



2022 USS Nimitz (CVN-68) Association Reunion

Host/Coordinators Summary

Submitted by David & Carol Wood 10-23-22



Day 1

Embarkation-Tampa Florida: We began our reunion by getting onboard the ship on Saturday October 15th. All attendees (18 Members & 11 Spouses), including several first-time attendees and first time “cruisers”, mustered in the Adriatic conference room on the Serenade of the Seas. This was the first voyage of the ship since returning from the west coast and Alaska, having just come through the Panama Canal earlier this week. We gathered at dinner that evening, four tables in close proximity to each other and the seas stories and the good times began!

Day 2

At Sea: Our first day was a day at sea which was a great time for us to hold our annual business meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Rich Galecki. John Wilder presented the results of the financial audit and distributed the scholarship applications/essays to several members and board members to score. We have a balance of over \$20,000 in the Association bank account. The financial audit was accepted/approved by the membership. The Scholarship awardee will be reported out at our second business meeting. Nominations for President were Gary Rollins and John Wilder, the election will also take place during the second business meeting on Wednesday. Father Peter, Dave Wood and Rich Galecki, conducted the two-bell ceremony. The chief of security (John) gave a brief presentation about the ship, which has been selected for an around the world cruise. The Serenade is the only Gas Turbine vessel in the Royal Caribbean fleet. One very interesting fact is that it gets 40 feet to the gallon.... now that is a gas hog!! Dave Wood presented a plaque to the Chief of Security in recognition for being the host for the 2022 Reunion.

All hands were treated to a personalized video message from the USS Nimitz CO, Captain Sicola, to the Association. He provided the attendees an update on the ship’s activities. As always this was one of the highlights of the business meeting and a comfort to hear that we left the ship in good hands. We will be posting this to our website and Facebook page. Nominations for the location of the 2024 Reunion we solicited. Potential sites were Charleston, SC; Milwaukee, WI; Niagara Falls, NY; Minneapolis/St Paul, MN; Nashville, TN; Myrtle Beach, SC. A vote was held, and Charleston was selected as the site for the 2024 Reunion.

Myrl Wallace gave an update on the 2023 reunion in Tempe, AZ. The hotel selected is the Embassy Suites in Tempe and the dates are Oct 16-18th. Additional reunion and hotel information will be forthcoming in the next Association newsletter.

Dave Wood presented a plaque to our Chaplin, Fr Peter, for his 20 years of dedicated service to the Association. Fr then shared a story about healing from an experience he had with military men that fought on opposite sides of a war. The presentation was heartwarming.

Dave Wood also presented a plaque to Rich Galecki for his dedicated service to the Association as president for the past 4 years. Rich gave thanks for all of the members for their support and input during his tenure. Rich will step down at the end of this year's reunion to be replaced by the winner of the vote later in the week.

There was a good deal of discussion about the state of the Association website, and it was a unanimous decision that this should be a primary focus of the new President. It was also discussed that the future direction of the website (delete or update) should be made within the next 90 to 120 days.

The meeting was suspended for the day, to be reconvened in three days.

The afternoon found the members at the pool or exploring the ship. The ship also was host to the International Belly Flop contest and the Association was honored to have two participants selected to participate. Howard Kamarata and Steve Crabtree represented the Association well. Hundreds gathered around the pool while another 200+ hung over the railing one deck above to get a glimpse of our gallant participants. Although neither won the event, they both had a respectable showing!

Day 3

Grand Cayman Island: We were so fortunate that the ship is too large to dock at this port, so we were treated to "liberty boats". Fond memories and years of therapy went down the drain. Actually, the liberty boats were clean, the crews friendly and all in all a very different experience than most remembered from their Navy days!

Many of the attendees enjoyed the tours available on the island, from horseback riding to getting some sun on the beautiful beaches. Others strolled around town, stopping for ice cold beers and conch fritters as well as other tasty treats.

Once back on the ship, there was a Veterans Celebration for all veterans on board. The Association was honored to have Fr Peter (Chaplin) and John Wilder (flag bearer) participate in the ceremony. As always Fr Peter shared a very relevant military story. This was held in the center of the ship (Centrum) with passengers leaning over the railing on 5 different decks to see the ceremony. Afterwards there was a good deal of talking with other veterans and passengers. It was great to see that all branches were represented.

Day 4

Cozumel, Mexico: Day four found us once again in port, this time Cozumel, Mexico. Many participants went to Mr Sanchos Beach Resort, but others went to swim with the dolphins, local cooking lessons, and others did some shopping in downtown Cozumel. There were 15 of us at Mr. Sanchos and we swam/floated in the ocean and in their freshwater pool, ate some really good food and all in all relaxed. Some, who shall remain nameless, got “stuck” at Senor Frogs for an extended period of time, but did make it back for dinner albeit a tad bit late. Regardless of which activities the members participated in, everyone seemed to have had a very enjoyable day ashore. That evening there was a 70’s celebrations and some members dressed up in 70’s retro attire. Eileen even managed to participate on stage, in the entertainment portion of the 70’s night with the ships Royal Caribbean Dancers. You Go Girl!!

Day 5

At Sea: Today was the only gloomy day, but we reconvened for a short business meeting to announce the scholarship winner and elect the next President. We had two very good candidates this year, one sponsored by Forrest “Woody” Conrad and the other by Dave Wood. The scoring was very close, separated by only **0.7 points**, the scholarship was awarded to Leah Shay from San Tan Valley, AZ. Leah was contacted when we reached shore in Tampa and was extremely thankful and honored to have been selected.

Next the election for Association President was held by secret ballot. The two candidates presented were Gary Rollins and John Wilder. Fr Peter and Rob Jameson collected the ballots and reported out that the members unanimously voted for John Wilder.

Congratulations John!!

Myrl gave another short update on the 2023 reunion. The 2022 Member Business meeting was adjourned.

The remainder of the day was on your own with no planned activities until the annual Bill Paschall Banquet this evening. Members spent the day continuing to explore the ship, smoke cigars, spend time in the casino, play miniature golf, exercise, whatever they pleased.

This night we honored our founder and fellow shipmate Bill Paschall at the annual Bill Paschall Memorial Banquet. Although the setting was different than most reunions, you could feel Bill’s presence in the room. One of the reunion activities for the week was an onboard “Old Salt” Olympics, which included: shooting baskets, ping pong, sitting in the hot tub, mini golf, swimming in the pool and many more events. The awards were presented at the Bill Paschall Memorial Banquet on the last night of the cruise.

Howard Kamarata	Gold
Pat Kamarata	Silver
Billy Chastain	Bronze
Tim Gildea	Bronze

Forrest "Woody" Conrad
Everyone else

Bronze
Tied for last place

NOTE: It should also be noted that both Howard and Pat had perfect scores on the Old Salt Olympics, however, the judges ruled that Howard's participation in the International Belly Flop contest earned him an additional one bonus point which won him the gold medal.

After this, hugs and goodbyes were shared with the hopes of meeting again next year in Tempe.

