



# DESRON 30 News

## Reunion Association Newsletter



Summer 2013

Vol. 2 No. 2

### Director's Summer Letter

*By Dennis Holt & Dick Myers*

Dick Myers has been in contact with the other ships in the squadron to see how their reunions are doing. The C.K. Bronson and Dashiell both have good attendance so they plan to continue individual meetings. Both the Smalley and Caperton said their next reunion will probably be their last on their own. Of course, we have previously given them an invitation to join our group when they can no longer support a separate reunion. Our efforts have led to finding additional members, and we should continue to have enough members to support our reunions. Our net membership is almost the same as last year since those members who have died equal the new members found.

It is time for you to reserve a room for our reunion in September. It will be in Branson, MO, from September 18<sup>th</sup> to September 22<sup>nd</sup>, and rooms will only cost \$89.00 per night including a hot breakfast. This year we are using a meeting planning group (Gatherings Plus), who will take care of all the tours, dinners, etc. Complete information and a sign-up form are attached. Reservations for the tour package are needed by July 19<sup>th</sup> so that the meeting planners can arrange for buses, etc. Branson is well known as a location that **LOVES** the military and really tries to show us a good time.

Here are the latest statistics. At present we have contact information for 1,310 shipmates (and family members). These contacts include: Cotten (529), Daly (194), Dortch (249), and Gatling (338). We encourage e-mail use to distribute our information, and the e-mail addresses we have include Cotten (167), Daly (107), Dortch (101) and Gatling (133). We need all members and family

contacts to let us know if they have a workable e-mail address so that we can keep mailing costs and dues low.

Official paid membership for DESRON 30 as of this newsletter is 266. We hope to continue to increase this number with the circulation of this new joint newsletter. Our policy is that widows do not pay dues. The By-Laws (and federal regulations) require that we maintain a paid member list, and also that all official votes require paid membership for members to vote. If we can increase our paid membership, it will prevent an increase of the dues amount in the future. Financial data is given in another section of this newsletter, but dues and contributions are such that we have enough money to continue to publish and circulate this newsletter.

We also continue to maintain our website at [www.desron30.org](http://www.desron30.org). This website is also available to you. For our members, one nice feature is the ability to continuously update your contact information. You are able to input these changes for your own personal information using the website input. In order to maintain privacy, we have provided password protection to avoid having your private contact information available to the general public (insurance salesmen, etc.). Therefore, to see contact information on any ship personnel, you will have to enter a user name and password. The user name is the ship name (cotten, daly, dortch or gatling) and the password for all four ships is "8tincans". This password will be changed whenever necessary to protect the members' privacy. We have had no problems or complaints in the two years we have maintained this website.

We are also mailing out the updated roster for you to use. This new roster will be posted on the websites under each ship's name.

Finally - something new. In order to stimulate attendance, we have decided to add a grand prize at the drawing we hold during the banquet each year. We will award one free night at the hotel as one of the prizes in the drawing. This will be in addition to the smaller prizes and the 50/50 raffle we usually hold.

## ***The Place to Be***

*By Nancy Bielot*

This year THE place to be from September 18-22 is going to be Branson, MO, for our annual reunion. Branson is a family-friendly destination located in the heart of the Ozark Mountains. Plus, Branson loves veterans! There is a lot of patriotic pride throughout all of Branson.



The reunion will be held at the Grand Plaza Hotel ([www.bransongrandplaza.com](http://www.bransongrandplaza.com)). The Grand Plaza Hotel is located in the heart of Branson, MO, and is within walking distance to some of Branson's shows and attractions.

(A good website to learn detailed information about Branson as well as the shows in our itinerary is: [www.bransontourismcenter.com](http://www.bransontourismcenter.com).)

The Clay Cooper Music Express Show is performed at the Clay Cooper Theatre, and it is filled with high energy singing, dancing, comedy, and much more.

Legends in Concert is performed at the American Bandstand Theater and has been part of the Branson entertainment scene for over 17 years. Scheduled to perform at the while we're in Branson are Buddy Holly, Whitney Houston, Johnny Cash, The Blues Brothers, and Elvis (impersonators, that is).

Also on our itinerary is the Showboat Branson Belle. Once on board the Showboat, a musical salute to the land that we love, Made in the USA, will be performed. Every musical moment of this show is dedicated to America, from pop and folk hits to a grand finale that will make hearts swell with pride.

Average daily temperatures in September in Branson are a high of 80, and a low of 58.

Items of possible interest, but not on our itinerary, include the Veterans Memorial Museum, Tanger Outlet Center (shopping), Ride the Ducks, wineries, Ripley's Museum, Hollywood Wax Museum, Silver Dollar City, and the Branson Scenic Railway. There is plenty to do in the area; please join us for this year's reunion, and consider adding a day or two to your trip for some of the other items of interest.

We look forward to seeing you in Branson in September.

## ***Why Go To Reunions?***

*By Dick Myers*

I was thinking the other day about how I have explained to non-military folks why we have reunions. I told them we gather to tell "sea stories" but later I decided that does not really explain it. When I went into the Navy I learned that "sea stories" are the way we exaggerate our ocean experiences and improve our amorous land adventures.

But at reunions we are really exchanging true experiences, some funny, some frightening and some sad. Our sharing of these is a way we maintain and improve our bonding with the group. I have often noted that the Navy has many more active reunion groups than the other services. I think that is because we lived so close on ships and we depended so much on the proper actions of others for our safety. Other services have the ability to move separately and they have short periods where they rely on others (battles and other military actions), but they do not have this dependency for months and years on end like a naval ship. Let me give some examples.

Since most of my service was during the Cold War, I can say that I only had a serious

concern for my life or well being on a couple of occasions. One of these was in the Red Sea during the 1956-1957 Suez crises. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was allied with the Russians and received aircraft, submarines and other military support from them. From our base in Massawa, Eritrea, the Cotten and the Daly took turns patrolling the Red Sea and monitoring Russian movements through that area. One day when I had the deck watch, CIC reported a group of small targets coming toward our ship. We eventually saw them and realized that they were eight or ten Egyptian torpedo boats. These boats continued toward us, and our Captain had us go to battle stations. The torpedo boats began to circle us and we trained our five inch cannons and other weapons on them. I guess they knew we meant business and they backed off. A similar incident only seven years later in the Gulf of Tonkin resulted in the Vietnam War. Just last year at the reunion I discovered from a Daly sailor of that era that his ship had the same action with torpedo boats on another day. This was not reported in most media, but my wife called the Red Cross when one source reported that the Cotten was sunk during that time. Our safety was insured by a well trained crew.

A second occasion where I was truly in fear for my life I reported in the "Tin Can Sailors" newspaper a year ago. Four ships in our squadron experienced an unreported hurricane (without satellites we didn't know they were out there). The Cotten suffered damage that eventually caused us to return to Boston Naval Shipyard for repairs. The storm had winds of over 90 knots (100 miles an hour), waves measured at over 100 feet, and the ship rolled very badly - eventually reaching 70 degrees past the vertical in each direction. Again, a good crew was responsible for getting us safely back to the United States.

But the real stories come from our World War II heroes. I remember several times hearing from Captain John Strane at reunions about his experience on the Cotten. John was one of the nine pilots shot down in the Pacific during World War II who were picked up by the Cotten. When he was brought aboard, he told

the crew about his wingman who had also been shot down. The Cotten went searching for the wingman and finally found him. Each year since they returned to the United States, CDR George Denby (the wingman) has called John on the anniversary of their rescue to thank John for his rescue. Of course, John has always said, "Hey, it wasn't me that saved you, it was the USS Cotten". Unfortunately John has health problems now and is unable to attend our reunions, but it is my hope his wife will read this article to him.

The genesis of this article was a note I received this week from a Gatling sailor, QM3 Robert Valliant. Bob was a crew member of the USS Princeton which was sunk in Leyte Gulf in 1944. He survived the cold sea until the Gatling picked him up. His note told me he was only aboard the Gatling for 48 hours until they got back to the base in Ulithi where he was put ashore. Bob said he would like to attend our reunion but cannot make it this year. He promised me on the phone he will make it next year, and as phrased in his written note, "Hope to meet up with you folks and learn some new sea stories." You bet I want to hear more of this story about his rescue and all his other stories.

So let's go to reunions while we can to share and save our memories – they are more important than we may realize.

## In Memoriam

*By Frank Bisson, Dennis Holt, Dick Myers*

As of June 28<sup>th</sup>, we have received the following information on shipmates who are deceased. Our deepest sympathies are extended to the families of our deceased members.

| LAST NAME            | FIRST            | MIDDLE | RANK |
|----------------------|------------------|--------|------|
| <i>U.S.S. Cotten</i> |                  |        |      |
| Wolfe                | Thomas           | W.     |      |
| Dennis, Jr.          | Dorris           | Buford | FN   |
| Dibling              | Robert           | W.     | LTJG |
| Dzienius             | Alphonse<br>(Al) | R.     | MM1c |
| Holthausen,<br>Jr.   | Carl             | F.     | ENS  |
| Marzola, Sr.         | Anthony          |        | CS2  |

| LAST NAME             | FIRST    | MIDDLE                           | RANK   |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------------|--------|
| Pennington Jr.        | Rollie   |                                  |        |
| Vanderhorst           | Richard  | H.                               | RDM3/C |
| Waters                | Jack     | H.                               |        |
| Wolfe                 | Thomas   | W.                               | SN     |
| Wood                  | Richard  | F.                               | BT3    |
| <i>U.S.S. Dortch</i>  |          |                                  |        |
| Wulf                  | Lawrence |                                  | GM3    |
| Mahan                 | Jeanne   | <i>Wife of Ed Mahan,<br/>RM2</i> |        |
| Neuman                | John     |                                  | ENS    |
| Giordano              | George   |                                  | EM3    |
| <i>U.S.S. Gatling</i> |          |                                  |        |
| Apple, Jr.            | John     | H.                               | LTJG   |
| Drogitis              | Harry    |                                  | F1(EM) |
| Flake                 | Thomas   | L.                               | RM2    |
| Hagood                | Emmett   | G.                               | MM3    |
| Hettel                | Thomas   | J.                               | QM1    |
| Hylas                 | Michael  | P.                               | MM3    |
| Lacey                 | Kenneth  | L.                               | SN     |
| Mansfield             | George   | W.                               | S1     |
| Mc Cormack            | Charles  | J.                               | GM3    |
| Provencio             | Raul     | A.                               | EMP3   |
| Quinn                 | Willie   |                                  | BT3    |
| Skidgell              | Millard  |                                  | SF3    |
| Storey                | Donald   | E.                               | ENS    |



## Treasurer's Report

*By Dick Myers*

Financial data for the past year is as follows:

|                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Dues & Contributions Received       | \$1,830.00        |
| Surplus from 2012 Reunion           | \$3,558.70        |
| Newsletter Printing & Website Costs | <b>\$3,534.37</b> |
| Postage, Supplies and Misc.         | <b>\$318.79</b>   |
| Checking balance as of 06/01/13     | \$1,234.47        |

## New Members

*By Dick Myers*

As of 06/01/13 we have welcomed the following new shipmates to our group.

### USS Cotten

Roland J. Lussier  
Louis C. Motter, RD2  
Raymond Thomas  
Bob Tripp, MM3  
David L. Wortman

### USS Daly

Charles Hoy, BT2  
John Muise, MM3  
Robert Pruitt, FT3

### USS Dortch

Jack Cockrell  
Newt Lawrence, BTC

### USS Gatling

Bobby F. Bright  
Teresa Perez (Daughter of Albert Tatum)  
Robert Valliant, QM3  
Robert L. Walker



# Destroyer Squadron 30 Branson, Missouri, Reunion September 18-22, 2013

| Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday  | Sunday  |
|--|--|---|---|---|
|  <p>Check in at<br/><b>THE<br/>GRAND<br/>PLAZA<br/>HOTEL</b><br/><b>\$89.00 per<br/>room per night<br/>plus tax,<br/>including hot<br/>breakfast</b></p> <p>12:00 p.m.<br/>Hospitality<br/>Room Open...<br/>Light Snacks<br/>Provided</p>  <p>5:30 p.m.<br/>"WELCOME<br/>ABOARD"<br/>DELI BUFFET<br/>in<br/>Hospitality<br/>Room</p> | <p>7:00-10:00<br/>Hot Buffet<br/>Breakfast</p>  <p>10:00 a.m.<br/>THE<br/>CLAY COOPER<br/>MUSIC<br/>EXPRESS<br/>SHOW and<br/>LUNCH</p> <p>Hospitality<br/>Room Open</p>  <p>OPTIONAL<br/>ACTIVITY:<br/>6:00 p.m.<br/>"IT"<br/>DINNER AND<br/>SHOW at<br/>Hughes<br/>Celebrity<br/>Theatre<br/>\$55.00 per<br/>person</p> | <p>7:00-10:00<br/>Hot Buffet<br/>Breakfast</p>  <p>9:00 a.m.<br/>AREA<br/>GUIDED TOUR<br/>and<br/>Lunch on Your<br/>Own at Old<br/>Downtown<br/>Branson</p> <p>Hospitality<br/>Room Open</p>  <p>3:00 p.m.<br/>MEMORIAL<br/>SERVICE &amp;<br/>THE<br/>SHOWBOAT<br/>BRANSON<br/>BELLE<br/>Dinner Cruise<br/>and Show</p> | <p>7:00-10:00<br/>Hot Buffet<br/>Breakfast</p> <p>9:00 a.m.<br/>BUSINESS<br/>MEETING</p>  <p>Hospitality<br/>Room Open<br/>All Day</p> <p>Afternoon<br/>Free</p> <p>6:00 p.m.<br/>GROUP<br/>PHOTO<br/>(not part of<br/>package price)</p>  <p>7:00 p.m.<br/>FINAL<br/>EVENING<br/>BANQUET<br/>at Hotel<br/>with<br/>Entertainment</p> | <p>7:00-10:00<br/>Hot Buffet<br/>Breakfast</p> <p>Depart</p> <hr/> <p><b>ACTIVITY<br/>PACKAGE:<br/>\$199.00 per<br/>person</b></p> <p>INCLUDES:<br/>Hospitality<br/>Room with<br/>Snacks 1<sup>st</sup> Day<br/>Welcome<br/>Packet with<br/>Name Badges<br/>Welcome<br/>Reception<br/>Clay Cooper<br/>Show and<br/>Lunch<br/>Showboat<br/>Branson Belle<br/>Dinner, Show &amp;<br/>Cruise<br/>Final Evening<br/>Banquet with<br/>Entertainment<br/>All Taxes and<br/>Most Gratuities<br/>Transportation<br/>to Group<br/>Activities<br/>Reunion<br/>Website</p> |



**DESTROYER SQUADRON 30 REUNION**  
**Branson, Missouri**  
**September 18-22, 2013**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GUEST/SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

DATES ON BOARD AND SHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**HOST HOTEL: THE GRAND PLAZA**

Call 417-336-6646 for room reservations and mention you are with the Destroyer Squadron 30 Reunion. The room rate is \$89.00 per room per night plus tax. Hot buffet breakfast is included in room rate. Room rate is available 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion based on availability. Rooms not reserved by August 19 will be dropped from the group block.

REUNION ACTIVITY PACKAGE.....\$199.00 per person  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of Attendees x \$199.00 per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday, "IT" Dinner and Show at Hughes Theatre.....\$55.00 per person  
\_\_\_\_\_ # of Attendees x \$55.00 per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DUE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

A 50% deposit is requested by JULY 19 with final payment due AUGUST 19. Refunds on cancellations after September 12 will be on a case by case basis. Cancellations must be made by phone and authorized by a representative of "Gatherings Plus."

**Mail Registration Form and Check Payable to:**

**GATHERINGS PLUS**  
**P. O. BOX 1023, BRANSON WEST, MO. 65737**  
**417-338-4048**

**pamb@bransonmilitaryreunions.com**

**Reunion Website:**

[www.reunionpro.com](http://www.reunionpro.com)