



John Geraghty
Ken Werth
President Emeriti

Ruth Geraghty
Secretary / Treasurer
18 E 37th St.
Bayonne, NJ 07002.
Phone: 201-339-5155
Email: rwgeraghty@verizon.net

Bill Kastens
President
1824 SW Village Dr.
Topeka, KS 66604
Phone: 785-272-2604
Email: bmk1930@sbcglobal.net

Bob "Willie" Williams
Vice-President
1829 Kathleen Ct.
Virginia Beach, VA 23464
Phone: 757-479-2733
Email: griswold5@verizon.net

DIRECTORS: Warren Hopkins, Kent Thomas, Ron Orszag, Jack Chesnick

NOVEMBER 2012 PIEDMONT NEWSLETTER

Piedmont Sailors—Here is a summary of our 2012 Omaha Reunion prepared by Director and Recorder Kent Thomas, Overland, Park, KS; YN 49-52.

Sailors of the USS Piedmont (AD-17) saw and enjoyed the best of Omaha--perfect weather included--at their 23rd annual reunion Sept. 26-30. Registration and reacquaintance with friends began in our hospitality room Wednesday afternoon Sept. 26 with our host hotel, the Comfort Inn & Suites, providing us a great pasta buffet dinner that evening. The hotel also gave us complimentary breakfasts throughout our five-day stay and provided free shuttle services to and from the airport and other locations as desired by our members.

Thursday was devoted to tours of the city, the ever-famous Boys Town and the Strategic Air and Space Museum. We traveled in two chartered buses and saw or learned about Omaha, among many things, the following:

- Famed explorers Lewis and Clark went through the Omaha area in 1804 on their westward trek.
- Omaha is Nebraska's largest city with a city population of 410,000 and a metropolitan population of 865,000. The city was founded in 1854.
- Omaha's unemployment rate is less than 3 percent and the city is home to five Fortune 500 companies: Union Pacific Railroad, ConAgra, Mutual of Omaha, Peter Kiewit and Sons Construction, and Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway.
- The quaint and vibrant Old Market area, featuring art galleries, about 30 restaurants, and many old warehouses which have been converted to loft apartments.
- The University of Nebraska Medical Center.
- The fascinating Durham Museum, housed in beautifully refurbished Union Station and featuring military exhibits of our nation's wars and the evolution of military uniforms.
- Memorial Park, dedicated to veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam.
- Omaha Community Playhouse where Hollywood greats Henry Fonda, Marlon Brando and Dorothy McGuire got their professional starts.
- The University of Nebraska-Omaha, which has about 14,000 students.
- Gold Coast Historic Area, an upscale residential area of older homes, including that of Warren Buffett.
- The Joslyn Castle and Museum.
- St. Cecilia's Catholic Church built in 1905 and reputed at one time to be among the largest 10 Catholic cathedrals in the U.S.
- The new TD Ameritrade Park, now home of the College World Series.
- The huge Omaha Convention Center.
- Pioneer Courage Park, with many beautiful and elaborate sculptures of pioneers, covered wagons, livestock, buffalo, etc.
- The Bob Kerrey pedestrian bridge, 3,000 feet long over the Missouri River, and connecting Nebraska with Iowa, from Omaha to Council Bluffs.

After the guided tour of Omaha, our next stop on Thursday was at Boys Town, where we first enjoyed lunch, then toured the sprawling and well-known facility. Father Edward Flanagan founded the home in 1917 to care for five

boys. The present site was purchased in 1921 and now is home and safe haven to 550 boys and girls, ages 10 until high school graduation. Our guide said about 100 graduate each year and leave Boys Town at that time. Girls have been included since 1979. There are 12 Boys Town sites in the U.S.

Boys Town is a National Historic Landmark and is incorporated in Nebraska as its own town. Its museum traces the footsteps of Father Flanagan and shows how the organization carries on with his legacy. The Boys Town motto is "Saving Children, Healing Families."

Thursday's last bus stop was the Air and Space Museum near Ashland, Nebraska. Formerly the Strategic Air Command (SAC) museum, it displayed old aircraft, mostly bombers built in the 1940s and 1950s. Of special interest were the B-25s used by General Jimmy Doolittle and his men who raided Tokyo in 1942 as a surprise counter-attack to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Our guide said a recent reunion of Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders disclosed only five of the original 80 men were still living. We also saw the B-17, B-29, and the mammoth B-36, plus a U-2 reconnaissance plane like that flown by Gary Powers who was shot down during the Cold War.

Following this tour, our coaches returned us to the hotel. The hospitality room was reopened, thanks to Jack and Marge Chesnick and Willie and Aslaug Williams, with snacks and drinks awaiting. Dinner was on our own that night.

Friday was another highly interesting day of tours.

We visited Outlook Nebraska, Inc., a toilet paper plant that supplies all of the military and other parts of the Federal Government, as well as other facilities it can contract. The fascinating aspect is that of its 64 employees, 62 are legally or totally blind. ONI is the largest employer of blind persons in Nebraska.

The plant began operation in the year 2000 and can produce up to 240,000 toilet paper rolls in a 24-hour day. ONI runs around the clock, using larger rolls of recycled paper purchased from various paper mills around the nation. The purchased large rolls usually weigh between 2100 and 2500 pounds each; some even larger.

Another stop Friday was at the aforementioned Durham Museum where we saw scores of photographs that chronicled the nation's wars, as well as military uniforms worn throughout our history. Union Station, home of the museum, was opened in 1931 and was extremely busy with passenger and freight trains during the 30's, 40's and 50's. The Durham family started refurbishing the station in 1990.

Lunch Friday was at the history-rich Bohemian Cafe, "Omaha's European Connection" since 1924. We enjoyed a choice of three entries plus two kinds of kolackys, a Bohemian pastry. One of the restaurant staff demonstrated how to make kolackys, and we were treated to a musical recording of the cafe's theme song. Here with the ditty: "Dumplings and kraut today at Bohemian Cafe, Draft beer that's sparkling, plenty of parking; See you at lunch, okay?" Anyway, it was a fun time and the food was delicious.

The third tour Friday was one of a kind. It was a very impressive two-hour concert on a Kimball theatre pipe organ in the suburban Markworth home. The original organ was removed from the Leona Theatre in Homestead, Pa., in 1975, and has been rebuilt, cleaned, restored and increased in size over the years since. In 1995, the Markworth's built their current home with the thought of housing a larger organ.

The guest organist for our visit was Jerry Pawlak, a native Chicagoan now living in Lincoln, Nebraska. He played many familiar and nostalgic songs and we sang along for several. Jerry has been the organist for the College World Series the last two years.

Upon returning to the hotel late Friday afternoon, we had a short break and then convened for the Piedmont's annual business meeting, with Bill Kastens, President, in charge.

First order of business was selection of a reunion location for 2013. Steve Hatfield, who was to explore the possibility of meeting in the Seattle-Tacoma area, was absent so no further consideration was given to that site. Willie Williams, Vice-President, said he had toured the Black Hills region within the last week and said he was impressed with Rapid City and the surrounding area as a meeting place. The hotels were reasonable and free airport shuttles were offered. For New Orleans, he mentioned the high costs of hotels, charges for parking and travel expenses from airport to hotel. If we ever do New Orleans, we will have to try to negotiate some of these costs down.

Warren Hopkins, a Piedmont board member, spoke in favor of going to Portland, Oregon and reminded shipmates that we have not been west for our reunions for several years. Hopkins volunteered to do the leg work if Portland were to be considered. Another sailor said that we have never met anywhere on the West Coast north of San Francisco.

Upon motion to meet in Rapid City, a show of hands indicated about half were in favor. Another moved that we go to Portland. During discussion, Warren offered to visit the Seattle-Tacoma area also, if members were interested in that vicinity. Following that, Kastens called for a vote between the Northwest and Rapid City. A show of hands favored the Northwest by 22 to 18. As always, the final decision will depend on room availability, costs, air connections, and other factors deemed important by officers.

There also was discussion about combining reunions with other tenders, in hopes of boosting attendance, but no action was taken.

In other business, Bill reviewed the Treasurer's Report showing a balance of \$11,191 as of Sept. 15, 2012 but he added that outstanding bills would probably lower the balance to \$5,000 or less. Our longtime secretary-treasurer, Ruth Geraghty, suggested keeping the annual dues at \$10, but that renewal time would be January of each year. This was agreed to by all those in attendance.

Kastens next asked for nominations for officers and board members, and a motion was passed to retain the same slate: Kastens, president; Williams, vice president; Mrs. Geraghty, secretary-treasurer; Jack Chesnick, Ron Orszag and Warren Hopkins, directors; Kent Thomas, recorder and director, and Ken Werth, immediate past president.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

After another short break, the first of two nightly raffles was held, under the leadership of Jack and Marge Chesnick. Dinner was also on our own Friday evening.

Daytime Saturday was free time, with some Piedmonters and their guests scattering around the city for various activities. Several walked the pedestrian bridge across the Missouri River; others went to the terrific Henry Dourly Zoo, and a few others browsed the Old Market District.

Saturday night brought our annual banquet and several recognitions. Eighty-three attended our last evening of the reunion. Before dinner, Jack Chesnick, Bob Quandt and Joe Pietrosanti conducted the "Missing Sailors Memorial" to honor recently deceased Piedmont sailors or spouses. They included:

Matthew Bakale, Spring Lake, Michigan; CFS 44-46 PLANK, died April 26, 2012.

Paul Bodurtha, Camden, Maine; Ship's Cook 45-46, Oct. 18, 2010.

Frank Gregory, Pinehurst, North Carolina; Repair Officer 73-75, Sept. 22, 2012.

Rowland Hyle, Topeka, Kansas; Flag Div. RMSN 1947, Aug. 13, 2012.

A.J. "Jim" Jordan, Muskogee, Oklahoma; FPP2 50-51, Sept. 12, 2012.

Robert Kolb, Wakefield, New Hampshire; Dentist 54-56, April 3, 2011.

Phillip O'Donnell, Oakhurst, New Jersey; EMC 43-47 PLANK, Oct. 20, 2011.

John Sorice, Washington, Pennsylvania; SN 44-46 PLANK, March 14, 2012.

Dorothy Beyer, Staunton, IL; wife of Arthur Beyer, Sept. 18, 2011.

June Crawley, Bethany, Oklahoma; wife of Frank Crawley, Dec. 24, 2008.
Cheryl Quandt, Freehold, New Jersey; wife of Bob Quandt, June 8, 2012.
Terry Creighton, Baldwin, New York; wife of Marty Creighton, Dec. 12, 2011.

The Pledge of Allegiance followed, and then Commander Harold Henkel of Virginia Beach, Va., gave the invocation. A delicious buffet dinner was enjoyed by all, and thereafter additional recognitions were given.

Those attending their first Piedmont reunion introduced themselves. They were: Clark and Jan Beal, Omaha; Kenneth and Vivian Berry, Ivan, Arkansas; Terry and Diane Derby, Harlan, Iowa; Don and Devonna Etrheim, Jasper, Minnesota; Rex and Jane Gossett, Centennial, Colorado; Tom and Janet Minarik, Bellevue, Nebraska; Michael and Patsy Morast, Saline, Michigan; Don and Janice Scholl, Fairbury, Nebraska; Ron and Leslie Sexton, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Wayne and Joyce Stevens, Huron, South Dakota.

Special guests were Michael and Kathryn Sorice of Washington, Pennsylvania. Michael is shipmate John Sorice's son and he brought to the reunion two Piedmont models that his father had built. As many of you will remember, John made and donated a Piedmont ship model (always the top prize of the raffles) for many years. John is greatly missed.

Five PLANK OWNERS attended the reunion: Willis Bloyd, Seward, NE (assisted by Dr. Van Vahle); Bob Laskey and Maxine, Overland Park, KS; Jim Link and Lydia, Dumont, NJ; Bob Minick, Glendale, AZ; and Joseph Pietrosanti, Binghamton, NY.

The oldest sailor present was Commander Harold Henkel, age 94. John Lenk, Vergennes, Vermont, served the longest on the Piedmont--six years(1949-55), and Max Stumborg, Wildwood, Florida, was recognized for attending the most Piedmont reunions: 22.

In a very emotional moment, Bill Kastens introduced his wife, Monica, as having served in both the Coast Guard (Spars) and Navy (Waves). Bill said they met at Treasure Island, CA while he was in ET school. Monica is now receiving hospice care for terminal cancer.

Commander Henkel made a few after-dinner remarks based on his experiences of 28 years in the Navy, beginning as a "90-day wonder" in 1941. He was supply officer on the Piedmont for two years, 1952-53, and had duty aboard five other ships plus several shore bases before his retirement in 1969.
A raffle of remaining items brought by shipmates and their guests completed the evening.

Sunday morning brought another complimentary breakfast, and then the handshakes, the farewells and good wishes as sailors hoped to see each other next year somewhere in the Pacific NW.

HERE ARE SOME UPDATES TO THE OCT. 1, 2012 ROSTER PASSED OUT AT THE OMAHA REUNION:

Kenneth Berry, Ivan, AR; DC2 68-70

Willis Bloyd, 624 Pinewood Ave., Seward, NE 68434; 402-643-2902

Robert "Pete" & Darlene Brummels, 3425 N. 206th St., Eikhorn, NE 68022 402-289-0529 (cell 402-677-0413)

SN 52-55 E—rpetebrumms@gmail.com

Ronald Judd, Poway, CA; YNCS 72-74

Don Marino, Henderson, NV; 702-533-4411

Clarence Osborn, 10574 Serengeti Dr., Littleton, CO

John Konczyk, Douglasville, GA; MM 49-51 Deceased 9/27/12

Freddie Thielen, Bellevue, IA; New email grannybird119@yahoo.com

Mike & Kaye Williams, Kinsley, KS; No Response, DELETE

BY PAYING YOUR \$10 DUES, YOU WILL RECEIVE THE MOST RECENT MEMBER ROSTER.

LICENSE PLATE FRAMES

I have many of our USS PIEDMONT AD-17 plastic license plate frames still available and need to get rid of them. I will send out each frame for \$1.00, postage paid (total cost is \$1 per frame). Also, I have Piedmont letter openers, hat or lapel pins, and tire gauges. Cost is \$1 each post paid, same as license frame. Order as many as you like!!! Make checks payable to "Piedmont Reunion Assoc." and send to:

Bill Kastens
1824 SW Village Dr.
Topeka, KS 66604-3712

FUTURE PIEDMONT REUNIONS

As you all know, we don't get any younger and many of our Sailors are finding it difficult to travel long distances to attend the annual reunions. In past years we always had 100+ in attendance but recently it has been more like 80 in attendance and this diminishes our negotiating power with hotels and bus tours.

So, we need your input concerning the idea of combining our reunion activities with some other tenders or destroyers such as the USS Dixie AD-14 or the USS Prairie AD-15, etc. The Dixie meets only every two years and will be in Nashville, TN in the fall of 2014. The Prairie meets annually yet. There are probably 8 to 10 other tenders that have reunions listed in all the publications and websites.

PLEASE CONTACT WILLIE WILLIAMS OR MYSELF WITH YOUR IDEAS CONCERNING FUTURE REUNIONS.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Oregon or Washington in 2013. Warren Hopkins is making several contacts and we will share the reunion information as it develops.

Bill Kastens, President
USS PIEDMONT AD-17 Reunion Assoc.

