



# Fireball!

## USS OZBOURN DD 846 "the Happy Ship"

Vol. 5. No. 1 January 1996

### NORFOLK REUNION BIG SUCCESS

#### The President's Report

##### FROM THE BRIDGE

To all those shipmates who did not make it to Norfolk, you missed a great reunion. At least that is what I heard from the attendees. The proceedings were topped off with a "USO-Andrews Sisters" type show, "Hearts Desire," featuring two young ladies who put on a superb act. They even had Charlie Akers on the stage waving the "maracas" while they sang "Rum and Coca Cola!" For his outstanding performance Captain Charlie won a tape of their act. Following "Hearts Desire," George Fink and Pete Cole showed slides from their service in "OZ" from the late '40's and the Korean War era, respectively. Pete brought a supply of his newly published book "Korea Remembered: Enough of a War" of which he sold quite a few.

AS MC at the banquet, I read letters from the son of Ray Lopez, from Barr Palmer and from the mayor of Herrin, Illinois, Joseph Ozbourn's home town. Captain (Select) David R. Lopez, USN told me of his father's death last July and how much he had wanted to attend the reunion with his family. Ray had retired to California from Taos, New Mexico where he had been a bank president. Barr Palmer sent his regrets that he could not attend because of the illness of his wife, Marge. Mayor Ed Quaglia of Herrin also sent his regrets. I had invited him to attend and he had intended to do so when last minute city business precluded his attending.

Special thanks are due to Paul Hecht as local chairman and to Paul Logan as corresponding secretary as well as to Steve Pleasants and Curt Anderson

for picking up, delivering and then returning ships artifacts to the Naval Historical Center.

The main transactions at the business meeting on Monday, October 30th were the election of officers for the next two years and the selection of a place and time frame for the next reunion. The current officers (Bob Whitten, President; Curt Anderson, Vice President; Paul Hecht, Treasurer, and Paul Logan, Corresponding Secretary) were reelected for another term. However, we have no recording secretary to keep track of membership and take or arrange for taking minutes at the business meetings. Currently this task is being performed by Paul Hecht, Paul Logan and me. Any volunteers? The site selected by the attendees at the business meeting is San Diego and the time frame is October 1997.

Toward the end of the banquet proceedings, Charlie Akers presented me with a beautiful plaque and gavel and OZBOURN logo, and inscribed with the following:

Commander Robert Whitten  
USS Ozbourn Association  
With Respect and Appreciation from  
his shipmates

October 31, 1995

I wish to express my thanks to Charlie and to all those who may have contributed to it. It is an honor to serve as your President.

Bob Whitten, President

**USS OZBOURN (DD 846)  
Association**

**Officers:**

President - Robert Whitten  
Vice President - Curtis Anderson  
Recording Secretary - Vacant  
Corresponding Secretary - Paul Logan  
Treasurer - Paul Hecht  
*Fireball!* Editor - Paul G. Logan  
Advisor - Charles Akers  
Historian - Fred Conwell

**Editorial Office:**

165 Pilgrim Road  
Braintree, MA. 02184  
Tel. 617- 843- 4713

*Compuserve 75107,2754*

*Fireball!* published quarterly

**Former Commanding Officers  
of USS OZBOURN (DD-846)**

1946-1947 CDR Bernard A. Smith  
1947-1948 CDR Norman E. Blaisdell  
1949-1950 CDR Ross E. Freeman  
1950-1952 CDR Charles O. Akers  
1952-1954 CDR William B. Fargo  
1954-1955 CDR Howard Scott  
1955-1957 CDR A.J. Toulon  
1957-1959 CDR. Charles A. Kuhl  
1959-1961 CDR William Turner  
1961-1961 LCDR D.V. Gorman  
(FRAM II) 3/61-12/61  
1961-1963 CDR William Lancaster  
1963-1964 CDR John Berger  
1964-1966 CDR Marvin D. Nelson  
1966-1968 CDR John G. Denham  
1968-1970 CDR Rodney L. Stewart  
1970-197? ???  
197?-1974 Ken Costilow  
1974-1975 CDR Frank Furtado

Ed Note: *If anyone can fill in the  
missing names, please let me know]*

**NORFOLK REUNION RE-VISITED**

Shipmates started to arrive on Saturday, October 28 around 1300. and were registered in by Ray Reveal (a very efficient and gracious hostess) of the Armed Forced Reunion Association. Members started to bring their old albums. Ray was giving out badges, function tickets and schedules.

Sunday morning we boarded a bus to Colonial Williamsburg. Had a nice tour of the various houses and shops on the grounds including the "palace". All had a nice lunch there at various restaurants at this old colonial village. About 3:30 we started back on the hour drive to the hotel. Paul Hecht had the bar open, and more shipmate's albums showed up for review.

Monday morning at 0900 we had our business meeting. Election of Officers was held and San Diego in the Fall of 1997 was decided upon for our next reunion.

After the meeting we boarded a bus for an excellent tour of the Navy base at Norfolk, A very impressive sight. We picked up a tour guide who did an excellent job of explaining the complete facility and ships in port. Our tour guide was heading for a three year tour to Japan shortly. We were touring the largest Naval Base in the world. Three of our largest aircraft carriers were in port there., as well as submarines and numerous other types of naval vessels.

We toured all the (well deserved) Admirals and Generals homes, well befitting high corporate officers. We had a nice lunch at the Breezy Point Officers Club. After lunch we boarded the bus and headed down to the Naval Museum in Hampton inside the Nautlis Building. We had a very informative tour of the Museum which included the US Navy history from its inception to the present day. Numerous ship models and artifacts were on display as well as many "talking" exhibits.

At 1800 the group boarded the bus for a trip to the Lynn Haven Fish House Restaurant for an excellent fish dinner of their choice. Everyone left satisfied and stuffed and returned to the Motel where the "meeting room Number Three" was open for chit-chat etc.  
(cont. page 4)

**ANNUAL 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**

**THANKS. . . . .**

## MAILBOX

Received a letter and picture from George & Betty Fink. Enjoyed the reunion and also retirement life.

Thanks to Gene & Betty Connolly for their card and a copy of the Ozbourn Commissioning Ceremony program.

Bob & Sally Whitten sent a card and review of their happenings this past year.

Letter from George Burrows passing on info.

Warren Sheldon sent info on his visit with Capt. B.A. Smith (first Ozbourn skipper).

Lloyd J. Cole TMCS Ret. sent some pictures including the "OZ" with the bow cut off. They were on display at the reunion.

Mail from Paul Hecht, enjoyed the reunion, wanted to remind shipmates to "pay up on their dues", and

needed to identify shipmates in reunion picture. (see other section of this issue).

Fred & Barb Souza wrote from sunny Florida. Thought the reunion was "outstanding." Working on finding new members. Blue coat was identified and sent to Dick Lay's wife Carol.

Tom Perkins dropped us a few lines. Sends a huge "Bravo Zulo" to all reunion organizers. One of the best organized ships reunions he has attended.

Jim Helland sent an update on his newly acquired "marital status" and he is developing some new "seeing eye" jokes for San Diego.

Vernon McCord wrote in about his experience "at the helm" when the OZ had her bow cut off.

Pete Athanas: your info in this edition.

## BOB SHELDON VISITS CAPT. B.A. SMITH

Bob Sheldon ((46-47) and his wife, Bette, had a great time at the reunion. On their way home they stopped to see his brother-in-law in Washington D. C. On a sight seeing trip they passed through Ft. Belvoir and decided to track down the Ozbourn first skipper Capt. Bernard A. Smith. They found him in good spirits having recently returned from the hospital. Capt. Smith expressed his regrets for not being able to attend the reunion and sends his greetings to all.

He thought the Ozbourn was a good ship. His reasoning was that most of the crew was experienced, having come from other ships, and knew what they were doing. The skipper recounted the time on shake down when an air craft carrier was trying to shoot down a drone. He said you could walk across the sky on exploding shells. Since we were passing by the skipper asked for permission to try to hit it. He got it. With one shot, Lt. Brown destroyed the drone. The skipper got on the radio and thanked the carrier for the opportunity. He said there was an absolute dead silence on the other end of the radio. That made his day. Capt. Smith's wife passed away in 1991. Bob and Bette had a nice visit and were extremely glad they took the time to track him down.

## WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE USS T.E.CHANDLER REMOVED THE BOW FROM THE USS OZBOURN ?

All hands were at General Quarters, we were playing war games. My GQ station was port side after signal bridge.

A signal was sent via voice radio from the Flag Ship. Turn 180 right. The Ozbourn was on the starboard side of the four destroyer division. Capt. Norman E. Blaisdell, when he heard this took the hand mike and said "repeat for God's sake repeat". The next thing that came over the speaker was "execute". How do I know ? I, Bernard Joseph Kern, had left my GQ station to ask how many times we were to simulate firing our 5" guns.

I went back to my signal light and flashed with an orange filter every second or so to act like gun fire. On one flash all I could see was the superstructure of a ship coming right at me. It hit once, bounced back, and hit again like it was going in the chart house hatch.

This blow knocked me down toward the mast and I hit the Chief Signalman Sam Bass and almost knocked him to the 40mm gun deck. I ended up by the 12" signal light on the starboard side of the signal bridge. Turning the light toward the water I saw the bow section forward of mount one floating by and then sank.

Berny Kern (48-50)

(cont. from page 2)

A slide show was presented by George Fink and Pete Cole.

The weather was perfect every day of the reunion. Low to mid 70's and cloudless skies. There was a beautiful golf course right behind our motel. A driving range was off to the side of the motel. Tennis courts were on the opposite side of the motel. The hotel was located on the corner of Northampton Blv'd and Wesleyan Drive just opposite Wesleyan College. A beautiful area. Grounds were very well kept. A small putting green was in front of the hotel. The hotel had at least four good sized function rooms. Some of the Shipmates we approached by a gentleman with car problems. The first day he had brake problems and needed a helping hand. The next day he had transmission problems and need another hand. I think this was his permanent occupation.

George Burrows drove up from Florida with his DD-846 license plate. Steve Picasants did leave the ships artifacts. Commissioning Plaque, Bible, FRAM MK I plaque, (took place at Puget Naval Shipyard Started March 15, 1961 and completed December 22, 1961); plaque of Pvt. Joseph Ozbourn of how he won the Medal Of Honor, ships Bible, candles holders and cross. These artifacts are kept at the Naval Historical Center at the Washington DC Naval Yard.

On Tuesday morning we took a very impressive tour of the General Douglas McArthur Museum. We viewed a film on the the General's life and toured the museum in which he is buried. It also contained many artifacts of the General's life with a reproduction of the "Instrument of Surrender", signed aboard the Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay, ending the War with Japan in 1945. It was a very impressive tour. Following our visit to the Mc Arthur Memorial we took the bus to the "Spirit of Norfolk" for a cruise down the Elizabeth River and lunch. We were entertained by the crew who put on a great show. Peter Athanas participated in one of the acts on stage and tried to disguise himself with a large Mexican hat. He looked very professional and we shall keep him in mind for our next reunion. After our cruise we went to the Waterfront Mall to give the ladies a chance to "spend a little cash" which their husbands had been saving for this occasion.

On Tuesday evening our banquet opened with a cocktail hour at 1800. It had a slow start as Bob Whitten hired a brand new bartender from Scotland who

was measuring the drinks with an eye dropper. After a few adjustments the situation improved.

At 1900 Bob started the evening festivities and Banquet with the pledge to the Flag. A dinner of chicken cordon blue or roast beef was served to the members. After dinner we had some excellent entertainment by the "Hearts Desire" two beautiful young ladies who put on a USO type show with music from the 1940's. They sang popular songs from the WWII era and put on some great skits. Charlie Akers assisted in a Caribbean number with the girls. It was quite obvious he had rehearsed this number as he didn't miss a beat, or bump or grind and was quite proficient in operating the "meracas." The girls wanted him to join the act but his wife Becky said he had other commitments.

Curt Anderson and Tom Perkins, in their neatly trimmed beards, worked very smoothly into a number with the girls who sang to them. They received a standing ovation from "two" of their friends in the rear. Incidentally Tom and Curt teamed up to sell tickets for the evening "drawing". At times they appeared to be a little *hi-pressure* but they did manage to make \$215.00 on ticket sales. Incidentally a note from Tom said he still had five tickets left if anyone was interested.

The drawing prizes were won by Pete Cole: a picture of the USS Constitution in Boston Harbor during the 1976 Centennial and an authenticated, registered piece of the Constitution, the oldest US Navy ship in commission. Another prize went to Rudy Boff: a bottle of Jack Daniels. George Burrows won a USS Ozbourn hat. Bob Sommers won a copy of Pete Cole's book "Korea, A War To Remember". Jack Blosnick won an official, registered, Russian submarine (Red October) Commanders hat. (I think he planned to use it playing golf)

Later in the evening Bob addressed our group and read a letter from Barr Palmer. He also read a letter from Ray Lopez's son David, announcing his death. Charlie Akers also spoke and pulled a few Tennessee jokes from his sea bag. Jim Helland had a few "seeing eye" dog jokes.

Some people still can't remember "fanny's" last name, but we trust this will not prevent them from entering heaven. Incidentally the bus driver should get *honorable mention* for "best joke of the reunion" with his joke on the young boys that saved President Clinton's life.

(cont. on page 8)

## FREE SPACE AVAILABLE

This space was left open to let you know we still had some room left for your contribution.

## DO YOU REMEMBER WHO SAT AT YOUR TABLE AT THE BANQUET???

Table one: George and Helen Brown; Joe and Carol Kirby; Dick and Carol Lay; Paul and Mary Logan.

Table two: Fred Conwell; Tom Perkins, Kurt Andreson; Bob and Suzy Sommers.

Table three: Peter & Arlene Athanas; George Burrows; Jim Helland; Rich & Glorie LaFond; Bill Ridel and John Ulicini.

Table four: Gene Connolly; Bob and Janice Kelley; Bob and Bettie Sheldon; Fred and Barb Souza.

Table five: Jack & Etta Blosnick; Pete & Emma-Jean Cole; Paul & Edith Hecht; Bob & Sally Whitten.

Table six: Charlie & Becky Akers; Rudy & Arlene Boff; George & Elizabeth Fink; Bill & Pat Minter.

Table seven: Bernard & Jean Kern; Al & Delores Kock; Vernon & Corrine McCord; Dave & Dena Verba.

## KOREA REMEMBERED

A new book "Korea Remembered" has been published by Charles (Pete) Cole (1950-51), published by the Yucca Tree Press, Las Cruces, New Mexico, has hit the stands. The book mainly details Pete's tour of duty on the Ozbourn but anyone who served aboard will find it very interesting reading. ISBN:1-881325-13-X, 320pp, photos and maps, \$17.95 + \$3.00 S&H.

## 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

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Be sure you notify the "Association" if you change your address. You can send any changes to the Editor of the "Fireball!"

## REUNION PICTURE MEMBER IDENTIFICATION

Front row L/R	Served	Rating	USS OZBOURN REUNION NORFOLK, VA OCT. 28-NOV. 1, 1995
1. George Fink	16-18	MM2	
2. Bennie Kern	48-50	QMC	
3. Jack Blossnick	50-51	Ensign	
4. Charlie Akers	50-52	Capt.	
5. Vernon McCord	18-19		
6. Jim Helland	46-46		
7. Bob Whitten	50-52	Lt. Jg.	
8. John Ulicini	46-48	SN/GM	
9. George Burrows	16-17	FN	
Middle row L/R			
1. Fred Conwell	50-52		
2. Joe Kirby	65-70		
3. Paul Hecht	46-47	EM1	
4. Peter Athanas	46-48		
5. Fred Souza	46-47	MM1	
6. Paul Logan	16-17	FN	
7. Richard LaFond	46-48	SN	
8. Bill Riedel	46-47	FN	
9. Bob Kelly	50-51		
10. Bob Sommers	16-18		
Rear row L/R			
1. Tom Perkins	50-53	FC1	
2. George Brown	16-17		
3. Pete Cole	50-52	Ensign	
4. Curt Anderson	53-55	Lt. Jg.	
5. Bill Minter	52-55	RD2	
6. Dick Lay	16		
7. Rudy Boff	52-55		
8. Al Kock	47-51		
9. Bob Sheldon	46-47	RD3	
10. Gene Connolly	16-17	Cox	

## AT THE HELM WITH AND WITHOUT A BOW

SOUTH CHINA SEA. At approximately 2030 on 11/13/48 after about six hours at general quarters, the crew was getting a little groggy. At least I knew I was. I, being Vernon McCord QM2 at the time was at the helm, my GQ station. Something caught my attention to port, a small red light where no light should be. A few seconds later all hell broke loose along with the most god awful noise I had ever heard. We had just collided with the USS Chandler.

The entire bow of the Ozbourn had been ripped off. (The red light I had seen was probably on the 1MC or 21MC on the bridge of the Chandler) I walked out on the starboard wing of the Bridge as the bow came by, not quite floating. I could still barely see the #846. It appeared to be 3 or 4 feet under water.

We had to back down approximately 125 miles to Tsingtao, in tow by a fleet tug at 10 knots. I had lots of time to reflect on the performance of the Bridge Crew and was amazed at the lack of confusion. Everyone seemed to know their job and went about doing it almost like it was a drill. I am sure there were a thousand different things going on that I don't remember.

Vernon McCord QM2



(cont. from page 4)

Seven Plank owners were at the reunion :Peter Athanas, George Burrows, Gene Connelly, George Fink, Paul Hecht, Jim Helland and Fred Souza. In addition there were seven members who made the first WESPAC cruise with them:Rich LaFond; Dick Lay; Paul Logan;Bill Riedel;Bob Sheldon; Bob Sommers and John Ulicini.

#### **FROM THE EDITORS DESK**

We have crowded a lot into this issue and no doubt we missed a lot. If you have anything of interest about the reunion or your Ozourn days please write and share this with your shipmates. Remember it is "your input" that makes "Fireball" an enjoyable publication. We have picked up some new "corespondents", lets see if we can hear from some new faces.

The Norfolk reunion was a great success. The Armed Forces Reunion Association did a great job organizing and supervising our activities. Ray Reveal did an exception job at keeping things rolling "on time" and watched over all like a mother hen. The location and accommodations were well chosen by Bob Whitten and Paul Hecht.

This reunion was more intimate than the last with plenty of time to get involved with more shipmates.

Mary and I had a great trip, a wonderful experience and really enjoyed meeting old friends and new ones.

Shipmates that missed this reunion should start planning to join us for our next reunion in San Diego in October 1997.

#### **USS OZBOURN ON PAGE 7**

Anyone interested in an 8 x 10 of the Ozourn on page 7 please let the Editor know. Cost should be under \$10.00.

**PAUL G. LOGAN, EDITOR  
USS OZBOURN (DD 846) ASSOCIATION  
165 PILGRIM ROAD  
BRAintree, MA 02184**