sent to Glenview, Illinois for Carrier Qualification training Aircraft Service – Unit 5 – and to Composite Squadron Sixty-five.

Tom Wilson spent Christmas with us at Austin, Texas in 1942. Tommy went to his brother John's wedding at Ft. Worth on July 4, 1942 when he and Methe Lowe were married in a garden wedding at her home. He stood up with them as Best Man. He forgot to take his coat and had to borrow one from Johnny, who was then stationed at Camp



Berkley, Abilene, Texas. Later, Christmas 1943 he visited Methe and Johnny in San Bernardino, California, just before he was sent to the Pacific.

He was with us Christmas 1944 for he had the entire month for furlough. He left me on January 1, 1945. I have a picture of him standing by his Dodge as he and a friend were leaving for Norfolk, Virginia. He went by Birmingham, Alabama to see Jere Meanza. He wrote me later that they broke up, but remained friends. He sent me the engagement ring. Jere is married now and has three children and lives in Florida. We exchange Christmas cards each year. He wrote me later that they broke up, but remained friends. He sent me the engagement ring. Jere is married now and has three children and lives in Florida. We exchange Christmas cards each year.

I will try to give fact about Tommy while in the service of the United States Navy: 1942 – Enlisted in Navy Air Force and trained at Austin, Texas and Athens, Georgia.

1943 – Trained at Dallas Love Field, Pensacola, Florida and received wings and commission; trained at Jacksonville, Florida, Glenview, Illinois, and assigned Carrier Air Craft Service Unit 5 and Composite Squadron 65. Dec 2, left San Diego on USS Midway. Spent Christmas with Methe & Johnny Wilson [Tommy's biological brother] in San Bernardino, CA and drove to Lake Arrowhead in the mountains.

1944 – Sent to the Pacific; took part in Saipan, Morotai, Tinian, and Leyte Gulf Battles. October 25, carrier St. Lo was sunk and almost all the squadron 65 were lost. Tommy and a few other pilots landed on Dulag Air Field, the Army's unfinished field at Leyte. November 1, 1944 he was promoted LT (jg) He wrote me "It took 15 months to make it. Doesn't make much difference in my pay, but does make me feel I'm not the lowest thing in the Navy now." Came home to Austin, Texas on plane for 1 month leave. He and I spent the month in Waco, Dallas, Ft. Worth, and Lubbock – then he left me in Waco, Jan 1, 1945.

1945 -- Left for Norfolk, Virginia. January 11, Atlantic Fleet Action Duty. March 13, Sent me a picture from Oceana, VA. April 2, talked to Tommy at Oceana on Easter Sunday. April 18, I received a card from Capt. Francis J. McKenna, Commander of the St. Lo. April 26, I received a telegram telling of Tom's death – signed "Fleet Air Detachment, Oceana Field, Virginia. May 3, 1945, Burial in Oakwood Cemetery in Waco, Texas.

Funeral services were held at Wilkerson and Hatch Funeral Home. He was buried with Military Honors – six Army pilots from Waco Army Air Field were pallbearers. The flag was folded and presented to me. It has never been unfolded. The flag was presented to me by LT(jg) D.S. Dobbins – USNR – of Fighting Squadron 95. Officiating at funeral – Dr. C.T. Calkwell – Pastor Emeritus Rev. Tom Callaher – Pastor, First Presbyterian Church – Waco, Texas.


Here is a quote from a letter from Tommy's Commanding Officer – "A flight of eight planes, one of which was Tom, were engaged in gunnery runs on a towed sleeve, about 35 miles to sea directly off the field. After the completion of one of the runs, Tom called to the flight leader, stating that his engine was failing and he was heading for the beach, he made what was apparently a normal water landing. The plane sunk quickly, he had inflated his life jacket, and appeared to be all right. He was picked up within 45 minutes of his forced landing. The doctor stated his death was caused by drowning. He had not been injured in any way by his forced landing.

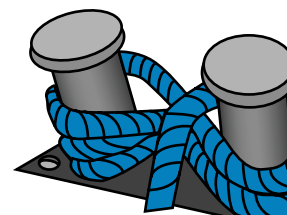
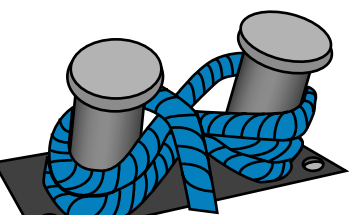
Tommy was training at Oceana, VA. with the Fighting Squadron 95. Week after Tommy's death, the 95th went to San Diego to go in combat in the Pacific. Two of the boys of the 95th Squadron drove his car from Oceana to Austin to me.

When Tommy came home Dec. 6, 1944 – he was wearing 3 ribbons and 5 stars and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Distinguished Flying Cross Medal was sent to J.D. about July 1946 – then he sent it to me in Nov. 1946.

Lieutenant (jg) John Langford, Flight Leader of Lynchburg, Virginia said "When Tom called him on radio telling him that he was having engine trouble, that Tom sounded cool and sure of himself. However, the engine failed due to loss of fuel pressure, as Tommy stated. Tom showed no signs of alarm over the radio at any time. He was a pretty cool pilot and made a beautiful landing.

THOMAS JEFF WILSON – gave his Life for his Country at the age of 22 years, 2 months and 20 days.

Note from D. Hughes-Grandson of Ellen Hughes: As of August 26, 2012, the flag is still unfolded. 



READY ROOM



Planning & Info for the 2012 USS St. Lo Reunion
October 22-26, 2012 in New Orleans, Louisiana
Hosted by Rodney Williams

(Continued from page 2)

2012 USS St. Lo Reunion Agenda

Monday, Oct. 22nd: Welcome & Registration. **Tuesday, Oct. 23rd:** Free Day or New Orleans Bus Tour. **Wednesday, Oct. 24th:** WW II Museum; Lunch & Musical Entertainment at Stage Door Theater. **Thursday, Oct. 25th:** Memorial Service at Jackson Barracks with Lunch at Landry's; Dinner Banquet & Dancing. **Friday, Oct. 26th:** Farewell Breakfast.

Now that you've seen all the fun we'll be having, make your plans to join us in the **BIG EASY** by following these three simple steps.

STEP ONE: Complete the 2012 Reunion registration form, enclose payment, and return to Rodney Williams by Sept. 1. If you need a registration form or have any questions, **please don't hesitate to call** Rodney Williams at 504.271.2212, Judy/Larry Hoffman at 615.983.0958, or JoAnn Sosa at 608.845.7290.


STEP TWO: Make your hotel reservations directly with the Double Tree by Hilton in Kenner, LA no later than 3:00 p.m. on Sept. 22. To receive special rate of \$109.00 plus \$13.90 tax, use the group code **MIL**. Please note that the hotel has **FREE** parking, airport shuttle, and transportation to shops and restaurants within 5 miles of the hotel at no charge. The hotel rate is valid for two days before and after the reunion.

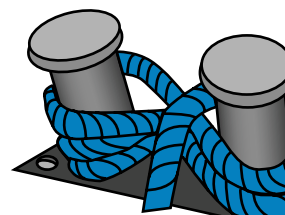
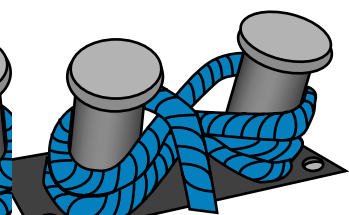
STEP THREE: Plan your transportation. The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY) is located just three miles (four minute free shuttle ride) from the Double Tree hotel in Kenner. Because MSY is an international airport, all major airlines are represented. As a suggestion, Southwest also flies to New Orleans and has the advantage allowing two pieces of checked luggage (50 LBS) for **NO CHARGE!** I don't know if anyone uses Southwest, but for me it makes a big difference with luggage fees when I'm traveling. Lastly, if you need assistance at the airports, don't hesitate to request wheelchairs or shuttle rides if necessary. It may make your whole trip a lot easier.

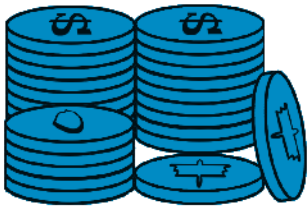
AMTRAK is another means of transportation. New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal is located at 2150 City Grill, in New Orleans which is just 13 driving miles from the Double Tree in Kenner.



For those of you travel by car/truck as I am again this year, I really, really, recommend a GPS. Besides being a lot of fun to use, I literally don't travel without one. Next to the microwave, I wouldn't be without my GPS and cell phone. It's our kids fault; they've brought me into this century!

Well you have all the information necessary to attend the 2012 Reunion. Don't miss out on getting together with friends and having a great time. See you in the **BIG EASY!** 





TREASURER'S REPORT

August 7, 2012
Carole Wahl, Treasurer

USS St Lo (formerly Midway) CVE-63/VC-65 Association Inc
For the period October 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012*

Balance on hand October 1, 2011 \$ 13,592.61

Receipts:

Membership Dues/Donation \$ 960.00
Ship's Store \$ 0

Total Receipts \$ 1124.00

Disbursements:

Ship's Store \$ 139.35
Postage/Shipping \$ 44.26

Total Disbursements \$ 183.61

Balance on hand June 30, 2012 \$14,533.00

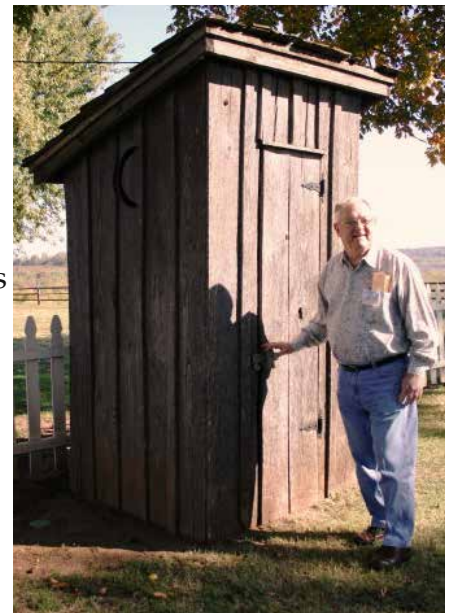
Reunion Account Balance 6/30/2012 \$ 7999.84

Respectively submitted: August 7, 2012
Carole Wahl
Treasurer

*NOTE: Due to annual October board meeting, financial statements are presented using 10/1 - 9/30 rather than fiscal year 1/1 - 12/31.



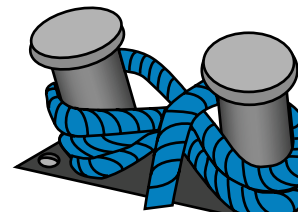
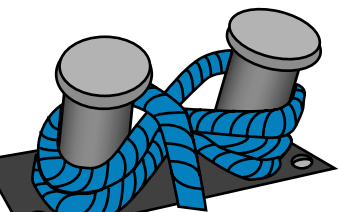
POW/MIA Table at the Memorial Service Luncheon (JS)



Insuring that restroom facilities meet the New Orleans standard, Rodney Williams makes a thorough inspection...for next years 2012 Reunion. (RW)



Barbara Odom, Aaron Larson, and Kerri Smith

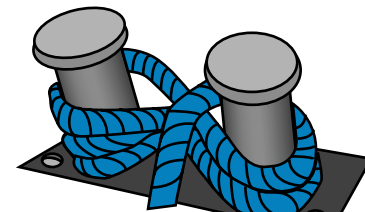
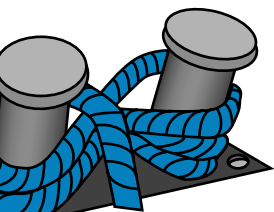


ON THE BRIDGE



USS St. Lo (formerly Midway)
 CVE-63/VC-65 Association, Inc.
 Board of Directors and Officers 2012-2013

<p>1) Rodney Williams, President 7621 Hwy 39 Baithwaite, LA 70040-2217 Telephone: (504) 271-2212 E-Mail: rwilliams943@bellsouth.net</p>	<p>9) Michael Getas, Director 26 Cowbarn Lane - Apt 13 Novato, CA 94947-5136 Telephone: (415) 328-4774 E-Mail:</p>	<p>17) Eugene Sherrell, Director 18875 Coppermine Road Rogers, AR 72756-8148 Telephone: (479) 925-1403 E-Mail: gs2414@msn.com</p>
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<p>3) Judy Hoffman, Secretary 2752 Fleet Drive Hermitage, TN 37076-3531 Telephone: (615) 983-0957 E-Mail: judynlarry@comcast.net</p>	<p>11) Robert A. Jaeger, Director 2507 Hamlin Avenue, SE Buffalo, MN 55313-4611 Telephone: (763) 477-6489 E-Mail: bobdeejaeger@yahoo.com</p>	<p>19) JoAnn Sosa, Director-Newsletter Editor 2601 Tonto Trail Verona, WI 53593-9247 Telephone: (608) 845-7290 E-Mail: jsosa@ussstlo.com</p>
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“WE REMEMBER”

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

USS ST. LO CVE-63

(FORMERLY MIDWAY) AND

VC-65 ASSOCIATION



Unexpected Strategy 1053 Hours After crossing the ramp at less than 50 feet high, Lt. Seki pushed sufficiently to hit the deck at about the number 5 wire, 15 feet to the port side of the centerline. There was a tremendous crash and flash as his bomb exploded.



Shipmates from the USS St. Lo and USS Dennis assemble at the new Armed Forces Reserve Center in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma for the 2011 Memorial Service: (l-r) Les Shodo (St Lo), Don Rice (St Lo), Tom Pettrillo (St Lo), Dale Orgill (St Lo), Gene Sherrell (St Lo), Fred Graziano (Dennis), Bob Schueter (St Lo).

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