

A good Navy is not a provocation of war. It is the surest guarantee of Peace

-Teddy Roosevelt

They Said It—a collection of memorable Navy quotations offered to USS Okanogan sailors as our Reunion Committee's way to say **Thank you for your service.**

**Sighted Sub,
Sank Same**

—Adm. D.F.
Mason

Without a respectable Navy, Alas America!
—John Paul Jones

**Don't Give up
the ship!**

—Capt. James
Lawrence

**Without a decisive Naval force we can do-nothing definitive,
and with it, anything honorable and glorious.**
—George Washington

The Navy
has both a tradition
and a future. and we look with
pride and confidence in both
directions.
—Adm. George
Anderson

**I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not
sail fast, for I intend to sail in harm's way!**
—John Paul Jones

**Damn the torpedos.
Full speed ahead!**

—Adm. Davy
Faragut

**I
have
not yet
begun to
fight!**

—John Paul Jones

**You may fire
when you are
ready, Gridley**

—Comadore
George Dewey

Where in the heck are we?
—Navigator Gordon Arnsperger

I can imagine no more rewarding career than a career in the Navy, and any man who may be asked what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: "I served in the United States Navy."
—President John F. Kennedy

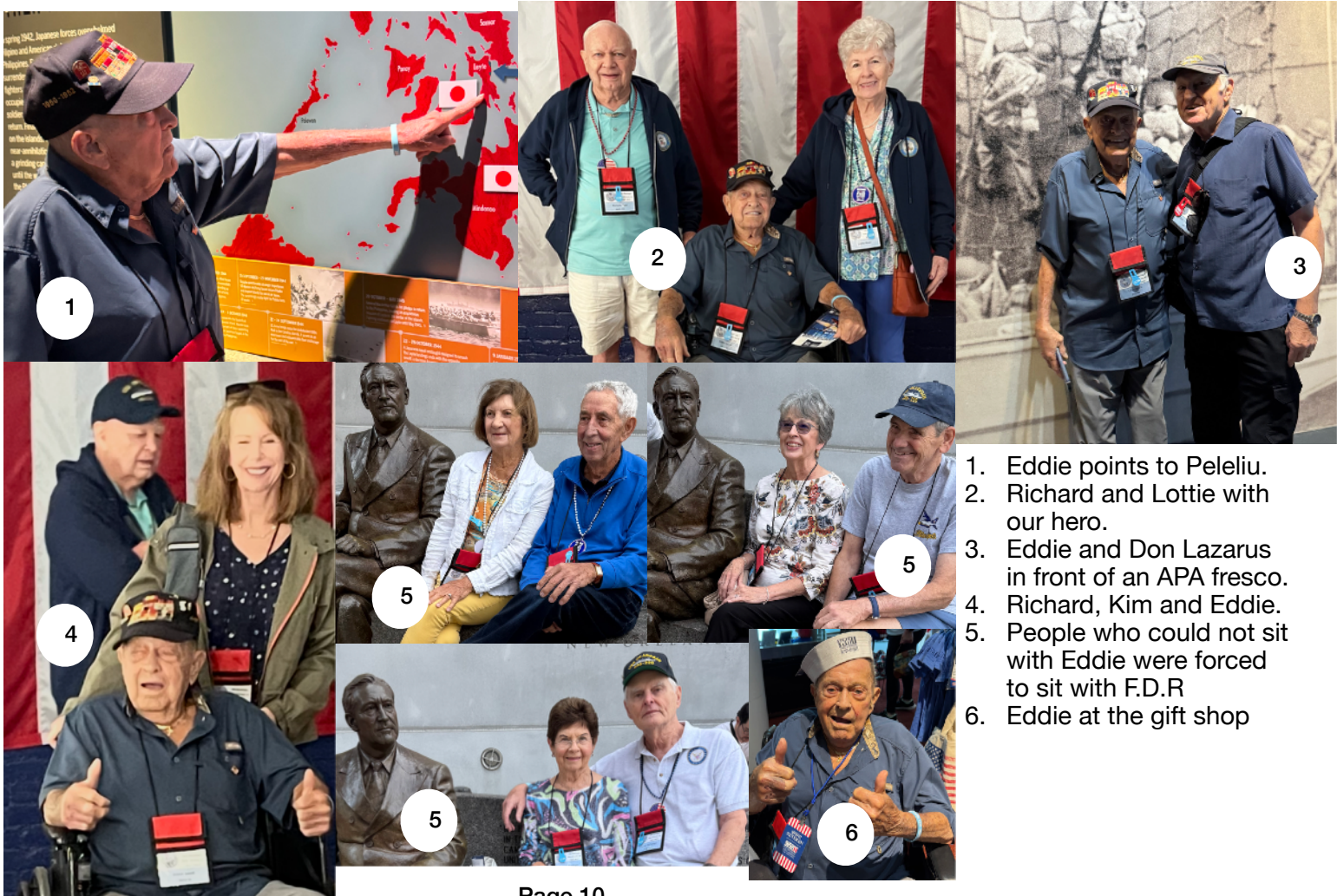


Eddie Janek and the WW2 Museum

On Monday, September 14, 2025—exactly 80 years from September 18, 1945 when 18 year old Eddie Janek served as a beach master on the first day of the bloody Battle of Peleliu, Eddie and the rest of us visited the National World War Two Museum in New Orleans. Our visit was an incredible experience. The Museum is beautiful and is full of immersive exhibits and battlefield relics. In addition it is massive—a giant complex of multiple buildings



with thousands of exhibits representing a broad range of the military and civilian effort during the war. Featured at the museum are 4,000 movie experiences and tons of galleries that offer interactive experiences, immersive exhibits, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories to take visitors inside the story of the war. Beyond the galleries, the Museum offers unique personal access to history, including an opportunity to climb aboard a B-17 bomber and other large aircraft and an invitation to look over a fully restored papa boat. The wonderful museum experience was made even better because we were in the presence of Eddie Janek. Eddie, the last living survivor of the battle of Peleliu, is a living piece of history and a hero to all of us. It was a pleasure to be around him as he looked over artifacts of things he remembered from 1945 and as he talked about those times.



1. Eddie points to Peleliu.
2. Richard and Lottie with our hero.
3. Eddie and Don Lazarus in front of an APA fresco.
4. Richard, Kim and Eddie.
5. People who could not sit with Eddie were forced to sit with F.D.R
6. Eddie at the gift shop



The Eddie at the Museum Story Continues:

As Edidie Janek made his way around the Museum (sometime walking and sometimes being pushed in his wheelchair by any one of a number of very-willing Okanogan Organization members) he was approached by a National WW II official who had heard that Janek was a WW II veteran. He introduced himself to Eddie and told him that he

was honored to meet Eddie and that he (the official) was in the process of escorting another WW II veteran around the museum that day. He then introduced Eddie to his fellow WW II vet, a former Army lieutenant who was 102 years old. How thrilled that official must have been to be in the company of a combined total of over two hundred years of history. Aware of this wonderful opportunity and in keeping with the museum’s mission of honoring World War II veterans, the museum representative invited Eddie Janek to lunch, presented him with a WW II Museum ball cap, and basked in the conversation of two WW II Veterans who had a lot to talk about.

Needless to say, Eddie spent the entire day at the museum, as did several of the rest of us. (Rumor has it that Larry Cleveland had to be kicked out when the museum closed.) Others spent three or four hours, left the museum for lunch, then came back. And still others left the museum after a couple of hours very satisfied and very impressed with what they experienced. All of us agreed that the National World War II Museum is a must-see. In fact, it is the top-rated tourist destination in New Orleans and the #2

museum in the whole world. It is a totally unforgettable way to experience World War II—from industrial efforts on the home front to the combat experience of the sailor and the G.I.





**Tuesday' Activities: Swamp Tour;
Pier 51 's New Orleans Cuisine;
Bus Tour of New Orleans**

Tuesday September 15 was packed with activities that proved to be interesting, entertaining, educational, and very informative. In fact, the day featured three major activities, the first being the Cajun Pride swamp tour, where we boarded a 50-passenger flat-bottomed boat



and glided down the Manchac Swamp, exploring a Louisiana bayou,



as we checked out the population of alligators, wild pigs, egrets, raccoons and other "swamp creatures." Our tour, narrated by an authentic Cajun boat captain—complete with accent, sense of humor, and a vast knowledge of the bayou's history, flora, and fauna was the perfect trip for a bunch of Gator Sailors. We learned a lot from Captain Thom, and all of us heeded his advice about keeping our hands out of the water. When we left the swamp, we were transported to Pier 51 Seafood restaurant where, ironically enough, a couple of us ate alligator.



Our Bus Tour of New Orleans

Following our lunch at Pier 51 we boarded our air conditioned bus for a two-and a half hour bus tour of New Orleans narrated by our licensed guide, Wolf, who is a native of New Orleans. Throughout our tour Wolf proved to be very knowledgeable, people-oriented, and humorous. He also seemed to have a great deal of love and respect for his home town and took delight in showing it to us. Here are a few of the historical, cultural, and artistic sites we visited, photographed, and learned about:

Jackson Square-where St. Louis Cathedral overlooks the statue of Andrew Jackson.

New Orleans St. Louis Cemetery—the oldest and most visited cemetery in New Orleans. It is filled with history and it is the resting place for many notable families.

The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway—the longest overwater bridge in the world, stretching 38.5 km across the lake.

The Garden District— known for its historic mansions and diverse architecture.

New Orleans City Park —one of the largest urban parks in the United States at 1,300 acres, the park features a wide variety of interesting locales, including **Cafe Du Monde** where we took a break from the bus ride to devour some delicious beignets. YUM!



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Our Versatile Hospitality Room

The Hospitality Rooms at our Okanogan Organization's Reunions have always been the most important element in the success of our annual reunions because our hospitality room is the place where friendships are made and shipmates bond. It is also the a place that is full of laughter, "sea stories," fun, fellowship and relaxation. It is a place where we can always get a cold drink and some salty or sweet snacks as we visit with others and a place where we always feel welcome and at ease. It was all of these things again this year, but also a great deal more. In fact, you might say that this year it was a multi-purpose room—a "Swiss Army Knife" that not only satisfied our desire to "eat, drink, and be merry" but also served many other purposes. It was a meeting room where we conducted our formal business meeting and several committee meetings. il also served as a breakfast nook, where we enjoyed our morning meal apart from the hotel's other guests, and as a museum, where thanks to Beth and Colin Carney, Okanogan artifacts and historical items were displayed and an Okanogan slide show was available. Other times found this venue serving as a retail store where Cheryl and Franky conducted a very successful "Going-Out-Of-Business Sale" that provided the best deals ever!



OUR ANNUAL BANQUET



Our banquet this year found us all dressed up and ready to celebrate our ship and our shipmates in a semi-formal atmosphere—with our ladies looking good and our gentlemen on their best behavior. It began with Eddie Janek leading us in the Pledge to the Flag followed by a Mary Lou Mulick’s very moving explanation of the significance of the Missing-man Table that everyone had passed on their way into the Banquet Hall.



Our next activity found Gordon Arnspiger and Mary Ann Schaefer conducting a “Taps Ceremony” where we paid tribute to all of our shipmates who had passed away since our last reunion as Mary Ann read their names: **Bob Anderson, Robert Atkin, John Bayless, Rich Boren, Sam Coil, Don Dowden, Ron Howell, Dan Keasler, Fred Keller, John Phillips, John Schroeder, George Smith, Paul Szabo, Dale Tabler, and Carl Weisinger.** Gordie then invited anybody who served aboard ship to stand and say the name of a departed



shipmate with whom they had a special bond. Guests were invited to mention the name of a deceased veteran that they wanted to honor. Arnspiger concluded the Taps ceremony with the prayer entitled **The Last Watch.**



Next, Kim Coleman, who brought Eddie Janek to us from Texas, also brought us greetings from the Texas Governor—Greg Abbott. As she stood at the microphone reading her governor’s letter to us Kim, poised and confident, reminded all of us of a skilled TV anchor woman. When she finished reading, she presented all of us with our own



personal copy. Here are just two sentences from Abbot’s message: ***“The USS Okanogan has borne the stars and stripes with distinction, and I applaud those who have served on this iconic vessel...”*** ***“First Lady Cecilia Abbott joins me in wishing you a memorable reunion and in thanking you for your service.”***



Finally, Richard Keel, acting chaplain, led us in before-dinner grace and we settled in to a delicious dinner.





Left—Faye and Larry Black enjoy dinner and each other. **Right** Cheryl and Franky on dinner break from the store.



After Dinner Activities included raffles and contests which found us awarding winners with articles that were sent to us by shipmates not in attendance and other pieces of Okanogan Memorabilia. Sandy Cleveland, of course, received one of the prizes—a ship’s plaque sent by Tom Nott. Colin Carney ended up with Gene Siu’s 1963 Cruise Book, and Joe Mills ended up with Don Dowden’s. Eddie Janek picked up a blue jumper which he will display in his “War Room, and Cliff Perkins walked away with the ship’s bell. By the way Colin Carney volunteered to try to find a museum home for Our Ship’s Launching Bottle container.



Left-Don English proudly displays our launching bottle container.

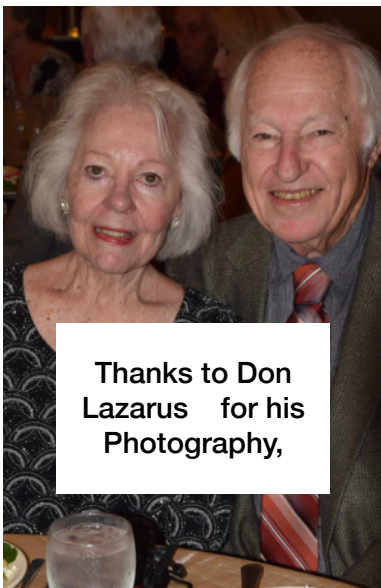
Right - Most valuable family: Missy Bouwer (who served as human score board for one of our games) Mary Lou Mulick (for her dramatic reading of the Missing Man script) and past president Garry Mulick (who knew lots of answers to the trivia questions and most of the NATO alphabet.)



Our banquet concluded with our traditional singing (**LOUDLY and PROUDLY**) “Anchors Aweigh” and “God Bless America.”

**See ya later
Gator Sailor**

**Golf Oscar Oscar Delta
Bravo Yankee Echo**



Thanks to Don Lazarus for his Photography,

