



April 2017

USS WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION

Highlights from the 2016 Reunion Seattle, Washington



Back Row: Tony Reiter, Herb Crask, Art Rinetti
Front Row: Howard Ehle, Bob Benafel, Bob Andler, George Gackle, John Brown, Jim Downing

The 2016 reunion in Seattle, Washington was another great event. We had a large turnout of crew members, family, and friends. The Association seems to be going strong and we're hopeful for a good turnout in Branson in 2017.

During the three days in Seattle, the following events were enjoyed:

- Welcome aboard pizza party
- Bus trip to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and museum in Bremerton, WA
- Reception at the USO Club at SeaTac Airport
- Side trips to downtown Seattle to enjoy the sights
- Banquet dinner where it was decided that we will have a reunion in 2017 in Branson, MO
- Memorial service for crew members who have passed since the last reunion

At the 2016 reunion, taps was played for the following crew members and friends who passed since our last meeting:

Hugh Bergen
John Radford
George Butts
William Shiperly

John Owen
William Wilkins
Lee Ebner
Paul Smith

Ronald Aubry
Floyd Proffitt
James Toler

*******Save the Date – September 21 – 24*******

2017 USS WEST VIRGINIA REUNION

Our reunion will be held in beautiful Branson, MO September 21-24 (Thursday to Sunday). All shipmates, family and friends are invited to attend. The Radisson Hotel Branson will host our event with an affordable room rate, complimentary breakfast buffet, free parking, valet service, and spacious facilities for our hospitality room, memorial service and banquet. The hotel's "Hall of Heroes" is a must see!

We will have our traditional pizza party welcome on Thursday evening - a free event for all guests. On Friday we will take a lunch cruise on the Branson Belle Showboat that features the all-new "Country on the Lake" musical review. A special military recognition ceremony will take place prior to boarding. Saturday morning we will visit the Veterans Memorial Museum - a national tribute to the brave men and women who defended our liberties during the 20th century - located minutes from our hotel. Later on in the day will be the memorial service followed by a social hour and banquet.

Watch for further, detailed registration information in the June Newsletter!

100th Anniversary of the U.S. involvement in World War One

On April 6th, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I. When World War I broke out in Europe during the summer of 1914, the United States stuck to a strict policy of neutrality. On August 4, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson declared to Congress that, "The United States must be neutral in fact, as well as in name, during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought, as well as action." However, after years of unrestricted German submarine warfare, the sinking of the Lusitania, and the public release of the Zimmermann Telegram, the United States could no longer remain neutral in the international conflict. On April 6, 1917, Congress officially declared war against Germany and joined the Allied forces. Led by General John J. Pershing, the American Expeditionary Forces arrived in Europe in June 1917. American forces participated in several major battles, most notably the Meuse-Argonne offensive. This became a major turning point in the War, which had been at a stalemate for years. The War would finally end a year later on November 11, 1918. Over 4.7 million American men and women would serve, and more than 116,000 American soldiers, or "doughboys" as they were commonly referred to, would pay the ultimate sacrifice.

ANNUAL DUES

Please complete and **send the enclosed form** to cover dues for January through December 2017. Membership is open to everyone and we love to have new members at our reunions. Annual membership dues are \$15. Donations are also welcome and sincerely appreciated.