

# MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



## SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

June 2013

### A message from the President



**Tony LaMorte**

Greetings,

Another summer is upon us so get out your suntan oil. Have a safe Independence Day Celebration, and watch the roads, the young ones are out of school.

Again, summer will be productive for improvements to the Museum. Some rearranging and painting will be done. Additionally, the Board of Directors has approved a project to replace the old, dilapidated chairs in the flag room with new folding chairs and provide our members an opportunity to donate a chair.

We are hoping to buy a total of 50 chairs. The cost is \$20.00 per chair and the Museum will have the donors name placed on the back of each chair, for example:

**Donated by  
Mr. and Mrs. A. La Morte**

The seats and backs of the chairs are cushioned. Photos of the chair are in this edition of the Scuttlebutt.

We already received donations for 23 chairs. We will purchase the other 27 chairs as donations are received. If you wish to purchase a chair please fill out and return the cut off slip found on the last page of this newsletter along with your check payable to the Military Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870.

We also have something special of a historical nature happening later this month. A story, compliments of the "Highlands Today" newspaper is included in this edition of the Scuttlebutt.

The flag will be presented to the Museum on 26 June and we will include photos in the August edition of the Scuttlebutt.

Stay safe,

Tony

**Military Sea Services Museum**  
**1402 Roseland Avenue, Sebring, Florida 33870 Phone: (863) 385-0992**  
**E-Mail: [navmargrd@gmail.com](mailto:navmargrd@gmail.com)**

**Hours of Operation**  
**Open: Wednesday through Saturday Noon to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/>**

### **Did You Know That**

The U.S. Navy stopped issuing clothes stops in 1973. --- Wonder how sailors are able to survive without those little strings! ---

### **Welcome Aboard New Members**

On 26 April 2013, Ronald Watkins signed up for a one year membership. Ron worked in pharmaceuticals and is retired. Ron lives in Indianapolis, Indiana.

On 27 April 2013, David and Sandy Stewart signed up for a one year membership. David retired from the U.S. Treasury Department. Sandy works in power and light in Indianapolis. David and Sandy have a home in Indianapolis and in Sebring.

On 1 May 2013, Robert Dikon signed up for a one year membership. Bob is a retired Vermont School Superintendent. Bob lives in Sebring.

On 6 May 2013, Edilma Thornburg signed up for a one year membership. Edilma is retired and lives in Sebring.

A very hearty welcome aboard to our newest members! A sincere thank you to all our members for their continued support. Without member support, the Museum would not be able to pay its bills and would have to close the doors.

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We were saddened by the loss of Zita J. Meier "Kelley" on 12 June 2013. Kelley was a World War II Navy Wave, and a long time member of the Museum. This 90 year old friendly, helpful, feisty, tiny spitfire will be sorely missed by all who knew her. Fair winds and following seas dear Kelley. Rest in Peace.

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### **Quotable Quotes**

For Evil to flourish, all that is needed is for good people to do nothing.---Edmund Burke

Kindness is the language the blind can see and the deaf can hear.---Mark Twain

Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives.---Ronald Regan

No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms.---Thomas Jefferson

The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.---Thomas Jefferson

I have wondered at times about what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress.---Ronald Reagan

## Anniversaries

**1 May 1898.** Admiral Dewey's squadron destroys Spanish squadron in Manila Bay.

**13 May 1908.** Navy Nurse Corps established.

**4 – 8 May 1942.** Battle of the Coral Sea. U.S. Navy repels the Japanese. This helps save Australia and blocks the Japanese juggernaut in the Pacific.

**7 May 1945.** Germany surrenders unconditionally.

**8 May 1945.** Victory in Europe (V-E Day) is declared.

**2 May 2011.** U.S. Navy SEALs kill al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.

**14 June 1777.** U.S. flag adopted by the Second Continental Congress. In 1916, President Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day.

**4-7 June 1942.** Battle of Midway. U.S. Navy decisively defeated the Japanese Navy inflicting irreparable damage on the Japanese fleet. The battle of Midway coupled with the earlier Japanese defeat in the battle of the Coral Sea was a major turning point in the war in the Pacific.

**6 June 1944.** The Allied invasion of German occupied Western Europe (Operation Overlord) begins on the beaches of Normandy, France.

**19-20 June 1944.** Battle of the Philippine Sea. The Japanese lost three carriers, two oilers and approximately 600 aircraft. The devastation caused to the Japanese fleet by the American pilots led to the aerial flight earning the name “The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot.”

**8 June 1967.** USS LIBERTY was suddenly and without warning attacked in international waters by air and naval forces of Israel. Thirty four Americans were killed and 174 wounded.

**4 July 1776.** The thirteen United States of America adopted the Declaration of Independence, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain.

**1-3 July 1863.** Battle of Gettysburg. The 51,000 casualties, 7,500 dead, at the Battle of Gettysburg was the largest number of casualties of the Civil War. This battle is considered by many to have been the turning point of the war.

**3 July 1898.** Battle of Santiago de Cuba. In the largest naval battle of the Spanish-American war, the U.S. Navy destroyed the Spanish fleet.

**28 July 1914.** World War I began.

**30 July 1942.** Women's Reserve. U.S. Naval Reserve (WAVES) established.

**14 July 1945.** First U.S. Navy bombardment of Japanese home islands.

**29 July 1945.** USS INDIANAPOLIS CA-35) was sunk by a Japanese submarine. Eight hundred and eighty crewmen were lost. Only 316 survived. The worst American naval disaster of World War II.

**27 July 1953.** Korean War ended.

*(We would like to thank our local newspaper "Highlands Today" for publishing the following story and allowing us to include it in this issue of "Scuttlebutt" along with "Highlands Today" photos and captions).*

BY [Pallavi Agarwal](#)

Published: May 31, 2013  
Highlands Today

SEBRING - Sixty-eight years ago, five American soldiers penned their names and hometowns on a 15-foot-or-so-long Nazi banner that flew over what is called Hitler's "Eagle's Nest," a tea house perched on a mountain summit in the Bavarian Alps.

Hitler's home and headquarters - the second seat of Third Reich power - were located at Obersalzberg, at the foot of the Eagle's Nest mountain.

The jubilant U.S. soldiers who signed their names when Hitler's private retreat fell to Allied forces were from the 99th Chemical Mortar Battalion.

One of those was Bill Dawson from South Carolina.

Almost 57 years later, Dawson would get a call from a William Legan, a Naples resident, who had found the flag in a trash barrel in Los Angeles when he was a boy and had hung on to it for almost 70 years.

Legan wanted to know if the Bill Dawson he was speaking with was the same man who had signed the banner. Legan remembered how surprised Dawson was when he got the call, but he got his answer.

Yes, he was told. He also learned about the banner's origins.

Two months later, the Legans drove to Columbia, S.C., and met Bill and Gretchen Dawson, who confirmed the handwriting on the banner as his. Dawson had wanted to see the flag.

Since that time, Legan, along with Tanglewood resident Jim Hummell's help, have tracked down information on four of the five soldiers whose names are on the banner, including the family of one of the men.

Next month, the banner - which is still in good condition - will embark on a new chapter as one of the exhibits at the Military Sea Services Museum in Sebring.

Legan, who never thought as a boy he'd keep the flag for so long, wanted to donate it to a museum. His mother stored it for him for many years and then it went into the Legans' closet.

"She would tell me, 'Get rid of it,' he said. "I didn't want to just give it away," he said.

For Hummell, who has known Legan since his Naples days, the project was a way to help a friend and honor the memory of World War II veterans.

"I went the extra mile for the brave men whose names were on the flag," he said. "World War II is a piece of American history."

The museum's Vice President John Cecil said they are still trying to figure out how to display the banner because of space constraints.

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5/28/2013 Sebring, Fla. - RYAN PELHAM/STAFF Jim Hummell shows a photo of Francis Michael Girard, one of the soldiers who signed the Nazi flag that is being donated to the Military Sea Services Museum.



"It is part of our past, good or bad," he said. "It's history. It represents everything that the Allied forces fought against. We are not honoring them (the Axis forces) in any way. We are going to acknowledge it is part of history."

The museum, which has memorabilia of the sea services - the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard - since their inception, also has on display some German memorabilia, a knife from Hitler's youth group and some pistols.

When Legan officially presents the flag to the museum sometime in June, the family of one of the soldiers who signed the flag, David H. Tubesing, hopes to be there.

Hummell, who got a lot of his information from Blaine Jenson, the coordinator of the 99th Chemical Battalion history, got connected through him to Tubesing's daughter, Donna Rehling.

Rehling provided him with several photos her dad had obtained during the war, some actually taken at Eagle's Nest.

One of the photos shows some soldiers holding some alcohol taken from the mountain chalet, which is perched at 6,017 feet. Another shows four men standing around what looks like a military supply trailer.

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Dawson told Legan that he didn't remember taking the banner down but said "that this was a forward party that went to Eagle's Nest near the end of the war after the Germans had left. They did take the souvenirs."

Dawson remembered Francis Michael "Mike" Girard, another soldier who had signed on the flag. A fourth one, William J. Fisher, was awarded the Bronze Star, Hummell later learned.

Dawson told Legan he remembered walking up a "very" steep mountain to Eagle's Nest and then finding an elevator to the top.

Most of all that is still around.

The Allied bombing left much of the chalet unscathed and the only way to get there is to walk through a marble-lined tunnel 400 feet into the mountain and then ride the brass elevator to the top.

"This lodge - which sits like a James Bond fantasy atop an alpine peak - was a gift to Adolf Hitler for his 50th birthday in 1939," writes Rick Steves, in his Rick Steves' Europe. "His inner circle all contributed. And, according to legend, the fireplace was a little extra from Mussolini."

It's also become a popular tourist destination in Germany.

"The dark allure of Adolf Hitler has turned his tea house at the top of a Bavarian mountain into one of the most visited sites in Germany. Tourism authorities announced that over 300,000 people visited the retreat on the peak of the Kehlstein mountain which was built for him as a 50th birthday gift by Nazi party secretary Martin Bormann in 1939.

This is nearly 30,000 up on last year," reports the UK Daily Mail in a 2011 story.



**A \$20.00 donation  
will purchase this  
chair (with your  
name on the back)  
for the flag room.**



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**Donation for Chair**

Donated by: name you want on the chair \_\_\_\_\_

If your request is received after all 50 chairs have been donated, please check whether you want:

Your donation returned \_\_\_\_\_

Your donation to go to the Museum's operating fund \_\_\_\_\_

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Cut out this slip above and mail it along with your check payable to the Military Sea Services Museum, 1402 Roseland Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870.