



# FIREBALL!

## USS OZBOURN DD 846 "the Happy Ship"

Vol. 8 No. 1 January, 1999

### FROM THE BRIDGE

I am happy to report that Captain Charlie Akers is on course and speed for the 1999 reunion in Las Vegas, October 13-17 (there was a error in the date in an earlier reporting). Those of us who had the privilege of serving with him nearly half a century ago again see his very effective leadership in action.

Some of our shipmates may have read of the current problems in the armed services, particularly the Navy and Air Force. Conventional wisdom holds that the hemorrhaging of trained personnel is caused by inadequate pay, decreased retirement benefits and longer deployments. While these three factors are by no means unimportant, they do not appear to be the principal causes of personnel shortages and low morale. Poor top leadership, both civilian and uniformed, seems to be the main culprit. The current Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak, is in this observer's humble opinion head and shoulders above the other members of the JCS. The Marine Corps, incidentally or perhaps not-so-incidentally, the only Service that is meeting its recruiting goals. And it is the only Service not experiencing "sexual harassment" in its recruit training. (Does separation of the sexes, or in "pc," "gender," have something to do with this?) Some Congress people on "both sides of the isle" have been suggesting that we return to the draft. The idea that unmotivated draftees called up for 18 to 24 months would be effective in this high-tech world is ludicrous. In the meantime, our armed forces are again becoming "hollow."

I have received from his son in San Diego some of the artifacts left by Captain Bill Fargo. I will bring to the reunion the ComDesDiv 112 pennant that he hoisted in his second tour in the "OZ" as division commander.

The very best wishes to all of our shipmates and their families for 1999. Sally and I look forward to seeing you at the Las Vegas reunion.

Bob Whitten/ Acting President

### REUNION NEWS

To start off a correction is due to the last few *Fireball's!* The official dates of the Las Vegas reunion is **October 13-17, 1999.**

An eagle eyed former skipper, and Association Advisor, Charlie Akers spotted the error and it is henceforth corrected. Well Done Charlie. ( I guess that's why we have an Advisor on board).

In addition, Charlie has been extremely active in getting the 'organization' of our reunion underway. While some of us may be dozing at the throttle,

Charlie has been "full steam" on the bridge.

First of all he has started issuing *CharlieGrams* to keep the committee abreast of the progress being made. A committee has been formed which consists of:

Association President: Bob Whitten  
Contractor: Charlie Akers  
Coordinator: Charlie Akers  
Ticket Preparer: Paul Logan  
Arrival Information Assembler: WD Minter  
Hospitality Room Manager: Donald "Mac" McCarthy  
Money manager & Recorder: Paul Hecht & Bill Jones  
Remaining Position: Volunteer Wives  
(cont. page 2)

### REUNION

#### IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Reunion</i>	Page 1,2
<i>Search Committee Report</i>	Page 3
<i>Mail Bag</i>	Page 3
<i>John Crowley</i>	Page 4
<i>Formosa Patrol in Fog</i>	Page 5
<i>Beale Denton</i>	Page 7
<i>Back Issues</i>	Page 8
<i>Taps</i>	Page 8

(Cont. from page 1)

Charlie is on the lookout for an amateur photographer to take random photos at the reunion. Charlie recruited his former shipmate from the "HOBBY" to prepare the reunion banquet place-card -programs. His name is George Watts and he designed the "Ozourn" logo that appears on the front page of each issue of the *Fireball!*.

As mentioned before arrival at the hotel is set for Wednesday, October 13, 1999 and departure is Sunday October 17, 1999. Room rates will be Wed., & Thur. nights: \$42.51 (inc. tax) per night for a single or double. Sat. & Sun. nights \$64.31(inc. tax) per night for a single or double. The hotel will honor these rates two days before and two days after reunion. If you come two days early and stay two days after reunion the rate will be \$42.51 per night.

Tentative schedule for reunion:

- Wed. Oct.13: Register at hotel & Ozourn desk  
Hospitality room open.  
Thur Oct. 14: Tour of Hoover Dam. Lunch at a hotel.  
Fri. Oct. 15: Afternoon magic show.  
Evening Comedy show at Maxim with Buffet.  
Sat. Oct. 16: A.M. Business Meeting  
Evening. Banquet with entertainment.  
Sun Oct. 17 Farewell Breakfast and departure.

Charlie has set up a flexible schedule with plenty of time for Las Vegas perusal and Hospitality room get-togethers. I trust Charlie is practicing up on his dance routines as any shipmate who attended the Norfolk reunion can attest, he was a 'hit'.

In the April issue of the *Fireball!* it will include sign up sheets and costs for reunion activities; Plan of the Day for reunion activities; Information on hotel sign-up and airport/hotel transportation; directions and any last minute details.

Be close to your mail box after APRIL 1 for the REUNION ISSUE of the *Fireball!*. The *Fireball!* predicts this reunion will be our **biggest**.

## GOOD NEWS!!

Treasurer, Paul Hecht, has joined us on the 'web'. Paul now has an Email address. You can reach him at:

**[pwhecht@pilot.infi.net](mailto:pwhecht@pilot.infi.net)**

## ANNUAL DUES -DUE JANUARY 1, 1999

Notice has been given plenty of press of our new dues procedure of paying on January 1 of each year. Some shipmate have already sent in their dues but Paul Hecht is looking at a lot of stragglers on the list.

As we have mentioned your mailing label on the *Fireball!* will tell you the last year you have paid . If there is not a "99" on your mailing label, you dues are due.

All shipmates on our records will receive the April Reunion Edition of the *Fireball!*. After that if your dues is not paid before the July issue you will be dropped from the regular mailing list. Don't let it lapse. Send that check for \$10.00 today, **payable to USS Ozourn Association to:**

**Paul Hecht, Treasurer  
P.O. Box 3534  
Portsmouth, VA 23701-0534**

## OZBOURN PICTURES

George A. Riebesehl ( 49-51) ME3, is looking for 35mm negatives and or pictures of the Ozourn for enlargement or copy. You can reach George at: 847-895-4739

## YOUR STORY

We still saved some room for your story about your Ozourn adventures, but it didn't arrive on time.

Well maybe next issue !!!

## SHARE A ROOM

If you are looking to 'share a room' with a shipmate please contact the *Fireball!* and we will start a list to try and match you up.

## SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

New Shipmates discovered since our last report in Oct 1998.

Name	City	Served	Rate
James Alwert	N. Vernon, IN		SOSN
Jack Cahill	Waynesboro, VA	50-51	SK1
Carl L. Esposito	Glen Burnie, MD		
Mathew Grayton	Danvers, MA	46	SN
McClinton N. Jagers	Milwaukee, WI	47-48	SD1
Marvin Johnson	Russelville, AR	48	SN
Keller, Darrel	Cedar Rapids, LA	59-60	FN
Clyde H. Kelly	Lutz, FL	46	SK2
Chester Lewandowski	Detroit, MI	66-68	
Virgil Lutz	Evansville, IN		
Jim McDaniel	Ontario, Can	49-52	GMSN
John W. Morgan	W. Keansburg, NJ	51-55	EM2
Clarence G. Murphy	Hampton, NH	46-48	SN
Perry D. Phillips	Onalaska, TX	46-48	RM1
John W. Prior	Eugene, OR		
Beale Riggsbee	Durham, NC	46	
George Riebeschl's	Schaumburg, IL		ME2
Raymond Stang	Sturgis, MI	46	EM3
Trifton P. Tripsas	Phoenix, AZ	56-57	IC3
David A. Vantine	Front Royal, VA	47	FN

### MAIL BAG

Email from Trifton P. Tripsas (55-58) IC3 looking to contact Raymond Johnson (56-59) ET and John Nyquist (55-58). LtJG.

Email from Frank Spittle (49) PN2, looking for reunion info. (see this issue)

Email from Pat Bohenko (68-70), RM2, who visited Vegas with his wife. Suggests a good guide book: "Frommers Las Vegas". Get the latest edition. Cram full of details. Pat suggests a 'good' pair of walking shoes. He will answer questions on Vegas at: bohenko@ziplink.net He will be glad to answer any Email inquiries. (Thanks Pat)

Clarence Murphy (46-48) SN, sent a note with his application. He remembered Capt. Barnie Smith was a mustang. The storm of 1947 going to China was an EXPERIENCE !! ( your Editor remembers that storm well. We ate nothing but sandwiches for 3 days and had to straddle the mess tables to eat so you wouldn'd fall down.)

Lonnie McLawhorn (49-50) sent in the following report of a Captains Mast:

MC LAWHORN, Lonnie P. SA  
USS Ozbourn (DD 846)  
Captains Mast : 19 April 1949  
Offense: AOL 12 hours 23 minutes.  
Date of Offence: 18 April 1949  
Punishment: Five (5) days solitary confinement  
on bread and water with full ration  
every third (3rd) day.  
J.R. Blackburn  
LCDR., USN  
Executive Officer

( Ed. note: I would venture to say in TODAY'S Navy the XO would be facing a Congressional Investigation for this punishment.)

Jim McDaniel (49-52) GMSN contacted us by Email. Jim is living in Canada and found our home page on the web.

Beale Denton (46-48) FN sent in some nice pictures including the Ozbourn when she had 3 five inch mounts and the whaleboat was on the port side. Beale also informed us that Phil Ihme (46-48) was recovering from a kidney stone operation and looking forward to Las Vegas in "99."

Buddy Englehorn (58-59) QM3, Emailed in looking for a 56-57 cruise book. We forwarded info to Fred Sinks.

Email from Bob Whitten telling us that many destroyers were named after former Marines.

WD Minter Emailed the he and wife Pat toured Boston while your Editor was vacationing in NH. Sorry we missed them.

Pat Bohenko (68-70) says you can check out [www.militarygifts.com](http://www.militarygifts.com) for Navy memorabilia. Also some good travel web sites are: [www.previewtravel.com](http://www.previewtravel.com) and [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com) and [www.southwest.com](http://www.southwest.com) for good prices on flights.

(cont. page 5)

## **Spread Eagle - Spread Eagle this is Ski Jump- Ski Jump Over**

All shipmates who served on the OZBOURN in the early 60's will remember the above refrain. I spent many hours standing lookout or being the helmsman on the bridge of the DD 846 when these call signs would crackle over the radio. Spread Eagle was of course the OZ and Ski Jump was the Hollister.

I remember meeting Joe Bagley when I first reported aboard 12/21/62. Bagley had been in the Navy 18 to 20 years and was a ASROC GM1. The ship had just arrived back in Long Beach from Westpac. I had never set foot on an ocean going vessel and was fresh out of Fire Control School in San Diego.

One afternoon in 1964 the Ozbourn sets its fueling detail to take on fuel from the carrier we were plane guarding. The two ships were steering a parallel course as a 5 inch refueling line was being heaved to the OZ by a group of 20 shipmates controlled by a whistle Bagley was blowing. My job was to hold a pulley in place that redirected the line heaving the cumbersome refueling hose. The hose had reached its destination and the boatswain mate had started removing the hose cap with a spanner wrench.

Suddenly the horizon turned black as a solid wall of bunker fuel started coming toward Bagley and me in what seemed to be slow motion. The carrier had sent the hose over in a charged condition. I turned deftly around, knocked Bagley unceremoniously on his butt and skiddadled around the davits holding the whaleboat. I thus escaped being drenched in what appeared to be pure crude oil.

Bagley and the OZ's port side had to undergo a through cleaning however. Later that afternoon I saw Bagley in the mess decks and he somehow seemed to have a whole new respect for me. During a different refueling procedure a giant wave carried the OZ into a carrier. The collision smashed the port screw guard. It's hard to believe the entire ship sold about 12 years later for around \$150,000.00

I remember standing beside the Mark 37 Gun Director during a lull from shelling San Clemente Island on the morning of November 22, 1963 and hearing a voice on the 1-mc announce the President had been assassinated.

The enlisted men's club at the foot of the pier in Long Beach was the site of many enjoyable nights listening to C & W music. The Bud put away then was definitely not of the light variety.

As I recall the crew had several tackle football games on a field close to the pier. The Officers who played received some hard hits. I remember Lt. Jg.

Brian Bucholtz, an Annapolis product, breaking free

to score several TD's.

I believe it was while we were escorting the Constellation to Japan in March of 1963 that a helicopter dropped mail to us from the carrier and caught fire. After deploying a couple of pontoons, the pilot set the copter down about 500 yards off our starboard beam. The OZ had lowered its whaleboat and picked up 3 or 4 occupants. The OD promptly mustered a damage control team and maneuvered the OZ so the copter would be within fire-hose range off the port quarter. As the copter was being sprayed, the main rotor blade rubbed against the ship just behind the bow and the copter immediately capsized. Two gunners-mates from WG division, Shorty Jim Roberts and James Robinson, brought a couple of M-1's to the bridge. I believe the skipper utilized the rifles to puncture the pontoons. The copter was last seen gurgling its way to the bottom.

Jerry Rost (SM2) recalls OZ rescuing another Fram-2 destroyer's drone at another time.

During the cold war and in the aftermath of Francis Gary Powers U-2 incident the Russians had taken to over-flying certain US Military installations. While accompanying the Constellation and having a forward picket station, I was present in CIC when some interceptors (A6 Skyhawks) were scrambled to investigate a BOGEY we discovered. The Bogey turned out to be a Russian Bear Bomber that was intending to over-fly the carrier. I can still hear our A-6 pilots reporting that they were flying in close formation around the bomber.

During our regularly scheduled excursion to Westpac in the summer of 1964 Commander David Berger injured his back. The ship under the leadership of Lt. Commander Marvin D. Nelson sailed on toward the western pacific area.

I believe that during my entire tenure on DD 846 the ship exhibited an "E" on the bridge that was earned by the officers and the crew being efficient, effective and excellent.

I don't see any names on the ship's roster from my era, however I believe Wilson Sheets was a storekeeper and ran the ship's store. I was thrilled to run across the Oz's home page while surfing the net and think that the Association's organizers all deserve a "well done". Hope to see you in Las Vegas.

John Crowley (62-65) FTG2

## MAIL BAG

(cont. from page 3)

Howard W. Hillson ( 52-54) FP2 sent in an article from the Feb. 1946 "ALL HANDS" magazine. This issue contained an article about five Marines who were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. One of the Marines was our Pvt. Joseph W. Ozbourn. Pvt. Ozbourn fell on a live grenade, killing himself, but saving the lives of four marines close by him. The other four Marines in the article, who received the medal of Honor, had Gearing Class Destroyers named after them.

Howard says he really enjoys our web page.

Art Rainville (52-55) EM3 sent us an obituary on Walter Ousey, a former XO on the Ozbourn. Art is looking forward to Las Vegas. He also is going to send us a story about the centerfold in the 52-53 cruise book.

Melvin Mayer ( 50-53 ), BM3, Emailed in looking to hook up with Virgil Tosto (46 - 52) , BM2, and Al Burkhart.

Don Sacco Emailed in looking to contact some former shipmates. Don is in Panama, retired from the Army. His wife is still in the service and stationed in Panama.

Jim Councilman (46), SM3, wrote in asking if the Ozbourn took a 5 day cruise after she was commissioned and before going on shakedown. Anyone got the answer? (Editor came aboard in July 1946 after shakedown)

Leroy Davis ( 47-48 ), S2, sent in a Christmas 1947 menu from the Ozbourn and a newspaper article. Thanks.

## FORMOSA PATROL IN FOG

( Thad H. Harden sent in this interesting story about the Ozbourn. It runs almost 7 pages so we will run it as a series. Numerous stories about the Ozbourn will never be written but the *Fireball!* will do its best to print all that come across the desk. Thad was involved in a recent Ozbourn mystery and solved it, only that story cannot be fully told at this time)

Not often do ships at sea get into a fog so thick, so dense, one cannot see 20 feet. Such was the scene in which a United States Ship

(USS ) Ozbourn (DD 846) found herself one night in 1959. Ozbourn was a US Navy Destroyer on patrol in the Straits of Formosa. This set of straits is a narrow stretch of Pacific Ocean separating mainland China, and the small offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, from the island of "Formosa." Ozbourn and her sister ships in the US Seventh Fleet were suited to the mission of the Formosa Patrol. They were of a size and armament, and most importantly, they could accomplish the mission at hand. That mission was to provide a calming presence, an implied potential force, standing between the warring factions of what had once been, for a brief flash of history, a unified China.

Mainland China's two major political parties, the Nationalists and the Communists, had fought in civil war since the early 1930's. When the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1937, the two parties joined military forces against the Japanese. Chiang Kai Shek led the Nationalists. Mao Tse-Tung led the Communists. When World War II ended, the two parties went back to fighting each other. Both intended to dominate mainland China, and all of its adjacent territories, Formosa included.

The Communists won! October 1, 1949, Mao Tse Tung announced that China was, henceforth to be known as: the Peoples Republic of China, the PRC, a nation controlled by the Communists.

Mainland Nationalists, who could do so, fled the country, as soon as possible. Many settled on Quemoy. Others went to Matsu. Still others went with Chaing Kai Shek, who led his family and his loyal followers to Formosa. There he set up a separate Chinese government, the Republic of China, or the ROC. He also changed the Japanese name, "Formosa" to "Taiwan."

USS Ozbourn was a DD-710, "Gearing Class" long hull destroyer. She was one of many built and commissioned by the end of World War II. The U.S. Navy names its ship classes after the first of a specific, common design. USS Gearing was the first of the "long hull" destroyer class, an improved version and 20 feet longer than the sumner Class (DD-692). Class characteristics are described in terms such as: she displaced 3460 tons of sea water at full load, measured 390 feet 6 inches in length from bow to stern, was 40 feet 10 inches wide at her widest beam, and drew

(cont. page 6)

## FORMOSA PATROL IN FOG

(cont. from page 5)

14 feet 4 inches of water (draft) from her waterline to the bottom of her sonar dome, the lowest part of the ship.

As a warship, she drew respect. She had six 5"/38 caliber Navy rifles. (5"/38 means a 5" bore, with a length : times 38 = 190" from breech to muzzle). These guns could throw a 55 pound projectile 9 nautical miles. Two were mounted in each of two enclosed gun mounts forward and two in one mount aft. As a deterrent, she was mostly symbolic of United States power. Although not the equivalent of a battleship or an aircraft carrier, she was still a potential reminder that the United States SEVENTH Fleet routinely patrolled the Formosa Straits. So, in a normal six month deployment to the Western Pacific, every destroyer could expect to be assigned to at least one 7-10 day patrol, sometimes two. Their task was to be there, just simply, be there! By just being there, the United States aimed to discourage aggression by either side. It was a pseudo war-like task to prevent a real war.

This night visibility ranged from near zero to 50 feet, seldom more. As new clouds rolled toward the ship out of the dark black night, the sailors claimed the visibility went from bad to worse and back to bad. Never good. Sometimes the lookouts could see 50 feet. The next moment have trouble seeing their hand a few inches in front of their face. That was disconcerting enough, but even more so, was the fact that the ship's bow was nearly 170 feet in front of the bridge, and the bridge watch never did see it in their 4 hours on duty.

Prudence demanded the ship move slowly. The speed was: "bare steerage way," approximately 7 knots for this class ship. (One Knot is one nautical mile per hour, where a nautical mile is 2000 English yards, or the distance on second of arc subtends the equator.) At bare steerage way, motion through the water is so slow the force of the sea water is almost too little for the rudders to turn the ship. From time to time the Officer of the Deck would increase speed to ten knots, straighten the ship's heading, and then reduce speed again to bare steerage way. The slow speed gave him time, time to sense danger and to react, when time might be critical. It could also minimize damage in event of collision.

Despite frequent briefing, most of the crew did not fully understand, or appreciate, why they were there? Should they expect overt action from some unexpected enemy? Not so briefed. Were unknown threats hiding under the fog? No intelligence indicated there were. Then, why was this single warship wandering around in International waters, with no apparent purpose?

One recurring fact did not escape notice. When a USN ship wandered as much as one tenth mile inside the claimed 12 mile limit from the mean waterline of the Chinese Mainland Coast, the Communists made a fuss. They announced on their radio broadcasts to the world that a United States warship had *violated* China's sovereign border. This helped very little to quell the doubts of many in the crew, who felt the mission was aimless, and it was senseless for them to be there, anyway. If a threat did turn up what the hell were they going to do? To whom? Why? Who was the enemy? They were well informed sailors, who had valid questions.

(To be continued in the next issue of the *Fireball!*)

Captain Thad Harden writes an interesting short story about an incident aboard the Ozbourn while on Formosa Patrol. Many of you will relive this incident while other shipmates, though not aboard the OZ on this particular cruise, will readily relate to all occurrence as though they *were* aboard.

*The Editor*

## THANKS

To John Crowley, Beale Denton and Thad Harden for their contributing articles to the *Fireball!* As I mentioned before, this is 'your' newsletter, and your **news** makes it happen. To other shipmates who correspond, keep up the good work. Look around, scratch your brain and records for some interesting information on about your service while aboard the Ozbourn. It's there, so pass it on.

The Editor



( l to r)Richard Bennedetti , John Jugan, Art Rainville (52-55), EM3 and Rudy Boff (52-55 ) in Aberdeen, Hong Kong, 1953.

(photo by Art Rainville)

## BEALE DENTON AND THE OZBOURN

Beale Denton(46-48), FN, reported aboard the Ozbourn on March 30, 1946 in Boston, MA Shakedown commenced March 30, 1946. Enroute to Cuba, a whale surfaced just ahead of Ozbourn, was sliced in two, the pieces went through the screws, leaving them out of balance until she went into drydock in Bremerton, WA about a year later. Capt. Smith turned the ship around to see the pieces, not a pretty sight.

Completed shakedown June 27, 1946. Left Boston July 20, 1946 for Panama. Arrived San Diego Aug. 1, 1946. The Ozbourn still had her Atlantic colors, dark grey, and appeared "dirty" to Pacific sailors -- hence the origin of her name "The Dirty O". She arrived in San Diego with a full wartime complement of manpower; observers said "They never seen so many men on such a little ship." We arrived with all men possible lined up on deck. Many were soon siphoned off with reserves leaving (with enough points to "get out.") Left San Diego for the Orient Jan. 6, 1947

We went through a terrible typhoon getting to Japan from Hawaii. I witnessed the inclinometer in the Forward engine room indicate a 90 degree roll a number of times. That was scary since I was told a destroyer would roll over after 89 1/2 degree roll.

When we arrived in Yokosuka, the whistle wouldn't blow to set the special sea detail -- I found out why when I was sent up to fix it -- The flag from the mast was stuffed down it due to the storm.

We took on fuel and received about 10% water -- fuel and diesel oil -- and when we went to sea and switched from the ready tanks to the cruise tanks -- we went dead in the water. Taking on diesel fuel; the ship overpressured and caused severe foaming that put diesel fuel in the after engineers quarters. I figured a way to by-pass the centrifuge to the ready tanks to relieve the pressure to stop the fuel from entering the crews quarters. Consequently, when the Ozbourn's boilers went out, the emergency diesel generators wouldn't work either because there was water in their tanks too. The Engineering Officer and the Executive Officer didn't have anything good to say to me about that! They also fixed the diesel fuel lines so the centrifuge could NOT be by-passed again! We were dead in the water for about 3-4 hours.

I was in the auxiliary gang, stood boiler watches at sea, and was a boat engineer.

