



# USS Noxubee AOG 56

## Shipmates Association Newsletter

November 2008

www.ussnoxubee.org "Always on the Go"

*Hope you all had a  
great Thanksgiving.  
Wishing All a  
Merry Christmas  
and a Healthy,  
Prosperous New  
Year 2009*

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#### Editor:

Dick Barber

#### Association Officers:

President; Gary Hall

Treasurer; Bob Ahlersmeyer

Secretary; Dick Barber

#### Board of Directors:

Dick Bland, Dudley Cass, Pat

Francione, Jim Gabrisch, Paul

Gryniewicz, "Moose" Haviland,

Bill Holton, Howard Justice, Bob

Mitchell, Tom Mize and Jan Scott

## Reunion News

For those Shipmates and their Wives that did not attend the Quad Cities Reunion, you missed another great one. There were twenty-four Shipmates in attendance, thirteen accompanied. Seven were first time attendees: Rod and Linda Wilson, Dan and Irene Hardel, Richard Blake, Howard Sprinkle, Jerry Jenkins, Ernie Thedell, Sam Nielsen. George Hahn BM3, 1967-70 was looking forward to attending the reunion. George received orders and crossed the Quarterdeck 16 April 2008, his wife Vicki attended on his behalf.

The Old Salt Meeting Place opened Sunday afternoon about three PM, greetings and stories started much earlier as Shipmates arrived to check into The Stoney Creek Inn. Food and beverages were available as soon as Marilyn and her very capable friends completed the room's setup. Their preparation and service of Hors D'ourves prior to dinner was a meal in itself. After a brief opening ceremony and dinner we were able to relax and get reacquainted with first timers and discuss the coming day's events.

Monday was a full day starting at 0830 and not finishing up until close to 2200 hours. There was a visit to the Deere-Wiman House the home of John Deer's descendents from 1872-1976. Next we entered Hillcrest now the Butterworth Center, built in 1892 a

Please see *Reunion News* on page 2

## Vietnam Vets Exposed to Agent Orange

Agent Orange was discussed at the board meeting as well as the General Meeting. It is evident that the numbers of shipmates affected may never be fully known without locating those serving onboard during the period Noxubee was in Vietnam. There are also a number of Shipmates that have crossed the Quarterdeck from that period; cause on some is not known. Shipmates that have symptoms, some are being treated, some have claims pending while others to date have been turned down. If you have any symptoms, by all means go to the Veterans Administration Hospital nearest you to be checked, give the names of men known to be receiving treatment that served on Noxubee during your time frame. Also go to the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and ask for help in filing claims. It is my understanding they have been very helpful.

## Shipmates Crossed the Quarterdeck

Harold "Ken" Clayton FN 1951-52 07-22-2007

John S Olkowski F1c 1946 02-13-2008

Raymond A Ledenican SK3 1969-71 06-20-2008

Wilbur Hales SN 1952-54 07-27-2008

*Reunion News from page 1*

wedding gift for Katherine Deere and William Butterworth. From there we returned to Stoney Creek for a quick lunch. After lunch we sallied over to the John Deere Collection Center for a chance to see some antique tractors as well as new farm equipment. We were told the Collection Center will be closing its door in the very near future. We then walked over to the John Deere Pavilion where unique John Deere memorabilia could be purchased.

From there, on to the Kenny Bush Farm! Kenny Bush is a farmer by trade, semi-retired with a private collection of tractors and automobiles as well as a three story museum with everything from farm implements to household items, a replica of a school room circa 1930's. A collection of books covering almost any subject that has to do with farm equipment parts, repair, and too much more to mention. From the Bush farm we journeyed on to Prairie Rose Farm, home of Don and Marilyn Andress. While there excellent food was served, Don took groups out for Hayrack rides through his pasture. On the first run which my wife and I were on there was some consternation when Don motioned for Gary Hall to take the wheel of his antique John Deere Tractor and continue the run back to the house. Gary with pride took control and the journey was uneventful. No one bailed out or tried to walk back. Well done Gary. For the rest of the evening more banter and stories told while marshmallows were roasted, toasted or cremated. A long day and a great evening had to end; we were transported back to Stoney Creek to get ready for another day.

Tuesday found us at Rock Island Arsenal. We toured Lock 15 (built in 1934) on the Mississippi River, just above Government Bridge (built in 1897). While there a tug pushing six barges entered the Lock we witnessed a marvel in engineering as the barges were lowered in the lock to continue the journey and also the opening of Government Bridge to permit the continued travel on the river. During the Narrated tour of the island by bus we were able to visit the grave of George Hahn in the national Cemetery. Additional time was available for us to visit the Arsenal Museum. We proceeded on to the Machine Shed in Davenport Iowa for a late lunch before heading back to Stoney Creek for some free time.

Wednesday morning the Officers and Board of Directors met. A slate of Directors was prepared for submission and approval at the Association General Meeting; see heading for current Board members. The Current Officers, President, Gary Hall; Treasure, Bob Ahlersmeyer; Secretary, Dick Barber were nominated to serve thru the 2009 Reunion.

Howard and Frances Justice were introduced as the Hosts for the 2009 Noxubee Reunion, to be held in Charleston West Virginia.

## More Reunion News

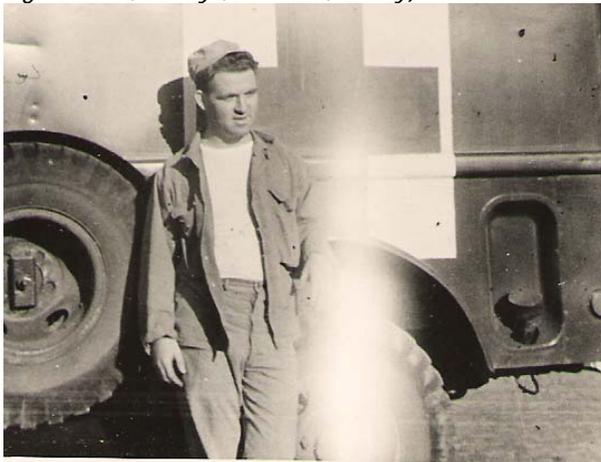
After the General Meeting adjourned, group photos were taken. Wednesday afternoon was open, free for Shipmates to wander the area sightseeing or?

Photos of reunion attendees were taken prior to the Closing Banquet. A table was set at the Banquet for Shipmates who have Crossed the Quarterdeck. After completion of the meal a flag ceremony was conducted Honoring our Missing Shipmates. After the ceremony, door prizes were awarded to those having a selected nautical term on the back of their ID badge. We knew there was something amiss after the third or fourth drawing and all were females. After all the women



### 1947-52 Noxubee Shipmates

Dick and Raye Barber stopped to visit Leroy Wilson this past summer. Darryl Middleton and Charlie Heinig came up to visit as well! (Left to right: Dick, Darryl, Charlie, Leroy)



Harold "Ken" Clayton



Frank Gosselin and (?)

## 2009 Reunion Information

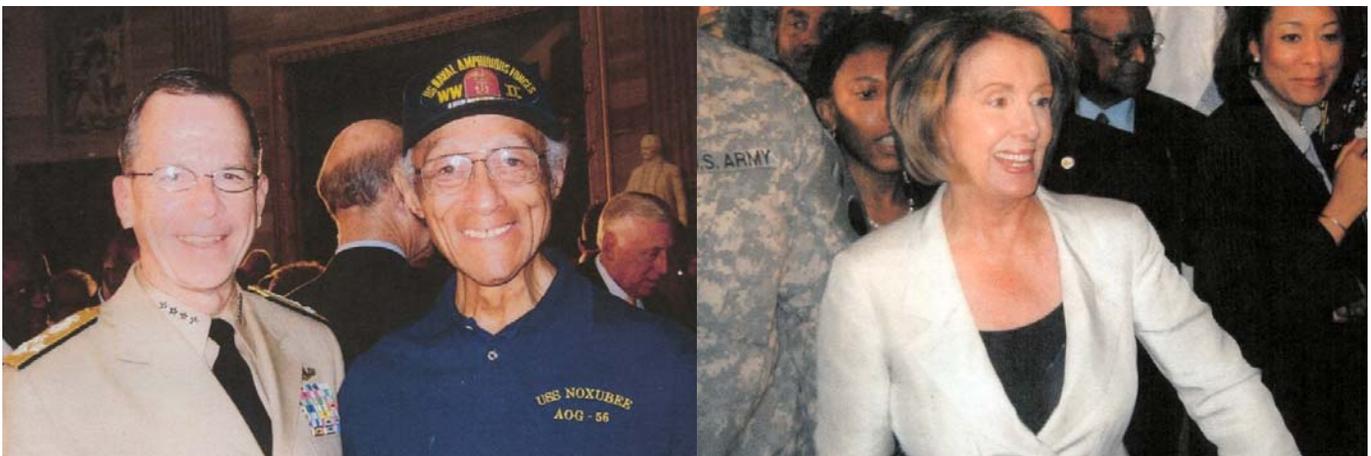
Dear Shipmates:

Frances and I are excited to host the next reunion in Charleston, WV. We have met with the Charleston Visitors Bureau to make arrangements to set the date and events for the 2009 reunion. We should have hotel bids by the end of next week. We will keep you informed as details are confirmed. We have already contacted and heard back from some of our shipmates that say they are coming. We are looking forward to having everyone visit our beautiful state.

Let me tell you a little about our city and state. West Virginia was granted statehood in 1863 by proclamation from President Lincoln. It succeeded from Virginia during the Civil War. It is considered the southern most northern state and the northern most southern state. The population is about 2,000,000 with Charleston being the largest city of about 51,000. Charleston is the capital of WV, located on the banks of the Kanawha River and is intersected by interstates 64, 77 and 79. Our airport is Yeager Airport (named after native Chuck Yeager). The airport call letters are CRW (\*if booking a flight, make sure you book for Chas, WV not Chas, SC\*). WV is hilly country and very colorful in the fall. For anyone driving into our state you should have a very scenic drive.

We have several tours we are looking at that we think are enjoyable but will also give you a little of our history. We also want to give shipmates plenty of time to visit with each other because that's the best part of the reunion. We plan to give you plenty of options for your free time. So make your plans now to be with us October 4<sup>th</sup>-October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Hope to see y'all in WV.

Howard & Frances Justice



Admiral Mike G Mullen, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, is principal military adviser to the president, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. He is pictured with William "Bill" Holton, a veteran of US Naval Amphibious Forces in the Pacific Fleet for the duration of WWII. Post war, Engineman 3C, petty officer Holton was assigned to the Atlantic Fleet and served proudly aboard the gasoline tanker, USS Noxubee AOG-56, during 1947-48. Subsequently, the Noxubee became the Admiral's first shipboard command. Ironically, he was also destined to be the last commanding officer of the feisty and agile vessel, as he would preside over its decommissioning process. The vessel was eventually sold for scrap, much to the chagrin of all of us who grew up on her. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi hosted the ceremony. Photo on right.

*More Reunion News from page 2*

## Shipmate News

### Missing Shipmate contacted

Tom E Basham HMC 1974-75 has contacted the editor and is back on the active files. Tom's wife passed away and he has had a bout with cancer.

### Newly Located Shipmates

(Contact addresses are on the shipmates directory)

Larry Arjona CS3 1966-68  
 Frank Gosselin EN3 1974-75  
 Francis A Mazur S2 1947  
 Patrick McGee SN 1948-50  
 Russ Myers SN 1969-70  
 Howard Sprengle ENCS 1966-68  
 Claude Thibodeau S1c 1945-46  
 Cecil Wolfe ENC 1966-1969

Bill Holton attended the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the integration of the United States Armed Forces, Congress Woman Nancy Pelosi hosted. The photo was taken with Adm. Mike Mullin. See photos page 3.

### Note

In the interest of reducing expenses we post the Newsletter on the Noxubee Web site.

If you have a computer, and are satisfied with getting the Newsletter thru that media rather than by snail mail, please contact me, and I will put a hold on mailing one to you.

received a prize, Marilyn and her very capable helpers broke out large sacks loaded with home made Throw's for each of the men attending.

A busy four days came to a conclusion about 2115 hours as the Hospitality Room had to be cleared to be prepped for another group the following morning. Goodbyes were said as some headed back to their rooms while some found their way to the Suite of Don and Marilyn for more talking and merriment before retiring.

Thursday found all heading back to their respective homes thinking about 2009 and Charleston, West Virginia.



Wilbur Hales

## Noxubee Shirts and Hats



- Shirt Large (5ea) and X-Large (4ea) \$16.10 ea + shipping
- Hats \$10.60 ea. + shipping

Contact Dick Barber 706-245-6110, 706-540-3494,  
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