



Taps for Shipmates

Sam M. Mauck

(67-68)

28 September 2004

BULLETIN BOARD OF GENERAL INTEREST

1. **Website.** The new Ozbourn website is now in operation following a lengthy reconstruction period. Most notable is the new newsletter section which displays several issues on command with the most recent in living color. Check it out, I think you will be impressed. Go to www.ozbourn.org.
2. **Bylaws.** Included with this issue is a copy of the proposed update of the Association bylaws. This subject will be an agenda item at the business meeting in Charleston in October and will be open for review and discussion. Check over the proposal carefully, bring it with you and present your comments at that time.
3. **New slate of Association Officers nominated.** Following are the names of officers that will be placed in nomination at the business meeting to be held during the reunion in Charleston. The nominees are:
 - a. President: Rudy Boff
 - b. Vice President: Ken Keene
 - c. Corresponding Secretary and Editor of Fireball: Richard Johnson
 - d. Recording Secretary: Bill Jones
 - e. Treasurer: Richard Clark
4. **Dues.** Your dues status is indicated by a two digit number on the newsletter mailing label. For example, **05** indicates that you are paid up through calendar year 2005. Any discrepancies should be reported to Recording Secretary Bill Jones ASAP. No late dues notifications will be sent. The treasurer will gladly accept additional years dues.

FROM THE BRIDGE

As of this date, most of the arrangements for the reunion have been made. In this issue you will find the schedule of events and the forms you will use to make your selections for the various activities that are offered. We feel that the Armed Forces Reunion Inc. have organized an impressive schedule of tours, accommodations and meals highlighting the ambiance and beauty of historic Charleston that will serve to make this another memorable Ozbourn reunion.

Notification of the forthcoming reunion has been posted in various publications and journals in order to reach as many shipmates as possible. If anyone sees any of these notices please notify me by e-mail of the source so that we may evaluate the effectiveness of the program. If you have a former shipmate that you think might like to attend, give him a call and urge him to attend. Every reunion is attended by shipmates that just found out about the event by a phone call from an old friend or by way of the internet. In recent months we have been pleased to see significant increases in new members

and it is hoped that they will join us at the reunion and we urge them to round up some of their old Ozbourn buddies as well. Our goal is to get the word out to as many of our old shipmates as possible so that all may join in the festivities at an Ozbourn reunion.

In closing I would like to ask all of you to keep our great country, service personnel (especially those in hospital) and their families in your prayers.

Rudy Boff, President

Mess Decks Humor!

Mess Cook: "Hey stew, the crew didn't go for your hash very good today."

Ships cook: "Put some raisins in it and we'll have mince pie tomorrow."

Officers of the Association

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Past President

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Cupertino, CA
W.D. Minter (52-55)
Texarkana, TX

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

THE MAIL BAG



HONG KONG LIBERTY

Fellow Machinist Mate Knave and I were on liberty in Hong Kong. While walking down the street after sampling the wares in various establishments we spied a blonde woman and after a year of nothing but black hair we were entranced. We followed her down the street and into a restaurant and right into the kitchen. It seems her husband, the chef, owned the place. We explained how nice it was to see a blonde, had a few drinks and left. Nice people is all I can say. A great liberty town.

Richard Clark MM2 Bella Vista, AR

NATION'S OLDEST MARINE DIES

George Perkins, of Shreveport, LA, believed to be the United States' oldest Marine, has died at the age of 106. Perkins was in the Marine Corps from 1917 to 1919 and was the last surviving Marine from World War I.

Jack Blonsick ENS. (50-51)

NEW MEMBER CHECKS IN "ALMOST A PLANK OWNER"

I first boarded the Ozbourn in the spring of 1946 in Norfolk, VA, just as the ship returned from her initial sea trial after being commissioned in Boston. So I may not have been a "plank owner" but was the next thing to it.

I served a two-year hitch from 1946 to 1948, a term that was designed to release WWII Navy vets from their duties as soon as possible.

Aboard the Ozbourn, I moved from deck-hand duties to Quartermaster 3/c while taking the ship through the Panama Canal to San Diego, then on to Hawaii, Japan, Tsingtao, Hong Kong, Shanghai and the Korean peninsula and then back to the U.S. west coast.

By Christmas of 1948, I was back home in Rockford, IL, and then finished my college education at Michigan State University.

Robert Ringle QM3 (46-48)

Welcome to the Ozbourn Association. We are always pleased to get new members. See you at the reunion? Ed.

WELLS FARGO EXPRESS

I am new to the organization, but not new in any other sense of the word. Have just received my introductory issue of your very well done newsletter.

My period of service was from about June 1953 to September 1955. Would you be interested in periodic reminiscences, enhanced by some photo archives from my memory? I am enclosing an example.



This is probably someone you knew from those days, William B. Fargo. This event involves Ozbourn's assignment to pick up and deliver an injured seaman from an Attack Cargo (AK) ship, in the Sea of Japan, to a hospital in Japan, probably Sasebo. The trip was made in excess of 32 knots, all the way. The banner under Captain Fargo reads, "Bill Fargo Express, You Call - We Haul." **Richard Raidt (53-55) Kerrville, TX**

Ed. Note: Thanks for the input, Richard. It is always a pleasure to welcome new members to the Association and to receive material that has not been published before. I do remember Capt. Fargo and the banner as well. I believe that it was made up by Bill Ellis and the bridge gang sometime in 1952 after Capt. Fargo took command. However, I seem to remember the slogan as being "Wells Fargo Express — You Call - We Haul." Anyone care to comment on this?

WELCOME ABOARD

Fetters, Dennis	SF3	(71)	Port Orchard, WA
Goetsch, Cloy			Andover, MN
Miller, Donald	LTjg	(51-53)	Tempe, AZ
Morales, Raymond			Horizon City, TX
Raidt, Richard		(53-55)	Kerrville, TX
Ringle, Robert	QM3	(46-47)	New Bern, NC
Roache, Robert			Gardner, MA
Smith, Jim	ET2	(62-65)	Tipton, IN
Summers, Richard			Pearland, TX
Taylor, Robert	ETN2	(63-65)	Reston, VA
Wilkinson, Don	RMSN	(50-52)	Longmont, CO
Williams, Doyle	CPO	(73-75)	Colorado Springs, CO

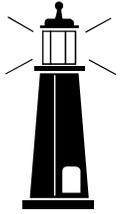
This list brings to 26 the number of new members who have joined the Association over the past six months and is very heartening indeed. Welcome aboard! Attend the reunion and get involved.

A POWDERY SUBSTANCE

(Dateline— West Point, NY) Army football practice was delayed nearly two hours yesterday after a player reported finding an unknown white powdery substance on the practice field. Head coach John Mumford immediately suspended practice while police and federal officials were called in to investigate. After a complete analysis by both the FBI and Army Intelligence, forensic experts determined the white substance was the goal line.

Practice was resumed after special agents decided the team was unlikely to encounter the substance again.

Go NAVY!!!!!! Beat ARMY!!!!!!



SHIPMATE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Paul W. Hecht

This edition features long time Association member and former Treasurer Paul Hecht. He served six years in the regular navy throughout WWII and was discharged shortly after Ozbourn returned from her first WEST-PAC cruise in late 1947.

I enlisted in the U.S. Navy on November 24, 1941 in Raleigh, NC and took boot training in Norfolk, VA. The United States went to war on December 7 and I was transferred to the new battleship **USS Washington (BB-56)**. After some training exercises with the 16 inch gun turrets the ship headed up a convoy out of Portland, ME to join the British Navy in Scotland. Having been at sea for only two days in the rough North Atlantic winter a man overboard alarm was



Paul W. Hecht, Philadelphia, PA Sept. 1942

sounded and the task force immediately commenced recovery procedures. After many musters with no one reported missing we learned that the Task Force Commander, Rear Admiral John Wilcox, had gone overboard and he had not been recovered. After arrival at Scapaflow, Scotland, Admiral Giffen transferred his flag to **Washington**. We operated with the **HMS King George V** escorting supply ships in the North Atlantic toward Murmansk, Russia, crossing the Arctic Circle. On one of our return trips off the coast of Norway contact was made with the German battleship **Tirpitz** and the whole task force went in hot pursuit to engage in battle but no contact was made and the ship turned and headed back to port. On one occasion while in Scapaflow, King George V of England visited the ship and held inspection. We operated for some time between Scapaflow and Reykjavik, Iceland. During this time I was transferred to the electrical division as they needed and experienced movie operator and I met Douglas Fairbanks Jr. who was an officer serving on board. He had me show a movie he played in called "The Corsican Brothers." At about this time **HMS Punjabi** was rammed and sunk by

HMS King George V and all the depth charges exploded splitting one of the double bottoms of the **Washington**.

We returned to the states and on 21 July I was transferred to the Naval Hospital in Brooklyn with a fractured pelvis. The injury occurred when I was caught between a bulkhead and a gun mount that had been trained around without ringing the alarm bell. I was released from the hospital on 30 September 1942 and reported to the light cruiser **USS Memphis (CL-13)** in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Later while enroute to Norfolk an abscessed tooth gave me some trouble and I found myself in the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, VA. When my jaw healed I was transferred to a new Fletcher class destroyer **USS Eaton (DD-510)** then under construction in Bath, ME. The **Eaton** went through the fitting out period in the Boston Navy Yard and then proceeded to shakedown operations in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. After shakedown was completed we immediately headed for the Panama Canal bound for the South Pacific. On the way we crossed both the Equator and the international dateline for which I received the Shellback and Golden Dragon certificates. Our first port of call was Noumea, New Caledonia. For several weeks the ship operated out of Efate and Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides and then we moved north to Tulagi on Florida Island, just 20 miles from Guadalcanal. An invasion force was formed up to take Vella LaVella, an island further north up the infamous "Slot." On departing

the Tulagi area on the night of 13 August 1943, two enemy torpedo planes came in and **Eaton** was already at one down and it was Savo Island. The invasion force moved to Vella LaVella and the 15 August 1943 with ship escorting the third second waves unloaded headed back south other ship with the plies. Everything had hand as there were no those days. It took all four air raids developed another at noon and were credited with down that day. When it was time to leave leaving the LST's the other ship made a



California, '44
An old salt now

observed to crash on battle stations and shot troops were landed on **Eaton** and another wave. The first and their troops and leaving **Eaton** and the LST's unloading supply had to be unloaded by forklifts available in day during which time more planes shot and the tide was out and the tide was out grounded. **Eaton** and high speed run toward the beach making a sharp turn that caused a wave big enough to lift the LST's high enough so that they could back off from the shore. All night long **Eaton** and the other ship laid a smoke screen to hide the LST's from prying eyes.

While on patrol around Kolombangara on 1 October 1943 lookouts on board **Eaton** spotted an enemy submarine on the surface and sunk it with 5 inch gunfire. We later learned it was the Japanese submarine **I-20**. On another occasion in mid-November while screening a task force in the area of Empress Augusta Bay an enemy torpedo plane made a run on the cruiser **Denver** and **Eaton** was ordered to try to intercept the torpedo. As it turned out, we were so low on fuel that

(Turn to **HECHT** on page 6)

USS OZBOURN SHIP'S STORE
Open 24 Hours Rudy Boff, Proprietor



CAP, Cotton Twill— Navy Blue with brilliant Gold letters and destroyer silhouette. One size fits all. Item # C01-- \$14 each
With "Korea" embroidered on back: Item # C01K-\$15 ea.
With "Vietnam" on back: Item # C01V- \$15 each



PATCH, fabric
Original design, Item # P 01
Revised design, Item # P 02
\$6. each

MUG, coffee 11oz.

Embossed with Ozboourn patch and destroyer silhouette. Item # M01
\$8 ea., 2 for \$12, 6 for \$ 30.



FRAME, license plate
Item # F01 \$5. each

The following listed items are special order only. Contact the ship's store manager.

- Micro-fiber Jacket, fleece lined-water repellent \$90**
- Twill Jacket, fully lined with full front zip \$80**
- Windbreaker, mesh lined and full front zip \$60**
- Jerzees Super Sweatshirt, assorted colors \$40**
- T-shirts, both long and short sleeve \$ 35 and \$ 20**

All items have ships name and hull number embroidered in gold letters.

Photos and additional ordering information can be found on the Ozboourn website at www.ozboourn.org under the heading Ship's Store.

Orders may be placed with: Rudy Boff
1036 Connor Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1033
Tel: 412 833 0572
email: boffrud@juno.com

THE OLD vs THE NEW;

From the Bluejackets Manual of 1917 in the section under "Pay and Accounts."

"Men must remember that their pay, except what is necessary to clothe them, is nearly all clear money. They have many allowances in addition to their pay. Their ration is quite sufficient to feed them. They have no board bill to pay. If they are sick, they get medical attention free. In case of serious illness, they are sent to hospital and cared for by the government. If

they are injured in line of duty, they get a pension. They would get no such allowance in civil life"

Examples of typical enlisted pay scales per month:

	1917
Chief Petty Officer (permanent appt.)	\$77.
Seaman first class	\$26.40

Some examples of "extra allowances"

- Each good conduct medal -- 82 cents
- Submarine pay-- \$5.
- Heavy gun pointer-- \$10 for 1st. class/\$6 for 2nd. Class
- Jack-of-the-Dust -- \$5.
- Mail clerk (ship with over 650 men)-- \$25.

Examples of typical pay for Officers:

Captain: \$4000 per annum plus 10% of his current pay for each term of 5 yrs. Service. The annual pay of a captain shall not exceed \$5000 per annum.

Ensign: \$1700 per annum.

Midshipmen at the Naval Academy: \$600 per annum

Sea Pay and duty overseas: 10% of their salaries

Navy Nurse Corps (female) after 9 yrs. Service \$780 per annum

2005

Chief Petty Officer (E9) with 10 yrs. Service: \$3901.20/mo.

Sea Pay, \$500/month; Submarine Pay, \$425/month; Diving Pay, \$340/month max.; Basic Allowance for Housing with Dependent, \$876.90.

Seaman (E3) with 3 yrs. Service: \$1641.00/mo.

Sea Pay, \$100/month; Submarine Pay, \$95/month; Hazardous duty pay; \$150/month; Basic Allowance for Housing with Dependent, \$504.60.

Officers:

Captain (O6) with 20 yrs service: \$7763.40/mo.; Sea Pay, \$475/mo.; Submarine Pay, \$835/mo.; Basic Allowance for Housing with Dependent, \$1215/mo.

Ensign (O1) with 3 yrs. Service: \$2948/mo.; Sea Pay, \$210/mo.; Submarine Pay, \$230/ mo.; Basic Allowance for Quarters with Dependents, \$652/mo.

In addition to the examples given above, there are many other incentive and special pays that are currently in effect. In the case of medical officers a Special Incentive pay can amount to \$12000 to \$39000 per annum depending on the medical specialty.

Tin Can Trivia

One of the ships on display at Patriots point in Charleston is USS Laffey (DD 724), the second ship to carry the name. The first Laffey (DD 459), a 1620 tonner of the Benson class, was commissioned 31 March 1942 and entered the fray in the South Pacific in August of that year. On Friday the 13th of November, Laffey was placed in the van of a group of destroyers and cruisers under the command of Admiral Daniel Callaghan in what later became known as the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. During the engagement, Laffey slugged it out with superior Jap forces that included two battleships and was sunk when hit by a torpedo in the fantail followed by a salvo of 14 inch shells from the battleship Kirishima. Many of the crew were lost including the skipper, LCDR William E. Hank who was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously. USS Hank (DD 702) was named in his honor.

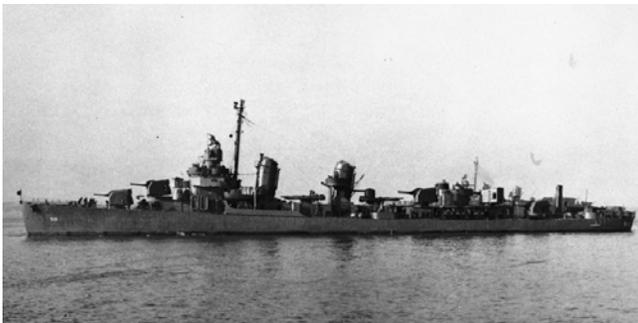
(HECHT continued from page 4)

the torpedo went right under us and struck the **Denver** in the after fire-room. We were then assigned to escort the cruiser back to Tulagi.

While in the South Pacific **Eaton** was involved in the invasions of the Treasury Islands, Bougainville, Green Island, Emirau Island and took part in 24 shore bombardments. We then moved north to take part in the invasion of Saipan and Tinian where we picked up 3 Japanese POW's. After several weeks of operations in the Marianas Islands group, **Eaton** headed east for the states and overhaul at Mare Island Navy Yard having completed over 15 months in the South and Central Pacific war zones. We never took a bad hit while I was on board, only a strafing on one occasion. In December 1944 after completion of overhaul **Eaton** headed West again and during a port call at Pearl Harbor I was transferred from the ship to attend a course of instruction at the Electrical Interior Communications school in Washington, DC.

I rode an old freighter back to the West Coast and then took a troop train east to Camp Perry in Williamsburg VA. Since Washington was quite close to my home in North Carolina, I was able to visit with my parents often and

on one trip I met Edith and by the time my schooling ended we were engaged to be married. Upon completion of the course of instruction I was transferred to Bath, ME for the pre-commissioning detail of the **Ozboourn**. Following the fitting out period at the Boston Navy Yard and shakedown at



USS Eaton (DD 510) as completed, Dec. 1942

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Edith and I were married in July 1946. Shortly thereafter the ship left Boston for our new homeport in San Diego and Edith returned home to North Carolina and later in the summer joined me in California.

In January 1947 **Ozboourn** departed San Diego on the first of many deployments to the Far East. On the way we stopped in Pearl Harbor, survived a typhoon with minimum damage and finally made port at Yokosuka, Japan. Later on we were based at Tsingtao in North China and we visited Hong Kong and Shanghai. On return to Japan, port calls were made at Sasebo and

Nagasaki and I was able to visit Tokyo. While in the orient it was customary to transfer personnel to the states 30 days before their discharge date and a list was drawn up and posted with my name near the top of the list. One day I noticed that a line had been drawn through my name and when I inquired about it I was told that it was by direction of the Captain who wanted me on board for the voyage back to the states. So I made the long trip back with the **Oz** and received my discharge 6 days after my enlistment had expired.

For service during my 6 years 6 day period of enlistment in the U. S. Navy I received the following medals:

1. American Defense Medal
2. American Theatre Medal
3. European, African, Middle Eastern Campaign Medal
4. Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with 1 Silver and 2 Bronze Stars
5. WWII Victory Medal
6. China Service Medal
7. Occupation Medal—Asia
8. Good Conduct Medal
9. Russian Patriotic Medal— It was awarded for convoy escort duty to Murmansk by the Russian Government, 50 years after the war was over.

Tare * Victor * George

H. Barr Palmer

“My most interesting tour of duty, the real weapons business”

In the two previous issues of Fireball! we followed Barr Palmer's career from XO of Ozboourn and assignment to the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project at Sandia Base, NM. Now, three years later he is assigned to the Staff of Commander Service Force, Pacific Fleet (COMSERVPAC) for duty as Special Weapons Logistics Officer. We pick up his narrative upon arrival at the headquarters at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Once the family was settled I checked in to the headquarters and started getting acquainted with the personnel with whom I would be working. The officer who I was relieving was

anxious to get moving but I took my time to make sure that all was in order. My office staff consisted of one officer, a Lieutenant, and two Yeomen which was really all that was necessary at that time. This small office was responsible for the movement of all complete nuclear weapons and major components within the Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) area. In effect, we were CINCPACFLT's agent in all matters related to the flow of nuclear weapons materials to the fleet. As specified in the Atomic Energy Act of 1947 all weapons and their major components were under the direct management of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and were allocated to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to fulfill the mission requirements of

the Armed Forces. This required a great deal of meticulous attention to detail in the coordination of movement and reporting, all of which were undertaken under a strict veil of secrecy with all shipments in the custody of couriers. The procedures under which my office operated were developed by my predecessor and it worked very well.

One has to understand the climate we were living in at the time. There was a Cold War underway and China was kicking up the dust, not unlike today and things were tense to say the least. CINCPACFLT wanted more weapons to cover its targeting responsibilities but so did the PacAirForce. Anyway, our office treated every weapon or component shipment as our very own ward and I never slept easy

(See PALMER on page 7)

(PALMER from page 6)

until a weapons shipment was completed and reported.

Now comes the greatest experience of my life. In early 1956 I received a phone call from my counterpart on CINCPACFLT staff and he told me to get to his office immediately for a meeting with representatives from the staff of CINCPAC (these were the big boys in the area). Upon arrival in his office I met the CINCPAC staff officer who handed me a Top Secret message and told me to read it. The message was from Admiral Radford who was the Chairman of the JCS, it was very brief and directed CINCPAC to place one or more nuclear weapons in the Bonin/Volcano Island chain south of Japan. The priority of the message was Operational Immediate which in Navy parlance means to "do it yesterday." The message was to be passed to PACFLT and PACAF for action and the details were left to those two commands to figure out how to do it.

The three of us got charts of the area in question to determine what facilities we might have in the area. It became immediately apparent that the Air Force had Iwo Jima so they had an easy task to get a weapon there. The only naval facility was Chichi Jima and the harbor was too small for the flying boat (Martin Mars) to land and there was no suitable airfield on the island. I suggested that we could fly a nuclear capsule to Guam and have one of our ammunition ships deliver our smallest bomb, a Mark 12, to Chichi Jima. We had no one in Guam or the Bonin Islands trained to assemble the two major components, but at least we had met the requirement. We had plenty of carriers not too far away who could drop weapons in anger if required. Our Service Force ammunition ships had been modified to transport bombs but not nuclear capsules and their crews were not trained to assemble nuclear weapons. Getting the capsule from Hawaii to Guam was easy as NAD Oahu was PACFLT's main storage facility and we had Fleet Logistics transport aircraft on standby status for moving the materials in any direction required. With the basics of a plan in place the meeting broke up



Futami Bay, Chichi Jima

and I returned to SERVPAC to brief the Admiral. He asked me if the operation was feasible and when I answered in the affirmative he directed me to accompany the capsule and smooth the way. By this time the messages were flying back and forth as all the commands involved were notified of the details of the part they would play in the operation. My itinerary called for joining the Fleet Logistics aircraft at NAS Barbers Point for the first leg to NAS Agana, Guam. The aircraft was already loaded with the capsule when I arrived, the pilots had taken custody of the capsule and we took off immediately on the long overnight flight to Guam. Upon arrival I could see that there

were many security and emergency vehicles scattered around the area and numerous armed guards on patrol. The pilot shut down the engines and the next thing I saw was a forklift heading for the aircraft with a Navy captain on the lift. The crew chief opened the door and the captain entered the aircraft with the words, "What the hell is going on?" I calmly told him that we had a nuclear

capsule aboard and that I wanted it stored and secured for a couple of days. His eyes widened and he asked, "Where's the bomb?" With that I knew that he didn't know anything about bombs, capsules and weapons. I pointed out the metal container which measured about 20x20x30 inches and his response was something like, "all this for that thing?" After turning over custody of the capsule to the CO of NAD Guam we went to see the Commandant of the Naval District, COMNAVMAR.

The Admiral was a fine, quiet person and it was easy to see that he was not unduly concerned over the situation. He had received the JCS message and he knew that we had to expedite the movement. He pointed out that Chichi Jima was the preferred location but using a ship

would take too long so it was decided to use an Air Sea Rescue aircraft which would have no problems getting into the harbor. We discussed the security arrangements that would be necessary and decided that a contingent of Marine guards would accompany the movement and then remain at Chichi Jima in order to provide security for both the capsule and the Mk. 12 bomb that was due to arrive there by ship in a few days time. I met the CO of the Air Rescue Squadron, we discussed the trip and he decided to lead the mission himself which was rather comforting to know. After agreeing on take off time of 0500 in the morning I had lunch with the Admiral and then retired to the VIP Quonset hut and turned in. By this time it had started to rain and overnight had turned into a heavy gale by take off time the following morning.

The flight was comprised of two amphibious aircraft, fondly called Ugly Ducklings, the lead aircraft containing the capsule and the follow-up aircraft carrying the bulk of the Marine security force. We taxied across the airfield where the capsule container was loaded and lashed down near my seat so I could use it as a footrest. We then took off with the second plane right behind us.

The flight plan called for a fueling stop at Iwo Jima so that no refueling would have to be done at Chichi Jima and I told the pilot that we should make the fuel stop at Iwo as routine as possible as I didn't want the Air Force people to know what our cargo was. After about four hours of flight time we landed at Iwo, refueled, picked up some box lunches and then resumed the one hour flight to Chichi. The weather now became a factor in the landing at Futami Bay as the sea was up and the wind was swirling around the peaks surrounding the bay through which we had to make the landing approach. Our pilot wisely decided that the other aircraft should return to Iwo until conditions improved and then set us down safely in the bay. It was a rough landing but the capsule had been delivered on schedule.



Docking at Chichi Jima

Next Issue: Chichi Jima

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



The Stars and Stripes Forever



OZBOURN SINKS CHOPPER

With the 7th fleet, 1964

On the morning of 17 September 1964, while on life guard station for an underway replenishment, a helicopter from USS Kearsarge (CVS 33) crash landed in the water dead ahead of Ozbourn. Seven minutes later the helicopter crew of four was hauled aboard the ship's motor whaleboat none the worse for wear. After extinguishing the fire in the helicopter, recovery operations were attempted with the still floating helicopter, but unfortunately they were unsuccessful. (This account of the incident appears in the Ozbourn website.)

Now for the rest of the story as supplied by Jim Smith (62-65) of Tipton, IN who was on board Ozbourn at the time.

“As I remember there was no attempt to recover the helicopter. While we were putting out the fire, it flipped over with just one pontoon showing above the water. I was told by someone on the bridge that the Skipper, of his own volition, declared the ‘copter a hazard to navigation and ordered it sunk. A sailor went forward with a rifle and promptly sank it with several well placed rounds in the pontoon. Scuttlebutt has it that the top brass on the carrier was not very happy with the decision.”

Ed. Note: Thanks for the first person account of the incident, Jim. Keep ‘em coming.



FIREBALL! The newsletter of the USS Ozbourn Association

Fireball, Spring 2005