

USS WILHOITE DE/DER 397

Association Newsletter



USS WILHOITE DE/DER 397

July, August & September
2020

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6/16/2020 10:06 AM

USS Wilhoite Reunion 2020

To cporetm@cox.net <cporetm@cox.net>

June 16, 2020

After considerable thought and some discussion with Ray Rott it has been decided to cancel the 2020 Wilhoite Reunion. There were many factors that weighed in on this decision number one being the age of the members and with none of us getting any younger the pandemic loomed large. Also there has been a resurgence of new cases here of late not in Buffalo, New York but in other areas of the country. Another key factor was air travel and the close proximity to other passengers.

Ray and Donna have graciously agreed to host the 2021 reunion in Buffalo, NY. This kind of reminds one of an old movie title, Same Time Next Year. Connie will publish this in the newsletter. I would think that the moneys collected for the tours in Buffalo will be held in the Treasury until next year unless I hear differently. As always if any of you have any questions about this or any other matter feel free to contact me.

Tom Morrissey Wilhoite Association President

3240 S. 76th St

Lincoln, NE 68506

Phone 402-483-6889

Wilhoite dues paid 2020

(Numbers beside name indicate the year the dues are paid through)

Aittala, Gene (21)

Alcorn, Mike & Dana

Caldwell, John & Brenda

Cusato, Paul

Dyson, Al

Ereck, Ron (21)

Gieda, Mary

Gergens, Steve & Ruby

Hawes, Eugene (22)

Hayes, Will

Huml, Vincent (21)

Hydro, John

Kimball, Elisabeth (21)

Knight, James

Mauldin, John & Connie

McFadden, Charles

Morrissey, Tom

Owens, William

Parker, David

Payson, Dave

Polh, Art

Rott, Ray & Donna

Shanahan, John

Tencer, Charles

Thompson, Ross

Torriglia, Paul

West, Thom & Helen

Yonkofski, Ben

Dear Shipmates & Families,

I was so hoping I could say "this is our last newsletter before the reunion." As you have read from our President, Tom Morrissey, we had to cancel due to Covid. However, this just means we will have a bigger & better reunion next year, 2021, in Buffalo. It is my hope that many of you will start now planning to attend. Let's do our best to make it the biggest and best reunion yet. Bob Piazza, with the USS Finch, has contacted another DER and hopefully they will be joining us next year.

In this newsletter you will find "A Fascinating Piece of History" sent to me by our shipmate, Art Pohl. I hope you enjoy it. Also, our shipmate Gary Payne sent me information regarding the VA benefits to those who served during Market Time Patrols. This is very good news, please take time to read and if you feel you are eligible for a claim, I urge you to do so. There are phone numbers for you to call to find out. It's important to remember that when you served, you were young and healthy but don't feel just because you are aging that none of the current health problems you are having could not be a result of your time serving on the USS Wilhoite.

I have asked our Chaplin, John Caldwell to send an inspiration for our newsletter. His sweet wife, Brenda, called me and said John wanted to send me a book of Christian Inspiration. John likes this book & so do I. This newsletter has the first illustration I have chosen. Again, I urge any and all of our officers & shipmates to feel free at any time to submit something. It's not "my" newsletter, it is all of ours.

I hope this finds all of you well and I pray that we make it through this Covid crisis. I am proud to be your secretary & I am proud to say I am the wife of a sailor who served on the USS Wilhoite.

Until next time, Fair Winds & Following Seas

Connie Mauldin, Secretary

Our Chaplin, John Caldwell, has given me a book of illustrations for Christian Service. He has given me permission to choose from this book for our newsletter. I hope you will enjoy and reflect on the illustrations I have chosen

WHY WASHINGTON SUCCEEDED

You may read in your United States history how George Washington found rest and relief in prayer during the trying times he and his soldiers passed through at Valley Forge. With all the cares and anxieties of that time upon him, he used to have recourse to prayer. One day a farmer approaching the camp heard an earnest voice. On coming nearer, he saw George Washington on his knees, his cheeks wet with tears, praying to God. The farmer returned home and said to his wife: "George Washington will succeed! George Washington will succeed! The Americans will secure their independence.

"What makes you think so, Isaac?" asked his wife.

The farmer replied: "I heard him pray, Hannah, out in the woods today, and the Lord will surely hear his prayer. He will, Hannah; thee may rest assured He will."

Sunday School Times

A FASCINATING PIECE OF HISTORY

Very interesting. I bet most people didn't know this. I wish that there was an account of who ordered this and who drafted and approved this surrender plan. Who says that Americans do not have a sense of history and culture?

Why did the US choose a US Navy Iowa-class battleship as the location for Japan's surrender in World War 2 even though they were in Tokyo Bay and could have used a building on land? Pure symbolism. Nothing says "you're utterly defeated" than having to board the enemy's massive battleship in the waters of your own capital city. A naval vessel is considered sovereign territory for the purposes of accepting a surrender. You just don't get that if you borrow a ceremonial space from the host country. In addition, the Navy originally wanted the USS South Dakota to be the surrender site. It was President Truman who changed it to USS Missouri, Missouri being Truman's home state.

The Japanese delegation had to travel across water to the Missouri, which sat at the center of a huge US fleet. It's a bit like those movie scenes where someone enters a big-wig's office, and the big-wig sits silhouetted at the end of a long room, behind a massive desk. The appellant has to walk all the way to that desk along a featureless space, feeling small, exposed, vulnerable and comparatively worthless before the mogul enthroned in dramatic lighting before him. By the time he gets there the great speech he had prepared is reduced to a muttered sentence or two. In addition, the USS Missouri flew the flag of Commodore Perry's 19th century gun-boat diplomacy mission that opened the closeted Edo-era Japan to the world and forced upon them the Meiji restoration which ended the rule of the samurai class. The symbolism here is pretty clear – "this is how we want you to be, and remember what happens to countries that defy us." It was particularly humiliating for a proud country like Japan, and that was entirely the point.

The symbolism of the ceremony was even greater than that. The ship was anchored at the precise latitude/longitude recorded in Perry's log during his 1845 visit, symbolizing the purpose of both visits to open Japan to the West. Perry's original flag was also present, having been flown all the way from the Naval Academy for the ceremony. When the Japanese delegation came aboard,

they were forced to use accommodation way (stairs) situated just forward of turret #1. The freeboard (distance between the ship's deck and the water line) there makes the climb about twice as long as if it had been set up farther aft, where the freeboard of the ship is less.

NOTE: This was even more of an issue for the Japanese surrender party as the senior member, Foreign Affairs Minister Shigemitsu, was crippled by an assassination attempt in 1932, losing his right leg in the process. The #1 and #2 turrets had been traversed about 20 degrees to starboard. The ostensible reason for this was to get the turret overhangs out of the way to create more room for the ceremony on the starboard veranda deck, but in fact this would have only required the traversing of turret #2 had it been the real reason. In reality, the turret position also put the gun barrels directly over the heads of the Japanese. They were literally standing "under the gun."

The honor guard of US sailors (side boys) were all hand-picked to be over six feet tall, a further intimidation of the short-statured Japanese. The surrender documents themselves, one copy for the Allies and one for the Japanese contained identical English-language texts, but the Allied copy was bound in good quality leather, while the Japanese copy was bound with light canvas whose stitching looked like it had been done by a drunken tailor using kite string. After the signing ceremony, the Japanese delegation was not invited for tea and cookies; they were shuffled off the ship as an Allied air armada of over 400 aircraft flew overhead as a final reminder that American forces still had the ability to continue fighting should the Japanese have second thoughts on surrender.

And now you know the rest of the story ...

Agent Orange exposure on Navy or Coast Guard ships

Did you serve on a Blue Water Navy vessel offshore of the Republic of Vietnam, or on another U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship operating in the coastal waterways of Vietnam, between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975?

If yes, you may have had contact with Agent Orange, an herbicide used to clear trees and plants during the war. We refer to this as a presumption of contact. Find out if you can get disability compensation and other benefits for illnesses we believe are caused by Agent Orange.

i Blue Water Navy Veterans and Agent Orange

Blue Water Navy Veterans are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for illnesses related to Agent Orange

<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/>

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5/20/2020

Agent Orange Exposure On Navy Or Coast Guard Ships | Veterans Affairs

exposure. This is a result of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. The law was signed on June 25, 2019, and takes effect on January 1, 2020.

Read below to learn more about eligibility requirements and how to file a claim. If we denied your claim in the past, you can file a new claim based on this change in law.

Can I get disability benefits from VA?

You may be able to get disability benefits if the below descriptions are true for you.

This must be true:

- You have an illness we believe is caused by Agent Orange (called a presumptive disease)

And at least one of these must also be true. Your military record must show that between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, you:

- Were aboard a U.S. military vessel that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam, **or**
- Served on a vessel not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia (as detailed in Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019)

[Review our list of diseases related to Agent Orange](#)

Who's covered?

- Veterans
- Qualified dependents

What kind of benefits can I get?

- Health care
- Compensation (payments)
- [An Agent Orange Registry health exam](#)

How do I get these benefits?

You'll need to file a claim for disability compensation and submit your evidence (supporting documents).

If you have an illness we believe is caused by Agent Orange

You won't need to show that the problem started during—or got worse because of—your military service. This is because we believe that certain diseases are the result of exposure to herbicides. We refer to these as presumptive diseases.

[Review our list of diseases related to Agent Orange](#)

[View the evidence requirements](#)

If you have an illness that's not on the list of Agent Orange-related diseases, but you believe was caused by Agent Orange

You'll need to:

- Provide scientific and medical evidence that the condition is related to exposure to Agent Orange, **or**
- Show that the problem started during—or got worse because of—your military service

Scientific proof may include an article from a medical journal or a published research study.

[View the evidence requirements](#)

What if I'm a Blue Water Navy Veteran, and VA denied my claim

in the past?

If we denied your claim because we determined that your disability wasn't caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service, you can file a new claim based on the change in law.

In certain cases, if we approve your claim, we'll pay you back to the date when you submitted your original claim. We refer to this as retroactive payment.

[Find out how to file a claim for disability compensation](#)

Learn more about this change in law, and how it may affect you:

[Fact sheet: Blue Water Navy Veterans and Agent Orange \(PDF\)](#)

[Frequently asked questions: Blue Water Navy Veterans and disability benefits \(PDF\)](#)

What if I need help filing my claim?

You can get help from us in one of these ways:

- Call [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000) or TTY [800-877-8339](tel:800-877-8339), or
- [Go to your nearest VA regional office, or](#)
- [Get help from a trained professional trusted to help with VA-related claims](#)

Last updated: April 30, 2020