

SHIPMATES GATHER



A Navy Reunion, their first in 45 years, was held on June 9 by the shipmates of the U.S.S. Ponchatoula (AO148). The men and their wives had a picnic at Christ Community United Methodist Church in the picnic grove. Those attending were: kneeling from left Cliff Devere, Spring Grove; and Earl Myers, Jersey Shore. Standing from left are Robert Jacoby, New Holland; John Potochnik, Livingston, Texas; Tom Davis, Harveys Lake; Jack Evans, Magnolia, Del.; James Schmerse, Durand, Ill.; and Elwood Inch, Selinsgrove

June 11, 2001

Ponchatoula Picnic

On the 19th of Jan. 1956 the Navy commissioned a new tanker in the Phila. Navy Yard, the USS PONCHATOULA. In succeeding days the ship took on supplies, loaded the reefers and magazines and got underway. The first stop was Norfolk followed by degaussing at Portsmouth and then underway for Panama and the Canal. The west coast shakedown was followed by WestPac operations. With incidents (towing a disabled Panamanian freighter) and accidents (colliding with another tanker) the years wore on. The original crew (plank owners) were discharged and disappeared into the anonymity of the general population.

On Sat. 9 June 2001, Thanks to Elwood Inch who found the site and grabbed it, and a personal computer that dug some of these people out of their holes and provided communications, eight of these Cold Warriors and their wives gathered for a first ever Ponchatoula Picnic. The event was held at Community Methodist Church Pavillion, RD Selinsgrove, Pa. Food was provided by the wives and was abundant and delicious. USS Ponchatoula baseball caps were issued and the sea stories began and were still going at 8:30 PM. The kids who chipped paint and handled lines 45 yrs ago were now gray or balding and thicker in the waist than formerly but the wit and banter of the chow line and mess hall still sounded the same. Taking pictures and looking at pictures were popular activities. Among the old pictures was a "big belly contest" in which Hunter (BM2) showed the others that it was "no contest".

Attending the picnic were:

	James Schmerse & wife	Durand, III
Pa.	Elwood Inch & wife	Selinsgrove,
Del.	Jack Evans	Magnolia,

6/14/2001

- Pa. Robert Jacoby & wife New Holland,
- Pa. Cliff DeVere & wife Spring Grove,
- John Potochnik & wife No fixed abode
- Earle Myers Jersey
- Shore, Pa. Tom Davis & wife Harveys Lake,
- Pa.

The Potochniks who live in a camper with no fixed abode or phone are self described as "homeless".

The only non-retiree is Earl Myers who is still pushing (or pulling) semi-trailers over the road but planning to retire in six months.

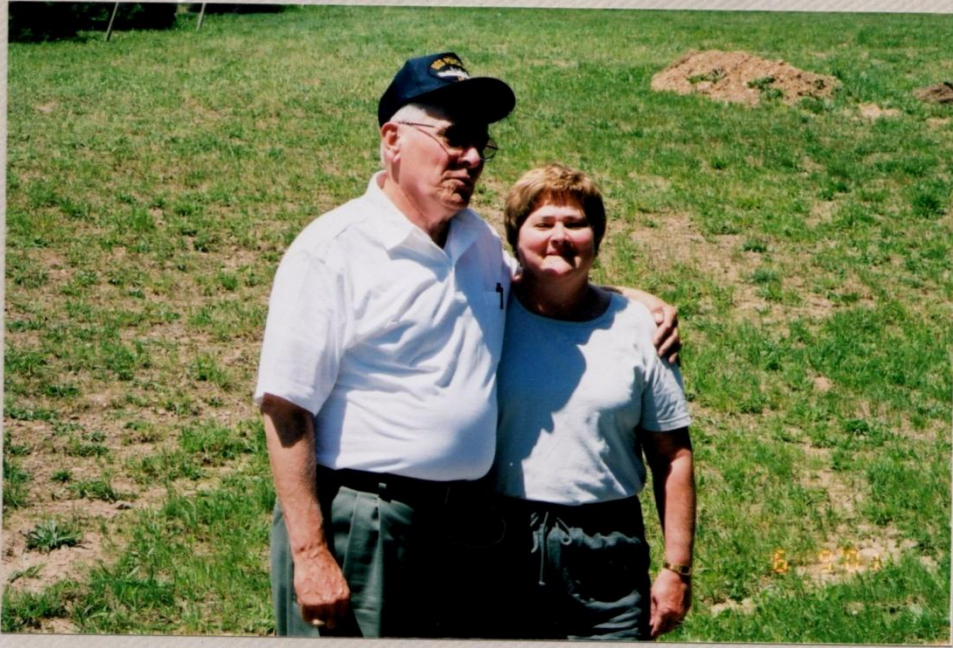
Evans and Myers were the only attendees who were unmarried.



The Reunion of the USS Ponchatoula
Shipmates in Tex., June 2001

Tom and Wife Davis





Bob Jacoby and Wife
John and Ruth Patocknik

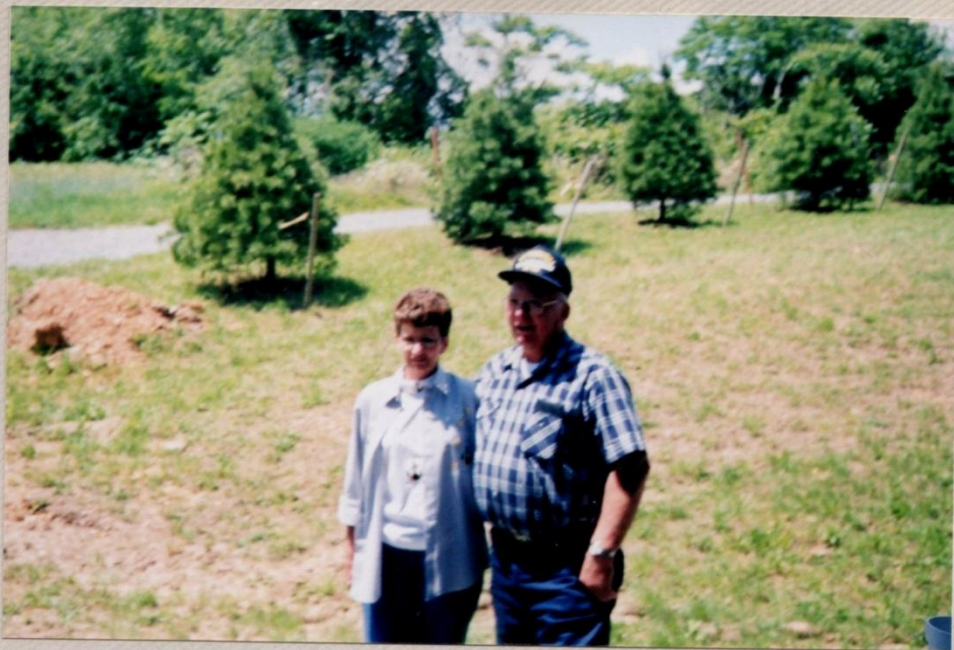




Cliff and Diane De Vere

Barb and Elwood Lach





Jim and Betty Schmeise

Earl Myers





Jack Evans

Bob, John, Jim, Elwood & Bob





USS PONCHATOULA

AO-148

SHIPMATES REUNION



PONCHATOULA, LOUISIANA
May 6-9. 2003

USS PONCHATOULA Shipmates Reunion Banquet

May 8, 2003

Lions Club
Ponchatoula, Louisiana

Opening Ceremonies

- Patriotic Music
Ponchatoula High School Stage Band under the
direction of Ted Forrest
- Honor Guard Entrance
Covington High School Navy ROTC
- Invocation
Deacon Larry Melancon
- Pledge
Dutch Battle (USS Ponchatoula 1970-72)
- National Anthem
Glynn Fendlason
- Honor Guard Departure

Remarks by Mayor Julian Dufreche

Dinner

Presentation by Mr. Bill Lounsbery, President
USS Ponchatoula Shipmates Association

Closing Remarks- P.F. Hammond, Secy-Treasurer
USS Ponchatoula Shipmates Association

Music by Mr. Hank Jones & Friends

REUNION ROSTER

ALBON, Bill & Charlene
AUD, Tony & Carol
AXTELL, Dan & Sandi
BATTLE, Dutch & Susan
BOOS, Paul & Margaret
BURY, George & Betsy
BURY, John & Cathy
CAMPBELL, Hugh & Nancy
COLLINS, Bob & Phyllis
DAVIS, Tom & Susan
EVANS, Jack
FALL, Ralph D.
GURNICK, John & Dorothy
HAMMOND, PF & Bobbi
HEPLER, Mark
INCH, Elwood & Barbara
KRUIZICK, Steven & Gwen
LOUNSBERY, Bill & Janice
LITCHFIELD, Barry & Sandy
MC GARVEY, Joe & Lorena
MILAN, Bobby & Phyllis
MILLER, RP
NYENHUIS, Keith & Janice
OKOLOWICZ, Ken & Pam
PACHEL, Francis & Mildred
PATRANELLA, Tony & Geri
REHLANDER, Phil
ROCKWELL, John & Ramona
SCHMERSE, Jimmy & Betty
SCHNEIDER, Dave
SITER, Al & Regina
SMITH, Gerald & Beth Rivera
SMITH, Rodger & Rosie
SUTTON, Bill
THIBODEAUX, Robert R.
THOMAS, Joe
VAN METER, Steven
WEBER, Richard

38 shipmates + wives 27

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- ❖ Mayor Julian Dufreche
- ❖ City Councilwoman Margaret Hawkins
- ❖ Collinswood School Museum
- ❖ Mr. Jim Perrin
- ❖ Mr. Ronnie Perrin
- ❖ Mr. Mike Berner
- ❖ Mr. Dutch Battle
- ❖ Ponchatoula Lions Club
- ❖ Tangipahoa Tourism

USS PONCHATOULA AO-148



USS Ponchatoula 148
Shipmates ass.
Reunion May 6-9-2003



**USS PONCHATOULA
Shipmates Association
Ponchatoula, LA – May 2003
(AO-148)**

Jim Schmerse

SN – Jan56 to Jun57



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