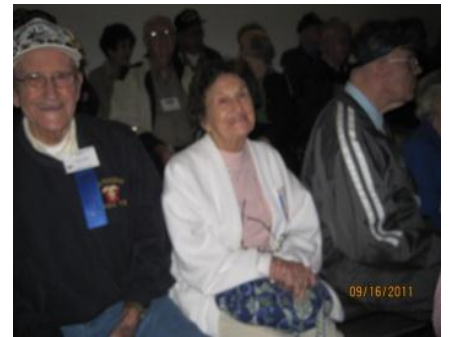


Report on 21st Annual Panamint Reunion

The 21st Reunion of the USS Panamint (AGC-13) took place in Chicago, IL from Thursday, September 15 to Monday, September 19, 2011 and was attended by 3 generations of crewmembers and their families.



By Thursday afternoon, the 15th, twenty nine members had gathered in the hotel Hospitality Room of the Deerfield Marriott Suites Hotel to kick-off the annual event with a “Welcome” Pizza, Salad, wine and beer party. The tunes of Glenn Miller and the sounds of chatter and happy laughter filled the suite which, in addition to the spacious main room, featured a glorious outdoor terrace with a view of Chicago, a galley kitchen and 2 private baths. Some of us wondered if we really wanted to travel on the scheduled tours as we were so comfortable with our hospitality accommodations. Seven am

Friday morning, the 16th, however, found us on our luxury coach

bound for the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, on Lake Michigan, celebrating its Centennial Year as guests for the graduation of 952 new recruits! Once we were seated in the great hall at the base, we were treated to the pomp and circumstance of marching bands, flag and rifle drill teams and the spectacular view of 952 fresh faces, in sparkling white uniforms all spit-shined and pressed to a “t”, marching proudly into the hall by



divisions. They then all stood “at attention” waiting for their big moment of acceptance into the US Navy and the receipt of the Commanding Officer’s Commemorative coin in recognition of their achievements during recruit training that morning. All of us were touched by these young people who had worked so hard for this day and honored to be a small part of their celebration! Following the graduation ceremony, we re-boarded our bus and were joined by female ETSN, Christina Pedigo, who ably and amiably conducted an informative tour of the training and main base facilities, took us to the PX for a little “special” base discount shopping and then joined us at the Port O’ Call Restaurant for our tasteful buffet lunch. We were ushered into a high-ceilinged room with a beautiful view of Lake Michigan and gathered at our tables just in front of the stage and podium, where we were welcomed by our President, Fred Earl, who requested that crewmember, Reverend Lyle H. Powell, deliver our opening blessing. The blessing was followed by the meticulous formality of our Color Guard who presented the colors and stood at attention while the National Anthem was played and sung by our members. After retiring the colors, the members of the Color Guard joined us at lunch along with Navy Chaplain, Lt. Mark Hughes, who graciously greeted each table group individually. Chaplain Hughes rose to the podium to deliver his gentle, but powerful, remarks regarding the importance of passing on our memories to the next generation to preserve the truth of the past. He then gave us the Closing Blessing.

From Left to Right:

Barbara Begerow Horn
Lt. Mark Hughes, CHC, USN
ESTN Christina Pedigo
Carol Begerow Abudato
Anne Marie Macnamara



Our day at the storied, and now **only**, operational “boot camp” facility in the United States, concluded with a tour of the Great Lakes Naval Museum, which is dedicated to “telling the story of the enlisted sailor” from the first recruit graduation in 1911. The Museum rooms were filled with mementos of the 100 year old history, not just of the base, but of the United States Navy. It was informative, enlightening and nostalgic and brought tears to the eyes of many.

Saturday, September 17th had been left as a free day so that members who planned only to attend the banquet, but would arrive early in the day, could visit with each other in the Hospitality Room.

The Annual Reunion Banquet commenced at 6:30 pm, with 39 in attendance in the hotel banquet room as we stood to welcome our Color Guard, who displayed the Colors throughout the playing of the National Anthem and the recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance by the assemblage. After the Colors were retired, the Color Guard members joined us for a bountiful three course dinner, topped off with our special U.S.S. Panamint cake, cut jointly and with much hilarity, by President Fred Earl and recently retired Treasurer, Walt Sutter.



ATTENDING CREWMEMBERS OF THE U.S.S. PANAMINT (AGC-13)

Seated Left to Right: Mel Reidberger, Joe Brusca, (the Hat and Badge of indisposed Bob Begerow, held in place by George Gibson), George Gibson, Gus Lattanze.

Standing Left to Right: Walt Sutter, Harold Austin, Al Pupo, Fred Earl, Lyle Powell





USS Panamint (AGC-13)

Happy Gathering of Crewmembers, Wives and Families

2011 Annual Reunion Banquet



We were then joined by Captain Victor Delano, USNR, of The U.S.S. Eversole, which was also headquartered at the hotel for **their** annual reunion. Even though the Eversole had served in the Korean War era, our Panamint “detectives” determined that the former Captain of the Eversole as a young Ensign, had been aboard the battleship U.S.S. West Virginia, docked next to the U.S.S. Arizona, during the attack and subsequent sinking of both ships by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. It was decided that our entire group should hear the Captain’s story, and he became our surprise Guest Speaker at the banquet. The Captain is now 94 years young, retired and “sharp as a tack”. As he was introduced by President Fred Earl, a hush fell over the crowd, many of the hotel staff hovered in the archways to hear him speak and the four Color Guard sailors listened intently, as he began his matter-of-fact recollections of that fateful day. He did not exaggerate, but freely shared his experiences during the attack, while in the water swimming in the oil slick from the sunken ships and his miracle survival as he awakened at the U.S. Naval Hospital at Pearl. It was a very special addition to our book of reunion memories.

FCSN Rebecca Shequen



FCSN Holly Hammontree

FCSN Jade Irving



ICSN Darold Holmes



The Lattanzes



The Reidbergers



The Begerow Girls



With Dad, Bob Begerow, in 2010---Be back in 2012!

The Sutter Family



The Earls



The Gibson Family



The Austins



The Macnamara Family



The Brusca Family



On Sunday, September 18th, a rainy and chilly day, we embarked on our last scheduled event of the reunion as we boarded our luxury coach and were joined by our charismatic and highly informed travel guide, Mike Stillerman, for a daylong tour of the downtown Chicago area. Our Memorial wreath, which had decorated our banquet podium the night before, was placed carefully in the Baggage Compartment, as it was to be left in place at our first stop, the War Memorial at Soldier Field. Chicagoans have generously striven to honor the U.S. warriors of our past worldwide wars and conflicts with a variety of artistic depictions in bronze, stone and other mediums throughout the city.



The structure at Soldier Field was originally built to honor the heroes of World War I, at the suggestion of the Gold Star Mothers of that era. The original amphitheater was designed with an entry of massive, classic Greek columns around a portico, visible for miles, and featured a dual-sided, 3-D bronze monument depicting figures of soldiers and sailors and their families, who lost so much during that period, hence, the name, "Soldier Field".



Over the years, the amphitheater was utilized constantly for a variety of important, public events, but eventually morphed into a stadium devoted entirely to football. Now, the home of the Chicago Bears, the only features of the original structure remaining are the Greek columns, portico and the bronze war monument. But, in recent years, the City Fathers have added a distinctive Memorial Wall of Honor featuring a marble wall with a continuously flowing and uplighted waterfall punctuated with circular bronze plaques bearing the insignia of each of the modern military services. This Memorial Wall was our destination on Sunday morning. Here, under its 3 foot U.S. Navy plaque we placed our wreath and conducted our annual Memorial Service for the deceased members of the USS **Panamint (AGC-13)**.





Our next “tour day” stop was at the renowned Museum of Science and Industry for a special visit to the only German U-Boat ever to be captured in history. It was intact, with crew members aboard and occurred during World War II. Extensive entry exhibits, stretching through two, lengthy, tunnel-like rooms, included actual films of the capture and prisoners of the enemy submarine, along with a pictorial and oral history of the events leading up to, and during, the War. We especially enjoyed a vivid portrayal of attacks on our Liberty Ships and an impressive movie portrayal of our breaking of the German Code, featuring the Officer most responsible for the work.

U-Boat-505, loomed ahead of the last entry exhibit in a hanger-like structure, suspended in space to appear to be underway at sea. A Viewers’ Gallery surrounded the vessel containing illustrated specifics boards explaining the various compartments and equipment displayed before us. Indirect, gray lighting highlighted the feeling that you were at sea with the boat. U-Boat-505 has become the most popular exhibit at the Museum and was well worth the hour we spent exploring her history. As we left the Museum, we each collected a previously-ordered box lunch, prepared by the Museum’s kitchen so that we could make use of our limited time by eating enroute to our next stop.

From the moment we departed our hotel and throughout the streets of the “Windy City”, as we traveled to our varied stops, our trusty guide, Mike, had regaled us with Chicago anecdotes and history. He spun his tales of the heroes and ne’er do-wells and the ever-present legends that surround this most beautiful of Midwest cities, showed us its skyscrapers, the stately high-rise residences along Lake Michigan’s shores, the Miracle Mile shopping mecca, the famous “Chicago Fire” Water Tower, the Loop and its much-photographed elevated car, famous parks, museums and sculptures. To end our excursion, we were scheduled to take an unusual sightseeing boat trip down the Chicago River. The River, which runs upstream right through the heart of the city, was looking gray and uninviting at the dock. We hesitated.... It was rainy and cold. But, we boarded, quickly hunkered down under the canvas canopy and huddled closer together to keep warm. (The cups of hot chocolate helped, too.) Settled in our places, we allowed the boat to take us gliding between the scenic, flower bedecked riverbanks to view and learn about one of the most scenic and celebrated skylines in the world.



Glad to be on the warm bus again and pleasantly tired, we returned to our hotel and decided to have a group farewell dinner in the Hospitality Room. The hotel obliged by sending us menus from the excellent restaurant, a private waiter and, in no time we were slurping hot soups, salads, burgers and desserts in our own private dining room. It's a good thing that our Hospitality Room was situated at the end of the hall as the room echoed with our laughter and good fellowship. Toward the end of the evening, Fred Earl requested that Reverend Powell say a Closing Prayer of Thanksgiving and "Godspeed" to all who were to travel home the next day. We joined hands around the room as Reverend Lyle movingly summoned just the right words to end our 21st reunion.



All of us are looking forward to our next reunion, the 22nd, which is tentatively planned to be in Annapolis, MD.

WON'T YOU JOIN US??



