



Pvt. Joseph W. Ozbourn
Tinian, Marianas Islands
28 July 1944

FIREBALL!

VOLUME 32, No. 1
Winter 2024



The official newsletter of the USS Ozbourn (DD 846) Association

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

FROM THE BRIDGE

Greetings to All Shipmates, Families and Friends

Hoping this note finds you all doing well.



As you all know, we found it necessary to cancel the 2023 Reunion to be held in Columbus, Georgia, as a result of the low number of registrations. Although it was a very difficult decision, clearly when contracts require a minimum number, hotels, tours, etc. to move forward, we soon realized that our numbers would not be sufficient to host a

2023 Reunion.

Clearly, there are most likely several reasons for the low number of registrations, one of which, no doubt is our aging membership.

At this time, we are looking at other options. One option being discussed is possibly combining future reunions with the Tin Can Sailors Association. They host reunions every year and our attendance as the USS Ozbourn Association can be customized as we have always met every other year. "Currently", this appears to be our best option. However, if anyone has any recommendations or concerns, I encourage you to contact one of the elected Association Officers.

I wish to thank all of the Officers and the entire membership for the great support of our Association.

Guy Posey, President, USS Ozbourn Association

Election of Association Officers

During the 2021 Business Meeting of the USS Ozbourn DD-846 Association taking place on 1 October 2021, the following shipmates were elected to serve as the Officers of the Association. As a result of the cancellation of the 2023 Reunion, no business meeting was held, hence no new election took place. Pursuant to Section VII, General Provisions for Governance of the Association, Subsection A, Elected Officers, in the absence of a Business Meeting, the following Elected Officers will continue to governing the Association's Business.



GUY POSEY
President



HAROLD "MAC" MCKEEHAN
Vice President



KEN KEENE
Secretary



MIKE WARD
Treasurer

2023 Reunion Committee

Jeff Parker, Editor

Although the low number of registrations necessitated the cancellation of our 2023 Reunion, as your "Fireball" Editor, I wished to acknowledge the very hard and time consuming work put into the planning of the reunion by our Reunion Committee. With several other very successful reunions planned by this committee, 2015, 2017, 2019 & 2021, the 2023 Reunion was certainly going to be another great one. On behalf of the membership, I wish to thank **Guy Posey, President, Harold McKeehan, Vice President, Mike Ward, Treasurer and Ed Woodbury** for all of their very hard work. This of course includes their lovely wives, **Sallae Posey, Linda McKeehan and Bonni Ward**, for all of their assistance and patience in the great deal of work required to plan and see any reunion to a successful conclusion. We would also like to thank all of the members in attendance that jump in and help during each of our reunions. Be sure to watch for updates regarding any planning of a reunion in the future.

"OZ" PRIDE UNITES TWO OLD SHIPMATES

As we can all attest, it can be a very small world and at anytime a great surprise could occur at any moment.

One such surprise recently occurred while sailing on the Celebrity Eclipse, a cruise ship off of the California Coast. While enjoying the libations commonly found on cruise ships, your humble editor was surprised by a gentleman passing by wearing a USS Ozbourn DD846 ball cap. I quickly inquired of the gentleman if he had served aboard the "OZ". He soon identified himself as **Jerry McKee, YN2, (66-69)**, who's name I immediately recognized as a long time supporter of our association and contributor to our "Fireball" Newsletter. We of course spent several days speaking regarding the "OZ" and our fellow shipmates. It was truly great to meet Jerry's Family as well.

If not for Jerry's great pride of the "OZ" by wearing his ballcap, we would have just been two ships passing in the night. Thank you Jerry for all you do for the Association and the "Fireball".



Association Officers

President

Guy Posey (69-71)
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Vice President

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Past Presidents

Years served aboard OZ/Assoc. President
Robert Whitten Jr. (50-52) (93-99)
Cupertino, CA
W.D. Minter (52-55) (99-03)
Texarkana, TX
Rudy Boff (52-55) (03-07)
Pittsburgh, PA

Publication Deadline

If you have a letter, story or photo you would like to share with other Ozbourn shipmates, the deadline for submitting contributions for the **Spring/Summer 2024** issue is **May 15th**. Articles may be re-written for purposes of editorial style. Due to limitations, some materials may be used in a future **Fireball** edition.



MAIL CALL

The following letters and emails were received by your Association Officers during the last quarter.

LOSS OF PLANK OWNER



The Association is saddened by the news of the loss of Shipmate **FLOYD HILL, SM2, (45-46)**, a 96 year old Plank Owner, who served on the Ozbourn during its shakedown cruise fresh from the builders yards. Floyd's Grandson Brian Cole of New Bern, North Carolina, said how happy they were to find the USS Ozbourn Association. Brian stated that it added some details to Floyd's stories and allowed the family to connect with the family of his long lost friend Charles Hood.

Clearly, the attached photograph of Floyd, celebrating his Birthday, October 2022, adorned in his USS Ozbourn Ball Cap, depicts just how proud he was to be a member of the Ozbourn Crew.

We are very grateful to Brian Cole for the photograph and information regarding our Shipmate Floyd Hill.



Since the closure of our Ship Store, **MILITARYBEST.com**, has become a trusted source that can be counted on to provide products related to the Ozbourn such as ball caps, shirts, jackets and a number of other items that would be of interest to all shipmates. Military Best is offering a 10% Discount on all purchases. When making orders, reference Coupon Code OZ10. Those shipmates, family members and friends, interested in ordering products can the Military Best website at www.MilitaryBest.com



WELCOME ABOARD

NORMAN UHLIR, (RD), (45-46)

The Association is truly proud to welcome aboard a Plank Owner



TAPS FOR SHIPMATES

"SAILORS ONCE, SHIPMATES FOREVER"

FLOYD HILL, SM2, (45-46)

DONALD RUETH, SN, (56-58)

"May fair winds and calm seas be with you always"

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Submitted by Jeff Parker, Editor

Clearly, the health of our great USS Ozbourn DD846 Association is paramount to maintain the memory of our fallen hero Private Joseph W. Ozbourn USMC. This of course includes all of those shipmates who served aboard this great ship. I wish to encourage all shipmates and family members to continue with their support of our Association. Please, do not hesitate in forwarding historical information as well as photographs for inclusion in future editions of the "Fireball" Newsletters. Please forward any information to your Editor, Jeff Parker, email: LJPARKER1@COX.NET

A LITTLE MORE HISTORY USS OZBOURN DD846

Submitted by W. Wesley Groleau, STG3, (75)

I reported aboard USS Ozborn in January of 1975, at the Naval Reserve Center on Swan Island, Portland, Oregon. She had been there since "I-don't-know-when", (June, 1973), as a Reserve Training Ship. I don't know if she ever got underway in that capacity, but I suspect so, as I had been on training cruises of three other training cans. However, we did not sail from there until late March or early April, when she was towed with a skeleton crew to Bremerton to salvage the equipment. The rest of us went there by bus, slept in the barracks, and bussed to the ship for stripping.

I was fresh out of A-School, but STG3 due to being first in the class. Most of the time, I was assigned to supervise the E-1 to E-3 folks cleaning the barracks. However, I did get to the ship several days toward the end. I located at least a dozen sound-powered phones and a few growlers and took them to the pier for salvage. I was told that the shipment of those had already been sent off and I should just keep them. So I turned them into an intercom system on my father's ranch in Oklahoma, with one growler and one phone in each building.

We had a Decommissioning Ceremony in June, 1975 and off I went to DDG-36.

(Editors Note: Just to piggyback onto Groleau's "A Little More History", after being transferred from the active fleet in Long Beach, California, the Ozborn moved to the Reserve Fleet, stationed on the Willamette River, in Portland, Oregon. As a member of the crew, the Ozborn sailed several times for the purposes of training reservists and mid-shipman, down the Willamette River and into the Pacific via the Columbia River. Destinations included Pearl Harbor, San Francisco, Seattle, Alaska and several ports in British, Columbia.)

A GREAT HONOR BESTOWED ON USS OZBOURN DD846 SHIPMATE



One of our own, yes, Shipmate **DONALD RUETH, SN, (56-58)**, was bestowed a well deserved great honor of being named Grand Marshal of his town's 2023 Memorial Day Parade. Don and his lovely Wife Cathy were always in attendance at our reunions and brought with them great humor and fantastic fun.



(Editors Note: It is of great sadness that our dear friend and Shipmate Don Rueth, passed away on August 14,

MEMORIAL TO OUR LOST SHIPMATES

Submitted by Editor Jeff Parker

As most of you know, especially those that have attended one of our great reunions, there is traditionally time set aside to conduct a Memorial Service for all of the shipmates lost over the previous two years. In addition, the Association has been blessed by past "Fireball" Editor **Richard Johnson, RD2, (61-64)**, in setting up a Missing Warrior Table during the reunions banquets. We are very grateful to Richard.

The fact that our 2023 Reunion was cancelled does not diminish our responsibility to remember those shipmates that are no longer with us other than in our hearts. Therefore, the entire Association wishes to recognize our fallen shipmates from the past two years.

John W. Nyquist, LTjg, 1955-1948

Michael O. Titus, FTG2, 1965-1968

James Clay, RM2, 1952-1955

Melton Hargrove, CSSN, 1951-1953

Eugene Mitchell, LTjg, 1961-1963

Andrew Smith, EM2, 1961-1965

Richard Satchell, EMC, 1955-1958

Delbert Field, FT3, 1954-1957

Gordon W. Wulf, ET2, 1952-1954

Joseph E. Throshan, EM2, 1952-1955

Eldon W. Riley, RD2, 1953-1956

Richard G. Powers, RM2, 1953-1958

Floyd Hill, SM2, 1945-1946

Donald Rueth, SN, 1956-1958

"May fair winds and calm seas be with you always"

Jeffrey Parker
1036 Calle Venezia
San Clemente, CA 92672



Pvt. Joseph W. Ozbourn
USMC
Congressional Medal of Honor

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DUES ALERT!

Are you overdue on your annual dues? Only dues paying members receive the **Fireball** newsletter. Look at your mailing label on your most recent newsletter and find a number such as 22 or 23. This number indicates the last year you were current with Association dues: 22 means 2022, 23 means 2023, etc. If you wish, you may pay for multiple years.

Membership dues are **\$15.00** annually and are due in January of each year. Please make checks payable to the **USS OZBOURN ASSOCIATION** and forward them to **Mike Ward**, Association Treasurer, at 3836 County Road W40, Decorah, Iowa 52101.

Your Association officers ask you to.....

DO THE DUES TODAY!

We're on the Web at www.ozbourn.org

The following information can be found on the Association's website: Mission Statement, a list of Ozbourn shipmates, historical photos, Ship's Store and how to Join the Association.

USS OZBOURN COMMANDING OFFICERS

The USS Ozbourn has had 18 different commanding officers during its 29 year history. Do you remember which skippers you served under? If you have an interesting story about any of the Ozbourn's commanding officers to share please forward your experience for possible inclusion in a future issue of the **Fireball**.

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| CDR B.A. Smith | March 1946-October 1947 |
| CDR N.E. Blaisdell | October 1947-March 1949 |
| CDR R.E. Freeman | March 1949-September 1950 |
| CDR C.O. Akers | September 1950-April 1951 |
| CDR W.B. Fargo | April 1951-April 1954 |
| CDR H.T. Scott Jr. | April 1954-November 1955 |
| CDR A.J. Toulon Jr. | November 1955-Sept. 1957 |
| CDR C.A. Kuhl | September 1957-July 1959 |
| CDR W.W. Turner | July 1959-March 1961 |
| LCDR D.V. Gorman | March 1961-December 1961 |
| CDR W.W. Lancaster | December 1961-October 1963 |
| CDR D.W. Berger | October 1963-July 1964 |
| CDR M.D. Nelson Jr. | July 1964-April 1966 |
| CDR J.G. Denham | April 1966-September 1968 |
| CDR R.L. Stewart | September 1968-June 1970 |
| CDR E.W. Numbers | June 1970-December 1971 |
| CDR K.L. Costilow | December 1971-March 1974 |
| CDR F.J. Furtado | March 1974-May 1975 |

