



The Sumner Sentinel ©

May - June 2017
Volume IV Number 3

Already Working on Next Year's Reunion

Did you ever wonder what it cost to put on a USS Allen M. Sumner reunion?

I know I did.

Now, through the consciences work of our treasurer Pete Drooms, we know the 2017 reunion cost \$10,048.63.

The breakdown of this costs is as follows:

Vietnam Plaque Awards and new name tags (\$586.83)

The Sumner gifts cups and the gift cards (\$1,050)

Banquet Including food and music (\$2,820.27)

Farewell breakfast (\$1,628.58)

Hospitality room - Drinks, Food and multiple types Pizza etc. (\$1,820.76)

Memorial Wreath (\$290.79)

Transportation (Buses) (\$1,100)

Miscellaneous expense - Tote bags and shipping of six Vietnam Plaques for people who paid for them but did not attend the reunion (\$170.30)

Shipmate Help Fund Expenses used this Reunion (\$581.10)

No two reunions are alike, of course, but we have a ballpark figure to work with and the officers are busy checking out places to hold our 2018 reunion in Savannah, Ga.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . .

Greetings to all. The 2017, 29th Reunion held 5/07/17 - 5/10/17 held in Mayport, Florida has come and gone. Thank you to all of the first timers. We hope to see you next year in Savannah, Georgia!



Frank DiBello

Thanks to our hosts, Dave and Sue Robson. The Hampton Inn will never be the same. The Memorial Service at the base chapel was memorable. The base speakers were very informative. It is amazing how much the base has changed!

I want to thank our Sumner ladies for all their help. Thanks to Dave Robson for getting our base speakers and to Don Hayden for our banquet speakers. Thanks to Jim Frederickson for ringing the Ship's bell at the Memorial Service.

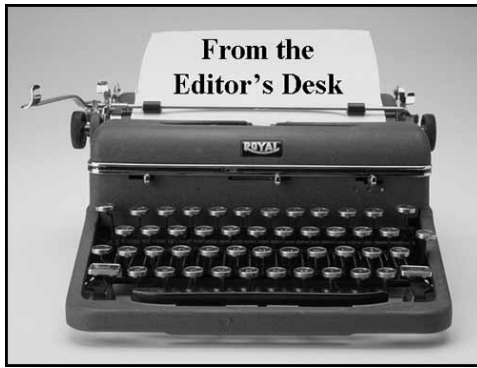
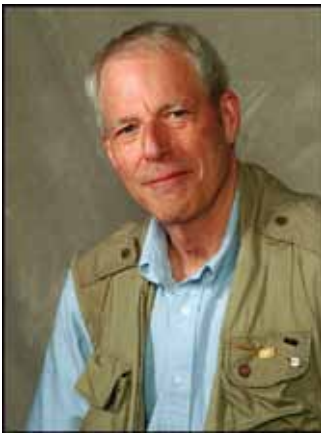
Thank you Karen Harderer, Mary Moore, Rita Hart and Connie for making the registration desk run smoothly. Thanks to Rita Hart, Karen Harderer, and Gail Dromms for running the Silent Auction and the Ship's Store.

I especially want to thank Pete Dromms for all the hard work he does managing all the Ship's Store Inventory and makes it all come together so well.

Also for storing and transporting all those items and all of the other items necessary for these reunions. Thank YOU Gail Dromms, for helping round up all the last minute important things that make

See President, Page 4





By Don Hayden TM3 (1961-62)

If it just hadn't have started off with those fires burning in the Okefenokee Swamp Park.

A massive wildfire burning in south Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp had engulfed more than 200 square miles, causing evacuations as firefighters work in vain to bring the blaze under control.

The fire was started by lightning on April 6 in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

More than a month after it started, the fire remained only 12 percent contained, according to fire officials. Dry, windy conditions have made the blaze hard to fight.

The fire remained very active according to firefighters, crossing containment lines and making runs to the east.

While we were attending our reunion, 140,000 acres were burning. Of those, about 11,000 acres had burned in just the past two days, fire officials said.

About 625 firefighters are working to battle the blaze, according to officials.

Portions of south Georgia and northeast Florida, extending to Jacksonville, are under a heavy smoke advisory due to the fire.

On Saturday, May 6, ash was observed at the hotel floating in the air similar to snow flurries.

The smell was overwhelming - especially with the editor and his COPD.

And, the odor permeated the hotel requiring the

editor to use a face mask.

Except that the editor had reserved four nights in the hotel and had a non-refundable airline ticket, he might have been willing to "eat it all" and head for home.

Talking with some locals revealed that the swamp provides an almost inexhaustible supply of fuel meaning that as the heat from the fire evaporates the water, more fuel "plants, etc" is

exposed.

Then the wind changed directions and instead of blowing south toward Jacksonville, it began blowing eastward - unfortunately with the small town of St. George in its path causing many evacuations.

Hopefully residents will get some heavy rain or the fire will burn itself out.

And, hopefully, the wind doesn't become sustained from the south - 125 miles from Savannah, Ga. - the location of our next reunion!

Do You Want to Continue Receiving the Sentinel

Note to shipmates, wives and widows, especially those with an "L" designation on their address label:

We know that the "L" means Life member and usually is associated with widows of Sumner shipmates.

What we don't know is if you really want to keep receiving the ship newsletter - the Sumner Sentinel.

If you don't want to keep receiving it and you don't have an e-mail address, please contact the editor with a post card or other stationery (return address on the back page).

Thanks, The Editor



From the Founder's File: Chief Joe Gall

President

Continued from Page 2

these reunions run smoothly. As well as giving Pete moral support!

Thanks to Sue and Dave Robson, Dale Surber, Connie, and everyone else that kept the Hospitality Room running smoothly.

Thanks to all who participated in the 50/50 Ticket Drawing, "Help A Shipmate Fund" especially Bernie Armstrong and Dale Surber for doing the "leg work"!

We had a First-Timer win the drawing, and in true "Sumner Spirit" he donated his winnings back to the fund for a total of \$274 to the fund.

Hello Gang,

First of all I'd like to say that it was great to see y'all again, after a long hiatus (4 reunions), and it was great to see such a great turnout. Everybody looks younger, (what have you been drinking?).

So next year it's off to Savannah, then Branson-great choices. At this date it's too early to tell if we'll be there, but we'll see; I'd like to be.

I don't really know what else to say, so I think I'll just keep this to a short blurb.

Everybody stay healthy, and hopefully we'll meet again somewhere down the line.

Special thanks to the Hruskas for the special hand-made Live Auction items.

You can tell they put lots of time, talent and love into making them. Thank you, Aleta Walters for your beautiful, patriotic handwork. All of you are so talented!

Thanks to our founder, Chief Joe Gall for appearing and sharing words of wisdom at our 29th Annual Reunion.

Best Wishes to you and Susan as you sail into the new seas of life. Congratulations to New Director John Hruska, and Master-At-Arms Pete Dromms.

Thanks again to all that helped in this reunion! See you all in Savannah, in 2018!

Agent Orange - If You Served in Vietnam, You Probaby Were Exposed to it

What to do for determination that you have been exposed to Agent Orange

Jon C. Randall - Vietnam Combat Veteran and Sumner shipmate provided important informaton on the subject of the defoliant "Agent Orange" and its effects on humans such as himself during the Vietnam War.

During our reunion in Jacksonville, I was stunned to hear that some of the Sumner crew

have been listed being exposed to Agent Orange, and yet didn't know how they got it working offshore on the firing line. So I did my best to inform them how they obtained it, and it was then verified by Colin Bensporath of the RAN Hobart with their own study by the RAN.

After I left the Sumner, I was assigned to a DER

out of Pearl, but she turned around three days later and we decommissioned her. Shortly after that I flew into Tan Son Nhat airport then flown by a Bell UH-1 "Huey" (sitting next to the door gunner) to where the ARL 30 (USS Askari) was located in the Mekong Delta. While on her we patrolled the Delta then alternately proceed into Cambodia. While aboard her we went through the TET offensive. I left the war in July of 1970, being left off at San Diego and hitchhiked the entire Route 66 to Chicago in 3½ days.

Over the years, "little things" took place in my body, things that were supposed to work that fell apart. Removal of my Gall Bladder, my wife's miscarriage of my only possible child, explosions and flashes in my eyes and head when laying down to sleep, the loss of all teeth, and a host of other things. <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp> (copy and paste)

In Feb 2010 I had a major heart attack on top of a telephone pole working for AT&T in Wisconsin. When I woke up was met by my supervision in the recovery room.

A co-worker who was a Vet suggested that I contact the VA and try to get things done there in Milwaukee.

In November I had lung cancer and on Christmas Eve had 2/3ds of my right lung removed. Up to this point, all surgeries were done by civilian doctors as the VA fought it all the way. It was there that the VA listed me as possible Agent Orange but wouldn't cooperate or try to help.

For the most part, you have to fight them fully and it is my suggestion that you find an "Advocate" for you that you'll find at the VA in their own offices or in the DEER compound of the VA.

These service advocates are members of National Groups such as the DAV, VFW, AMVETS, American Legion, and so forth. What I discovered was that they'll advocate for you to the VA,

but you have to do your own research and gathering of documentation that you give to them for your behalf to the VA. In Vietnam we call them REMF's (or pencil pushers), as that is what they will do for the most part on your behalf. You may find a gem out there, and be grateful if they help.

Over time, more things happened, and I was able to obtain the 2011 Ship Registry of Presumed Agent Orange <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/docs/shiplist.docx> which unfortunately does NOT include the Sumner nor the Hobart.

Because the Askari is listed on this list and also on my DD 214, I turned that over to the DAV representative and the VA had to list me fully as 100 percent due to the things I underwent. I am classified that to this day it cannot be revoked. But there is good news for you who may be exposed to Agent Orange while in the Blue Water Navy, and listed here http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-agent_orange.asp which reads:

"Exception: Blue Water Veterans with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in Vietnam. This is because VA also recognizes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as related to service in Vietnam or the waters offshore of Vietnam during the Vietnam Era."

And this is where the research pays off for you to present when you plead your case to the service representative who goes with you before the VA. Over time I went through other things with my body, prostate cancer (Gleason 7), diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, cancerous growth on my head and tags on body, and additional things showing how and where Agent Orange worked its way fully throughout my body. But by the Grace of God I'm still here, and now sharing what I can to help you.

What amazed me by the comments of the Sumner Vets and their lack of understanding of how

they obtained Agent Orange while in the Blue Water Navy was already done by extensive research on several continents by respective organizations. I'm referring to the treatment of the water supply to the ships by what the US Navy and others had onboard to sterilize the water

So, in a nutshell, I would suggest that you do a lot more research on this, contacting those national organizations to see what they have available, join some of their organizations, and never give up.

Contact the VA for getting testing, and obtain

a representative (not a lawyer as that would be a waste of money) for helping you in the VA reluctant system. SHOW UP for your exams, testing, and appointments. The VA will try to wear you down, but don't give up one inch. Just keep pushing and fighting for what is due you.

Tell other shipmates and form a cohesive group to walk you through together as a team. You are not alone, as some of us have walked on ahead of you to encourage and help you. May you have fair weather and following seas in this journey you now will undertake.



PETE'S PICS REUNION MEMORIES JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



Pete Drooms





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