



# USS Seattle AOE 3

## Veteran's Association

### Newsletter



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Issue # 32

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#### REUNION # 14 - 2024 in Providence, RI

Plans are underway – first info will be out in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2024

### Letter from The Association President

Shipmates

As we close another year of our association, we are mindful that we lost several of our shipmates and others received bad health news, but we remain thankful in all things. Even with a struggling economy and times where we as Americans do not seem to agree enough, America remains a land of opportunity and a beacon of light to the rest of the world.

Please read about our 2023 Reunion in Cleveland for those who missed it and read the article about the 2024 Reunion and mark you calendars so you will not miss it. We are headed to New England, our first time in that area, and look forward to seeing new shipmates from there.

It is interesting to look back at the history of our association. The ship was commissioned in 1969, during the late years of Vietnam. Many of the sailors of that early crew were between 18 and 25. For a bunch, it was their first duty assignment in the Navy and as plank owners, they had a special relationship with the ship. It was no wonder that when the ship was decommissioned in 2005, the majority of those who attended were plank owners and those who made the first and second Med Cruises.

By the time the ship was decommissioned in 2005, those sailors were between 52 and 60 years of age. Most had raised their families; their careers were well established and they were free to travel. Those were the guys who started the association and were the ones who attended the early Reunions and as long as they are able, they plan to attend each Reunion. But Father Time has a way of entering the picture on all of us.

Desert Storm was 1990-1991. Guys serving who were 22 years old are 55 years old now. About the same age as those who started the association. Those who were aboard at the time of decommissioning who were 22 years old are about 40 years old today. There are no new Seattle sailors after 2005.

***So, what's my point? We have two more generations of USS Seattle sailors who can meet and keep the association alive. They are the Desert Storm Era and the Decommissioning ERA.***

We need to reach out to both groups. Today we have one member who served aboard Seattle AND is still on active duty. I bet there are more.

If you are not a member, please consider joining and stay up with us. Even if it is hard to make reunions at this time in your life, there will be a time when it will be easier and having that connection over the years will give you the desire to come when you can. The history of attendance tells us, if you come to one you are very likely to come to another. Maybe not every year, but you will return multiple years.

**May God Bless you and your family and God Bless America!  
Fair Winds and Following Seas,**

David Holton, president USSSVA, 704-698-5948, [david@davidholtonconsulting.com](mailto:david@davidholtonconsulting.com)

## Letter from The Association Vice-President

Shipmates,

We are a few months removed from our 2023 reunion in Cleveland, Ohio. We had a smaller turnout than anticipated due to illnesses and injuries, but those that did attend had a great time as usual. You can view pictures and videos of all events as well as the banquet on our website. We are in the process of working on our 2024 reunion which will be held in Providence, Rhode Island August 7<sup>th</sup> – Aug 11<sup>th</sup>.

We have less than 2 months left this year which means it is time to start thinking about 2024 dues. Also, we all kept in touch with a shipmate we served with, please encourage them to join our great association.

It is never too early to start making your plans to attend. More info about hotel reservations and reunion registration will be available in early February 2023.

Unfortunately, inflation is still higher than we would like it to be. This will NOT affect your association dues. Dues will remain \$30.00, the same as in 2009 when this Association was founded.. If you prefer to be a Life Member, dues are based on your age and can be found on our website.

**Happy Holidays to each of our members, our guests and their families.**

Rich Toma  
Vice President, USSVA



## 2024 MEMBERSHIP



Annual Membership cost is \$30.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year reported on board: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:      New Member \_\_\_\_\_      Renewing Member \_\_\_\_\_

Life Memberships are also available. Rates by age can be found on our website.

### MAIL TO:

Dan Justynski, USSVA Treasurer  
254 Sugar House Ln.  
E. Thetford, VT 05043

Make Checks Payable To:

**USS Seattle AOE-3 Veteran's Association**

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2023 USS Seattle Reunion – Cleveland, Ohio  
(recap by Mark Giraldi)

While unfortunate last-minute circumstances prevented several Shipmates from attending, the 2023 Seattle reunion at the Cleveland Airport Wyndham still proved to be a lot of fun and filled with interesting activities. Wednesday, August 9<sup>th</sup> was the official check-in date as shipmates reported aboard to take part in the festivities. As always, the Registration/Hospitality Suite was open and awaiting shipmate arrivals with food graciously provided by the hotel and your favorite beverages and snacks courtesy of the Association. Old acquaintances met to reminisce, and first-time attendees were warmly welcomed to the fold.

On Thursday morning, we got down to business with a members meeting, while the spouses enjoyed breakfast on their own. Shortly after the meeting, we boarded a bus for the ride down to Canton, Ohio, and the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Opened in 1963, the Hall of Fame enshrines exceptional figures in the sport of professional football, including players, coaches, franchise owners, and front-office personnel, almost all of whom made their primary contributions to the game in the National Football League.

After we all got our fill of “Thursday Morning Football”, we hopped back on the bus for lunch at Fat Heads Brewery for terrific burgers, barbecue, and our favorite adult beverages.

Back on the bus and straight to the hotel to relax, get cleaned up and get ready for our excursion to downtown Cleveland and a dinner cruise. We boarded Lady Caroline and were seated in the lovely dining room replete with a cash bar and great view of the Cleveland skyline. The Lady Caroline is a four-deck, 120-foot-long ship featuring more than 15,000 square feet for passengers to enjoy. Three of her decks are fully enclosed and climate controlled. The sky deck features a covered bar with music and open views for sweeping panoramic sightseeing. As we got underway, we were treated to a great buffet dinner and dessert. The ship continued outside the breakwater and cruised Lake Erie effortlessly. At the cruise’s end we boarded the bus and returned to the hotel to continue socializing at the Hospitality Suite.

After breakfast on Friday morning, we had a special treat. Our Association is fortunate to have an active-duty member, John Pettry, Hospital Corpsman Master Chief, who was kind enough to arrange a guided tour of the Hospital Corpsman Trauma Training Center (HMTT) located at University Hospital in Cleveland. There we learned about the Navy’s new approach to training Hospital Corpsmen in the real-world trauma situations that they will likely face in the future. We were told about the curriculum, met the local command, and viewed the Simulation Lab where students are expected to react to varying physical symptoms such as blood pressure, heart rate and others, all controlled by the instructors from a handheld tablet. Students then get practical experience by being assigned rotation at the hospital’s Emergency Department Trauma Center. This unit is one of eight in the country that conducts this type of training with the goal of preparing our Corpsmen for any crisis that unfolds in the future.

We returned to the bus to be driven downtown and dropped off at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, located on the shore of Lake Erie in downtown Cleveland, Ohio, recognizes and archives the history of the best-known and most influential artists, producers, engineers, and other notable figures who have had some major influence on the development of Rock and Roll. Folks were able to spend as much time there as they wanted and then visited the other sites in downtown Cleveland since they were all within walking distance. Other downtown attractions included The Great Lakes Science Center home to the John Glenn Visitor Center, the USS Cod (SS-224), a Gato-class WWII submarine, and the Steamship William G. Mather Marime Museum.

We capped off a great day with a buffet dinner on the upstairs porch at Shooter’s Waterfront Café. We were all having a great time when the wind piped up and the rain came down and tables and food were blown around. We all moved indoors and continued our dinner after getting ourselves cleaned off. We then boarded the bus back to the hotel and swapped more sea stories at the Hospitality Suite.

As has become routine in our annual reunion agendas, Saturday was a free day where members could go off on their own to relax, sightsee or do whatever they chose. At 5:00 pm that evening, however, everyone mustered into the ballroom for mixer/get together prior to the banquet. Raffle tickets and 50/50 tickets were sold, and everyone mingled and had a good time. At the appointed time, the Color Guard, courtesy of Rich Toma's future son-in-law and grandson presented the colors as a bagpiper played. Then Master Chief Pettry gave the order to "Post Side Boys" as shipmates lined the ballroom doorways to pay respects to Captain Honour and Captain Enschede, our Guest Speaker. Boatswain Bob Miller piped them aboard. All shipmates then retired to the rear of the room where they toasted our fallen shipmates with a dram of Hennessy cognac. Shipmates returned to their seats as Master Chief Pettry read off the names of the shipmates having passed in the last two years. Boatswain Bob Miller then piped them off with a "farewell and following seas, we have the watch". Dinner was then served and afterwards the donated items were raffled, and the 50/50 winners were announced.

As we had our dessert and coffee, Captain Honour introduced our Guest Speakers, Captain and Mrs. Enschede. After being credited with two confirmed MiG-17 shoot-downs and completing 285 combat missions, Captain Enschede was shot down over North Vietnam by a surface-to-air (SAM) missile on 25 August 1972. He was held as a prisoner of war in Hanoi until he returned with the last group of repatriated officers on 29 March 1973. He and his wife Kathy focused their presentation on the different perspectives of being a Prisoner of War and with Kathy enduring the trauma of learning her husband was shot down during the Vietnam War and having to console and raise her three young daughters on her own. It was a very moving presentation and testament to the fortitude of a POW and the perseverance of a Navy wife working to find out any information she could about her missing husband.

Sunday morning was the Farewell Breakfast as shipmates gathered one last time to say their goodbyes and depart until next year in Providence, Rhode Island.

A special thanks to Doug Hollenbeck who devoted much of his time to videoing portions of the reunion which can be viewed on our website. Also, thanks to Rich Toma for working with the Chamber of Commerce in Cleveland and other Cleveland area facilities in arranging and suggesting events and sights. Lastly, Thanks to John Pettry for stepping up and arranging a terrific tour at University Hospital with the HMTT, and to all those that took pictures; we'll get them up on the website shortly.

## FAREWELL to SHIPMATES

Over the years we have lost 100 shipmates and at each reunion we have honored those who have passed on before us. There may be others we do not know of their passing. When we receive word of the passing of a shipmate, we try to find an obituary that we can include (for a limited time) on the ship's internet site. Listed below are the names of those we know that have passed since our last reunion.

[George Hastings Jr.](#) (Crew Of 1968) 🌹 🇺🇸

[James Henderson](#) (Crew Of 1968) 🌹 🇺🇸

[Steve Lee](#) (Crew Of 1992) 🌹 🇺🇸

[James Lunn](#) (Crew Of 1976) 🌹 🇺🇸

[Al R. Pillman](#) (Crew Of 1971) 🌹 🇺🇸

[Jim Ross](#) (Crew Of 1994) 🇺🇸

[William Stollings](#) (Crew Of 1970) 🌹 🇺🇸

[Steve Swagger](#) (Crew Of 1968) 🌹 🇺🇸

[Claude Ward](#) (Crew Of 2003) 🌹 🇺🇸

If you know of a shipmate that has passed, please send info in an email to: [deicker@comcast.net](mailto:deicker@comcast.net)

If you have a link to an obituary, please also include that information as well.

**Fair Winds & Following Seas**