



Voiture 1379 Communiqué for April 2021

Membership is currently at 36 with our goal of 41 for the 2021 membership year.

It is also that time of the year for reports. If everyone would take a little time and make a note of your information for the past year (July 2020 June 2021) that would help make our reports better. Generally the Directeurs are looking for total number of hour's volunteered, total number of miles driven and total dollars donated to various community and veteran projects.

Bonhomme Richard

After extensive cleanup and reclamation in the wake of a July inferno, the amphibious assault ship Bonhomme Richard will be decommissioned in San Diego in mid-APR before being towed to Texas where it will be scrapped, the Navy said in a statement. Navy officials said in November that while Bonhomme Richard was salvageable, the time and price of repair — five to seven years at an estimated \$2.5 billion to \$3.2 billion — were too steep to warrant saving the 22-year-old ship. The Navy plans to hold a small decommissioning ceremony Wednesday with limited attendance. Then the ship will be towed to Galveston, Texas, said Cmdr. Nicole Schwegman, a Naval Surface Force Pacific spokeswoman. Schwegman said most of the roughly 1,000 sailors assigned to Bonhomme Richard have either been reassigned or are in the process of transferring.

Fire broke out on the vessel around 8:30 a.m. on July 12. Noxious black smoke darkened otherwise clear San Diego skies as the fire raged out of control. Temperatures on board topped 1,200 degrees F at times, making it all but impossible for firefighting crews to access burning spaces to extinguish the fire. More than 400 sailors from 16 San Diego-based ships joined federal firefighters to battle the blaze day and night. Helicopters from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 3 dumped more than 1,500 buckets of water onto the ship in nearly round-the-clock operations. The fire burned for four days before the Navy officially declared it extinguished. Navy officials said at the time they believed the fire began in the 844-foot ship's lower vehicle-storage area, a part of the ship with an ample supply of fuel and oxygen for a fire.

According to a KGTV news report, Navy Criminal Investigative Service agents searched the home of a Bonhomme Richard sailor in August. No charges have been filed in the case according to Cmdr. Myers Vasquez, a U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman. Vasquez said the Navy's investigation into the cause of the blaze is ongoing and he declined to say when it might be completed. Amphibious assault ships are the largest amphibious ships in the Navy and are used to deploy Marines and their equipment during amphibious landings. Their flight decks are capable of handling operations with helicopters and the F-35B Lightning fighter jet. At the time of the fire, Bonhomme Richard was nearing the end of a two-year, \$250 million upgrade to accommodate F-35B operations. It is the largest U.S. naval warship lost since World War II.

This months Promenade will be on April 28th Post 61 Kansas City, MO Promenade starting at 18:00 HRS.

Thank you for your service to Our Great Nation, and your service to the 40et8 through Voiture 1379. If we all work together we can and do make a difference.

Robert C. Emery, Correspondant Locale, Voiture 1379