

USS GYATT ASSOCIATION

445 Western Avenue ~ Morgantown, WV 26505

15 December 2011

Greeting Shipmates:

Well I made it to the reunion at Duluth, Minnesota and like everyone else and as usual enjoyed myself. I decided it was best not to fly and so with Chuck and Barb CARTER and their GPS leading the way; Al and Marian SEYBRECHT following - Phil and I bringing up the rear and Phil doing most of the driving we made the trip in timely fashion.

We started the reunion registration with 52 attendees and ended with 50 attending. Three new shipmates and their family members shared our times and memories – Jim BARTL (GM3 1947-48) who is from and still resides in Duluth; Merlin PLACE (SN 1948-49) from Spring Valley, Wisconsin and Robert TODDY (QM3 1952-55), from Minnetonka, Minnesota. We also had our share of old timers like C. F. and June TURK, who haven't missed a reunion; our hosts, Tom and Jaci FULLER, who have missed one reunion; and Roland and Rose Mary CASTILLO who also have missed one reunion and then there is Flo and Irene LAFFOON who have attended regularly since the passing of her husband, Lou – who was a LTJG aboard the GYATT during the early fifties and had missed only one reunion.

It is great seeing familiar faces – but it is sad not seeing those that are also familiar but cannot or have not attended – the JOHNSONS – the CAINS – AUTIOS – BOWLES – HEATONS – WEBSTERS – MARTINS – MAZZILLIS – VIAFORS – MYERS - LUNSFORDS – WUEBBENS and CLARK just to name a few. It was learned at this reunion that Margaret CAIN died this past spring and those that knew her are deeply saddened by her loss – she was at her husband's side when he hosted two reunions in Charleston, SC – always a help - you are missed Margaret.

We have been advised by family and shipmates; before, during and after the reunion, via conversation, cards, e-mail and our website of the loss of the following shipmates: Varajoon AYKANIAN (BM3 1952-53); Robert BEDWELL (LCDR 1951-53) an attendee at a number of reunions; Robert BARNES (SN 1955); John BELCH (MM3 1965-69); Floyd BESVOLD (SN 1945-46); Samuel BLACK (BT2 1950-52); Sheldon BOYD (SO3 1951-52); Anthony CAMPAGNA (SKSN 1950-52); Michael CARDONE (GM2 1946-47); Richard DEMPENSY (LTJG 1954-55); Henry EDDLEMAN (MM3 1964-66); Milton FAUROT (EN2 1950-53); John HOPEWELL (LTJG 1963-65); Luther JENNINGS (QMSN 1952-55); Paul LAYFIELD (1964-66); Stanley LUSK (WT2 1947-48); Harry NICHOLS (TM3 1951-54); PRIGGE (SN 1948-52); Patrick RAYBURG (SM3 1966-68); William SMITH (BM3 1957-59); 1951-54 Alfred SMUDE (SN 1952-54); Alfred STOVER (GMG1 1966-68) and James TEMPLETON (FTSN 1947-51).

Before I go to far and forget (I do that a lot these days) a special thanks to Tom and Jaci FULLER for hosting his first gathering of old and new shipmates in the center of the north central part of the country and a special thanks for doing away with the home state gift (old folks have too many things as it is) – again it's the memories of days long past when we remember something silly or something profound that brings a smile to one's lips and a twinkle to the eye as they relate it to someone who was there. While the thought crosses my mind don't forget to send your posed photo – you know – the kind you got your mother or you heart throb – I have received four such photos since the reunion (including my own) – if the percentage holds I will receive 96 more based on the size of our mailing list.

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Back to the reunion - almost 90-percent of the group arrived on Sunday, the 18th of September, and we spent the time visiting old friends and some we haven't seen in almost 60 years and enjoyed our new hat pin and embroidered Lake Superior tote bag - the gifts of this year's reunion hosts.

Monday was a bus tour to one of the many famed light houses in the United States – this one - known as the “Split Rock Light House” it was built as a result of a storm in 1905 that damaged 29 ships – a third not insured and belonging to steel companies. Money was appropriated in 1907 and the light house was completed in 1910. It was only accessible from the lake side until the mid 1920s - the light house and its fog signal operated until 1969 when modern navigational equipment made it obsolete. The property was taken over in 1971 by the Minnesota Historical Society and has been operated as a museum site since with restoration having it look as it did in 1924 – the living quarters reminded many of us when we were boys. Lunch was at the Moose Lodge in Two Harbors, Minnesota and dinner was aboard a Vista Cruise Harbor ship and our own chartered deck as we cruised through the channel out to Lake Superior one of the largest and deepest lakes in the world.

Tuesday a rainy day and a tour of the Hibbing-Taconite Mine with an indoctrination in the conference room and a trip to the mine pit and the ancillary buildings used in processing the ore. The bus was covered with mud but we observed 240-ton trucks, large electric shovels and large hydraulic excavators loading overburden and iron ore into the trucks. Interestingly, most of the raw material is exported. Most of the ore is shipped by ships via the Great Lakes between mid March and mid November for the lake is frozen in winter. From here we went to the Minnesota Discovery Museum where we had lunch, saw a movie and toured the facility and on the way back to our home away from home for four nights. We stopped at a visitor's site (it stopped raining) that told you all you wanted to know about iron ore mining. This site, atop a hill that overlooked past mining operations – restored as forests and lakes - had a 240-ton and a 75-ton end dump truck parked for viewing and photo taking and the crew took advantage of the photo taking with photos next to the six-foot plus high tires.

Wednesday – here already, we held our memorial service in the morning at the Lake Superior Maritime Museum where we read the names of 605 departed shipmates. In the afternoon we held our business meeting and in the evening we had our banquet. Since discussions on the business meeting and the banquet activities may be longer than a few words - we will address each subject separately.

Business Meeting: The discussions are not in order and are for your information. Photographs: I am relinquishing the care and transportation of the myriad of photographs into the hands of Chuck THOMASON, who has agreed to carry them from reunion to reunion and care for them. I will continue to add to the photos, printing from copying photos or discs by scanning, sizing and printing photos. I have recently sent photos sized, identified and enclosed in plastic sheets that were printed from discs received from Chuck and Wayne MATHEWS and subsequently forwarded to Chuck. I still have three discs received from Al Seybrecht to process. Memorabilia: Over the years the Association has received numerous items from shipmates for display and they been cared for by three people, the latest was A.J. METDEPPINGEN, our most recent Keeper of Memorabilia, A. J. advised that he will relinquish this duty station. After much discussion on how to handle the memorabilia it was agreed that the memorabilia would be sent to the USS Adams, DDG 2, a museum ship, (the vote to do this was 19 to two in favor of doing this). BARATA is charged with getting this done. In the short term the memorabilia is in the hands of Chuck THOMASON, who will mail same to the DDG 2.

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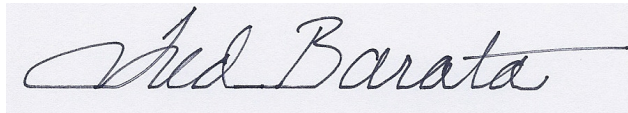
Reunion 17: The cruise proposed for 2012 was voted on and it was agreed that we would proceed in the manner set by Bill MYERS, in a flyer mailed to Tom FULLER for review and distribution. Upon returning to their respective homes Tom FULLER and Fred BARATA, along with some shipmates close to Bill, received an e-mail from Bill's daughter advising of some severe health issues. After discussions, with the appropriate parties, it was agreed that the cruise would be rescheduled. Tom FULLER then contacted Chuck THOMASON on the possibility of moving the proposed reunion for 2013 up a year and Chuck after discussion with Willard FROSETH and Tom WRIGHT, co-hosts for the 2013 gathering, agreed that it could be done. The base site will be Aurora, Colorado and is scheduled from Monday the 17th of September 2012 (arrival) thru Friday the 21st of September 2012 (departure). It will be held in a brand new Fairfield Inn (not yet opened) with a rate of \$90 (ninety dollars) per night without tax. Details will be noted in the May 2012 Newsletter. Congratulations to TFW (THOMASON, FROSETH & WRIGHT) for their quick response.

Dues and/or Donations: Not much of a discussion on this subject – but a special thanks to those that contribute because less than 10-percent of those on the mailing list keep us informed by covering mailing, printing and other related costs – such as information for new members. Ship photos are the only photos charged for and that cost is reproduction on an 8.5 by 11-inch photo sheet. Your donation brings you an updated roster (all hands) either printed or on a CD.

Elections had only a slight variation, from last year's and the results are shown as a Post Script (and you thought we didn't know what PS meant) at the end of this letter.

The banquet was a success with an excellent meal, good music and good company. A myriad of prizes were drawn for and there are three of note; the first is the fifty/fifty drawing won by Al & Marian SEYBRECHT, who graciously, with a little prodding by Marian, donated it to the Association and then there was the free stay, provided by the hotel, and won by Jack & Mary WARDELL. Finally to me - was something somewhat unusual – there were three books drawn for - two were large books on the U.S. Navy in hardback and the GYATT history and all won by Tommy PARKER. Tommy figuring he had won too many books relinquished the GYATT history (also in hardcover) and it was won by Chuck THOMASON on a redrawing.

So for now – you know what I know. So the association officers; president – Tom FULLER, vice president – Tom WRIGHT, treasurer – Chuck THOMASON and your secretary wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas and in the coming year - God's Blessings and good health.



Fred Barata (1950-1954)

PS: Officers and Duty Stations.

Officers:

President: Tom FULLER

Vice President: Tom WRIGHT

Secretary: Fred BARATA

Treasurer: Charles THOMASON

Duty Station:

Chaplain: Tom FULLER

Historian: Fred BARATA

Keeper of Photographs: Charles THOMASON

Keeper of the Roster: Fred BARATA

Keeper of the Website: Fred BARATA