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THE BANG GANG NEWS LETTER

Published to perpetuate the memory of USS BANG (SS-385) and her Crew

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**USS BANG (SS 385) 83RD REUNION
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
JULY 27-30 2026**

A GREAT TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!



FPO



This column is dedicated to all the letters we receive from you. Any info about yourself or others you want to share with your shipmates will be published here. Think of this as a combination of the bulletin board in the Crew's Mess and the IMC.

Hello Shipmates, friends and loyal readers!

Once again, it is time to recap what I believe was perhaps one of the finest reunions we've had in a long time! Our hosts, John and Darlene Kraft went all out to provide a fantastic week of tours, get together and general good times for our 83rd reunion!

I've written many times in the past issues of our reunion venue, Milwaukee Wisconsin and everything I praised turned out to be true. The weather was great, (and cool) for our Florida attendees, and this only enhanced what I think was a great two days of tours.

Our tour guide, Kay Collins of Cheers Milwaukee was a truly knowledgeable representative for Milwaukee and its surrounding neighborhoods. She gave a running description of all the landmarks, and the famous and infamous locales many of us had heard of, but never actually seen. Milwaukee's baseball stadium and its history from a AAA team to today's perennial pennant chaser, to many of the breweries that made Milwaukee famous.

Tuesday, July 29th started out with an rolling overview of the city and the influence European immigrants made on the city, both culturally and architecturally. We also saw many of the breweries that "made Milwaukee famous" and stopped at one of the newest breweries, Lakefront Brewery, right on the Milwaukee river, where we were treated to a scrumptious buffet (with all the beer you could drink) and a tour of the brewery itself. It is regarded in the beer capital of the world as one of the most entertaining tours out there! We left with a "goodie bag" of Milwaukee treats and a commemorative glass from the Lakefront brewery.

We then went to the Milwaukee County War Memorial to conduct our Eternal Patrol service. It was, as it always is, a very somber ceremony, made all the more moving by the stories of the many Milwaukee residents who fought and died in World Wars One and Two, Korea, and Vietnam.

We then went on an extended motor tour of the Lake Michigan, we saw many of the old mansions of the beer barons, still inhabited by the several generations of children and grandchildren. We ended the day by a visit to Kapps Frozen custard stand, a must go "naughty pleasure" stop for visitors all over the Midwest.

On Wednesday we toured the home of one of Milwaukee's most famous beer barons, Captain Frederick Pabst. A masterpiece of Flemish Renaissance construction, it is now one of Milwaukee's most visited landmarks. Hand carved stairways and furniture, thirty rooms, and two kitchens with all the modern appliances, gives a great view of what life was like back in the Gilded Age, when money was no object, and the income tax wasn't invented yet. We then had a delicious German Sampler Plate at Mader's German restaurant, again with copious amounts of beer! Mader's is a landmark in Milwaukee's old world third street, opened in 1902! Finally we took a cruise around the Milwaukee Lake Michigan waterfront and saw the city from a different perspective. It was a fantastic way to end a very enjoyable, educational, and calorie laden couple of days! Kudos to John and Darlene for two days of great fun and a Bravo Zulu to Kay Collins for two days of non-stop narration that was definitely not boring! Speaking of not boring, next year's reunion will be held in New Orleans, always a fun destination, with even more food. Our hosts will be Frances Ferguson and Candi Messerschmidt. Dates, hotel info, and tours will be forthcoming in future newsletters, so stay tuned and as we always say...Be there, or be square!.

SAILING LIST MILWAUKEE REUNION JULY 27-30 2026

Frances Ferguson and Candi Messerschmidt

Jim Andree and Carolyn Beck

Ralph and Claire Gates

Kathy Seader

Gabe and Pam Lewis

Gerald and Connie Simpson and guest Debbie Prouix

Charles Dougherty

Brian and Danielle Keely (Guests)

Eric and Sally Ericson

Alan and Linda Thole

Rob Bridle

Bill and Joan Fenton

John and Darlene Kraft (Hosts)

Len and Sharon Sciuto

Frank and Claudia Steimetz (Guests)

Hal and Edith Wilkins

Paul Schramm

Luis Arellano and Wendy Kingsbauer

Bob Sawyer

**USS BANG BUSINESS MEETING JULY 30, 2026
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**

Pledge of Allegiance

President Bill Fenton called the meeting to order at 1000 hours and requested all present to stand and pledge Allegiance to our flag..

Roll Call of Officers

President : Bill Fenton

VP: Paul Schramm

Secretary: Alan Thole

Treasurer/Storekeeper: Ike Cohen

Newcomers to the reunion

Bill requested any newcomers to the reunion to stand and introduce themselves.

Brian Keely

Motion to approve last year's Business Meeting Notes.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Old Business: None

New Business

Eric Ericson discussed his research into joining up with the USSVI National annual reunion in the future if the Bang reunion membership became too small to continue on its own. The USSVI picks the location for the meeting and does all the set up work for the reunions. Eric also said that if present snail mail newsletters come back as non-deliverable, they will be struck from the mailing list..

Gabe Lewis suggested including the full address of shipmates on the website. The group's decision was to leave it as is, due to the privacy concerns since the website is accessible by anyone, not just shipmates. A shipmate can request the full address of another shipmate from the webmaster.

Good of the Order

John and Darlene Kraft were thanked for hosting and setting up the successful 2026 Bang reunion in Milwaukee. Great job!

Frances Ferguson and Candi Messerschmidt will host the 2027 Bang reunion in New Orleans, Thank you for volunteering.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved and seconded. Meeting adjourned. Alan Thole, Secretary

The Chaplain's Corner

Hello to all, once again. The definition of religion is an individual's relationship to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of especial reverence. It is commonly consistent to the way people deal with normal and ultimate concerns about their lives leading up to their ultimate death.

The idiom "on eternal patrol" is commonly used in Naval and Military context to honor those who have passed away while either on active service or as veterans. This designation applies particularly to submariners, for it conveys the ideal that these individuals remain forever engaged in their mission, maintaining vigilance and duty in a metaphorical sense, even though they are no longer physically present.

From last year to this year, the USS BANG (SS 385) placed ten of her crew on Eternal Patrol. The Eternal Patrol list, as time goes by, has continually grown larger. It doesn't really matter what year or crew they were aboard. What matters most is that they were and are patriots. They were shipmates who, like the rest of us, loved their country and were ready to boldly support it, defend it, and even die for it. Remembering the adage, "there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for another." As patriots, the necessary words to be added, "or die for one's country."

Love of country, or patriotism, is the feeling of attachment, devotion, and commitment to one's homeland, encompassing pride in its culture, history, and values while recognizing its flaws. The United States of America is often regarded as the greatest country in the world due to its freedoms, innovation, economic power, cultural influence, and historical achievements. We are the shining light for all other global countries.

Most of us believe we are who we are because of God's help, support, divine assistance, and guidance. These terms are often used to express the fullness of God's involvement in our lives.

I pray to God every night to continually protect and defend our country and her people. I also pray that our rights and lives as Americans set the perpetual example for the people of all countries to strive for and accept. Do you believe in the power of prayer? I do and I sincerely hope you do as well.

May God continue to bless us all and these United States of America.

Len Sciuto
Chaplain, USS BANG GANG



U-505 Germany's Cursed U-Boat
The Final Chapter
The Accidental Long Trip Home or No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

5 June 1944

The battle was over. The U-505 was in tow by the destroyer escort USS Pillsbury, and the U-505's crew had been taken prisoner, with the exception of Signalman First Class Gottfried Fischer, whose body was found on the deck of U-505, a victim of the strafing from Casablanca's Wildcats. It was the first capture of an enemy warship in time of war by the US Navy since the war of 1812. The excitement was short lived although, for as soon as CIC Adm. King was notified, he was livid with rage. For at that moment, elements of the US 82nd and 101st airborne, in addition to the British 1st airborne and 2nd Paras glider force were readying for the jump into occupied France, the start of the Invasion of Europe. If the German High Command were to discover the loss and capture of the U-505, the whole D-Day invasion would be in jeopardy. King wanted Captain Gallery court martialed, the captains of the Casablanca, and destroyer escorts reprimanded. Cooler heads prevailed and the U-505 was set to make a 2,000 mile journey back to a Bermuda. The U-505 proved to be too large for the Pillsbury to tow, and was lashed to the Casablanca and the slow voyage was begun. Along the way the body of Signalman Fischer, covered by the U-505's battle ensign and was given a formal burial at sea.

The trip, while long, was rather smooth. The U-Boat wolfpacks were not about to tangle with an escort carrier, and the myriad Wildcats, who while obsolete, were still very dangerous. The U-505's crew was put under double guard, and allowed topside once a day for exercise, and they ate in the crew's mess at specific times, again under double guard. After three days of towing, the Casablanca transferred the U-505 to the ocean going fleet tug, Abenaki and on 19 June entered the Great Sound of Bermuda, and docked in the Lend-Lease Navy base there. The Enigma machine, code books, and other materials were flown to London and promptly deposited in Bletchley Park, the Enigma code breaker's base.

The U-505's crew were flown stateside and her crew of 58, of which three were wounded and interred them in a POW camp in Camp Ruston, Louisiana. Here they were treated to the most secret imprisonment in the United States. They were separated from the general population, and housed in a special prison complex, with double barbed wire fencing, separate mess hall and exercise areas, and 24 hour triple guard patrols. In a direct violation of the Geneva Accords, the International Red Cross was not informed of their capture, they were not allowed to write home, receive any packages, and engage in any sports or social gatherings. They were as good as dead, which the German Admiralty so declared three months after their capture with the universal submarine epitaph..."Overdue, presumed lost."

In 1947, the U-505's crew was released from Camp Ruston, and finally were reunited with their families, and the Red Cross opened a inquiry into the violation of the Geneva Accords. It went nowhere.

Lt. Albert David, who led the boarding party received the Medal of Honor, it the only time it was awarded to a Atlantic Force sailor. TM3 Knispel and RM2 Wdowiak received the Navy Cross, SN James Beaver the Silver Star, Cmndr Trosino, the Legion of Merit and Captain Gallery the Distinguished Service Medal, and Task Group 22.3, a Presidential Unit Citation. The Court Martial was never mentioned again. After the war, the U-505, was permanently berthed in Bermuda, and re-named USS Nemo. It was about to be scuttled, but a group from Chicago started a fund drive to save it, and it is now housed in the Chicago Museum of Science and History, where it welcomes over two million visitors a year.

Admiral King did not receive any medal.









THE LUCKY BAG

**JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT
WAS SAFE TO GO TOPSIDE !**



Well, loyal readers and shipmates, the end of another reunion newsletter has come. I want to take this opportunity to once again thank John and Darlene Kraft for hosting this year's Bang Gang reunion. I, and I'm sure the rest of the attendees, were impressed with all the fantastic sights and fabulous hospitality of Milwaukee. As I mentioned in the last newsletter issue, the tours seemed a little pricey at first glimpse, but were worth every penny and more! Kay Collins of Cheers Milwaukee was a very knowledgeable and funny tour guide, we learned many interesting anecdotes about this great city, and saw the myriad cultural, historical, and probably most important, sampled many brands of beer that made Milwaukee famous. It was a great reunion, one that all the attendees I'm sure will remember for a long time. Bravo Zulu John and Darlene, now sit back and enjoy a well deserved rest.

Now for an announcement that may come as a surprise to many. This will be the last Newsletter that will be issued under the Microsoft Publisher App. Bill Gates, in his ultimate wisdom, is going to retire Publisher for good beginning October 1st. Thanks Bill, just when I was beginning to get the hang of it! Don't worry, the Newsletter will live on, but in a different format. I will be churning out the Newsletter in Microsoft Word. It should be easier, as I use Word almost every day, and most, if not all, the formatting and writing I used in Publisher is available in Word, which is the reason Bill decided to pursue the closing of Publisher. This of course applies only to those who receive the e-edition, and the hard copy will stay the same as will the standard layout and categories we now have. It will be the same, only different as the writing Gods say. The changeover will take very little time and the Bang Gang newsletter will come out as usual for the Fall/Winter issue. I will also email all the e-edition recipients before the 4th quarter issue comes out let you know what to expect notification wise. So, look for the notification for all e-edition recipients, and wish me luck, LOL!

You may have noticed that there was no Lost and Found section in this issue. This is due to a couple of reasons. One, we did not have any shipmate deploy on Eternal Patrol, ALWAYS a welcome omission! Two, no address or email changes, and Three, we had just a few slush fund donors, so I decided to put the abbreviated Lost and Found chapter here to save a couple of pages while at the same time Money!

No lost shipmates to report, let's hope this continues!

Slush fund donations:

Jim and Harriet Schutz

Eric and Sally Ericson (the Forward Room comes through again!)

John and Darlene Kraft

Thank you all! We are now buying stamps at \$82.00 a roll, the average postage, depending on length of the newsletter runs between \$1.60 and \$2.48 per issue. We sent out 142 hard copy issues this quarter, so it is imperative that we increase the donations and the converts to the e-edition. Thank you for your support!

Well, that's it for now, and I'll leave by saying that I had a great time at the reunion and the best part was seeing trading old sea stories with my shipmates. The best people I've come to know.

Take care, and fair winds and following seas to all!

Eric H. Ericson, III-Editor
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