



FIREBALL!

NEWSLETTER OF THE USS OZBOURN (DD 846) ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2001

VOL.10 NO.2

REUNION EDITION

FROM THE BRIDGE

As this issue of the Fireball! will be going to all hands, I would like to issue a special invitation to those shipmates who have never attend an Oz-bourn reunion to come to Seekonk and join in the festivities. This years event is filled with exciting activities for both shipmates and their spouses or guests. Dinner aboard a WWII Battleship, the USS Massachusetts BB-59, followed by a memorial service for our departed comrades. A visit to the USS Joseph P. Kennedy DD850, one of the few Gearing class destroyers to escape the scrap pile. Walk the decks and visit old familiar areas of your Ozbourn days. But the thing that gives me the biggest thrill is greeting and visiting with friends and acquaintances of so many years ago. You will discover that friendships last forever and there are no strangers at an Ozbourn reunion. To those of you who live in the eastern United States, lets show those West Coast guys how to support a reunion in your area.

Some suggestions for those who plan to come: For the best airfares, book your reservations early and don't forget to check on senior fares and senior discount coupons. They offer substantial savings if you book early. Complete and send in your sign up sheets and registration fees as quickly as possible. This gives us a reliable count of how many to plan for and your money will be refunded if for some reason you can't attend.

Mark the reunion dates on your calendar and schedule other activities around them.

Keep October 17—21, 2001 open.

Finally, to those who are having trouble deciding whether to come or not, I offer this: come to one Ozbourn reunion and if you are not thoroughly satisfied and don't go home with a warm feeling inside then don't come back. I want to warn you though, I and many of your shipmates went to that one reunion and now we are hooked for life.

W D Minter, President

FROM SHIPS OFFICE

As you scan this issue of Fireball! outlining the activities available during the forthcoming reunion, it will become apparent that a great deal of effort and attention to detail has been expended by the reunion committee in putting together the best possible package for your enjoyment.

Should one of the tours scheduled not meet your fancy, just remember that this area of New England is loaded with historic and wonderful places to visit. For example, sites like Old Sturbridge Village, Plymouth Rock, Cape Cod and many others to include Boston are within easy traveling distance from our temporary "Home Port and would be worthy of consideration.

The next issue of Fireball! will be published in August and will contain the finalization of plans for the reunion. I hope all of you will give serious consideration to attending. Lets make this the best one yet. "SEE YOU THERE".

T. M. Perkins, Editor

MAIL CALL

What follows is probably one of the more inspiring letters concerning one of our shipmates that has come to the attention of the editorial office. It was sent on 22 December 2000 so the reader should bear this in mind. The originator, Jack Blonsick.

Subject: LTJG Robert C. Whitten, USNR

Fifty years ago today, Fireball! was cruising off Korea, just after the activities of Hungnam were concluded. Suddenly the word was passed about a fire in one of the firerooms. I was proceeding forward on the starboard side of the main deck when I saw HEAVY, dark gray smoke coming out of a trunk. I saw LTJG Whitten, a recalled reserve officer with extensive maritime service, rapidly, without being ordered to do so, don a breathing device and descend into that pit of hell to fight that fire. He immediately disappeared from view.

A few days later we celebrated Christmas in Sasebo, Japan while the Ozbourn was repaired to return to the line in Korea. It is one of the most courageous feats I have ever witnessed. While in Sasebo celebrating the birth of Christ, I felt ashamed that we were drinking good booze while our brothers in arms were freezing their cajones on the other side of the Tsushima Channel. I tried calling my mother from the Camp Mowry bar. After a wait of over 4 hours I gave up and returned to our home away from home. I wonder what would have happened if Bob Whitten hadn't paid attention to his damage control training. We owe you, Bob, BIG TIME. Jack

CAPT. Charlie Akers our Commanding Officer during that cruise responds:

This message refers to Jack Blonsick's e-mail reminding us of the meritorious action of Bob Whitten when he entered Ozbourn's fireroom in the face of a major oil fire in December 1950. Jack's commendatory report is especially significant coming from a Naval Aviator who risked his life each time he was catapulted from or landed aboard the postage stamp size deck of a Navy Carrier. Charlie Akers

This e-mail was received May 28, 2000

Subject: Got some goodies for you

My father, Kenneth Albert Robinson was on the USS Ozbourn from July 1947, Yokosuka, Japan to at least the collision. I've got an aerial photo pre-1948. On the back it says "Reported aboard for duty July 20, 1947. Yokosuka, Japan". "USS Osbourn (DD846) the Dirty "O". Another is a picture of the bow after the night training collision.

I just looked at my fathers discharge. He was in the Navy from 1-18-44 to 5-6-46. I can't say why there is a discrepancy in the dates. Was on reserve duty after discharge and then enlisted in the Air force.

John Robinson, Chester, WV

(continued pg. 3)

USS OZBOURN (DD 846) Officers of the Association

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USS OZBOURN WEB PAGE

<http://home1.gte.net/wdminter/ozbourn.html>

(Mail Call Cont.)

Received via the Ozbourn web site guest book dated 6 February 2001

I served aboard the USS Orleck DD886 and the USS Maddox DD731 between 1961-1963. I'm a member of the VFW in OSBURN, ID and in our entryway we have a picture of the USS Ozbourn given to us by someone who thought Osburn, Idaho should have a picture of her since the names sound alike. I was checking out some destroyer sites and found yours. She was a good looking ship as always.

Harold Ueckert
Osburn, Idaho

Another message from the Ozbourn guest book dated 7 February 2001.

Name: David Hunt

Country: Oregon, USA

Comment: My father served on board the USS Ozbourn 48-52. He was a ET2/c. His name is George Hunt: does anyone remember? He is getting up in years and I am trying to find friends from his past. George would like to know if anyone knows the whereabouts of his old buddy, J.R. Lingenfelter. George can be reached by e-mail at <DBHUNT@excite.com> or by phone at (503) 465-9483.

Ed. Note: David, check photo this issue for picture of Lingenfelter. His whereabouts is not known.

Following message was received by e-mail 16 February 2001.

Beverly and I are most humble and pleased to share with you the achievement of our daughter, stage and film actress Marcia Gay Harden.

Marcia was nominated as "Best Supporting Actress" in this years Academy Awards for her role as "Lee Krasner", wife of Jackson Pollock in the film "Pollock". Actor Ed Harris who plays the role of Pollock was nominated for "Best Actor".

This culminates years of dedication for Marcia Gay and we hope it is only the beginning.

Thank you all for your loyalty.

Thad and Beverly Harden

Southlake, TX

Shipmate Thad Harden served on board from 1958 to 1960.

Way to go Marcia Gay, we'll all be rooting for you on awards night. Ed.

Shipmate Paul Hecht, our capable Treasurer, in an e-mail dated 14 March 2001 sent in an informative narrative of his recent visit to the newest addition to the fleet.

Last Saturday I was able to attend the commissioning of the USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG-81) an Aegis class destroyer. It is the first Arleigh Burke class destroyer to have a 5"/62 gun mount. They use 5 different kinds of 5" ammo in this gun and the range is from 20 to 60 miles. It carries torpedo tubes and missiles as well plus helicopter facilities on the fantail. Ship displacement is over 9,180 tons. And we thought the Ozbourn was a large DD at 2200 tons. In fact, the Arleigh Burke class ships are larger than light cruisers used to be. The ship was built at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine and commissioned here in Norfolk, VA. Propelled by four quick response General Electric LM2500 Gas Turbine Engines coupled to two 17 foot variable pitch propellers, it has the capability to go from cold iron to underway in two minutes and to back down without stopping the engines by reversing the pitch of the props. Three Allison 501 Gas Turbine Engines provide the ship with up to 7500KW of electrical power. Two reverse osmosis distillers can produce 24,000 gallons of potable water per day.

Over 2000 people attended the ceremony and there were lots of British service people and British civilians there as well. Also a British ship, the HMS Sheffield was nearby and fired a 19 gun salute. The Navigator of the ship is a permanently assigned British Officer.

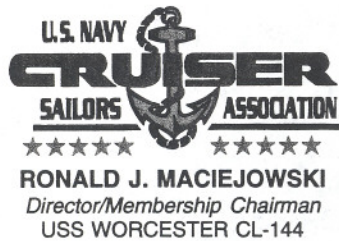
It sure is a different Navy than it was 40 years ago. Paul Hecht.

TIN CAN TRIVIA

The first U.S. Navy ship lost to hostile action in WWII was the destroyer REUBEN JAMES (DD 245) on 31 October 1941 with the loss of 115 men.

(Mail Call cont.)

President W.D. Minter has been contacted by the Recruiting Chairman of the U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association for the purpose of making all former cruiser sailors aware of his organization. The USNCA has been underway since 1992 and now has over 4,000 members on the rolls. All interested former cruiser sailors are eligible for membership and will receive a complementary copy of the newsletter together with all pertinent information. Interested parties should make inquires to:



55 Donna Terrace
Taunton, MA 02780-2824

Tel/Fax: (508) 824-0789
e-mail: clicanavy@aol.com
www.navycruisers.org

From Hans Koehler (58-59):

Here is a photo of the Ozbourn taken at sea in November 1956. Perhaps you can use it in a future issue of Fireball!

Ed. Note: Indeed we can Hans; no room this time but keep your eye on the Fireball!, and thank you.

From Bob Alexander (65-67)

While I was serving on the Ozbourn one of the crew died while the ship was in port at Long Beach. This was just prior to the ship's homeport change to Japan. I cannot remember his name but he had not been on board very long and was assigned to one of the engineering divisions. I recall that he was of Polish/ Indian descent and was very proud of his Indian Heritage.

Ed. Note: A check of records available to us does not reveal any information relating to this incident. If any crew member from the 65-67 period can provide the name of this shipmate, contact the editor.

TAPS FOR SHIPMATES

VIRGIL ROBERTS, EM 2/c, (50-52)

12 February 2001

Reported by Richard Clark

KENNETH ALBERT ROBINSON, S1/c (47-48)

21 Oct. 1925 to 5 June 1996

Reported by John Robinson (see Mail Call pg. 2)

WILLIAM E. TOMPKINS, BT, (48-52)

8 February 1990

Reported by Lori Buck (see mail call below)

STEPHEN C. PLEASANTS, YNCS, (46-??)

23 January 2001

Reported by Stephanie Turman (see mail call below)

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

(Mail Call cont.)

From Lori Buck

Hello,

I just found your web site. My father was a boilerman on the Ozbourn from 28 September 1948 to 28 March 1952. His name was William E. Tompkins. He passed away on 8 February 1990. If he could be in your memorial section it would be much appreciated.

From Stephanie Pleasants Turman
Spotsylvania, VA

Chief Pleasants was born on 1 April 1926 in Waynesboro, VA. He attended schools in Crimore and Waynesboro, VA and in 1942 went to work at a shipyard in Newport News, VA. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in March 1944 and served in Motor Torpedo Boats in several campaigns in New Guinea and the Philippine Islands. Following WWII he was in the commissioning detail of USS Ozbourn and served in various ships and stations until retirement in May 1964. Following retirement from the Navy he worked at various trades in Virginia had resided in Centreville, VA since 1971. He is survived by his wife Frances and numerous other family members. Interment was at Arlington National Cemetery on 30 January 2001.

USS OZBOURN (DD 846) FIFTH BIENNIAL REUNION

BOSTON, FALL RIVER, NEWPORT, SEEKONK
ACTIVITIES INFORMATION SHEET

OCTOBER 17—21, 2001

TRANSPORTATION

Air travelers are advised that the T.F. Green Airport in Providence, RI is located approximately 5 miles from the reunion headquarters in Seekonk, MA and would be the most convenient point of arrival. This airport is serviced by the following major airlines: American, Continental, Delta, Northwest, Southwest, United and U.S. Airways. Boston's Logan Airport is, of course, a hub for all major airlines serving the Northeast. Mileage from Boston to Seekonk is approximately 50 miles. Ground transportation from the Providence Airport to the Hotel is still being reviewed for best service provider and the results will be provided in the next issue of the newsletter.

For those arriving by motor vehicle, Seekonk, MA is located approximately 5 miles to the east of Providence, RI, adjacent to the intersection of I-195 and State route 114A.

REUNION HEADQUARTERS AND LODGING

"Home Port" for this years reunion is the Ramada Inn, Seekonk/Providence, located just 5 miles to the east of Providence, RI. This site was chosen for its relative proximity to Boston/Fall River/Newport where the bulk of the tour activities are to take place. It was thoroughly checked out by our operative in the area who provided a favorable report. A spacious hospitality suite has been engaged and becomes the base of operations for all the reunion activities.

RAMADA INN

940 Fall River Ave.,

Seekonk, MA 02771

Telephone: 508-336-7300

Fax: 508-336-3107

Room Rates:

Single: \$75.00+ tax per night

Double: \$77.00 + tax per night

50 Rooms blocked out for October 17-18-19-20, 2001 (extra nights before or after at the same rate)

Free Buffet Breakfast each morning except Farewell breakfast Sunday morning 21 October.

Deposit or Credit Card Guarantee required.

TOUR ACTIVITIES

DAY ONE (Thursday 18 Oct.)

Battleship Cove, Fall River MA

USS Massachusetts (BB 59)

This is truly a tour that all the old salts should not miss. This site contains one of the largest and most varied collection of naval memorabilia to be found anywhere. From the 35,000 ton battleship to a miniscule LCM built by the famous Higgins Co. there is something to interest everyone. Walk the decks of the "Big Mamie", as she was affectionately known by her crew during WWII, and see the bridge and conning tower from which intrepid sailors dueled with the French BB Jean Bart at Casablanca in 1942 to the steel works at Kamaishi, Japan in July 1945, where she fired the last 16 inch projectile of the war. Self guided tours take visitors to virtually every area of the ship from engine room through berthing compartments to radio rooms and much more. As a special treat, dinner will be served to the group at 1645 in the wardroom. This will permit all you old rag hats to see how the other half lived while you were standing in line down in that stuffy mess hall. Following dinner, there will be a memorial service conducted on board to commemorate all of our departed shipmates.

USS Fall River (CA 131)

This heavy cruiser was commissioned in July 1945, too late to see action in the war and remained in commission only slightly more than two years prior to inactivation in 1947. Languishing in reserve for 25 years, it was sold and broken up for scrap in 1972. The bow of the ship was acquired and now graces the entry to the Battleship Cove area.

USS Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. (DD 850)

This ship was named for President John F. Kennedy's older brother, a naval aviator who was killed while participating in a secret project to destroy missile sites in France during WWII. During the Korean War the ship participated in operations in the Far East. In October 1962 the ship engaged in blockading operations in Cuban waters and was the first U.S. Navy ship to stop and inspect a Soviet chartered vessel. Heavily modified from its original configuration by the Fleet Modernization program, old Ozboourn sailors will no doubt suffer a twinge of nostalgia while touring the spaces on board the Kennedy.

USS Lionfish (SS 298)

A WWII Balao class fleet type submarine, this ship was commissioned in November 1944 and was conducting its second war patrol when hostilities ceased in the Pacific in August, 1945. Easy access to the below deck areas permit visitors to get a sense of the extreme crowding experienced by the crews who sailed the submarines into battle during the war.

PT 617 and PT 796

Examples of both the Elco and Higgins type Motor Torpedo Boats, the two boats on display are representative of the 531 units that operated in both the European and Pacific theaters of operation during WWII. In 1961, PT 796 was a stand-in for PT 109 during the inaugural parade of President Kennedy.

(Over)

ACTIVITIES INFORMATION SHEET (CONT.)

Numerous other small craft are on display in the area including a Higgins built Landing Craft Medium (LCM), a Japanese Suicide Attack Motorboat known as the Shinyo and a Cold War era East German high speed coastal defense vessel that was armed with the STYX anti-ship missile. This boat was built in Russia and following the reunification of Germany in 1991 was transferred and commissioned into the U.S. Navy. Manned by a civilian crew it was employed in evaluation operations in the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Cape areas.

DAY TWO (Friday 19 Oct.)

Boston

USS Constitution

At 0830 the tour heads out for a day in the Boston area. First stop is the Charlestown Navy Yard, home port of the USS Constitution, the oldest commissioned warship afloat. Built in 1797 in a shipyard north of Boston, she is still capable of getting underway under sail and is manned by a U.S. Navy crew. It has escaped the wreckers on several occasions and was last dry docked and overhauled in 1995. Also located here is the USS Constitution Museum which is well worth a visit.

USS Cassin Young (DD 793)

Nearby is berthed the WWII Fletcher class destroyer USS Cassin Young (DD 793), one of the few remaining examples of the largest class of DD to serve during the war. Named for a Medal of Honor winner at Pearl Harbor, the ship was heavily engaged in operations against the Japanese in the Pacific and survived two separate Kamikaze crashes at Okinawa. She won the coveted Navy Unit Commendation as well as four campaign stars for WWII service.

LUNCH following the Navy Yard tour will take place at the renowned Phillips Old Colony House three miles south of downtown Boston. Combining the décor of the English countryside and the comfort of an English hunt club it offers traditional New England fare and our operative on the scene highly recommends the Baked Scrod.

President John F. Kennedy Library

The last stop of what will surely be a memorable tour day is the Kennedy Library. Located on the bay south of Boston, the library displays a large volume of material related to the life and presidency of President Kennedy.

DAY THREE (Saturday 20 Oct.)

Mansions of Newport

Newport, RI, some 25 miles south of Seekonk is the destination on Saturday afternoon as the tour takes you to the fabulous summer homes of some of the wealthiest families of the 19th century. Situated on a promontory overlooking the Atlantic Ocean is a street lined with some of the most opulent summer residences ever built.

The Breakers

Considered to be the grandest of the Newport mansions, the Breakers was a symbol of the Cornelius Vanderbilt family's social and financial preeminence that was based on extremely large holdings in the steamship and railroad enterprises. Construction commenced in 1893 and when complete it contained 70 rooms with an equally grand set of stables to house the horses.

The Elms

This was the summer residence of Edward Berwind of Philadelphia and New York whose fortune was centered on the Pennsylvania coal industry. The Elms was modeled after an 18th century French chateau and was constructed between 1899 and 1901 at a reported cost of \$1.4 mil. Lavish terraces and classical revival gardens surround the mansion and it was furnished with rare European antiques.

Rosecliff

Commissioned by Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs, it was completed in 1902 at a reported cost of 2.5 million dollars on property that was, at one time, owned by George Bancroft a former Secretary of the Navy. Mrs. Oelrichs was a member of the Fair family of Virginia City, Nevada that held partnership in the company that controlled the fabulous Comstock Lode. Rosecliff was noted for the lavish and innovative receptions that were held there.

Once back in Seekonk a hospitality hour will take place followed by the traditional banquet. It may not be on the lavish scale that occurred at the mansions visited earlier in the day but be assured that the conversation and camaraderie will be just as engaging and stimulating. Entertainment will be provided by a group called the Merry Makers.

Computer web sites that contain more detailed information follow: Newport-www.newportmansions.org

Battleship Cove-www.battleshipcove.com

Boston Navy Yard-www.navy.mil/homepages/constitution/index

Kennedy Library-www.jfklibrary.org

www.usconstitutionmuseum.org

Phillips House-www.bostondining.com



Five young salts savor a glass of pineapple juice at Lau Yee Chai on Waikiki, May 1950
 L to R: Sid Dugan, Tom Perkins, Bob Kelly, Jim Lingenfelter, Tom Keary

“SEAMAN SECOND CLASS --NON SWIM-MER” by Frank Spittle (49-51)

In our last episode we left the redoubtable seaman deuce confused and bewildered in the Mare Island Navy Yard trying to figure out why his new ship was resting in dry-dock sans a bow. In this installment a metamorphosis takes place as our hero becomes a man. Chap. II, “Gettin’ Inked”

“Familiar faces from the Ozbourn’s crew watched the action. The tattooing area was partially curtained off, about three feet up from the floor, to allow some privacy for those being “inked”. One of the deck force guys was getting a ship’s screw tattooed on the cheek of his butt. The other cheek already showed a colorful, completed screw”. Thus opens the account of the traumatic experience of a young sailor’s first exposure to the seedy tattoo parlors along the Pike in Long Beach. Vivid descriptions of the faded, peeling sketches of the art work that adorned the walls gave

witness to the proprietor’s renditions of spiders, snakes, girls names with roses and scrolls, skulls, flags and others too numerous to mention.

“The artist looked up toward me and exhaled a laugh. Cigarette smoke charged from his nose and out through his stained teeth. ` Well mate, what’s it going to be? Did you see that picture there on the wall behind you, of the spider? Done that one on a Marine’s forehead. Understand he got kicked out for that. That’s the hard-ass Corps for ya”.

Finally, the seaman chose a Hula dancer complete with grass skirt, long hair with arms outstretched. Next he chose the location high on his shoulder and entered the spotlight. Facing his buddies through the smoke he describes the intricacies of the tattooers art and the pain that goes along with the procedure. As the spectators gawk over the curtain, the deed is done and a round of applause goes up. “Nuthin’ to it”, I bluster, “which one of you guys is next”.

Great story Frank. Reserve a copy for me. Ed.

Thomas M. Perkins, Editor
USS Ozbourn Association
2240 Pine Tree Dr., S.E.
Port Orchard, WA 98366-3454

ATTENTION 'ALL HANDS'
SUBJECT: MEMBERSHIP

We hate to keep "pinging" on you about this subject but it appears the number of "active members" on the muster list is declining. Treasurer Paul Hecht reports that as of 14 March 2001 only 191 members are up to date with their dues. This figure represents a decline of approximately 60 since the last membership period that ended in December 2000. Therefore, each and every member who receives this **REUNION ISSUE** is enjoined to check his membership status and bear in mind the following points:

1. This will be the last Fireball! you will receive until the next reunion issue in two years time unless you are a paid up "active member".

2. In order to continue to receive the benefits of membership, check the mailing label for your current status. The date shown indicates the

last year that you were paid up. For example: if 00 appears you expired in Dec. 2000. If 01 appears, you are OK through December of 2001 and so on.

3. You must be an active member in order to attend our exciting and thrill packed reunions.

4. Send membership dues to:

Paul Hecht, Treasurer

P.O. Box 3535,

Portsmouth, VA 23701-0534

The Association cannot operate without the support of the entire membership. Only \$10.00 per year, a very reasonable rate.

In a related matter, several Fireball! newsletters were returned by the USPS due to unknown/undeliverable addresses. Please keep us informed of any changes. The newsletter is mailed around the first of Jan./April/July/and October. If you give us enough notice we will do our best to even catch up with you snowbirds. Remember, to get Ozbourn news regularly, you must be a member.

The USS Ozbourn Association wants you, re-up now!