



USS YosemiteAD-19 Association

From Bill Krug w.krugiii@gmail.com
Cell Phone (570) 878-2860



October 2023 Newsletter

October 16, 2023

Fellow Association Members, Former Sailors, Friends, and Family,

I hope this newsletter finds all of you safe and in good health and spirits. I watch the news as you do and am concerned about Hamas's attack on Israel. I agree with our military response to the situation and am thankful for where we are today. But I would be remiss if I didn't tell you this situation reminds me of past Deployments to the Mediterranean. I am familiar with the whole area and have visited many ports in Israel.

When I heard the call for a second US aircraft carrier, the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group*, to join the *USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group*, memories came flooding back to me. I remember our ship, the USS Yosemite, being part of a large Battle Group with numerous other ships involved in the Gulf War. As many of you may know, the Yosemite consistently played a vital role in those world events at the time. We did all the same things happening today, went to the same places, and were often on station with other ships for the same reasons.

During the Gulf War, we were directed to the area of hostilities just like today's sailors serving the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and R. Ford Carrier Strike Groups*. As sailors of the US Navy, we are both dedicated to our duty and performing our mission. I recall working long hours supporting those ships in the Gulf War with different names that had been forgotten for the many repair jobs. Our presence made it possible for ships to be repaired at sea and not have to enter a port, which would put them at risk or in harm's way. Many of you were on fly-away teams to support ships or traveled by small boats to support the mission. I even recall having a ship strapped to us underway to accomplish repairs.

While we are no longer on the front lines, we have been in the same Mediterranean waters at different times. We were there under the same tension of wartime trauma as today's US Navy sailors will feel. I still remember doing my mission-critical work at sea under these stressful conditions! It is equally important that our memories be shared and kept alive.

Now, to change the topic to our 2024 Reunion, it has been six months since our last Reunion, and many of you who will read this had good reasons they couldn't join us in



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Jacksonville. So we have gone from Jacksonville, where the ship was last homeported for the 2nd phase of its life, to the Newport Area, where it was first homeported. For some who live in Florida and the South, it's quite a change, as it was for those from the North to head to Jacksonville for the Reunion. But it is essential to retrace the origins of the USS Yosemite from the start and experience different and exciting places for our Reunions.

For the 2024 Reunion, we have some great tours lined up, including Battleship Cove. Most of you know we all have a limited amount of time on this earth, and as we get older, we like to make sure every minute counts. Please take your precious time to join your shipmates to remember the old times, create new memories with old friends, and meet new ones. I am asking you to look ahead; it is time to book for our Reunion and make an advanced plan. As the USS Yosemite Association, we got a great Hotel to give us off-season pricing during our visit, when they will be in peak season. Also, the Reunion can be an excellent vacation. This Reunion is a terrific value for the quality you will receive!

So join us as we go back to where this great ship was first homeported, the Newport Area. Just a reminder, our great ship was Commissioned on the Twenty Five of May Nineteen Forty-four. When the ship was one year old, the Commanding Officer (George C. Towner) had an Anniversary Dinner Commemorating the first year of Service. The menu was as follows:

Cream Of Celery Soup, Saltines, Stuffed Celery, Ripe Olives, Giblet Gravy, Cranberry Sauce, Roast Tom Turkey, Apple Dressing, Sweet Potatoes, Baked Ham Hawaiian Cabbage-Orange Salad, Sweet Mayonnaise, Buttered Asparagus, Parker House Rolls, Buttered Whipped Potatoes, Steamed Kernel Corn, Bread, Butter, Mince Pie, Ice Cream, Lemonade, Cigars and Cigarettes.

Now that is going all out!

He also wrote a special letter to his "Crew". Each crew member received a copy. It read as follows:

To All Hands:

ONE YEAR ago today, on commissioning the Yosemite, I told you that we had been given a fine ship but one with no reputation and with no ship's spirit. I emphasized that the reputation and spirit that she finally attained would depend entirely on what the Officers and Men who composed the crew made of her and her excellent facilities.



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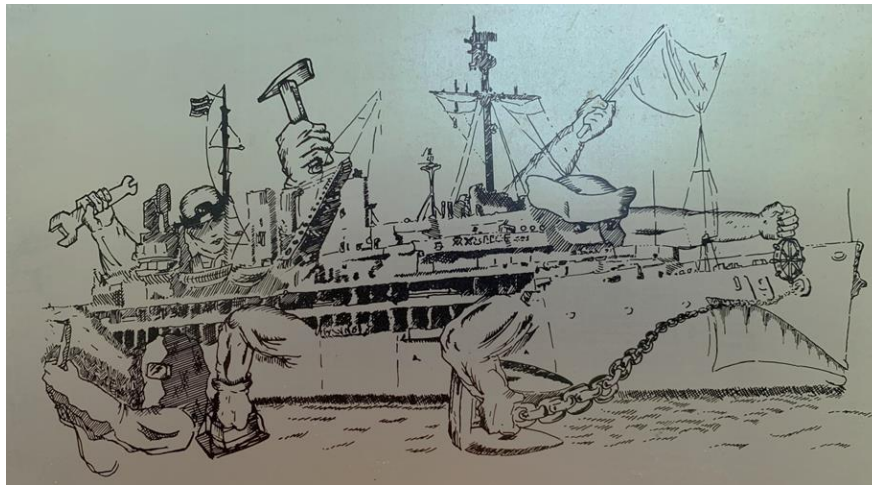
During the past year, those of you who had never been to sea before have become sailormen. For all of you, at times, the going has been tough and the hours long. Some have fallen by the wayside, some have stubbed their toes but recovered their balance to go forward with the rest to produce a fine ship's spirit and a reputation that is the best.

The nickname that you yourselves have given the Yosemite tells the story.

THE MIGHTY "Y" TAKES OFF HER HAT TO NO OTHER TENDER AFLOAT

George C. Towner

So you can see from the start our ship has been getting new names with the passage of time and crews. For some, it was simply Yosemite Sam with "WE FIXEM TO FIGHT" to the Battle Tender, to the Busy Lady, and when I was on board, they added a great piece of art commiserating the efforts of Men and Women on board "*The Ship with Helping Hands*".



The Ship with Helping Hands

The Ship with Helping Hands is depicted in the last Cruise Book and is clearly an interesting piece of artwork. While it would have been an honor to be part of the first crew, it matters not what crew you were on in the big picture. I was on the ship's last deployments and recalled how it felt to return home after we departed the Gulf with the war and then head back to homeport. It is indeed a special feeling when it is all said and done, and you're returning to that place that is special to you. We all have lots of stories,



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and we can tell them at the Reunion with like-minded sailors sharing their stories and maybe adding to yours. Please make that your next priority.

I know that some of you have been struggling with health issues. While it has been known to only a few, I have had significant challenges this year. If it were not for modern medicine, I would not be with you now. But no matter what, I intend to be at the Reunion because I am very aware that some time cannot be made up. I want to be among those who attend the Reunion to re-live our experiences and, with the help of some who were with me, perhaps modify some of my own stories to keep them as factual as possible.

I still believe the Repair Officer (now Retired Capt. Phil Johnson) was at my side when I was in a predicament trying to get back to Yosemite. We have just reacquired a complete sampling of the Mines that we had recovered during the Gulf War. As my side of the story goes, I was getting ready to be perhaps incarcerated along with all my helpers and six others standing by the truck full of Mines confiscated. But those close to my table at our last Reunion must have heard the correction I was receiving from Phil, being supported by Lt Avery, who I think was paid to take a side opposing my story. Phil had a different version of the story of liberating these mines as Rear Admiral Raynor Taylor ordered.

According to Phil, my side of the story lacked an essential detail; he wasn't with me when I faced incarceration, but Phil did prevent it from happening with a couple of phone calls. The only reasonable solution for me will be to find some of those who were a part of the group to collaborate on my side of the story. This is part of the fun of telling sea stories. At the next Reunion, don't hesitate to ask me about this story performed in the dark of night to recover enemy mines from a Navy facility unwillingly to give them up.

I never personally met Gilbert "Smokey" Honermann myself. But, I was well aware he was active in our Association and contributed his time and efforts to improve it and keep it going. In the last newsletter, I told you that I had been in contact with Jane Sonnabend, his daughter. Smokey was so pleased to receive all of our newsletters, and daughter read them all to him. At the last Reunion in Jacksonville, we received a host of great things donated to us by Jane that we raffled off. Those artifacts were happily given to fellow sailors on behalf of her father. Smokey ran our Yosemite's Ships Store, as well as Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian in the past, and was well acquainted with the best choices of things of interest. In my May newsletter, I talked about Smokey and some of



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the unique artifacts given as prizes at the 2023 Reunion.

I am unhappy to report that on May 2, 2023, Gilbert "Smokey" Honermann passed away at 88. Go to our Website, <https://ussyosemite.net/gilbert-smokey-honermann-passed-may-2023/>, to read Smokey's Obituary. I am sure some of you knew him or of him, and we will miss this great man who also served as Secretary, Treasurer, running the Ship's Store, and Historian of our Association. So, once again, this is a reminder that we just can't put off what we can do today and in the near term.

Also, I was recently informed that David Livingston, a Plank Owner, passed away on April 30, 2023. Diane Livingston Johnson advised me of his passing. As some of you recall, he was a Torpedoman 3rd Class on the Yosemite. His daughter, Diane, has written an obituary and provided the photo on our Website: <https://ussyosemite.net/david-john-livingston-passed-away/> .

As the USS Yosemite Association, we are honored to be fellow Yosemite crew members of those who passed, and there are crew members who will recall and mention them. For Association members that have passed, we are deeply honored for personally knowing them and thankful for touching their lives. Finally, I want to say that we are saddened by the heart-wrenching loss of those who passed who were active Association members and the meat of our Reunions. Our deceased Association members like Smokey are part of our legacy, not forgotten, and will be missed and in our prayers.

Our Website, <https://ussyosemite.net>, shares pictures and information of those who have passed. The photos, eulogy, and other information about the crew members are provided to us by a surviving family member or friend. Our Website posts newsletters, Reunion updates, and other information of interest.

The following is important 2024 Reunion information:

USS Yosemite Association Annual Reunion

When: April 24, 2024 - April 27, 2024

Where: Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick (Airport)

Address: 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

For more 2024 Reunion information (enclosed):

- **Reunion Hotel & Tour Information:**
<https://ussyosemite.net/2024-uss-yosemite-reunion-update/>
- **Reunion Registration Form:**



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<https://ussyosemite.net/2024-uss-yosemite-reunion-registration-form-2/>

- **Reunion Agenda:**

<https://ussyosemite.net/2024-uss-yosemite-association-reunion-agenda/>

Our Reunion has been planned with great tours that will make it a memorable experience for you if you attend. We have added the great "Foxwood Casino" to the mix of things for a Wednesday evening trip. The Hotel is in a very safe area, newly refurbished and updated, with two Restaurants that will give you a discount if you indicate you are part of the Yosemite Group. Breakfast is not included with regular booking, but you will get it daily in our Hospitality Room as part of our group.

You can book your room(s) today. The Association needs the Booking of Hotel Rooms to begin now. Remember you must book the Hotel separate from our other events and Reunion Registration Form. For reservations, call (800) 227-6963 for the Crowne Plaza Providence-Warwick (Airport), and please state you are with the "USS Yosemite Group and use code "YOS". This newsletter includes our Agenda, 2024 Reunion Update, and Reunion Registration Form with information on the Tours. The Reunion Registration Form must be completed and mailed ASAP to our Secretary so we can know how many people are going on the tours and correctly plan the Banquet.

Please note I want to thank Janice Rodrigue for being our Secretary and all the efforts she spent doing the tasks we need for the Association. We all appreciate her and her contributions. Janice will be stepping down soon; a special thanks to Janice for doing a great job. Tina Smith will replace her as our new Secretary and thank you, Tina, for accepting the Secretary position.

Please send your Reunion Registration Form to Tina. For questions, don't hesitate to call Tina at (734) 308-0402 or contact her by email tinabriones@hotmail.com . Please mail your completed Reunion Registration Form to:

Tina Briones Smith
5107 Reagan Dr.
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Please take the time to look at some of the treasures or artifacts you have at your home that are associated with the Yosemite and consider making them available for our Auction / Raffle so that we can spread the wealth of the past.



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Because Wendy and I will drive to the Reunion, the Ships Store will have a good representation. If you know of something in advance you want, please let Wendy know, and we will bring it and mark it for your name. As most of you know, Cooper has transferred the Ship's Store to Wendy. Cooper is now filling the Treasurer's position.

We are thankful that he turned over a very significant inventory to her. Wendy has consistently sold items to those who see us on our Website. Alphonso Montibello has done a great job managing our site and positively projecting the Yosemite Association. Please look at the Website and take note of the efforts he has put into it. Read some of the comments and stories.

Last but not least, please act on making your hotel reservations as soon as possible and send in the Reunion Registration form. I aim to provide you with the best Reunion you have ever had. But, to accomplish that, it takes our Yosemite People to sign up and make it all worthwhile. I hope you look forward to this as much as our leadership team. We are all roaring to go!

I know we will all get busier as we enter the fall, and the events of Thanksgiving and Christmas captivate our time and schedules. Please act sooner as opposed to later. The more we know in advance, the better we can plan and arrange for the best Reunion for you.

Wishing you all the best,

William C. Krug III (Bill)
President USS Yosemite Association