



# FIREBALL!

## USS OZBOURN DD 846 "the Happy Ship"

Vol. 7 No. 3 July, 1998

### FROM THE BRIDGE:

We -- again meaning Captain Charlie Akers -- have the next reunion set up for Las Vegas at the Maxim Hotel. We have it set for October 24-27, 1999 and expect to include a trip to Hoover Dam. This will be our fourth get-together and trust that we will even exceed the turn-out for San Diego.

A photo from the San Diego reunion recently appeared in the Tin Can Sailor. I sent several prints of which they picked one with former CO, Bill Fargo who passed away in April. For those of us who knew him, we miss him as he heads to the final home port.

Sally and I just returned from a tour in Spain and Portugal which included Seville and Lisbon. Both beautiful cities -- Lisbon is very reminiscent of San Francisco complete with a replica of the Golden Gate bridge -- they harbor the remains of two great navigators of history, Columbus and Vasco da Gama. Interestingly, Columbus' crypt rests in the Cathedral in Seville, not because he was such a great man, but because one of his sons was a cannon of the Church! Presumably da Gama is buried in the Lisbon Cathedral because he was a great navigator.

I am happy to report that my "global warming" resolution was adopted by the Navy League essentially as I wrote it.

As I announced in the last issue, we still need a president and a recording secretary. Paul Logan in particular needs relief because he is overburdened with both the newsletter and membership records. Relief for the watch is overdue! We have sent out the messenger but he hasn't returned!!

I am now down to four coffee cups: \$3.50 plus shipping charges.

Bob Whitten  
Acting President

### REUNION NEWS

We are on our way to another successful reunion. This time in Las Vegas Nevada. The final arrangements have been made for our reunion to be held at the Maxim Hotel at 160 E. Flamingo Rd, between the strip and Koval Lane. (757 rooms) (phone: 1-800-634-6987)

Most of the Maxim's business is senior citizens so it must be a "good bang for the buck." Rooms have been recently redone with modern colors. All rooms offer TV with pay movie options and inhouse information channels. The Maxim is only a block off the 'strip' so its location is a definite advantage.

The hotel offers a casino (as expected), 24 hour coffee shop with large portions and a New York Steak or prime rib dinner for \$4.95. In addition there is Jack's Colossal Deli. The Grand Buffet is rather elegant, especially at dinner, when tables are candlelit and a pianist entertains on a baby grand. (Dinner nightly - \$6.95). There are two casino cocktail lounges: the Waterfall and Cloud Nine.

**Don't forget the dates: October 24-27, 1999. Get it on your calendar. More to follow next issue.**

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## SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

New Shipmates discovered since our last report in April 1998.

Name	City	Served	Rate
Bailiff, William D.	Lambertville	FL 66-67	BT3
Bakker, Dwayne E.	Hancock,	MN 46	S1
Barger, Roy L. TM2	Harriman,	TN 46-48	
Carriker, Marvin C	Madison,	NC 46	S2
Clark, Richard I.	Bella Vista,	AR	MM3
Cohrs, Werner C. ETM3	Deltaville,	VA 46	
Counselman, Clarence	Otto,	NC 46	
Davis Leroy	Apache Jun	AZ 47-48	S2
Garrison William E.	Atwater	CA 48-52	BM3
Keller, Darrel E.	Cedar Rap.	LA 59-60	FN
McMillan, Maurice C.	Enigma	GA 46	S2
McRoberts, James V	Fairfax	VA 52	ETC
Seidel, Norman	Denver	CO 63-65	Ltjg
Waldroup, Bert	West Monroe	LA 50-53	FT2
Zamba, Stanley	Santee	CA	MMC

## FROM THE EDITOR

All hands were saddened by the death of former skipper Capt. Bill Fargo (52-54). Those shipmates who served aboard the Ozbourn with him and crew members that had the good fortune to spend some time with him at our reunions will miss him. He was a great skipper and great gentleman.

Each year as our shipmates grow older we get closer to our final 'home port'. We can see from our departed shipmates list - - - it is getting longer. This fact makes it imperative that we search for new, younger shipmates to carry forth the organization and ideals of our Association. There is plenty of new young blood out there - - we are searching for it. Our Association is well organized with good By-Laws and procedures in place. Our reunions are getting larger, bringing more enjoyment to our members and keeping the spirit of the OZBOURN alive and well. We have put forth, through the good efforts of our members, some interesting facts and history of the "OZ" helping us to relive the 'better' times we enjoyed on this great ship.

## MAIL BAG

A post card from James V. McRoberts, (52) ETC, from Fairfax, VA. He reached 79 last year, still drives a little and would like to hear news of the old crew.

Bill Garrison, (48-52) BM3, comes aboard with memories of China and loosing 38 frames off the bow, getting hit on the starboard side in Korea and taking fire while on operation "Sitting Duck." He has plenty of good memories.

Daryl Turner ( 48-52 ) Emailed in about Cal Patterson ( 50-51 ) being laid up in the hospital from a bad fall. Haven't heard how he is doing lately.

Paul Hecht (46-48) keeps promising an account of his cruise. How about it Paul?

A letter from Raymond J. Johnson (56-58) ET2 informing us of the death of Farris O'Dell. Thanks Ray.

Email from Acting Pres. Bob Whitten: Sent an Email to Capt. Keith Fargo extending condolences and asking him to send his father's photo of Ozbourn and command pennant. Card sent of VADM Thomas B. Fargo and Ms. Barbara Fargo.

William E. Garrison (48-53) BM3, wrote in to tell us his brother gave him a copy of *Fireball!* He enjoyed it very much and is joining our association to hear news of the Ozbourn.

Email from Dudley Janeway (65-66) . Found us on our web home page. Waiting to see his name on homepage as an Association Member.

Howard (Shoulberg) Lawrence (46-48) sent in his corrected Email address. Howard worked for Paul Hecht in the electricians gang. Looking for Ray Geiger from Iowa. (In process of researching 1946 crew, Ed.)

Jackson Tyree ( 52-55 ) Emailed in with the sad news of the death of shipmate Harry Seise ( 54 ). Harry paid a visit to Jackson last summer. In addition Jackson sent his condolences for Capt. Bill Fargo, a great skipper and a great man. Jackson was grateful to meet up again with Capt. Fargo at the San Diego reunion.

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## THIS OLD "DD" CAN STILL HUNT

This is an account of the USS Ozbourn (DD 846) as seen by its 'skipper' John G. Denham (66-68).

Ozbourn deployed in June 1966 for a two year tour of duty in the Seventh Fleet, home ported in Japan.

By 1967 Ozbourn was well established as a unit of Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Seventh Fleet. It was

Fleet policy to home port a squadron of destroyers overseas that were capable of responding to local military requirements on short

notice; a group familiar with the local rules of engagement, the turf and competent in all types of surface warfare. Part of the

success of this policy was the provision that allowed voluntary swapping of officers and enlisted crew members between the incoming and outgoing ships. Within days after arrival in

Japan I had a 25% turnover in crew, but had inherited an almost permanent group of experienced volunteers. Manning was maintained at almost 100% of complement.

The average combat operation experience and knowledge in each home ported ship was considerably above that of other units rotating from the states. I was familiar with the reputation of these "Asiatic Sailors" and therefore knew they were the best. As a Lieutenant I had been C.O. of a home ported ship in Sasebo, Japan for over two years.

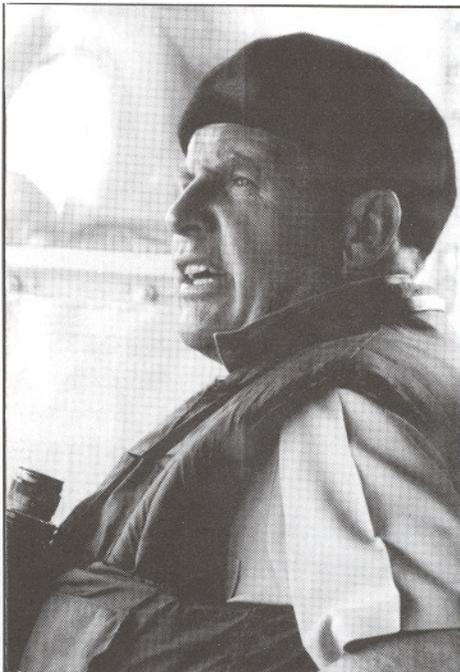
In the Seventh Fleet the home ported DD Squadron was called "The Fire Brigade."

Ozbourn had been in Asian waters many times and was no virgin to hostile action, In 1951 off Korea, she was involved in combat and hit twice by enemy gunfire. Although now over twenty years old, this mature lady from Bath, Maine had been modernized with new anti-submarine rockets (ASROC), ASW torpedoes, and remote controlled unmanned helicopters (DASH). We even improved on the DASH concept by adding a TV monitor and observing enemy activity behind their lines; we nicknamed these DASH

birds SNOOPY. Her stylish DD silhouette still boasting two twin 5 inch 38 caliber gun mounts: one forward and one aft.

On 24 March 1967 after a week as plane guard in the gulf we were detached and ordered to proceed to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Vietnam, Upon arrival we reported to the Surface Warfare Gunfire

Coordinator for duty as naval gun fire support unit (NGFS). This was old hat for us as we had successfully done this many times before. Our gunnery skills were tops. Our initial salvo accuracy was always well within fleet standards. Whenever possible we spent time "peaking" our gunnery skills. Our Condition 3 gunnery teams could handle almost any situation; their motto was "Accuracy not Quantity." On the evening of March 24, 67, as darkness settled in we were ordered to proceed to a position in the North portion of the DMZ. A low thin haze covered the enemy coastline to our North. During the night we patrolled in our area using random courses and speeds so our track could not be predicted and keeping a good watch for enemy radar lock-on. It was essential we remain in our assigned area as other units were operating in blacked-out condition near by. At night one could only rely on radar to detect other surface units of infiltrators.



WITH THE SEVENTH FLEET OFF VIETNAM June 15, 1968. Cdr. John G. Denham gives one of his men an order during an Operation Sea Dragon mission against enemy targets ashore in North Vietnam. (Official US Navy

Several times during the night we provided Harassment and Interdiction (H & I) fire in support of friendly forces ashore. This required us to steady on a course and speed to develop an accurate firing solution. About 0200 on March 25, 1967 we were called to support a withdrawal operation for a company of U.S. Marines. When called by our control spotter (a marine officer), we responded with our ship's name sake instead of our assigned call sign, "THIS IS PRIVATE FIRST CLASS OZBOURN REPORTING FOR DUTY SIR!"

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The rest of the night was relatively peaceful with the exception of the radios which were constantly belching forth calls for help, identification, authentication and tactical signals from adjacent forces.

On the 0400-0800 watch on the 25th, ensign Alan Swinger, USN reported fog setting in. Primary navigation control was already in the Combat Information Center (CIC) therefore we continued on our random patrolling based on CIC recommendations. Although the ship was secured for battle, by first light we could feel a chill from the wet blanket of thick fog surrounding the ship. As light increased one could just see our wake as we weaved in the patrol area. At 0700 we started heading Eastward to clear the area and prepare for an 0900 underway replenishment with logistics support group. Three lookouts were stationed: one port, one starboard and one aft. The Signal Bridge and the Main Battery Director crews were in full battle dress on top of the pilot house. The Director Officer was continuing his fruitless search peering into the fog toward the shoreline which was now mostly astern. Only the port and after lookouts were able to see the shoreline.

The fog began to disperse as the warm sun peaked in and fingered the higher ground. Within minutes large patches of land became visible. The North Vietnamese gunners were evidently alert and prepared for as soon as they sighted us they started firing. No enemy radar signals were detected. Our first indication of hostile action was what sounded like firecrackers, and then a series of splashes in the water around us. The OOD, Ensign Swinger ordered ALL ENGINES AHEAD FLANK. Within seconds we were surrounded with white splashes of water from the incoming projectiles hitting around us. Either the fuses were of poor quality or very old as only a few projectiles detonated on impact with the water. The OOD sounded General Quarters and ordered COUNTER BATTERY- SURFACE ACTION - -PORT. We sighted no muzzle flashes or gun smoke although we had a relatively clear view of the shoreline. As we weaved to port, unmasking the gun director, the after 5 inch mount got off several rounds toward the most probable area of enemy firing. We estimated that during this short encounter the enemy had hurled about 60 projectiles at us. "OZ" was hit twice with 4 inch mortar type projectiles almost simultaneously; one round penetrated the

ASROC Storage Magazine (aft) and the other hit the exterior bulkhead of the Gunfire Radar Control Room and Radio Annex (near midships, under the navigation bridge). The fast action of the OOD, Ensign Swinger, cleared the ship from any further danger and freed the after guns to fire.

Our problems had just commenced as we withdrew from enemy gun range. Before any manned and ready reports reached the bridge we received a report that the ASROC magazine was on fire, and the Main Battery Control reported loss of power and control to all gun mounts. This was the first indication we had on the bridge that the "OZ" had been hit. Amazingly we felt nothing on the bridge although a 4 inch projectile had detonated almost under our feet. Most of the crew were having breakfast when GQ sounded. Many just put food in their pockets and moved to their battle stations to supplement the condition three watch teams.

In a disciplined ship team leaders never wait for orders to correct problems. LT. J. H. McMillan, USN, Engineering Officer and LTjg E.L. Stagner USNR leaped into action with damage control teams dispatched in two directions. Shipfitters Scott and Dent took on the ASROC fire crawling through smoke and burning residue from the burning rocket motors dragging an uncharged hose, suppressed and contained the fire and then cooled the other rocket motors. Their actions saved the weapons magazine and probably the entire ship.

LT Don Barnhart, USN, Operations Officer performed the most meticulous task of the day, keeping others informed. In a combat situation, information to seniors is essential. When catastrophe strikes seldom does the recipient survive without some outside assistance. The ill fated USS Indianapolis, the USS Pueblo and the Tonkin incident were lessons learned. Navy procedures required pre-drafted message for emergency situations to be ready at all times for immediate release. Someone must be available to handle the dissemination of essential information without seeking last minute directions. Generally, several critical scenarios are considered and messages are drafted and kept up dated. If and when a situation occurs, the blanks are filled in and the message sent. We had learned the need for instant communications in the NASA Gemini recovery

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program.

As we cleared to seaward it was evident to other ships in the area that "OZ" was having a bad day. The rocket motor exhaust had created a tremendous dark cloud of smoke and flame; some observers later reported they thought we had blown up. The gun radar and radio room was destroyed. We did not know if the ASROC Magazine would blow or not. The rocket smoke was so hot and the noise so loud that one could not determine the degree of control being accomplished, if any. Two ASROC motors were on fire. Although they only burn for a few seconds it was possible they could set off the others. The smoke and heat continued for some time even after the fires had been subdued by Petty Officers Scott and Dent.

The first response to our needs came from Captain Dick Cochrane, the amphibious area commander operating immediately South of us. "What help do you need?" LT. Barnhart's reply was "just give us plenty of room for now, and if we are still here we'll let you know."

After the smoke had thinned and the noise abated it was necessary to determine the status of the other weapons in the magazine. Lt. Mike Krause, USN, Weapons Officer, Ensign Al Frecker USNR and Gunners Mate Gauger and Vorhees entered the still smoldering space and checked the remaining weapons for damage and potential risk. Two other ASROC missiles had been severely burnt. Even though the space was technically safe, the magazine was like the inside of a charcoal broiler; hot with spots of burning material here and there and occasional strange popping sounds. The electricians and electronic technicians had their hands full disconnecting hot leads and rewiring needed circuits.

The Damage Control Teams surveyed the entire ship for damage and found another small hole in the hull forward of the bridge. All rubber life rafts stowed on top of the after deck house were damaged either by heat or shrapnel. We had no usable life rafts. As we proceeded seaward assistance teams from the fleet arrived: ASROC technicians, medical evacuation teams and the fleet Public Information Officer. Fortunately we needed none of their services.

After a quick survey of damage and capability we cleaned up the mess and replenished from the logistics group a little later than originally planned and then proceeded to Subic Bay to get fixed up. At the inquiry in Subic Bay we were asked why

everything went so well, essentially it was recorded "Because they trained for it."

USS OZBOURN DD 846 departed Long Beach, California on 25 June 1966 for an extended tour of duty overseas and returned to Long Beach on 6 September 1968. I was fortunate to serve as her Commanding Officer the entire time. During that time she served as Destroyer Division 92 flagship. She fulfilled every assigned mission, including 89 missions in Operation SEA DRAGON where she was hit by enemy fire and two crew men were killed and several injured. OZBOURN was also involved in the initial USS Pueblo rescue efforts spending over 40 days in the Sea of Japan. During this overseas assignment the officers and crew were awarded two Battle Efficiency Awards (best in squadron 1967 and 68), the Meritorious Unit Commendation and personal awards including 4 Bronze Stars, 11 Navy Commendation Medals, 7 Navy Achievement Medals, and 4 Purple Heart Medals. The number of Good Conduct Medals was not recorded. While still Commanding Officer I was selected in 1968 to the rank of Captain. Senior Chief Sonarman McCarthy said it best about OZBOURN, "Hell Captain it ain't the age it's the quality that counts".

Thanks to Captain John G. Denham for this additional account of the OZBOURN during her 1966-68 years.

We look forward to other shipmates sending in accounts of their cruise.

## PERISCOPE BEARING . . . . .

One day while on submarine maneuvers, as a new seaman, I was standing a port bridge lookout watch, (with bucket between my knees), I kept diligently scouring my area and reporting anything in sight. Everyone on the bridge was keenly looking to starboard trying to locate the sub's periscope that was expected to make a run on us. All of a sudden I spotted a periscope off to port.

Over the sound phones I bellowed, "**bridge, port lookout, periscope bearing . . . .** Everyone rushed to port, glasses up on the horizon. Then I heard one officer say, "that's not the one." So ended my day in the sun.

Paul Logan (46-47)

Email from Capt. Keith Fargo informing us of the death of his father . In addition he offered our Association a picture of the Ozbourn and his command pennant that hung on his fathers wall for years.

Note from Phyllis Kamarth, wife of Bill Kamarth, telling us that Bill passed away April 22, 1998.

Email from Dick Clark , MM3. Located his former chief of the forward engine room, Stanley Zamba from Santee, CA. The best poker player he ever met.

Letter from Jim Helland ( 46 ). Jim appears to have struck some oil on his property. Enjoyed seeing all the shipmates at the San Diego reunion. Looking forward to a reunion in "Boston" while he is still young enough to make it.

Email from John Crowley ( 62-65 ) to tell us he found our home page on the web and had sent in his dues to sign up. Located former shipmate Jerry Rost (63-65) via the internet and had a great time reliving the westpac cruise of 1964 with him. He also sent along addresses for former shipmates: Jerry Rost (63-65); Larry Darrington (60-63); and Ltjg Norman Seidel (62-64).

Don Sacco (51-54) wrote in with a new address. He is living at the Howard AFB in the Panama Canal Zone. Don, retired from the Army, is living with his wife who is stationed in the Canal Zone.

Harrison Barger Emailed us with his brother's (Roy Lee Barger) Email address.

WD Minter ( 52-55 ) Emailed to inform us of the loss of shipmate Arnold Rantrup.

After receiving my first "Fireball!" in June of 1997 I renewed acquaintances with a one of my former shipmates Farris O'Dell, leading petty officer when I went aboard the Ozbourn

We made arrangements to attend the San Diego reunion and roomed together. We had a great time touring San Diego and talking with old shipmates we hadn't seen in some 40 years . I indicated to Farris we would be visiting close to him in the future and could get over for a visit.

In early April this year Farris called me to tell me he had cancer and I decided to push up my visit.

In April I visited Farris and spent 4 good days talking about the old times.

On April 29 we took Farris to the doctors and received a glowing report. We celebrated with a chicken fried steak. After lunch Farris's wife Mary took his medical records into the house while I helped him out of the car. Suddenly he dropped to his knees and said he was having difficulty breathing. He died shortly thereafter.

An outstanding technical repairman, Farris achieved some of his greatest personal satisfaction by performing a well concealed operation. He was the instigator and creator of the infamous "skull and crossbones" flag that appeared blocked to the mast the morning before crossing the equator on the 1956 cruise to New Zealand. This "polywog" insult resulted in great efforts by the bridge crew and the shellback officers to remove the offending item. After quite some time and many futile attempts the shellbacks had to resort to a lowly polywog to get it down. Ironically, it was Farris O'Dell that was ordered to go aloft and cut down the flag. It was a great triumph for him and remained a secret well kept by him and his co-conspirators.

### OZBOURN INTERNET CLUB

Join our Internet Email Club. Send your Email address to: [USSOZBOURN@aol.com](mailto:USSOZBOURN@aol.com)

We presently have almost 50 members. If you change your Email address - Let us know. Keep up to date in between newsletters.

**NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR FIREBALL!**

**[USSOZBOURN@aol.com](mailto:USSOZBOURN@aol.com)**



