

Pvt. Joseph W. Ozbourn
Tinian Is. M.I. 1944

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The newsletter of the USS Ozbourn (DD846) Association

July, 2002

Dedicated to perpetuating the memory of a gallant Marine and preserving the history of a fine ship

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The position of Corresponding Secretary and Editor of Fireball! will become vacant effective October, 2003. No experience necessary. No pay or benefits except for the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to the well being of a splendid group of shipmates in a top notch association. Software and turn-over indoctrination will be provided by officers of the association. The chairman of the nominating committee is now accepting nominations.

Contact:
Robert C. Whitten
1117 Yorkshire Drive,
Cupertino, CA 95014
email: rwhitten@pacbell.net
Tel: 408-252-9213

Get involved-Give Bob a call.

REUNION 2003 WILL BE IN TEXAS

FROM THE BRIDGE

The reunion committee has finished the site selection phase and is pleased to announce that the USS Ozbourn Association Reunion for the year 2003 will be held at the Holiday Inn Select in San Antonio, Texas, October 8-12, 2003.

This promises to be another action packed event with many interesting things to see and do in the San Antonio area including the National Museum of the Pacific War (formerly the Admiral Nimitz Museum) in nearby Fredricksburg. All veterans should find the museum a most interesting exhibit. The story of the Pacific Theatre of WWII from 1937 to 1945 is told with life-size and life-like exhibits from American and Japanese battles during the war. There is a Garden of Peace given to the museum by the people of Japan, a history Walk lined with rare WWII aircraft, tanks and guns and a Memory Wall honoring WWII veterans, ships and military units.

In addition, the City of San Antonio offers many hours of interesting sight seeing and entertainment with the River Walk, the Alamo, the old Spanish Missions and many other attractions, but to me, the main attraction is the camaraderie and friendship renewals that take place in the hospitality room at each reunion. These experiences are priceless.

The specific attractions that will be available to us have not been firmed up yet but will be decided in the coming months. Armed Forces Reunions which planned our reunions in Norfolk and San Diego has been engaged to plan our San Antonio reunion. They are professional reunion planners who specialize in military reunions and relieve the association members of much of the hard work involved in bringing about a reunion. I am confident that they will do as fine a job as they have in the past.

So mark your calendars and make plans now to be part of the 2003 Ozbourn reunion. Its an experience you will remember for the rest of your life.

W D Minter, President

MORE HISTORY—The missing years

For a period longer that desired, the history of the USS OZBOURN for the years 1973-1975 seemed to have been denied us. In 1999, or thereabouts, an effort was made to contact crew members from those years and obtain their recollections. Email and notices

in Fireball produced some results but not in the detail needed to produce an authentic history. With the approval of the concept of requesting the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) to name a new construction destroyer in honor

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ATTENTION ALL HANDS: SUBJECT: MEMBERSHIP

The USS Ozbourn Association is totally funded by subscription and cannot continue to exist without the dues paid by the members. U.S. Postal rates are scheduled to increase in June 2002 which will make further inroads into our operating capital. The dues of each and every member is very important to the well being of the association.

The Fireball! mailing label indicates your dues status by the addition of a two digit number. The latest year for which dues have been paid is indicated by this number. (For example: 03 indicates dues paid through 2003; 01 means paid through 2001 and is now delinquent), and so on.

All inquiries regarding label corrections and change of address should be made to the Recording Secretary, Bill Jones.

All inquiries regarding payment of dues should be directed to the Treasurer, Warren Zschach. Dues in the amount of \$10.00 per year (US) are payable not later than 1 January and become delinquent on 1 April. Remember, NO DUES—NO FIREBALL!



FROM THE EDITOR

As you will no doubt recall, a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) was enclosed in the April 2002 issue of the Fireball! This letter was a request for the Secretary's consideration in naming a new construction destroyer Ozbourn.

Feedback from numerous shipmates indicate that they forwarded the letter and had received replies acknowledging receipt by the Navy Department.

Two shipmates, Tom Hoey and Norb Craig reported that the veterans groups to which they belong have joined the effort as well. This is a very encouraging sign and can only help the cause. While the ship naming contest is considered to be a long shot at best, the more requests that hit the SECNAV's office the better our chances will be.

The entire new ship naming effort has been spearheaded by former skipper John Denham (66-68). John has worked tirelessly to fill in the missing pieces of the ship's history, a prerequisite in the ship naming contest, and has recently located the segment for the years 1972 to 1975. Additionally, he is the author of the SECNAV letter that was forwarded in the April 02 issue of the Fireball as well as several other articles that have appeared in previous issues. Further, John prepared another letter with space for letterheads for use by other organizations such as the VFW and FRA. A huge BZ to you John and thank you for all the support you have provided to the Ozbourn Association. All of us owe you a great debt of gratitude for your work on behalf of the association.

With this issue you have learned of the site for the next Ozbourn reunion in the fall of 2003. This seems like a good location for a reunion and many of our old shipmates should be picked up in this swing through Minter country. Keep tuned for the specifics which should be available in the next issue. Keep steam to the throttle and ready to answer bells. We will be underway on a reunion cruise before you know it. Tom Perkins, Ed.

TIN CAN TRIVIA

The single greatest combat loss suffered by Navy personnel during the Korean War occurred on board USS Walke (DD 723) on 12 June 1951.

While screening the carriers of Task Force 77 some sixty miles east of the port city of Wonsan, a huge explosion suddenly ripped through the after port quarter of Walke. The ship was saved through expeditious action by the crew. Battle Casualties: 26 Killed and 40 Wounded in Action.

A drifting mine was cited as the cause of the explosion by Navy officialdom but this position is disputed to this day. Some eyewitnesses mentioned the word "torpedo" and there is some evidence that a submarine was detected in the area with depth charges fired subsequent to the explosion. If this is the case then whose submarine was it??

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President
W.D. Minter (52-55)
4206 Buchanan Loop Rd.
Texarkana, TX 75501-8748
Tel: 903 794 4748
e-mail: wdminter@earthlink.net

Vice President (52-55)
James R. Clay
1413 Quail Ridge Rd.
Crestview, FL 32539
e-mail: jrcla@mail.cyou.com

Recording Secretary (51-52)
William L. Jones
15721 W. Piccadilly Rd.
Goodyear, AZ 85338-8767
Tel: 623 935 1073
e-mail: arizonawill@juno.com

Corresponding Secretary and Editor of Fireball! (50-53)
Thomas M. Perkins
2240 Pine Tree Dr., S.E.
Port Orchard, WA 98366-3454
Tel: 360 871 3361
e-mail: tperk@tscnet.com

Treasurer (52-55)
Warren E. Zschach
1311 Ponderosa Dr.
Petaluma, CA 94954-4393
Tel: 707 762 0469
e-mail: hwz@attbi.com

Historian (48-51)
Fred R. Conwell
4780 Stratford Ave.
Fremont, CA 94538-3337
Tel: 510 656 8208
e-mail: bedrock47@aol.com

Advisor (50-52)
Charles O. Akers
3261 Falkland Circle
Huntington Beach, CA 92649
e-mail: caker5@msn.com

SALTY LANGUAGE

Coxswain: The ancient Saxon word "swein" meant a boy or servant. "Cock" is an old English word for a small type of boat.

Thus we have the modern derivative of "cockswain" roughly meaning boat servant. Naval regulations (1824) states: 'he is to be very particular in having ready at all times a sufficient number of mats, plats, knippers, points and gaskets so that no delay may be experienced when they are wanted.

MAIL CALL



Received via email from ship-mate Tom Hoey (49-52) to Pres. WD Minter on 03/28/02 and reads, in part:

Received the newsletter and the letter addressed to the Sec.Navy. It is signed and mailed.

I would like to run something through you first, to get your thoughts about this. As a retired Navy Chief, and a member of Fleet Reserve

Association Branch 229, Newburgh, NY, we meet at the Marine Air Base (MAG 49) at Stewart Field. There are almost 200 members in our branch both retired and active duty. We have thirty seven Marines in our branch including the base Sgt.Major and the XO who is a LTCol. At our monthly meeting tonight I brought up the subject of the SECNAV letter about our ship naming effort and when they found out that the Ozburn was named for a Marine MOH winner they want all personnel on the base to participate. If you think it would help the cause, I would need an original letter in order to make up enough copies for the whole branch. I am ready to contact the FRA National to see if they will give us their support.

In a follow-up email on 06/08/02 Tom Hoey gave this up-date on the situation in FRA Branch 229: approximately 75 branch members, both Navy and MarCorp retired, have forwarded the SECNAV letter. There is apparently a hold-up at this time regarding the active duty Marines of MAG 49 at Stewart Field concerning regulation of petitions but once this is cleared up another 200 to 300 letters could be on the way to the SECNAV. It was enlightening to see the Aviation Marines pick up for the GRUNTS, as they call the ground troops. That's how it stands as of now and I'll keep you posted. Hope it helps.

You bet it helps, Tom. While this effort is still considered a long shot, the more letters we can place in the SECNAV office, the better the chances that they may honor our request. Ed.

Following is a sampling of letters on the same subject:

From H.E. "Buddy" Englehorn (58-59): Letter sent to the SECNAV. I also sent copies to Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) and Representative Gene Taylor (D-MS). This was a terrific idea and I hope it becomes a reality.

Bill Anderson, SF/HT (69-71): letter to SECNAV in the mail on Tuesday. I would like to thank all that have put the letter together. It would be great to see a new USS OZBOURN.

Warren Zschach, (53-55): SECNAV letter in the mail today. Thanks to all those shipmates that have done so much to get this in the Navy pipeline.

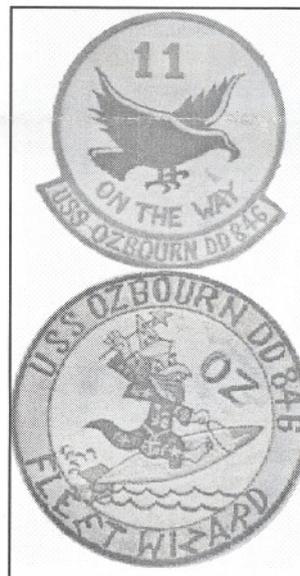
From WD Minter (52-55): Eddy Newman, one of Pvt. Ozburn's squad-mates in the 4th. Marine Div. called to say he had signed and forwarded the SECNAV letter.

Norbert Craig called to report that members of his VFW Post in Deming, NM showed considerable interest in the ship naming effort and requested more copies of the SECNAV letter for their use. The letter was forwarded and we await feedback on the success of the effort.

In a letter of 6 April 2002, Dwight Witte (56-57) writes: "One night while anchored on a strong anchor in a strong current, 2 or 3 miles off the coast of Okinawa I had the midnight to four anchor watch. I asked the guy I relieved why there were lifejackets on the bow, port and starboard. He said they were to be thrown overboard when at sea. I was bored and threw every one over the side and no one ever missed them. Nothing was ever said to anyone until now. My wife was secretly impressed with all the nice guys at the reunion.

Hope to see you and your wife at the next reunion Dwight. Ed.

Shown below is a pair of patches that were sent in via email by Richard Mosca (57-60). The "Wizard" theme of the lower patch, in the form of a plaque, was the subject of another



email from Daryle Root (59-63). Daryle went on to say that during his tour on the "Oz" from 1959 to 1963 the wizard plaque was in general use until the ship completed the FRAM overhaul at Bremerton Navy Yard in 1961. By 1968 when CAPT. John Denham took command, this plaque/patch combination had been superseded.

The origin of the patch shown in the upper figure is unknown. The use of the numeral "11" might signify attachment to Destroyer Squadron Eleven but Richard Mosca was not specific as to its origin.

Any further information regarding these items would be of great

interest to the members of the association. Send comments to the Editor

From former XO, CAPT. Barr Palmer (51-52), in part: Thoroughly enjoyed the April Fireball. I was happy to read lots about Walter Ousey whom I relieved as XO and nothing about me. I don't know whether that is good or bad but it's the way I like it. Frank Spittle's book is good reading. So good, in fact, that someone stole my copy out of my apartment so am ordering another copy. Even though I was only on board for a year I have nothing but

(Mail Call-Continued from page 3)

fond memories of Ozbourn. Fireball had quite a history and reading about her travails makes one proud to have served aboard her. One should also note that my CO, Charlie Akers was as good as one can get. He knew how to handle a DD and I can remember on one occasion when Charlie had to ask the Commodore to leave the bridge when he, the Commodore, thought Charlie was making an approach too fast.

I also remember arriving aboard Fireball by highline and was taken to the bridge to meet the CO. All Charlie ever said to me was "you take care of the administrative end and I will concern myself with ship's operations." Those were the only instructions he ever gave me the whole year I was on board and we were good friends and still are to this day.

The Ozbourn association is, to a great extent, the result of Charlie Akers and Bob Whitten's efforts. I will always remember the meeting with our wives at Charlie's home when the idea of forming the association was kicked around and the ground work laid. Just think of what has transpired since that time.

Following email was received by Historian Fred Conwell:

By way of introduction my name is Lloyd "Goodie" Goodman, RM3 (64-67). I have recently become a member of the Association and would like to pass on a photo. This shows a Special Operations detachment of Marines prior to the arrival of a communications hut on board to be delivered to Cam Ran Bay, Vietnam. This was another occasion when Ozbourn was involved in an operation to assist ground troops and in-country operations.

As I write this note, I recall the two Bronze Star Medals awarded to shipmates for heroism when two 81mm mortar shells hit our missile magazine and transmitter room while we were cruising off the IV Corps zone.



Bill Speers (62-64) wrote in with some interesting sidelights about the WestPac 62 cruise that John Jackowski talked about in the last issue:

I read with interest the reminiscence on West Pac 62 by RDI

John Jackowski in the April 2002 Fireball. I was in Ozbourn on that cruise and regrettably I don't remember any of that part of the history. Of course, I didn't join the ship until she was in Pearl on the way west and I was a snipe, the MPA, so didn't get to mix much with the Operations types. I do remember the Ops Officer was a long suffering LT(jg) whose cross to bear was Mobilize Delta (MD), Commodore (Captain) 'Big-Hearted Paul' Shropshire.

We snipe officers, Mermagen the chief engineer, the hard-luck DCA and myself, had to qualify as bridge (OOD), as well as CIC Watch Officer and Engineer Officer of the Watch in main control. (None of the other officers could even find main control, much less stand engineering watches). But I digress. I remember old Mobilize Delta as being wacko on the subject of Ops and Communications.

Those poor browbeaten radar and comm types were always slaving to keep their equipment in an operating condition to satisfy MD. They would wear out the primary and secondary tactical radio circuits, and the CIC circuits, with radio checks. Response to the checks would always come back "Loud and Clear." Then MD would come on the bridge, pick up the prit-tac and hail Hollister or Chandler. Recognizing MD's abrasive tone of voice, the other ships would reply, "Mobilize Delta, I read you weak with a loud background squeal." They were lying, of course, but MD would go nuts, and launch into the Ops Officer and CO to "Get those X#% ^&^^%XXXX communications working right, or else."

Our CO, the late Bill Lancaster, was a good sailor, which Big-Hearted Paul was not, even though he put on some snobbish airs. MD had started out in the Navy as a yeoman, and had Yorktown shot out from under him at the battle of Midway. Lancaster was a touchy, fussy, Ops-oriented CO, but he knew his business. He knew he was completely ignorant of propulsion engineering and damage control, and had the good sense to leave the engineers to Mermagen, who did know a lot about engineering. He didn't even blame electronics/radio/radar failures on "those greasy snipes who lost the electrical load again." We hadn't, of course. All the time I was in Ozbourn, we never failed to answer bells or hold the load. My BT's could get 29 knots out of two boilers. The one time we lost boiler fires was when we were alongside an oiler in the Formosa Straits. We took a shot of water in number 3 boiler and momentarily lost steam pressure to the number 2 engine room, the engine on the side toward the oiler. I heard the report over the IJV phones at my station in charge of fueling on the torpedo deck forward. My BT's cross-connected the steam plant so fast that the bow hardly wavered to port and we didn't lose more than a few RPM'S on number two engine. A less-capable team of snipes would very possibly have allowed us to get into a collision situation. Whatever you might say about their personalities, morals and drinking habits you would have to say that my BT's and MM's knew their business.

In a follow up letter Bill Speers elaborates on surviving a
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(Mail Call-Continued from page 4)

WestPac typhoon: I wrote earlier about some of the adventures we had when Ozbourne was in WestPac in 1962 and here is the "rest of the story" about the typhoon that beat us up at the beginning of the return voyage to Long Beach.

The Task Group got underway on a cold December morning and headed down Tokyo Bay, bound for the open Pacific. The typhoon was already working up, with howling wind and slashing rain, and by the time I took the afternoon watch as JOOD, seas in the Bay were ten to twelve feet. As usual when first underway, even in calm weather, I was battling seasickness. Late in the afternoon watch, some lunatic misanthrope, I suspect it was Mobilize Delta, the commodore, staged a man overboard drill. As the JOOD I had to take command of the motor whaleboat and rescue Oscar the Dummy. The deck apes managed to get the boat in the water without getting anybody killed despite the wild pitching of the ship and we headed to find "Oscar". Everybody was soaked to the skin from flying spray and sheeting rain, and all of us shivered miserably. And I'm getting more seasick by the minute. If Ozbourne's antics in reaction to wind and wave were impressive, the boat's antics were many times worse. Somehow we managed to find "Oscar" without capsizing the boat or losing anybody over the side. Now we had to get back alongside the ship, hook up to the boat falls and get hoisted back on board. How we performed the whole evolution without a serious accident I'll never know.

The XO gave each member of the boat crew a single shot of medicinal brandy, I got changed into dry clothes and went to the wardroom for dinner. I wasn't hungry but knew if I didn't eat something I would become REALLY seasick.

Fried chicken was the main course and I thought it could have been worse until I took a big bite of chicken leg. Under the fried crust, the meat was red and raw. Bounding out of my chair, I crashed out of the wardroom door and fell across the weatherbreak where I hurled everything I had eaten for the last couple of days into the raging Pacific ocean.

When the heaving finally subsided and I felt strong enough to straighten up. I turned around to go back into the wardroom. There, seated on the forward fire room hatch cover, sheltered from the rain and spray by the overhang of the 01 level, were a couple of my BT's, smoking cigarettes and grinning broadly at me.

I'm afraid the engineers had a good laugh at my expense that day.

What a great pair of sea stories and both with the bark on.. Thanks for sending them in Bill, we could use a few more. Ed.

In a note to WD Minter, Frank Tylman wrote:

Here are the newspaper clippings I promised. Hope "you all" enjoy them. I remember it vividly—maybe some others do too.

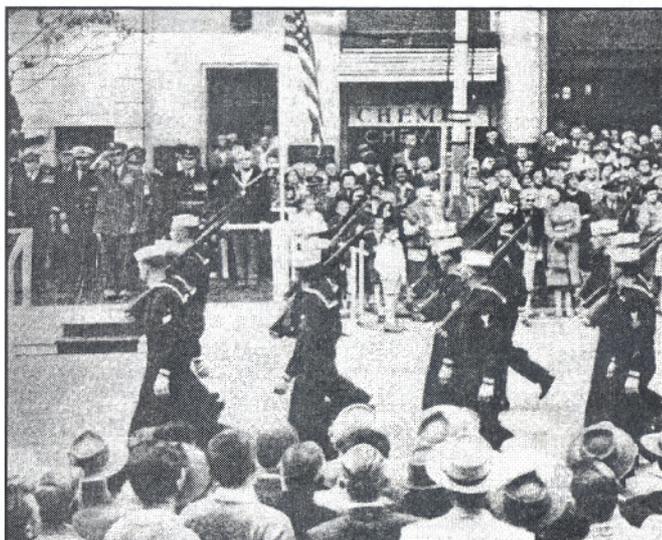
/s/ Frank Tylman

P.S. I also have the 6 page program of Ozbourne for crossing the Equator in August 1949. Very descriptive-would you like it also? The skipper was Ross Freeman, the Exec. was J.R. Blackburn and I was S.O.

(Included with Frank's note were several newspaper clippings showing views of the ship after the collision with Chandler and grafting of the new bow at Long Beach) Ed.

1953-1954 Cruise Summary (courtesy Al Holmes)

July	21 Depart CONUS	Oct	19 Arr. Keelung
	27 Arrive Pearl Harbor		26 Depart Keelung
	29 ASW/AA Exercise		26 Arr. Kaosiung
	30 ditto		30 Dep. Kaosiung
Aug	1 Depart Pearl Harbor		31 Arr. Hong Kong
	4 Arr. Midway (fuel)	Nov	4 Keelung
	11 Arr. Yokosuka		7 Kagoshima, Jap.
	17 Depart Yokosuka		14 Dep. Kagoshima
	19 Operations TF 77		15 Tsushima, Jap.
	23 Depart TF 77		19 Ulsan Man, Kor.
	24 Arrive Sasebo-Ret. to TF 77		21/22 Sokcho-Ri, Kor.
Sept	3 Submarine contact		24 Ulsan Man, Kor.
	4 TF 77 to TF 95		25 Arr. Sasebo
	6 Arrive Sasebo	Dec	1 Arr. FAY
	7 Depart Sasebo		31 Dep. FAY
	8 With TF 95	Jan	2-17 TF 77
	11 Koje Ko (Pusan)		19 Inchon, Korea
	12 With TF 95		22 Dep. Inchon (w/ POW's)
	18 Left TF 95		24-27 Keelung, Form.
	21 Arrive FAY		30 Arrive FAY
	25 Left FAY (typhoon)	Feb	3 Dep. FAY
	27 Returned FAY		11 Arr. Pearl Hbr.
Oct	3 Left FAY-ASW Ex.		13 Dep. Pearl Hbr.
	13 Arrive Okinawa		19 Arrived in the
	16 Depart Okinawa		Good Old U.S.A.



Ozbourne sailors parade in Freemantle, Australia during Battle of the Coral Sea ceremonies in May, 1959

(photo courtesy Wes Cressey)

(*More History—Continued from page 1*)

of the old DD 846 it was determined that an authentic history was needed. Therefore, a review of the existing history was conducted and a search began to collect factual data of significant events. In the meantime, the 1973-1975 history was briefly summarized with the information available and our initial request was forwarded to SECNAV.

As the membership became more involved in the possibility of a new USS OZBOURN, more information was received from crew members from the 72-75 era. Tom Guzman, who joined the ship in 1972 and was on board until the very end in 1975 provided excellent detailed information about those days which a number of shipmates confirmed. The Navy History Department provided the official history but would not release the 1972 segment due to security classification. However, just recently, the 1972 official history report was declassified and to our surprise it was identical to the informal information we already had.

For reasons unknown at this time, the official report for the summer of 1972 does not mention several significant operations in which the ship was engaged. First: in 1972, OZBOURN departed Long Beach a month early and proceeded at top speed to escort USS MIDWAY (CVA 41) in a non-stop dash to Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. Second: several crew members have confirmed that on the morning of May 1972 while operating with the USS CHICAGO (CG 11) off Haiphong, North Vietnam, the group was attacked by heavy shore battery fire, hostile aircraft and torpedo boats. OZBOURN successfully deterred the attacking torpedo craft and provided counter battery fire against the shore batteries while the CHICAGO destroyed at least one of the attacking aircraft with a TALOS missile. Third: in September while operating near the Hong La Islands (near the DMZ), OZBOURN took part in the sinking of over 50 tons of enemy supplies that had been placed in the sea by a merchant ship and had moved seaward instead of towards the North Vietnamese coast. Upon conclusion of these operations, OZBOURN's last overseas tour of duty, the ship was awarded a second Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period April-October 1972.

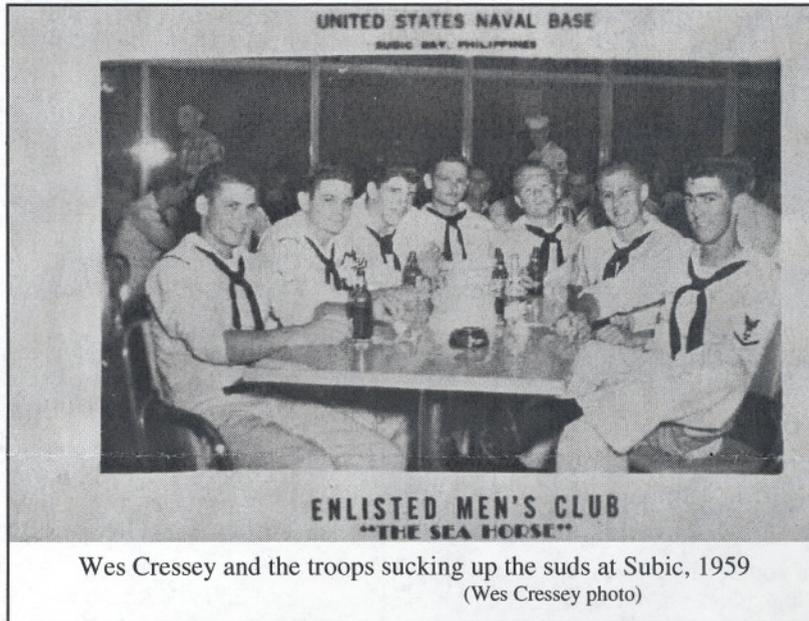
The year 1973 found the ship operating in west coast waters and obtaining much needed upkeep and repair. However, time had taken its toll and OZBOURN was showing her age. In July 1973 the ship was transferred to Naval Reserve Force status. A message from the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific

Fleet stated:

“You can be as proud as I am of the outstanding service your ship has rendered as a unit of the active fleet. I am confident that OZBOURN will continue to render valuable service as a unit of the Reserve Force.”

In May of 1973 the ship was transferred to home port in Portland, Oregon. Although declared a reserve training ship she continued to fulfill fleet requirements by providing services, training Naval reserves, participating in experimental projects and performing the task of a visiting U.S. Navy warship in Alaska, Canada, Hawaii and ports in the northwest. Even with one-third less than the regular complement of men, the ship continued to fulfill the fleet responsibilities.

On the occasion of a visit to San Diego in May of 1974, she encountered extreme heavy weather and developed serious leaks in the hull plating in the after engineering spaces. Subsequent inspections revealed that severe hull deterioration was widespread in the after boiler and engine rooms. An extended dry dock availability with commensurate repairs allowed the ship to return to port in Portland. Shortly thereafter her seaworthiness



Wes Cressey and the troops sucking up the suds at Subic, 1959
(Wes Cressey photo)

was called into question and she was placed in temporary inactive status pending further determination of the true condition of the hull structure and machinery. In early 1975 it was determined that OZBOURN was unfit for further service and would be decommissioned in Seattle, Washington. After an eventful towing to Puget Sound and berthing at Pier 91 Seattle, preparations for decommissioning continued with the crew being bussed back and forth between Pier 91 and the Naval Station at Sand Point. Much of the equipment was removed and moved to the Naval Shipyard in Bremerton. Decommissioning took place on 30 May 1975 and the ship was towed away to Bremerton to await the ship breakers. Thus ends this condensed generalized version of the ships history.

The tumultuous last days of the OZBOURN are best described in the words of Tom Guzman, first the Communications Officer and finally the last Operations Officer. He provided much of the input to the 72-75 ship's history summarized above and provides a more detailed account of the day to day struggle to meet fleet requirements and finally, even to keeping the ship afloat.

Tom Guzman joined OZBOURN in February 1972 as a brand
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("More History—Continued from page 6)

spanking new Ensign, fresh out of Comm. school and left Long Beach with the ship for the Far East and the Gulf of Tonkin.

We now pick up the narrative of Tom Guzman following the return to Long Beach in November of 1972. "Once returned, we spent the next 3 or 4 months in port without once getting underway. In early 1973 an inspection by the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) was conducted and it was determined that the ship would be transferred to reserve status. This was carried out and we were subsequently switched to Destroyer Squadron 37 with headquarters in Seattle and with OZBOURN's home port in Portland, OR. The transition was completed in May 1973. The homeport in Portland was physically located at the Coast Guard Station in Portland which we shared with another Reserve Training destroyer, the Wallace L. Lind (DD 703). By this time, the ship's crew had been decreased by over one third for the purpose of augmentation of the Reserve personnel and almost immediately a series of problems became evident. First of all, there was absolutely no support for home porting a ship in Portland. Initially we had to maintain our own power since there was no shore power capability to support two ships. Secondly, dependents had a difficult time as there was no base or support structure for their healthcare or commissary services. Also, the ship started taking up active ship commitments since active Navy ships were not available for regular operations. We therefore took on many commitments with a reduced crew, often involved in extensive periods at sea.

We also ended up training reserve crews from all over the country in addition to our own selected crew from the Portland area. We were isolated with no tender or repair service available and with the significant amount of underway commitments the ship reverted to a severe state of disrepair. The pace of operations without adequate support finally rendered the ship unable to carry out further commitments. In April or May 1974, the ship got underway for an assigned tender availability in San Diego. The transit south was difficult due to heavy weather, the ship took a severe pounding and then it was discovered that we were taking water in the after boiler and engine room bilges through the hull plating. We were able to keep ahead by pumping overboard but we were concerned about the situation once we arrived in San Diego harbor.

When we set the Special Sea Detail for entering port, we stopped pumping and by the time we came abeam of Shelter Island we were listing severely so we starting to pump again,

hoping no pollution reached the harbor waters. We urgently requested sludge barges and fortunately they were on hand when we reached the tender. By this time the ship was listing severely and once pumping began again both "donuts" were promptly filled. The ship was immediately given emergency status and the pumping continued around the clock.

Since no Navy dry dock was available, docking was made available at Campbell Industries, a tuna boat facility on Harbor Blvd. Several days later upon entering the dry dock it was discovered that major cracks existed in the hull plating beneath pump row in both the after engineering spaces. Sandblasting revealed that the rust and deterioration was widespread and there appeared to be no good metal to weld to. The ship remained in dry dock for several weeks until finally huge metal plates were welded to the hull where good metal could be found. Finally declared seaworthy, the remainder of the tender availability was cancelled and

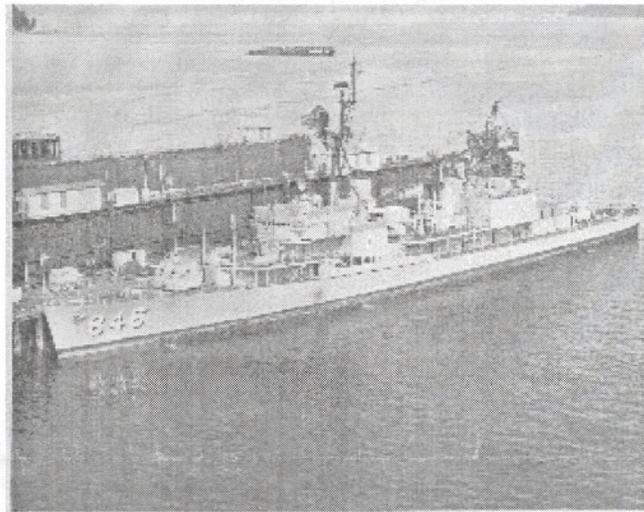
the ship ordered back to Portland. After sitting in Portland for the remainder of 1974 another INSURV inspection was conducted and the result was an order for the ship to be decommissioned. In typical Navy tradition, our skipper, CDR. Frank Furtado took the rap.

Decommissioning commenced in Portland and most systems were shut down to include the propulsion system. Finally, orders were received to proceed to Pier 91 in Seattle, under tow, and complete the decommissioning there. In February/March time frame of 1975 we were taken under tow by the fleet

tug USNS Ute and towed down the Columbia River to the open sea. Only a skeleton crew including the Commanding Officer, Engineering Officer, Operations Officer (Myself) and the First Lieutenant together with critical enlisted personnel made the trip. There was only auxiliary power available and the steering gear had been disabled along with the propulsion system. Almost immediately, we encountered heavy weather and exceptionally high seas, the rolling was severe and there was no way to steer. Shortly after reaching the open sea the tow line snapped and there we were, drifting helplessly at the mercy of the wind and sea. Fortunately, the deck force working with the Ute was able to get the tow line reattached just before dark and we finally made port in Seattle four days later.

Decommissioning continued in Seattle until 30 May 1975 when the ship was officially placed out of service, the commission pennant was hauled down and the 29 year career of the OZBOURN came to an end. I was the last Command Duty Officer and actually slept on board the last night before the ceremony. I guess it was fitting as I had been there the longest. I stuck around after the ceremonies had concluded and the tugs came

(Continued on page 8)



USS Ozbourn at the Todd Shipyard pier, Seattle, WA, Aug. 1974
This could well be one of the last photos of the ship prior to disposal.
(Photo courtesy Bremerton Naval Museum)

(*More History-Continued from page 7*)

and towed her away. It was a sad thing to see her pulled away like that, no radar rotating-no engine noises-no sailors on deck and saddest of all no N B C C call sign flying from the yard arm. She had lost her dog tags and was no longer a man of war.

The final ships log together with the last flown Union Jack and Commissioning Pennant were delivered to the Federal Archives in Seattle and the ship was towed to the Inactive Ship Facility in Bremerton to await final disposition."

/s/ Thomas Guzman, last Operations Officer, USS OZBOURN (DD 846).

Our thanks to John Denham and Tom Guzman for providing the material for this account of the final days of a great fighting ship.

As for myself, it is difficult to visualize the leaking, worn out hulk that she had become since I first reported aboard in early 1950. Back then she was barely four years out of the builders yard and had just received a new suite of 3"/50 AA guns with the latest in an automatic tracking firecontrol system to go with it. Ah, the ravages of time. Ed.

BINNACLE LIST

The following listed shipmates were reported in and out of sick bay during the past quarter and at last muster were all reported to be recovering nicely:

Jack Blonsick, Palm Coast, FL (50-51)

Vernon McCord, Tacoma, WA (48-49)

Trifon Tripsas, Phoenix, AZ (56-57)

We wish them well

SALTY JUSTICE

Discipline was harsh in the days of yore as can be seen in this regulation from the Royal Navy of Elizabethan England.

On the fourth offense for sleeping on watch, the following "mild" punishment was administered:

'Being taken asleep, he shall be hanged from the bowsprit in a basket, with a can of beer, a loaf of bread, and a sharp knife, and choose to hang there until he starve to death or cut himself into the sea.'

It is not recorded which option was most favored by the victims.

(*Heckler - Continued from page 9*)

Returning to Jim Stephens's narrative: "After about an hour and a half in the water a sleek, gray ship with large white bow numbers and a "bone in her teeth" appeared from seaward and took us aboard. The "Doc" took us to sick bay and issued each one of us some medication in the form of those little bottles of booze. That was certainly welcome as I think we were still in a little bit of shock but for the most part uninjured. I will always remember and be thankful for the USS OZBOURN (DD 846) and her crew."

Further entries in OZBOURN's log go on to detail the return of the ship to TF 77 and the eventual return of the rescued aircrew to the USS ESSEX (CV 9) later that same day. Thus was completed a rescue operation that plucked three good men from the sea and allowed them to fight another day. In fact, this same crew went on to complete about 50 more missions prior to returning to San Diego with the ESSEX in February 1953.

James Stephens, left the Navy in August of 1953 and later joined the Coast Guard where he remained until 1979 when he retired as Master Chief Radioman. He now makes his home in Chesapeake, VA.

Correction to the April Issue of Fireball! Please note

When ordering your copy of Frank Spittle's great book, "Sailor Write your Mother", the correct address is: Ocean Breeze Publications, PO Box 3421, Laguna Hills, CA 92654

USS Ozbourn ship's store: OPEN 24 HOURS

<u>Stock #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Price</u>
C01	CAP, Navy Blue with Brilliant Gold Lettering one size fits all	\$12 ea.
M01	Mug, 11oz. Embossed w/Oz patch and destroyer silhouette design	\$6. ea.
P01	Ship's patch (original) for jacket or cap	\$6. ea.
P02	Ship's patch (revised) (subtle difference in color and design)	
New Item:	Stock # FO1—USS Ozbourn license plate frames	\$5. ea/2 for \$8.

All items Top Quality, Warranted by "Trader" Minter. Checks or money orders only, made payable to USS Ozbourn Association. Mailing address: USS Ozbourn Association, 4206 Buchanan Loop Road, Texarkana, TX 75501
All items may be viewed and ordered from the web page.

And that trusty old workhorse, Skyraider BuNo 125710? Unless it has been salvaged by the destitute North Koreans, it is still on the ocean floor in the Sea of Japan, two and one half miles from the Yang-do Island group, east of Songjin, Korea.

In the dusty old records of BuAer however, this vapid entry may be found:

"Douglas AD-4N Skyraider BuNo 125710—VC 35 Hit by AA and ditched over Yang-do August 8, 1952."

OZBOURN remained in Far Eastern waters until November of 1952, steaming with TF 77, conducting shore bombardment and numerous other tasks that destroyers are called upon to do.

Our thanks to Jim Stephens for filling us in on the details of a most interesting story. Ed.

(Continued from page 10) (Heckler Cont.)

sight that day. We three were treated royally by the Ozbourn crew and it was appreciated. I will never forget and thanks for the memories. /s/ James A. Stephens.”

The entry in OZBOURN’s deck log for Friday, 8 August 1952 starts like this; 0 to 4 Steaming in company with Task Force 77 off the eastern coast of Korea. OTC is Commander Task Force 77 in USS ESSEX (CV9). Formation axis is 090 (t) with USS ESSEX (CV9) in station 2090, USS JUNEAU (CLAA 119) in station 2.5180, USS BOXER (CV 21) in station 2270 with the guide bearing 189 (t) distance 3000 yards. Closed concentric circular screen on circle 5 contains the following ships: Sta. No. 1, USS OZBOURN (DD 846); Sta.No. 2, USS WALKER (DDE 517) and so on through all nine stations in the screen, each filled with the name of a fighting destroyer. Details of course, speed, engine rpm’s and various other elements of the watch follow until this entry appears at 0251: “changed course to 350 (t) (pgc) 356 (psc), speed 23 knots, (224 rpm) for flight operations from USS ESSEX (CV 9).” On the bridge of OZBOURN, the Officer of the Deck, ENS C.G. Meyers crisply gave the necessary orders to the bridge watch in compliance with the orders from the flagship. Nothing really out of the ordinary for a veteran destroyer and crew that had been through the same routine so many times that it had almost become second nature.

Over on the ESSEX however there was a completely different picture as the nightly flight operations got underway. The crew of Douglas Skyraider, Bureau Number (BuNo) 125710 of VC 35 had been up since midnight, had breakfast of steak and eggs at 0030 and by 0215 were dressed in flight gear and were receiving the mission briefing from Intelligence personnel and the Squadron CO. At approximately 0245 when the task force changed course for flight ops the flight crew manned the aircraft, started engine, checked out equipment and launched at about 0300.

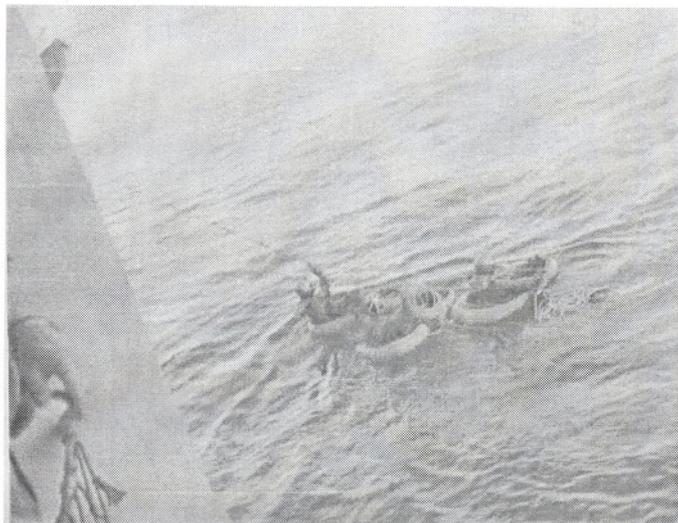
Back in the task force OZBOURN’s log entry for 0316 reads, “completed flight operations and resumed base course and speed.” Members of the mid-watch settled back to the regular routine in anticipation of relief and perhaps a few minutes of sack time before reveille and morning GQ roused them again.

On board Skyraider BuNo 125710, the crew settled into their mission heading toward the beach at approximately 10,000 feet so that they would not have to go on oxygen. This crew had deployed aboard ESSEX on 15 June, steamed to Pearl Harbor for refresher training and then on to the Formosa Straits where they conducted the “China Parade Air-show” along the China Coast during the last week of July. Following this operation, ESSEX moved on to join TF 77 in the Sea of Japan and commenced flight operations against North Korean forces on 1 August.

We now pick up the account of the Heckler mission of 8 August as related by crewmember Jim Stephens: “LT. Sam Norton was my pilot and the backseats were manned by AT2 Ben Killingsworth and myself. LT. Norton was a top notch aviator

who had flown in WWII and was recalled for Korea. I had flown with him on many previous occasions during training and we had completed three combat missions prior to 8 August. Killingsworth was usually the radar operator while I operated the ECM equipment but sometimes we swapped jobs and at other times one of us might not fly the mission at all for a variety of reasons. On 8 August our mission was to interdict the nightly flow of supplies north of the bomb line and after launch we flew inland about 25 miles and discovered a truck convoy moving on a road. LT. Norton pushed over immediately and made a rocket attack that resulted in the destruction of a number of trucks, pulled up to about 8000 feet and went around for another run. The pullout was at about 2000 feet when we started taking flak from larger caliber guns and some of it apparently cut an oil line in the engine. The pilot had managed to gain altitude to about 5000 feet when the engine quit. He ordered us to bail out and then immediately countermanded the order as he thought we now had enough altitude to get us out over the water where he could ditch the aircraft and in this he was successful. The aircraft hit the water and immediately broke apart, with the tail section, wings and engine all separating from the fuselage. The fuselage was about 30 to 40 feet under water when I managed to get out and back to the surface where I found that the entire crew had survived. We each had a one man raft that we inflated and there we sat, surrounded by sharks, only a couple of miles off a hostile beach and waited for rescue.”

Meanwhile back on OZBOURN, log entries read, “0457 detached from formation for rescue of downed pilot. Course 358 (t), speed 27 knots. 0618 sighted life raft visually bearing 356 (t) distance 8.5 miles. 0627 commenced maneuvering on various courses and speeds to effect recovery. 0640 following personnel picked up: NORTON, JAMES C. 437617, LT, USN; STEPHENS, JAMES A. 384 24 79, ALAN, USN; and KILLINGSWORTH, BENNIE B. AT2, USN, all from USS ESSEX (CV 9).”



Jim Stephens and Skyraider crew rescued, Korea 1952

(Photo courtesy Mel Hargrove)

(Continued on page 8)

Thomas M. Perkins
USS Ozbourn Association
2240 Pine Tree Dr., S.E.
Port Orchard, WA 98366-3453



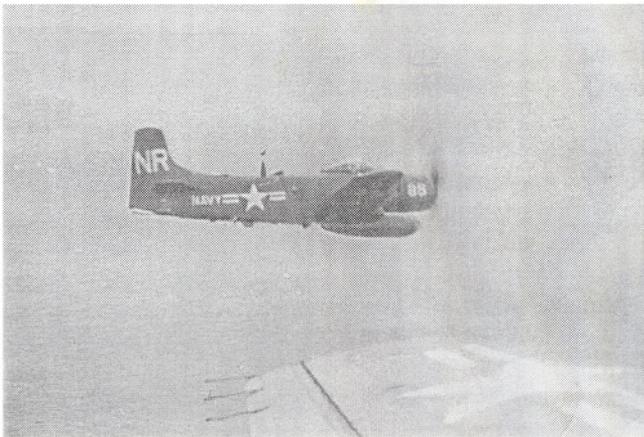
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"Flight of the Heckler"

During the Korean War, the United Nations enjoyed air superiority over the entire Korean peninsula, due in no small part to the United States Navy's Task Force 77 operating in the Sea of Japan. This forced North Korean forces into the practice of re-supplying their army at the battle front by means of truck and train convoys moving under the cover of darkness. To counter this effort, TF-77 planners developed an operation known as the "Night Hecklers" whose mission was the interdiction of the flow of supplies to the front. Douglas AD4NL "Skyraiders", were outfitted with a variety of radar, electronics and countermeasures equipment that permitted the aircrews to pierce the darkness, find the convoys and destroy them before they could deliver their cargo to the front lines. Each aircraft carried a crew of three and could carry a wide variety of ordnance to include 500 pound and 260 pound bombs as well as 2.5" rockets and 800 rounds of 20mm cannon shells. The aircraft were organized into a composite squadron and deployed

as a detachment to the carriers in the task force. Each detachment was comprised of 4 aircraft, 4 pilots and 8 air-crewmembers. What follows is the story of one of these aircrews from composite squadron VC 35 home based at North Island, San Diego, CA and a mission flown in the summer of 1952.



VC 35 Douglas "Skyraider" boring holes in the sky (Jim Stephens photo)

In 1952, the internet and web-pages had not been invented but it was an e-mail received by former Ozbourn skipper CAPT. John Denham in the summer of 2001 that brought this story to light. The e-mail reads, in part, "I happened upon the life of the USS Ozbourn quite by accident (referring to the Ozbourn web-page) and it brought back some memories from my days in the Navy. I noted that your official history states that in July 1952 the Ozbourn rescued three downed airmen from the

carrier ESSEX. In fact, that rescue took place on 8 August and I was a member of the aircrew. Your ship was a beautiful

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