



Fireball!

USS OZBOURN DD 846 "the Happy Ship"

Vol. 5. No. 2

April 1996

The President's Report

FROM THE BRIDGE

The October '95 reunion is only four months old and it is already time to start thinking about the next one. I will contact the Armed Forces Reunions in April to begin obtaining a hotel in San Diego, etc. The time of the month has not yet been determined but we would have a reading on it in the July issue of *Fireball!* I hope we can somehow arrange things to tour an Arleigh Burke destroyer (cruiser?) next time.

Speaking of Arleigh Burke, I suspect everyone is aware of his death last January. The national president of the Navy League, who attended the funeral in Annapolis, tell me that it was quite an affair; for anyone who is a Navy Leaguer, it is written up in the February issue of *Sea Power* (page 8, "Requiem for a Sailor"); for those with access to the *Naval Institute Proceedings*, see the February issue (page 8, "Death of a Sailor's Sailor). Engraved on his tombstone at the Naval Academy are the words Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, Sailor, United States Navy. I understand he was particularly proud of his being a sailor.

The Destroyer Squadrons Association has scheduled several "Bull Sessions" around the country (Everett, WA; San Diego, CA; St. Louis, MO; Norfolk, VA) which I hope some of our shipmates will attend. I had hoped to attend the one in San Diego, but several conflicts preclude it. I trust that our members have been receiving the newsletter published by Dan Wisner in Aloha, Oregon.

I have e received a copy of How to locate Anyone in the Military but I don't think I learned a great deal from it so far. We can obtain (maybe!) rosters for specific months upon payment of (I think) \$15 per month. Another possibility is the Internet. If any of our readers is on the

Internet or the World Wide Web (so far I have resisted the temptation), we may be able to locate shipmates via the "information highway." Does anyone so equipped wish to give it a try?

Bob Whitten, President.

P.S. Today, April 2nd, I installed new license plates on my 1994 Cougar: "DD 846 OZ". After all we were the fleet wizards!

W.D. MINTER STARTS RECRUITING

"W.D." William Minter (52-55) has started a one man recruiting campaign of former crew members of the OZ" who served during 1951-1956.. Since the Norfolk reunion he has sent in the following names of former shipmates that he has painstakingly tracked down through various sources.

Ralph E. Phelps - West Jordan , UT
Wayne Gurganus - Poway, CA
Sam Yancey - Arlington, TX
Eldon W. Rieley - Pensacola, FL
E. L. Kinder - Salinas, CA
Jack King - Altamont, IL
Jerome Wissler - Richmond, IN
Roy T. Keris - Colorado Springs, CO

"W.D." was disappointed that very few shipmates from his tenure (52-55) attended the reunion in Norfolk.

With the help of a national telephone directory on a cd-rom and lots of letter writing he has produced the above new list of shipmates. They all have been sent copies of the "*Fireball!*" in hopes that they will become full dues paying members.

"W.D." deserves a **well done** from all hands. If all of our members were able to recruit half as many shipmates as "W.D." we would have quite an organization. He is still working on a list to recruit more members.

MAIL BOX

Bill Riedel Jr. called looking for some info. He is looking forward to next reunion in San Diego.

Gloria LaFond wrote requesting a picture of the "Ozourn" for Richard.

Warren Sheldon, Warren Zschach, John Ulicni, James Gibson, Sam Bumbaca, and John Keeling wrote or called for a picture. We have the cost down to \$5.00 for an 8 X 10.

Sam Bumbaca (WT3) wrote to say he was sorry he could not make the Norfolk reunion but would see us in San Diego. Sam came aboard the "OZ" in Oct. 46 and left in Oct. 48. Sam would like to hear from "old Shipmates" (19 1/2 2nd St Brooklyn, NY 11231).

Bob Whitten sent info on two new members: John Keeling of Palmdale, CA and Richard Mosca of Moorhead, MN. WELCOME ABOARD!

Jim Helland used Feb. 29 to catch up on some correspondence. Had some medical problems but is OK now and driving to FL to see his grandson.

Paul Hecht wrote. Several shipmates have ordered his tape of the Norfolk reunion and really enjoyed it. Microsoft Desk Top Publisher is used to publish the "Fireball!".

Capt. John Denham (Ret) (C.O. 66-68) wrote a nice letter, sent some pictures for our files and some info that can be used for future articles in "Fireball!". One of his articles is on pages 3 & 4.

Dan Marshall (46-48) called, while he was in Florida, looking for George Burrow's address to hook up with him. Hope they made it.

ANNUAL 1995 DUES IS DUE

Your 1995 annual association dues was due July 1, 1995. Please send a check for \$10.00 to:
Paul Hecht
P.O. Box 3534
Portsmouth, VA 23701-0534

This is last issue to non paid members !!!

FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Taking a hint from Bob Whittens column this month the editorial staff here at the "Fireball!" has started to explore the Internet in search of former shipmates. Access to the Internet is gained through Compuserve. Some of the areas that are being explored are "US Navy Lost and Found Listings", "Navy Public Affairs Library", "Veteran Locator - The American War Library", "Navy On Line", and "American Legion Post 1135 -United States Navy page." Its time present members got involved in this search. If you aren't "connected" ask your relatives or friends to assist you in your search. Aside from being fun it is very knowledgeable and mind boggling to see how much information is available.

Take a page from "W.D. Minter's (front page) book and get started on your search program. They are out there. *"If we find them -- they will come."* We all made some great promises at the reunion - now lets all swing into action.

USS Salem Opens Gangway to the Public

The heavy cruiser USS Salem opened her gangway to the public on May 14, 1995 at the shipyard where she was built in Quincy MA. The Salem, former Flagship of the Sixth Fleet, has taken her place for everyone to enjoy. Three other former fighting ships are in Massachusetts in Fall River and make an exciting tourist attraction. The battleship USS Massachusetts, destroyer USS Joseph P. Kennedy (DD-850) and the submarine SS Lionfish.

USS OZBOURN

Anyone interested in an 8 x 10 of the Ozourn please let the Editor know. Cost is \$5.00.

REUNION VIDEO TAPE AVAILABLE

Paul Hecht has completed editing the video tape he took at the reunion. It contains many of the exciting and historical scenes you saw in Norfolk and Williamsburg. Its like reliving your reunion. The tape is two hours long and contains Pete Coles interview from WAVY-TV. To order send \$25.00 to:
Paul Hecht, PO Box 3534, Portsmouth, VA 23701

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE OZ

As compiled by Ron Kott (63-65), Captain's yeoman.

The USS Ozbourn (DD 846) was a 692-class long hull destroyer named in honor of Private Joseph William OZBOURN, USMC.

The OZBOURN was built at Bath, Maine by the Bath Iron Works and was launched on 22 December 1945. She was commissioned at Boston, MA on March 5, 1946. Mrs. Joseph W. Ozbourn was present at the launching.

Commander Bernard A. Smith was the first to assume command of the new destroyer. In August 1946 he took the ship from Boston through the Panama Canal to her new home port of San Diego, CA. On 6 January 1947 the OZBOURN departed from San Diego with Destroyer Div. 171 for her first tour of duty in the Far East. During this tour the OZBOURN was instrumental in saving a Chinese tanker that was in distress. Attaching a cable to the tanker, the Ozbourn successfully towed it to Keelung, Formosa. In May 1947 while enroute to La Perouse Straights the Ozbourn again came to the aid of a distressed vessel. A Sakhalin merchant ship ran aground and later broke in half. The OZBOURN picked up the crew and transported them safely to Yokosuka, Japan. The OZBOURN returned to San Diego on October 1947, and on 21 October Commander SMITH was relieved as Commanding Officer by Commander Norman E. Blaisdell.

On 1 October 1948 the OZBOURN departed San Diego for her next tour of duty in the Far East. This proved to be a short tour because the Ozbourn and the USS Chandler (DD 717) collided. The crew was at general quarters during darken ship operations when the collision occurred resulting in the loss of two crew members. The quick thinking and hard work of the damage control parties saved the ship, and she headed back to the Long Beach Naval Shipyard for repairs and to replace the bow.

On 14 May 1949 Commander BLAISDELL was relieved as Commanding Officer by Commander Ross E. FREEMAN. During the summer the OZBOURN participated in a six week Naval Midshipman training cruise visiting Panama and participating in various fleet exercises.

After undergoing a routine overhaul at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, the Ozbourn in company with the USS Norton Sound left San Diego in April 1950 to conduct the first guided missile tests at sea. The

OZBOURN acted as observing ship and assisted the NORTON SOUND in what was considered a bold step in the use of guided missiles by the surface fleet. Upon completion of the tests, the OZBOURN stopped at the Christmas Islands before returning to San Diego.

Upon the opening of the Korean hostilities, the OZBOURN joined Task Force 77. She participated in the invasion of Inchon and conducted air operations off the Korean coast where she twice won the Korean Presidential Citation.

(Editors note: This history will continue in the next issue of the *Fireball!* It will hopefully jog your memory to recall incidents during your cruise aboard the "OZ". In doing so please write down your experiences and send them along to be published for all your shipmates to enjoy. It may help to remember old shipmates you can contact to become members of our Association)

PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT RETURNS TO OZBOURN

Twenty minutes after the USS Ozbourn was struck by an enemy projectile off the coast of North Vietnam last December, the men anxiously watched the helicopter evacuate a critically wounded shipmate. SN Raymond G. Sauer has been struck in the lower back by fragments of the hostile shell.

Strapped into a stretcher, heavily sedated but still alert, Sauer gazed up at the Commanding Officer and uttered the words that make heroes of lesser men, "I'm sorry I got hurt, Captain, give them hell for me." The Captain answered after a long pause, "You're damned right, son. We'll do our best."

Sauer was evacuated to DaNang. Ozbourn and her crew of 250 were left to grieve the loss of two shipmates and the possible loss of a third, SN Sauer. After five days in DaNang, Sauer was transferred to the Naval Hospital in Chicago and shortly thereafter to the great Lakes Naval Hospital.

Raymond Sauer wrote of his improved condition to his shipmates soon as he was able.

Soon the letters flowed routinely, reminding the men of the letters Ray wrote to his girl in Cincinnati. "He never missed a day to write to her," a shipmate stated, "no matter how strenuous operations were."

The marriage of Ray and Pam was pleasant news to the Ozbourn crew.

(cont. page 4)

(cont. from page 3)

The wedding previously had been scheduled for early August, following Ray's normal return to the States. SN Sauer, now Raymond G. Sauer, USN Retired, is living in Cincinnati, Ohio with his new wife Pam. He is paralyzed from the waist down. Doctors say he probably will not walk again.

The Ozbourn recently arrived in Long Beach, after being homeported in Yokosuka, Japan. The men wished to see Ray and his wife on the pier at Long Beach greeting their ship as it moored. While still at sea a Raymond G. Sauer donation fund was established to provide transportation and accommodations in Long Beach to permit ex-Ozbourn sailor and Purple Heart recipient an opportunity to visit his ship and renew old acquaintances.

Ray and his wife were treated to trips to Disneyland, Marineland and Hollywood and were the guest of honor at several parties and receptions, and at the change of command ceremonies of Ozbourn's Commanding Officer, CDR John G. Denham to CDR Rodney L. Stewart.

(This story was submitted by former Ozbourn skipper Capt. John G. Denham)

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☆ With deep regret we received the news of the ☆
☆ death of one of our shipmates, **Chief James W.** ☆
☆ **Gibson** of Oak Harbor, WA, who passed away on ☆
☆ December 13, 1995. Chief Gibson was stationed ☆
☆ aboard the Ozbourn from 22 Aug. 1969 to 1 Sep. ☆
☆ 1974. Our condolences to his wife Mary. ☆
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COMPUTER BUFFS

Do you have a computer? Are you on the INTERNET? Can you send e-mail? Do you have a relative or friend that can? If you would like to join an information exchange club with the "Fireball", please e-mail your address to "Compuserve 75107,2754. We could share info to help find old shipmates and increase our ranks? Any Ideas!!!! We could start a "page" on the NET for lost shipmates of any ship. Send ideas!!! Does any member have a list of addresses (or cities) of former crew members? Send a copy to the "Editor" and we will try and track 'em down.

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