



SEPTEMBER 2011

USS WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION

## 2011 Reunion in Galveston, Texas

Our reunion in October is approaching fast. In our newsletter from February, we sent out all of the registration information for the upcoming reunion. If you didn't receive it or if you lost your copy, the sign-up sheet is included with this newsletter. Contact Mike Mullins with any questions. The registration deadline for the hotel is September 15.

We've had a few questions about transportation to and from the airport in Houston. Our hotel will be about an hour from Hobby and George Bush airports, and some attendees might be concerned about the cost of transportation to and from the airport. As we get our reservations in, we'll get in touch with everyone to see if we can arrange group trips to and from the airport.

As you all know, we never know when a reunion will be our last, so we hope that anyone who can attend will be there with us. Please spread the word – call all of your old friends and get them to Galveston!

Please Note: The best phone number for the hotel is 409-740-5300. The number in the last newsletter was the national number and it's difficult to get to the right person using that number.

## Important Address Change

Mike Mullins has moved to a new home and he has a new address. There should be no problems with any mail sent to the old address but going forward, please use the new address for communications with the USS West Virginia Association. His phone and fax numbers will stay the same.

USS West Virginia Association  
c/o Mike Mullins  
2933 Cottonwood Lane  
Chester Springs, PA 19425

Phone: 610-952-3542  
Fax: 888-370-3238

## A Final Word on Association Dues for 2011

We mentioned in our last newsletter that we needed to begin collecting annual dues to cover the Association's costs. We sent that newsletter to about 450 addresses. Unfortunately, we've only heard back from about 60 of those 450. At the last reunion, the consensus was that if dues were not paid that the names would be removed from the mailing list because it was likely that there was no longer an interest in the USS West Virginia Association. It was also determined that we needed to hear from life members so that we would know if they still want to receive the newsletters.

We're including a list of all of the current dues paying members of the Association on the last page of this letter. If you feel your name should be on the list, please let us know. Please don't feel insulted if you don't see your name and you feel that you should be on the list because of a previously paid life membership. We're doing the best we can to refine our membership list while saving wasted money on printing and postage.

If you have any ideas about a better way to reach out to people or if you have any concern about paying dues, please get in touch so we can find the best solution.

# Fighting Families

One of the most patriotic stories of wartime service is a familiar one. Military families were very common around the World War II era. There were many family members that served on the USS West Virginia before the start of World War II. Samuel, Robert, and Edward Kronberger; Sterling and Okey Bartrug; Maxie, Lacy, and Harry Bennett; Albert, Jacob, and Anthony Vander Goore; Elmer, Arnold, and James Bobick; James and Richard Crawford; Don and Norman Martin; are just a few.

The five Sullivan brothers enlisted on January 3, 1942 with the stipulation that they serve together. The Navy had a policy of separating siblings, but this was not strictly enforced. George and Frank had served in the Navy before, but their brothers had not. All five were assigned to the light cruiser USS Juneau.

The Juneau participated in a number of naval engagements during the months-long Guadalcanal Campaign beginning in August 1942. Early in the morning of November 13, 1942, during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, the Juneau was struck by a Japanese torpedo and forced to withdraw. Later that day, as it was leaving the Solomon Islands' area for the Allied rear-area base at Espiritu Santo with other surviving US warships from battle, the Juneau was struck again, this time by a torpedo from Japanese submarine I-26. The torpedo likely hit the thinly-armored cruiser at or near the ammunition magazines and the ship exploded and quickly sank.

Captain Gilbert C. Hoover, commanding officer of the USS Helena and senior officer present in the battle-damaged US task force, was skeptical that anyone had survived the sinking of the Juneau and believed it would be reckless to look for survivors, thereby exposing his wounded ships to a still-lurking Japanese submarine.

Therefore, he ordered his ships to continue on towards Espiritu Santo. Helena signaled a nearby US B-17 bomber on patrol to notify Allied headquarters to send aircraft or ships to search for survivors.

Approximately 100 of Juneau's crew had survived and were left in the water. The B-17 bomber crew, unwilling to disobey orders not to break radio silence, did not pass the message about searching for survivors to their headquarters until they had landed several hours later. The crew's report of the location of possible survivors was mixed in with other pending paperwork actions and went unnoticed for several days. It was not until days later that headquarters staff realized that a search had never been mounted and belatedly ordered aircraft to begin searching the area. In the meantime, Juneau's survivors, many of whom were seriously wounded, were exposed to the elements, hunger, thirst, and repeated shark attacks.

Eight days after the sinking, ten survivors were found by a PBY Catalina search aircraft and retrieved from the water. The survivors reported that Frank, Joe, and Matt died instantly, Al drowned the next day, and George survived for four or five days before being driven insane with grief at the loss of his brothers, finally going over the side of the raft he occupied. He was never seen or heard from again.

Security required that the Navy not reveal the loss of the Juneau or the other ships so as not to provide information to the enemy. Letters from the Sullivan sons stopped arriving at the home and the parents grew worried.

The brothers' parents were notified of their deaths on January 12, 1943. That morning, the boys' father, Thomas, was preparing to go to work when three men in uniform, a lieutenant commander, a doctor and a chief petty officer, approached his front door. "I have some news for you about your boys," the naval officer said. "Which one?" asked Thomas. "I'm sorry," the officer replied. "All five."

The brothers left a sister, Genevieve. Albert was survived by a wife and son. The "Fighting Sullivan Brothers" were national heroes. President Franklin Roosevelt sent a letter of condolence to Tom and Alleta. Pope Pius XII sent a silver religious medal and rosary with his message of regret. The Iowa Senate and House adopted a formal resolution of tribute to the Sullivan brothers.

Thomas and Alleta Sullivan made speaking appearances at war plants and shipyards on behalf of the war effort. Later, Alleta participated in the launching of a destroyer USS The Sullivans, named after her sons.

*Portions from Wikipedia*

# 2011 Reunion Activity Registration Form

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and the total amount. Send that amount payable to **USS West Virginia Association** in the form of a **check or money order** (no credit cards or phone reservations) to: USS West Virginia Association, c/o Mike Mullins, 2933 Cottonwood Lane, Chester Springs, PA 19425. Your canceled check will serve as your confirmation. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **September 19, 2011**.

DATE	PRICE (\$/PP)	NUMBER	TOTAL (\$)
<b>10/17/2011 Monday</b> San Jacinto Battleground, Monument, & Museum USS Battleship Texas BB-35 NASA Space Center	\$69.00 pp		
<b>10/18/2011 Tuesday</b> Lone Star Flight Museum Moody Gardens Aquarium Pyramid Rainforest Pyramid Fisherman's Wharf Luncheon	\$61.00 pp		
<b>10/19/2011 Wednesday</b> Train (2 Hours), Narrated Tour of the Island	\$15.00 pp		
<b>10/20/2011 Thursday</b> FREE Day on Your Own (Touring, Sunbathing, Shopping, Sea Stories, Etc.) Memorial Service Banquet, Texas BBQ and Seafood	\$38.00 pp		
Registration	\$35.00 pp		
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For hotel reservations at the Holiday Inn Resort on the Beach, call 409-740-5300. The special group rate is \$79.00 per night. This rate is good for two (2) nights before and two (2) nights after the reunion events. In order to obtain your special group rate, guests need to identify themselves as being associated with USS West Virginia BB-48.

## ATTENDEES (For name tags)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS ABOARD 19 \_\_\_\_ to 19 \_\_\_\_

GUEST NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME & PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

## INDEMNITY CLAUSE (Must be signed regardless of payment method)

I, the undersigned, hereby assume liability for and shall indemnify, defend, protect, save and hold harmless the USS West Virginia Association and the Holiday Inn on the Beach, its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates, and their officers, agents, subcontractors, and employees, from and against any and all liabilities, claims, judgments, damages, losses, including all costs, fees, and expenses incidental there to caused by or arising out of the gross negligence or willful misconduct on my behalf and which are in any way related to the services or goods contemplated by this agreement.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

# The Reunions is Almost Here!

## 2011 USS West Virginia (BB-48) Reunion - October 16-20, 2011

### Current Paid Association Members for 2011

Ed Allison  
Roger Anderson  
Robert J Andler  
Ronald J Aubry  
Orval Aylesworth  
Jesse James Bowen  
John C Brown  
Marvin Carson  
Marvin Childress  
Barbara Clements  
Herbert Crask  
Debbie Decker  
Capt. Victor Delano, USN Ret.  
James W Downing  
Harold R Dusick  
Lee Ebner  
Bill Friley  
Chuck Fry  
Tom Fuller  
George Gackle  
Julia Gatchel  
Howard Gist

Anna Hall  
LTC Nicholas Hannibal, USAF  
Ret.  
Neal Jones, Jr.  
Lawrence P Kabza  
William Keith  
Joseph B Keziah  
Lewis E LaGessee  
Robert Lasher  
Anthony Lewis  
Ben Lichtman  
Hoy Little  
Rick Lombardi  
Ernie Marshall  
Bill Martinie  
John Matheson  
James McNeill  
Peter Newberg  
James O'Neill  
John I Owen  
Mary Porzucek

Todd Preston  
Floyd D Proffitt  
Sylvester Puccio  
Morgan J Pulver  
Virgil W Reeve  
Robert L Reising  
Maurice O Riker  
Arthur Rinetti  
Richard Robinson  
Herman Schlaefer  
Donald Seibold  
Paul Smith  
Herbert Spencer  
Charles Stanton  
John P Tazewell  
Joe Variot  
Selman E Walter  
Jeanne Webb  
Cheryl M Wohlers  
Alton Wiggs  
Eldon Willander  
Frontis S Winford

**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.usswestvirginia.org](http://www.usswestvirginia.org)**



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**Mike Mullins – Curator**  
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Chester Springs, PA 19425

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