

U.S.S. Mississinewa

AO-59

SCUTTLEBUTT

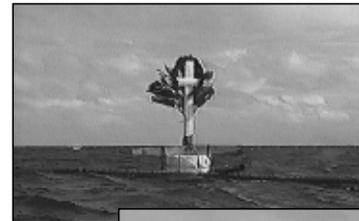
Fall 2000

Ulithi Atoll holds Memorial Service Service held over AO-59

Ulithi Atoll:

November 20th, 1944... The sky was clear with only a few light clouds. The wind was slight. The blast came at 5:45 a.m., breaking the calm of the morning.

January 7th, 2000... The new millennium found the islands calm. The wind was blowing about 15 m.p.h. with high clouds in the distance. The voices of young people blended with the sound of the waves and outboard motors. The Fethrai Youth Club from the island of Fethrai were on their way to the island of Mangyang to gather flowers and build



January 7, 2000 - Ulithi Atoll

The Passing Of Three Of Our Crewmen

Rocco DeMarco, S1c



Roland Cook, S1c



No Photos Available



John Girt, S2c



Ulithi Atoll - Fethrai Youth Group U.S.S. Mississinewa, AO-59 Memorial Service

January 7, 2000



Casting flowers on the water, singing hymns and saying prayers... the Fethrai Youth Group performs a memorial service in memory of all those crewmen who helped their people in gaining their freedom.



Ulithi Atoll:
a member of
the Federated States
of Micronesia.

a float with a large white cross. They were going to take the large cross and flowers out into the lagoon. Six boats filled with about 50 to 60 people gathered. Accompanying the people was a Protestant pastor, James Hapthey. Together they sang church hymns while scattering the flowers over the area where the U.S.S. Mississinewa had sunk to the bottom of the lagoon a little over 55 years earlier.



A cross was made and towed out into the lagoon where the U. S. S. Mississippi, AO-59 lays resting.

They gathered with signs to honor those brave men who died trying to free them from the Japanese who had taken many of the islanders away to force labor camps.

There was a sign which read "In loving memory of U. S. S. Mississippi, AO-59 that was sunk by a Japanese manned torpedo called Kai ten, 5:45 a.m. on the morning of November 20th, 1944."

Chief Pisente Taluguyor and a few of the elders organized the Fethrai Youth Club for the memorial service. Most of the Uliithians live on Mogmog, Asor, Falalop and Fethrai Islands. Falalop Island is the most populated of the islands, approximately twice the normal population with possibly over two hundred because of the high school there. All of the students from the rest of the islands, including Satawal Island, attend the high school on Falalop Island.

Most of the young people were not aware first of the history of the ship at the bottom of their lagoon, especially the girls because fishing is the job of the men. Sometimes people still catch their fishing lines of the hull of the AO-59.

When Chief Pisente Taluguyor explained to them the reason for the long overdue funeral service. They were very willing to pay their respects in honoring the Americans who helped liberate their families from the Japanese, especially those who were hurt or killed.

Our reunion group was very fortunate to have the service performed by the Uliithians and we wish to thank Chief Pisente Taluguyor and all of those who made this very beautiful ceremony possible. We also have a video of the event and photographs capturing the moment so we can all share in the service. A special thank you to Pisente Taluguyor's son, Faustino for an excellent job of video taping the service under difficult conditions. The wind and waves certainly made filming in a small boat no easy task.

The Fethrai Youth Club certainly has our thanks, but could also use some financial support. If any of our readers would like to help please contact: Tony Tareg, P. O.



Box 283, Colonia, Yap FM 96943. Mr. Tareg is a member of the legislature there in the Federated States of Micronesia. Uliithi Atoll comprises 40 islets, 1.75 square miles and the chief exports of the area are dried bonito, copra and tapioca. Just a reminder that it only takes a 33 cent stamp to send mail to the Federated States of Micronesia.

Rocco DeMarco, S1c

July 12, 1926 - April 16, 2000

Rocco J. DeMarco, 73, died Sunday, April 16, 2000 in Las Vegas, after a long illness. Born in Albany, NY, Rocco lived most of his life in the Albany area, moving recently to Florida and then Las Vegas. He was a Navy veteran of World War II and a survivor of a Japanese torpedo bombing of the U. S. S. Mississinewa A059. He received the Purple Heart and Medal of Freedom.

Mr. DeMarco was a sport enthusiast all of his life. He enjoyed baseball, basketball, soccer and golf. Rocco was a basketball coach of Vincentian Institute grade school. At the high school level, he was the basketball coach of the freshman team, the JV team and the assistant coach of the varsity team. He became the manager of the Albany Athletic Basketball Team who went on to earn many championships. He was also an avid soccer player for many years with the Albany Athletic Club then joining the Referee Association and refereed many high school and college games. Mr. DeMarco was past president and coach for many teams at the National Little League in Albany. He was past grand knight of the Knights of Columbus Councils 173 and 6758.

Former husband of 45 years to Peggy DeMarco; father of Donna Cullen and her husband, Fred of Ohio, Stephen DeMarco and his wife, Kathy of Loudonville and Lynne DeMarco of Albany; brother of Anthony and Peter DeMarco, Margaret Applewhite and the late Michael and Phyllis Vilanni; grandmother of Tracy, Ryan and Sean Cullen and Lauren and David DeMarco. Also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Roland Cook, S1c

July 12, 1917 - July 10, 2000

Roland G. Cook Sr., 83, of 123 Massachusetts Ave., died July 10th at Lawrence General Hospital after a brief illness.

Born and educated in Lowell, Mr. Cook worked as a correctional officer at Walpole State Prison. He lived in North Andover for 55 years, where he was a parishioner of St. Michael Church and was a Boy Scout leader of Troop 81.

He leaves his wife Louise (Cayer) Cook; sons and their wives Roland G. Jr. and Joyce of Indialantic, Fla., and Brian W. and Frances of Dunbarton, N.H.; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

John V. Girt, S2c

June 13, 1925 - September 6, 2000

John Girt entered the US Navy in April 1944 at the age of 19 in his hometown of Seaside, Oregon. He took basic training at Farragut, Idaho. Girt joined the A0-59 on October 24, 1944 after arriving from Pearl Harbor on a troop ship with several other new Mississinewa sailors, all last names beginning with the letter "G". Girt was a striker with the CNR gang working with Al Bell, Leo Cummings, and other CNR welders, metal smiths, and carpenters. Girt was one of 3 sailors in the port side shower, crew's quarters under the bridge, when the A0-59 was hit on the morning of November 20, 1944. John Girt reached the safety of a rescue boat just after escaping the forward crew's quarters. Seal Beach, California was Girt's stateside assignment after his 30 day survivors' leave.

Girt continued in his Oregon based family logging business after the war with his wife Ruth. Girt was laid to rest with Military Honors at Parkview Cemetery, New Plymouth, Idaho. David Rose, Girt's grandson, played Taps on his trumpet at the request of his Grandfather.

News from the Quarterdeck:

Congratulations to Andrew Johnson, MM1c, who celebrated his 80th birthday, August 9, 2000.

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The family of Lt. Robert Rowe (died December 2, 1944) has been located. Janice Tracy was 7 years old at the time her father died. We send her our sympathy on her loss. She is interested in talking with anyone who knew her father. If you knew Lt. Rowe and would like to speak with her, please call her at (207) 799-4412. It would mean a lot to her to be able to speak with anyone that knew him.

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If anyone knew Lester Helm Mann, Marcia Mann-O'Neil is looking for any information about her father. It was a long time ago but for many the loss is no less than were it yesterday. Please call 617-323-5798 or email: moneil1@chickering.com

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A special thanks goes out to Robert Kimbel, Jr. and his family for his tremendous effort and a great deal of time spent in researching the National Archives for information concerning the A0-59 sinking. Robert's efforts have been invaluable in helping Mike's book moving ahead.

If anyone remembers Robert Kimbel, WT3c, please contact the Kimbel family. Any information would be appreciated, call 312-328-8956.

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Our prayers are with the those who have lost family and friends aboard the U.S.S. Cole. Seventeen lives were lost along with thirty nine injured when a "suicide attack craft" came alongside the U.S.S. Cole and exploded, while the ship was in the port of Yemen for refueling.

A0-59



Building a cross, for the memorial service, on the island of Mangyang.

A Holiday Wish For All Of You

May the upcoming holidays find you and all your family in the best of spirits and health. You've all become a big part of our families.

From our families to yours,

*Bob Fulleman
Ron Fulleman
Mike Mair
and Sarah Bright*



Our prayers and sympathy go out to Andrew Johnson, MM1c and his family on the loss of his wife, Madeline. She passed away shortly after our reunion in Corpus Christi, TX, May 7, 1999.

Also our prayers and sympathy goes out to Eugene Cooley, S2c and his family on the loss of his wife, Patricia who passed away on April 14th, 2000.

PERS-8249-hsd

NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DEC 27 1944



Mrs. Dorothy Kimbel
RFD #1
Mohnton, Penna.

My dear Mrs. Kimbel,

It is with deepest sympathy and regret that I write you concerning the circumstances of Robert's death. Although he was previously reported missing, all facts have now been brought to light and I regret that I must assure you that there is no room for doubt.

Our ship was sunk as a result of enemy action on November 20, 1944, in the South Pacific. Robert was performing his duties with the highest degree of loyalty and efficiency, and I feel sure his death was instantaneous, since he was in the immediate vicinity of the explosion. His last resting place is in his ship. He is a hero in the eyes of all of us who survived, and a fit companion for the brave seamen of years gone by, who fought and died for their country and for the rights of all free men.

As his Commanding Officer, I wish you to know that Robert was a fine and upstanding man, admired and respected by all of us, and he will always be remembered as a capable, efficient and trustworthy member of the ship's company. His death is a great loss to both his country and the naval service. His personal effects, I am sorry to say, were lost with the ship with no chance of recovery.

All our prayers are with you in your great bereavement and I hope it will be some consolation to you to know that by Robert's death in the line of duty he made the supreme sacrifice for the greater security of those he left behind.

Do not hesitate to call upon me for any additional information or assistance. Letters addressed to me at 527 East 29th Street, Brooklyn, New York, will be promptly forwarded. I trust you will understand that only the strictest regulations prevented my writing you personally at an earlier date.

Sincerely,


Phillip G. Beck,
Captain, U.S.N.R.

This letter was received by the Kimbel family in December of 1944. Our thanks to the Kimbel family for allowing us to share this letter with the rest of the "Mississippi Family".

The U. S. S. Lackawanna, AO-40 14th Reunion - Renton, Washington

Mike and Jack Mair, Ron, Bob and Ray Fulleman had the pleasure of enjoying the hospitality of the crew of the U. S. S. Lackawanna, AO-40 recently at their 14th Reunion, held from August 24th to 27th in Renton, Washington. Claude and Theresa Bir were our hosts and organized a wonderful time for all. Renton, a suburb of Seattle, was where our hotel was located and the center of our activities. The reunion included a tour of the famous Museum of Flight, a Locks Cruise (of the Seattle area), a visit to Mount Rainer National Park and a terrific banquet to end the reunion.

We took a side trip to Bremerton Naval Base and viewed a naval museum and were able to board the destroyer, U. S. S. Turner Joy, for a tour of the

Suggestions for future newsletters needed !!!

Please send them to:

Bob Fulleman

551 N. Ocotillo Lane

Gilbert, AZ 85233

e-mail: azfull@usa.net

AO-59 Ball Caps can be purchased by clicking on the "Merchandise" link on the website

ship. Mike and Jack made their way a little further to the Naval Underwater Warfare Museum in Keyport, Washington to view one of the only two "Kaiten, Type I" suicide torpedoes left in the world. The Type I is the type that struck and sank the U. S. S. Mississinewa.

We had a terrific time that won't be forgotten. The next reunion will be held in Alabama, 2001. Possibly, in the city of Mobile, but we'll make that information available as soon as we hear more details.

Special Note!!

Recently, Mike Mair has been in communication with members of the Kaiten Pilots Association in Japan. On November 20, 2000, the 56th anniversary of the Mississinewa's sinking, Mike received an email from Mr. Minoru Yamada, a former navigator of the submarine I-53. The I-53 was responsible for the sinking of the U. S. S. Underhill by using a Kaiten (manned suicide torpedo). Mr. Yamada expressed his deep sorrow to the families of those killed and wounded aboard the U. S. S. Mississinewa.

!! Special Thanks !!

Our special thanks goes out to Frank Wilcox. Frank's donation covering the cost of this issue is very much appreciated by all of the U. S. S. Mississinewa "family".

Also a thanks goes to Kelly McCracken for his donation. Together they've made it possible to get this newsletter out to all of you.



Sorry, AO-59 Polo Shirts are no longer available for purchase