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President's Message

I hope this message finds all of you in good health and enjoying the summer.

It's time to remind you all about the Reunion coming up October 16th-19th. You must call for reservations at The Cape Codder at 1-888-297-2200 before Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2008.

I hate to tell you this sad news, however, I know Jim Modis missed last year's reunion due to illness, so I **called** to see how he was doing and if he would be able to attend this year. His wife told me that Jim had passed away in May. It was such a shock I just couldn't get over it. May he rest in peace.

Due to health issues, Jim Frohnapfel will not be able to host the 2009 Reunion in Chicago, as planned. I would like to thank him for trying, and hope that he and his wife are both feeling better. Paul "Cactus" Walters will host the 2009 Reunion in Las Vegas. He and TerryAnne may have more information available at this year's reunion.

**Charles Casello,
President**

U.S.S. SUWANNEE CVE 27 NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2008

Editor's Note

By now you should have received a registration packet for this year's reunion in Cape Cod. If you have not yet received your packet, email Bob McCarter at suwanneereunion@comcast.net or give him a call at 1-508-758-9849. Some of the activities Bob has planned will be scheduled based on interest expressed on the registration form, so be sure to complete and return your form, along with a check, as soon as possible. That will help Bob arrange for the activities you want.

Also, please note that you must make your hotel reservations at the Cape Codder Resort by September 16. I really look forward to seeing you there.

I would like to thank Peter Van Norde for his help with some research we are doing. He talked to Dick Murrow, who gave us access to his copy of the daily log, which provided a lot of valuable information about the history of the *Suwannee* and VF-40.

Thanks are due also to Carson Thompson, whose brother Onis ("Dean") Thompson was aboard the *Suwannee*. Carson made a generous donation in support of the website (<http://www.usssuwannee.org>).

I would also like to thank Dave Kerr. Dave's uncle, Joe Holchak, was aboard the *Suwannee*, which prompted Dave to do some research at the National Archives facility in College Park, Maryland. He located some photos that he had not seen before, and shared them with us. One of them is a photo of the TBM-3 that crashed in May of 1945. That picture appears on page three this issue. Dave also put the photos he found online at the link that appears below:

http://www.pbase.com/dsktc/national_archives_photos

-- Bill Reddell

Earl George's Travels to Include Cape Cod and More

Earl George is still going strong at 95. Earl was at last year's reunion in Fairfax, Virginia, having driven there from his home in Lynnwood, Washington. Not bad for a 94-year-old with one good eye. He lost the sight in one eye from injuries sustained at Leyte Gulf.

Those of you who were at the Fairfax reunion may remember hearing Earl reminisce about his 2002 trip to Panama. He made that trip, by himself, just to be able to say that he had driven as far south as possible from his home in the Pacific Northwest. Well, this past year he decided to head north, driving all the way to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. He stopped at hotels when he could find reasonable rates and slept in his car when he couldn't.

This year, Earl's solo travels will take him to Cape Cod for the 2008 Suwannee Reunion, then to the northernmost tip of Maine. Getting to meet Earl is another good reason to make it to this year's reunion.

New People Contacted Through the Website

A number of people have made contact by way of the website (<http://www.usssuwannee.org>) to find people who might remember them, or a loved one, from the Suwannee. We are listing these people below. If you remember any of the men listed here, get in touch. It will mean so much to a former crewmen or one of their surviving family members.

| Crewman | Contact | Contact Information |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Wayne Billow | Vaughn Billow (great-nephew) | vaughn.billow@gmail.com |
| Stony Lee Byrom | Jim Sellers (nephew) | James.Sellers@va.gov |
| Roy Young Deveny, Jr. | Katherine Larsen (great-niece) | kat.larsen@yahoo.com |
| Joseph Kovac | Kevin Kovac (son) | 908-722-5746 racekovac@aol.com |
| Charles G. McClure | Carol Brussel (daughter) | 720-313-5841 lauranevada@aol.com |
| Bob Miller | Bob Miller (himself) | irobertmiller@bellsouth.net |
| Paul Novacich | Chris Winchowski (in-law) | winsor@charter.net |
| Robert Henry Rohatch | Tony Rohatch (grandson) | 650-573-4692 trohatch@baymeadows.com |
| Art Syvertson | Jack Rosling (unknown) | 760-771-5900 jackr@cityservicenet.com |
| Onis "Dean" Thompson | Carson Thompson (sibling) | 817-845-2770 cthompson@rogp.com |

Modis, James – 1925-2008



James "Jim" Modis, 82, St. Joseph, Mo., died Thursday, May 22, 2008, at Heartland Regional Medical Center. Mr. Modis was born Sept. 10, 1925, in St. Joseph, where he was a lifelong resident. He was graduated from Benton High School, St. Joseph Junior College, Washburn University and University of Arkansas. He served in the United States Navy during World War II aboard the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Suwannee*.

Jim married Peggie Marie Shepherd on May 31, 1952. She survives of the home. Mr. Modis was a teacher for 36 years in the St. Joseph School District. He also coached basketball at Benton for 20 years, winning 387 games. In addition, he coached football, tennis, track and cross-country at Benton, where the Jim Modis Multi-Purpose Center was dedicated in 2003. Jim was a member of St. James Catholic Church, American Legion Post No. 359 for 62 years, MSTA, St. Joseph Retired Teachers Association; U.S.S. Suwannee, CVE 27 Association and Kappa Delta PI honorary education fraternity. He was preceded in death by his parents, Matt and Katie (Piscurick) Modis; his brother, Michael Modis; sister,

Josephine Modis; and two infant grandchildren. Survivors: three children, Jaime Modis and Greg Foster; Jeffery Modis; and Nanette Chatham, and husband, Wayne, Louisville, Ky.; and three grandchildren, Kali and Troy Chatham, and Trent Modis. Mass of Christian Burial: 10 a.m. Saturday, St. James Catholic Church, St. Joseph. Interment: Memorial Park Cemetery, St. Joseph. Parish rosary: 6 p.m. Friday, at Meierhoffer Funeral Home & Crematory, St. Joseph, where the family will receive friends from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday. The family suggests memorial gifts to the Benton Friendship Fund or Wesley weight lifting program. Published in the St. Joseph *News-Press* on 5/22/2008

Researcher Obtains the Flight Helmet of Joe “Bolo” Cavanaugh



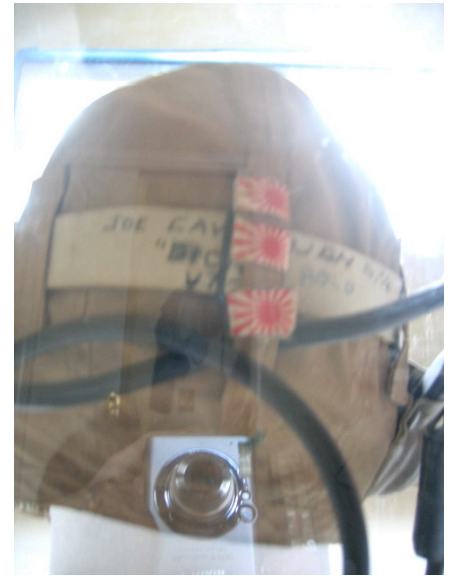
In May of this year we received through the website a request for information about Joe “Bolo” Cavanaugh and the Suwannee. Chris Gondai is doing research on the war in the

Pacific, and came across a flight helmet, goggles, wiring and throat mic that are marked with Cavanaugh’s name and the name of the Suwannee.

We gave the researcher contact information about Mr. Cavanaugh, as he was very interested in talking to him about his experiences, as well as letting him know about having found the flight helmet and other equipment.

Gondai is including the Cavanaugh items in a display of material related to naval air battles in the Pacific during World War II. He has been sidelined by family obligations, but hopes to contact Cavanaugh soon. Gondai will let us know

once he visits with Cavanaugh, and we will include additional information in a later issue.



The back of the flight helmet, including Joe Cavanaugh’s name.

Adm Sample at Nagasaki

Bill Miles contacted us with a comment about how little information is available about the disappearance of the flight of Adm W. D. Sample and Cpt C. C. McDonald at Nagasaki. This is probably due to the Navy’s reluctance to talk about the Suwannee and other ships being at Nagasaki at all.

Sample was legally declared dead in 1946. The crash site was located in 1948, at which time the remains of Sample and McDonald were buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Personal accounts related to the flight are at posted at <http://www.vp45association.org/Aircraft-and-Crew-Lost-1945.htm>.

TBM Crash Photo



USS Suwannee - Date 24 May 1945 "TBM-3 Bu. No. 68368 destroyed by 100 pound bomb, upon landing, Pilot Lt. (jg) O.F. Slingerland."

- Taps -

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Samuel A. Bowes | 06/07/06 |
| William H. Byron | 07/28/07 |
| Braxton Chandler | 05/04/00 |
| David R. Cox | 02/04/07 |
| William Dacus | 01/30/08 |
| Ralph Elston | 06/08/07 |
| Charles W. Gaddy | 03/16/00 |
| Frank R. Green | 09/09/06 |
| William J. Horner | 03/22/91 |
| Ted Lux | 10/07/07 |
| George W. May | 12/25/00 |
| James Modis | 05/22/08 |
| Walter Parkola | 09/09/07 |
| Don Peek | 04/11/07 |
| Leo Reinkmeyer | 09/29/07 |
| Fred G. Smith | 01/14/04 |
| Raymond Thalman | 12/29/07 |
| George H. Wigfall | 08/24/90 |



Suwannee DVD

If there are any *Suwannee* crewmen or Air Group members who have not received a copy of "Moment of Impact," please let us know. The DVD tells a part of the story of October 25-26, 1944, during the Battle for Leyte Gulf. To cover the costs of materials and mailing, we are charging \$5.00 per DVD. Those receiving a DVD are free to make copies for friends and family.

Contact:

Bill Reddell
12101 Mission Trace
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 561-7668
bill.reddell@sbcglobal.net

Suwannee Hit Was Costly to the Japanese

The kamikaze attack on the *Suwannee* on October 26, 1944 cost the Japanese armed forces much more than they had intended. Lieutenant Junior Grade Hirovoshi Nishizawa, the pilot considered to be Japan's greatest ace, flew in support of the kamikaze missions of October 25, where he was credited with his 86th and 87th kills. Nishizawa volunteered to make a suicide flight the next day, but his commanding officer refused his offer, saying that he was too valuable as a pilot and flight instructor to be sent on a suicide mission.

Nishizawa's A6M5 Zero was turned over to Naval Air Pilot 1st Class Tomisaku Katsumata, a less experienced flyer considered to be more expendable.

Following the loss of his plane when Katsumata crashed it into the *Suwannee*, Nishizawa joined other pilots from his squadron on a Nakajima Ki-49 Donryu ("Helen") to be flown to Clark Field, where they were to obtain new Zeros to fly back into combat. On the way, two F6F Hellcats from VF-14, flying off of the *Wasp* (CV-18) intercepted the flight and blasted the transport plane from the skies. It is believed that Lt. (jg) Harold P. Newell was the pilot who shot down the Japanese transport.

It is ironic that Japan's greatest ace, along with a number of other experienced pilots considered too valuable to be sent on suicide missions died as passengers in a transport plane, unable to use their considerable skills to fight off the attacking American pilots. In effect, each suicide strike on the 26th cost the Japanese one aircraft, one "expendable" pilot and one veteran pilot. In the case of the *USS Suwannee*, the experienced pilot lost because of the attack was Nippon's very best.



Japanese pilots prepare for a ceremonial toast before launching a kamikaze mission against U.S. ships during the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

For additional details about Nishizawa and the Japanese suicide missions at Leyte Gulf, check out the following link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hirovoshi_Nishizawa