

USS MASSEY DD-778 ASSOCIATION

The Big Dipper

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The 2019 Savannah Reunion will be held on:

May 5, 6, 7, 8, 2019 at the **EMBASSY SUITES SAVANNAH AIRPORT**
145 West
Mulberry Blvd., Savannah, GA

As the name implies, our accommodations are two room suites with more bells and whistles than we have ever had before. The hotel has free airport shuttle and parking. They also provide a complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast every morning starting at 6 am. There is a Manager's Reception from 5:30 to 7:30 each night with beer/wine and hors d'oeuvres! Enjoy the in-house restaurant called "Flying Spoons" plus a dozen dining experiences in the area. We will have a list of these in your registration envelope.

To make reservations, call **1-800-362-2779**, indicate you wish to make a reservation for the USS MASSEY Reunion.

The rates are:

Sun. 5/5/19 \$149.00 plus 13% tax and \$5.00 State fee
Mon. 5/6/19 \$149.00 plus 13% tax and \$5.00 State fee
Tue. 5/7/19 \$159.00 plus 13% tax and \$5.00 State fee
Wed. 5/8/19 \$159.00 plus 13% tax and \$5.00 State fee

Note: Check in time is after 4 PM and you may cancel without charge 48 hours prior to the day you arrive. Handicap rooms are limited. If for any reason you encounter a problem in reserving a room the Sales Manager - Robin Mawer will gladly assist you.

(Tours have lunches included.)

Monday May 6, trolleys will pick us up at **0830** for the three-hour Savannah Experience Tour that visits all the familiar sites and landmarks of the Historic District as well as the "forgotten" neighborhoods. See the grace of the Victorian District, restoration in the Thomas Square neighborhood, and the history of the Beech Institute area and the oak lined grandeur of Victory Drive. We dine at one of Savannah's oldest and most unique restaurants since 1753 - The Pirates House.

Tuesday May 7, trolleys will pick us up at **0830** for the Mighty 8th Air Force Tour. The Eighth Air Force was activated in 1942. The museum features over 90,000 square feet of exhibits, interactive displays, historical artifacts and a magnificent collection of art. See a visually-realistic mission experience, a world renown, research center and a beautiful memorial garden. The World War II, B-17 Flying Fortress, "City of Savannah" is undergoing a complete restoration inside the Museum's Combat Gallery. This is a two hour guided tour that takes place

after our memorial service in the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles. The chapel was built in an English Gothic style with antique features.

We have lunch, then board the trolleys for the Ships of the Sea Museum which features nine galleries of model ships, maritime paintings and artifacts. The collection includes colonial ships, ironclads, ocean-going steamers (including Titanic) and modern navy ships.

Wednesday May 8, trolleys will pick us up at **0830** for the Island Beach and Fort Tour . This excursion includes a visit to Old Fort Jackson, Georgia's oldest standing brick fortification and a National Historic Landmark. We will also visit Tybee Lighthouse which has a breathtaking view of the surrounding coast. We will lunch at The Crab Shack and order from a special menu.

Optional Tours

Using either UBER, LYFT, or friends, hitch a ride to downtown for afternoon Hop-on-Hop-off transportation to the historic Cemetery or Ghost tours, but block out **Wednesday afternoon** for our **Business Meeting**.

Free activities

You may enjoy numerous free activities while you are visiting Savannah.

Bonaventure Cemetery is a beautiful Savannah cemetery that has 160 acres of tall live oaks, Spanish moss and historic graves.

Cathedral of St John the Baptist has gorgeous stained glass, intricate murals and towering columns.

Savannah Botanical Gardens has nature trails, a two acre pond, gorgeous roses, seasonal blooms and an 1840 farmhouse.

Ghost Coast Distillery is a free tour where guides tell you about the history of alcohol, the distilling process, facility's equipment, product recipes and much more.

Forsyth Park is a one mile paved path, perfect for a "stroll in the park".

Art Galleries along River Street

The Savannah Belles Ferry will take you across the Savannah River for a view of Savannah from the other side.

Save the date.....Prior to the 2018 Savannah Reunion being cancelled, the Reunion Planning Committee was busy planning the 2019 Reunion to be held in Buffalo, NY. Now that the Savannah Reunion has been moved to the spring of 2019, **the Buffalo Reunion site is being pushed to the fall of 2020.**

Additional Buffalo Reunion details and Registration Forms will be provided in future newsletters. If you have any questions you may contact Thomas Hartman at his email address hartmanshome@cox.net.

Memorial Remembrance

Dames Chessher, FT2, 1950 -1954, passed away July 16, 2016
Bennie Cooke Jr., PC3, 1964 -1966, has passed away
Tony Degregoria, GM, 1956 -1957, passed away November 26, 2018
James Leber Sr., RM3, 1954 -1958, has passed away
John Smoak, SN, 1955 -1959, passed away January 11, 2019
Robert F. Prentiss, SH3, 1949 - 1952, passed away December 17, 2018
Stephen D. Moyer, STG3, 1967 -1969, passed away February 6, 2019

.May they rest in peace

USS Massey Website Upgrade

Reconstruction of the USS Massey website is underway and significant progress has been made. As we reported in the last issue of the newsletter, upgrading the site was going to be a topic of discussion at the business meeting which was to be held in Savannah in the fall of 2018. Since the reunion was postponed it was decided the upgrade needed to be started. The announcement of this endeavor was made in the last newsletter and the Executive Committee invited comments from the membership. Hearing no negative comments EXCOMM made the decision to move forward.

Goals are to make the site more intuitive to navigate, more visitor interactive, and more secure. Given we have a legacy of positive comments on the site, we are not planning on major surgery but some structural changes particularly to make the site more interactive from a communications perspective will be integrated.

Agent Orange Update

Here are the latest developments since our initial Agent Orange update in the last newsletter. Recently there have been numerous articles about the Blue-Water Navy Agent Orange Bill in the news. The question is “Where does the bill to expand VA coverage to the Vietnam Blue Water vets stand now?” The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) magazine in its February 2019 edition has a good recap of events since last December relative to Congressional status. In the now previous Congressional session, the House unanimously approved the bill which “would have allowed those who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam (VN) to claim presumptive exposure to Agent Orange”. The bill was then passed to the Senate for a unanimous approval vote in December. It failed when one Senator from Wyoming blocked the vote citing funding concerns. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie is on record opposing the proposed legislation citing his concern on the need for scientific evidence to support the legislation which has a price tag estimate of 2+B dollars. Secretary Wilkie has asked Congress to hold off a further vote on the bill pending completion of an ongoing VA sponsored study later this year.

On the legal front, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit reversed its earlier decision on a previously filed lawsuit, Procopio (Navy vet) v. Wilkie (VA Secretary), on 29 January 2019 in favor of the plaintiff, Navy vet Procopio. The VA has 30 days to file an appeal to the Supreme Court. This would appear to temporarily stall the Congressional process to reintroduce legislation to expand Agent Orange VA coverage to Navy Blue Water VN vets. The other factor that may delay the decision process is completion of the VA study. MOAAs opinion is that “the study will not provide any answers regarding Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam”. While these developments do not seem to favor quick resolution of the issue, it is clear from the MOAA article that there is growing bi-partisan support in Congress to push the legislation through.

We encourage our members to check out the VA General Counsel web site page on Agent Orange Exposure, <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/> particularly check the tab on the left column titled Vietnam Waters. We will try to stay abreast of this issue and encourage you to do the same.

2019 Association Dues payment is now being accepted.

Mail Membership Application and Dues Payment in the form of a check to Sue Radziwon, Dues Coordinator, at postal address 538 70th Street, Darien IL 60561-4052. The form is provided at the bottom of the last page of this newsletter.

Welcome to our newest members of the USS Massey Association.

We are pleased to have **Edwin R. Smith, MM3**, who served on the USS Massey in 1961-1965 and **Kevin Prendergast, BM**, who served on the USS Massey in 1967 and 1968, become our newest members of the USS Massey Association.

USS Massey Association Officers

President - Gordon A. Risk...1523 Millecoquins Ct... ..Rochester...MI...48307... 248.650.5138
Vice President – David Ford...6185 Coppercove Circle NW...North Canton...OH...44720...330.244.9287
Treasurer - Don Heenan...5224 Willow Mill Drive...Marietta...GA...30068...770.973.1693
Secretary – Don Wirt...2114 Yerger Rd...Pottstown...PA...610.327.0529
CHAPLAIN - Bernard Barilla...121 Berner Ave...Hazelton...PA.18201...570.454.0462
MASTER at ARMS - Tom Truesdale...5421 Bensalem Blvd....Bensalem...PA...19020
MEMBERSHIP & HISTORIAN – Bob Radziwon...630.515.9691
PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY - Wilson Walters...906 Vine St....New Eagle... PA...15067...724.258.9223
PAST PRESIDENT - Richard E. Pearsall...1224 Heathcliff DR...Virginia Beach...VA ...23464...757.474.9026 (H) 757) 679.8920 ©

USS MASSEY REUNION REGISTRATION, SAVANNAH, GA

Members Name _____

Guest Name _____

E-mail _____

Years served on MASSEY - 19 ____ to 19 ____

Plank owner Yes ___ No ___

First time attendee Yes ___ No ___

Rate/Rank on MASSEY _____

2018 Dues paid Yes ___ No ___ (enclosed \$10.00) _____

Registration fee @ \$20.00 PP _____

Monday: Savannah Experience Tour & lunch at The Pirate \$54.00 PP _____

Tuesday: Mighty 8th AF Memorial Service/Museum/ Lunch \$29.00 PP _____

Wednesday: Island Beach & Fort & Lunch at Crab Shack \$52.00 PP _____

BANQUET Wednesday evening

Grilled Beef Tenderloin with Portabella mushrooms \$49.00 PP _____

Parmesan encrusted Salmon with chive beurre blanc \$31.00 PP _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Please make your check payable to the **USS MASSEY ASSOCIATION** and

Mail to: **David Ford 6185 Copper Cove Circle NW, North Canton, OH 44720** (330) 244 9287

2019 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL USS MASSEY ASSOCIATION

(Please complete all information fresh this year)

Name _____ Spouse _____ Date _____

(FIRST, MIDDLE INITIAL, LAST)

(FIRST, MI)

Mailing Address

(STREET or PO, CITY, STATE, ZIP)

Phone _____ - _____ - _____ Cell _____ - _____ - _____

E-MAIL _____

Years on board _____ - _____ (e.g. 58-62)

Rank/Rate _____ (e.g. LT/FTG2)

2019 DUES (IF NOT INCLUDED IN REUNION REGISTRATION) \$10.00 _____

Make checks payable to: **USS MASSEY ASSOCIATION**

Mail check and application to the Dues Coordinator: **Sue Radziwon, 538 70th St., Darien, IL 60561-4052**

Please circle one of the following options:

E-mail newsletters to email address above: or **Mail** newsletters to postal address above