



USS Noxubee AOG 56

Shipmates Association Newsletter

November 2009

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Reunion News

Charleston, W VA 2009

Twenty five shipmates fifteen accompanied by their wives enjoyed four days or more in Charlotte. With the car show on Saturday and Sunday many of us arrived Saturday. There were over 800 antique and other cars to see, my wife was impressed by the 1955, 56, and 57 T Birds. Others had their favorites, too numerous to mention. All were impressive, some in like new condition, others rebuilt with new paint, upholstery and modified engines. It took just about two days to see most and probably many were missed.

Registration for the reunion started at 3:00pm Sunday. There were goodie bags, beverages and finger food for starters even though we were heading out to the "Fifth Quarter" for dinner at 6:00 pm. Opening ceremonies included presentation of the colors and a welcome by the Mayor of Charlotte, Danny Jones. Francis and Howard Justice gave us a brief of the agenda for Monday prior to our returning to the Hospitality Room to chat and relax.

Monday found us getting on a bus at 0800 for a trip to Beckley, WVA and a tour of the Beckley Coal Mine. If you had never been in a coal mine working conditions are difficult to realize. In their day, there was barely room to sit up let alone stand. Pay in the early 1900's was twenty-five cents a ton with about four tons a day mined by one person. We were fortunate to be able to ride in a tram to see what was once the working area opened to accommodate visitors. There was about a thirty minute period that a retired miner was able to show us equipment used in earlier days of mining. The equipment included the cages canaries were carried in, carbon lights, more modern battery operated lights, meal and water buckets. We saw methods of early excavation by dynamite, and newer methods by equipment similar to a mechanized chain saw that made horizontal cuts into the coal vein. The coal veins appeared to be only one and a half to two feet high. After leaving the mine we were taken to Tamarack shopping center where we also had time for lunch. Tamarack is an upscale shopping center where only items made in West Virginia are sold.

Tuesday morning was open and leisure time, we boarded the bus at 12:30 for the trip to the Blenko Glass Factory. There were several demonstrations of glass blowing and shaping during our time there. Many of the groups were seen in the showroom buying the wares. After we left the factory we were bussed to the Gym at the Church Howard and Francis attend. Their family prepared an excellent wholesome West Virginia spread for us. There was no "Roadkill", but a delicious meal. Thank you all for the hospitality. We were entertained by a local Bluegrass group the Kidd Brothers. I don't remember if they explained why "Brothers", to my knowledge they were not related. Regardless, they put on an outstanding show for us. A request was made for "Moose" to join the band for a couple songs, which he did to the delight of all. There were interruptions between some band selections while Howard and Francis gave out very unusual West Virginia door prizes "donated by local entrepreneurs" Needless to say a good time was had by all.

All good times must come to an end but prior to leaving attendee photos that had been taken the previous day by the Justice's Son were passed out. After viewing them some of the attendees almost passed out. The pictures are classic, I will not show any in the newsletter though. Take my word they are truly West Virginia Classic. Take a moment and call one of your friends that attended to see if they will send you a copy. After the commotion died down we boarded the bus back to the hotel for the remainder of the

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"Moose" Haviland, Bill Holton,

Howard Justice, Bob Mitchell,

Tom Mize, and Jan Scott

Annual dues are \$20.00 for calendar year January through December. Please mail to:

USS Noxubee Association Treas.

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evening. The hospitality room was open and more food and goodies available thanks to Heather Justice, Daughter-in-Law of Howard and Francis. Heather made sure there was snack food available through out the reunion, most home made and thoroughly delicious. Thank you, Heather.

Wednesday was a free day except for the annual meeting of Board of Directors, the Annual Noxubee Association meeting, then group photos being taken earlier in the day. The closing Banquet started at 1800 hours (six pm landlubber time). A memorial table was set; Bill Holton gave the prayer before dinner. On completion of dinner a flag ceremony was held in memory of our shipmates who have crossed the Quarterdeck this year. Their names were read, and a bell rung after each name (see Figure 1). The National Ensign was passed among attending shipmates in their honor. After completion of the ceremony drawings for door prizes were held. Our Cowboy Poet Laureate Don "Andy" Andress recited a couple of his favorites prior to closing and all heading back to the Hospitality room. Another sea story or two and shipmates started saying their farewells until next year.

All I can say is there were a good many of our shipmates that missed another great reunion. We had two new first time attendees; Pat McGee, and Alan Edmondson. If you read the memorial page you can see there are more additions and they will no doubt continue. Please start to plan now for 2010. We all want to have you join us while we still can.

2010 Reunion heading to Buffalo New York, August 15-18

"Moose" and Karen Haviland have volunteered to Host the 2010 Noxubee Reunion. There is talk of a side trip to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. (*At this time travel to Canada or Mexico requires a passport or Travel Card for re-entry to the United States*). Accommodation arrangements have been made at the Adams Mark Hotel, 120 Church St Buffalo, NY. For reservations, call 716-845-5100 or 800-444-2326. Please identify yourself as being in the Noxubee Reunion Group. They have agreed to a rate of \$91.00 per night, parking fees are waived. If flying, most of the major airlines fly into the Buffalo Niagara Airport. On Monday 16 August we will be visiting the Buffalo Naval Park. We are also working on other tours and points of interest. Closing banquet will be held at Adam's Mark on Wednesday 18 August. More information will be forthcoming and posted on the Noxubee web site as it becomes available.

How about a cruise in 2011?

The membership in Charleston voted to look at the possibility of a Cruise (4,5,or?days). Howard and Francis Justice are looking into costs. We would like to have your thoughts on this. Please e-mail me at dicbarber@aol.com , or drop me a note at 340 S. Broad St., Bowman, GA 30624 or call me 706-540-3494. The sooner we have an idea of numbers the easier it will be to solicit rates. A cruise would also require a passport for re-entry into the U.S.

Agent Orange Updates VA Announces Progress on Agent Orange Claims

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki announced a decision to establish a presumptive service-connection for Vietnam veterans who have B cell leukemia, Parkinson's disease or ischemic heart disease. These diseases are all related to exposure to Agent Orange, a herbicide used in Vietnam. Secretary Shinseki's decision was based upon the recently released Institute of Medicine (IOM) report that was mentioned in the July 31, 2009, edition of Newsbytes. FRA is advocating for a broader Agent Orange service-connection and this announcement is a major step in the right direction. Many Navy veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam, so-called "blue water" veterans, have health problems frequently associated with herbicide exposure, but have endured lengthy legal struggles to prove these problems are service-related. The Association has repeatedly pushed for a legislative remedy (H.R. 2254) and has referenced this issue as a priority for 2009 during the military and veterans' service organization meetings with the House and Senate VA committees. To read the VA press release with links to more information on each service-connected illness, visit:

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1796>.



Figure 1

Shipmates Crossed the Quarter Deck:

- Douglas "Doug" Dunaway EN3 66-69 26 July 2009
- J.C. "Jim" Claughton LT 51-52 22 August 2009
- Herbert Egger LT 51-52 20 Nov 2009

Shipmates News:

- Our Condolences to Tom Mize and family on the passing of Tom's Wife Peggy 9-21-09.
- Our Condolences to Gary and Betty Hall and Family on the loss of their Son Michael Hall 10-13-09

Board Members Re-elected

Members were approved during the last Association meeting at the reunion. Officers were also re-elected for another year. Dudley Cass submitted his resignation from the board; we'd like to thank him for his service.

Reunion Trivia Facts

This reunion has twenty-five attendees from eighteen states! We've had 111 from 32 states in the past. And We've had a total of 258 for eight reunions. Three shipmates have made all eight reunions:

Bob Ahlersmeyer

"Moose" and Karen Haviland
Dick and Raye Barber.

Future Reunions

I'm sure many are asking when we will be heading westward for another reunion. In order to do so we really need some one in the area to host. Our groups are fair size but not large enough to have an outside source setting up for us. If you can get two or three shipmates to help we would love to see other locations with you.