



Fireball!

Reunion plans go forward; *Volunteers needed*

Inside this issue:

Presidents message

2

Editors column

2

Ozbourn's Awards

6

Mail Call

4

Mail Call (cont.)

6

The reunion arrangements are coming along on schedule according to our Chief coordinator Paul Hecht. In a complex operation such as this there are numerous details that have to be worked out well in advance of the reunion date in order that all of the bases are covered. Some contracts remain to be signed but these will have to wait until the first quarter of Y 2001.



Ramada Inn at Seekonk?

As reported in the last issue, Seekonk, MA will be the base of operations for the reunion activities which encompass the Boston, Fall River, MA and Newport, RI areas.

More detailed infor-

mation will be forthcoming in the next issue of Fireball. Last but not least is the need for volunteers to staff the Hospitality Suite and the Registration desk. At the registration desk incoming guests will log in and receive badges and all the necessary information to steer them through the reunion activities. Two people are needed in this area. Five volunteers are

(Continued on page 3)

REUNION

**BOSTON, MA
AREA**

OCTOBER

17-21

2001

**DON'T MISS
IT!**

Wonsan, the longest siege

Wonsan, a major seaport on the east coast of the Korean peninsula took on added strategic significance as the war raged in the small perimeter surrounding the port of Pusan on the southeast coast during the summer of 1950. A base for U.N. forces at

Wonsan could provide logistical support for armies attacking along the coastal plain once the breakout from the Pusan area had been accomplished. A strong landing force, attacking west from Wonsan could cut the passes through the mountain-

ous interior and trap the remnants of the N. Korean army. Wonsan had already been hit numerous times by naval air forces but surface forces faced a serious threat from thousands of mines sown in the coastal areas of the entire Korean peninsula. American de-

(Continued on page 3)

FROM THE BRIDGE

Reunion Chairman, Paul Hecht and committee member Paul Logan report to me that everything is on schedule for our fifth reunion to be held in Seekonk, MA , October 17 to 21, 2001. I urge each of you to make your plans now to attend. Put it on your calendar and schedule other events around those dates. The reunion committee has worked hard to schedule

events that will interest everyone.

Former Captain John Denham is forging ahead with work to have a new ship named OZBOURN. John is very dedicated to the belief that the accomplishments of the ship and her crews over her 29 years of service to our country deserve this honor. After working with John in this effort ,

I am convinced that if anyone can accomplish this feat, he can. A part of the problem is that very few ships are being built and there are many, many requests for names so this effort could take years. At this point, John is working on justification and is interested in talking with as many former Ozbourn Captains as possible about events that happened

(Continued on page 6)

FROM SHIP'S OFFICE

Let me begin by telling you the reason for the late delivery of the October issue of Fireball! Although no budget is allocated for expenditure of funds in conducting the association's business, every effort is taken to keep operating costs to a minimum. With this in mind your humble editor engaged the services of a bulk mailing firm and even though a few bucks were saved, the delivery of the newsletter was not what I had been led to expect. My apologies to you all. Since our last issue, several moment-

ious events have taken place throughout the country, not the least of which was the mining of the USS Cole in far off Yemen. Once again, destroyermen were in the forefront of a conflict and once again casualties were taken. It is difficult to understand how a billion dollar ship could be disabled by two guys in a rowboat but those matters are best left to the pundits. In the aftermath of the explosion the crew of the Cole have again demonstrated the indomitable will and spirit of the destroyerman in saving

their ship and bringing her back to port.

In conclusion I wish to thank all who sent in congratulations concerning my first foray into the world of journalism. It was appreciated.

Ed.

TINCAN TRIVIA

The first Gearing class destroyer to be commissioned was USS Frank Knox (DD-742) on 11 December 1944.

The last to be commissioned was USS Timmerman (DD-828) on 26 Sept. 1952. Both were built by Bath Iron Works, at Bath, ME.

NEW MEMBERS since last issue

Jay Babcock (69-71)

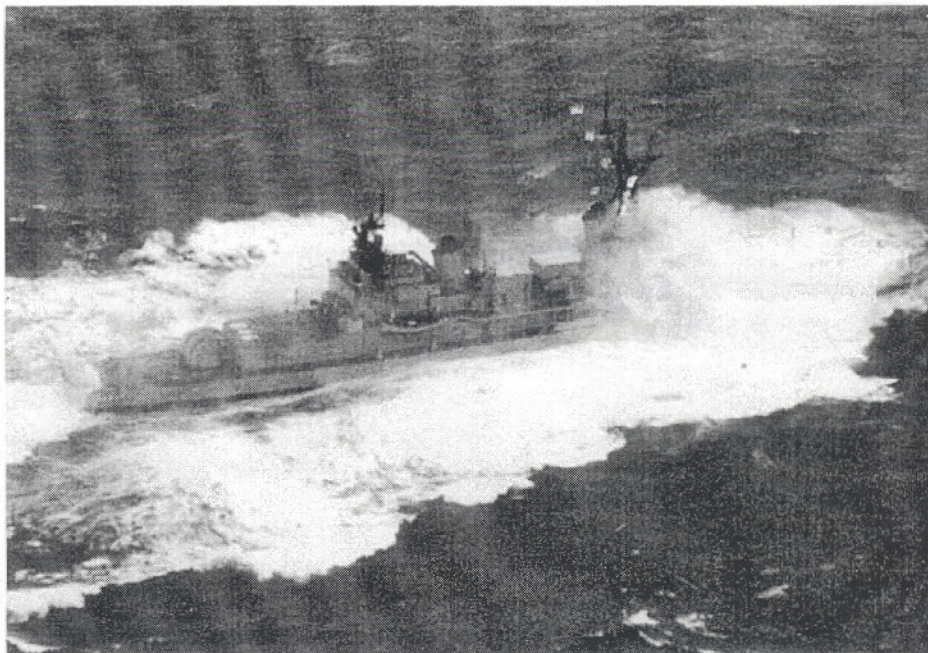
William Hodge (57-59)

Hans Koehler (58-59)

Joseph Simili (66-67)

(Continued from page 1)

needed to staff the Hospitality Suite. Duties here include opening and closing the suite on time, ensuring that snacks and beverages are well stocked and any displays are safe and secure. If you would like to contribute your time to this most worthy cause contact Paul Hecht by E-mail or regular mail at P.O. Box 3534, Portsmouth, VA 23701-0534. Telephone: 804 488 2419



Greasy pork chops for breakfast anyone? Ozbourne makes speed in heavy seas. Photo courtesy CAPT. John Denham

(Continued from page 1)

stroyers

had been ranging the east coast for weeks supporting air operations, seeking shore batteries and taking casualties from mines.

Initial preparations for landings at Wonsan began on October 10 but mine clearing operations took longer than expected and the port was secured by army forces attacking from the south.

As the U.N. forces swept north the war took another unanticipated turn when Chinese forces entered the war and the port of Wonsan once again took on added significance as a port for evacuation to the south. By mid-December 1950, Wonsan was once again in Communist hands. Since the city was the terminus for numerous coastal roads and a rail-

road connection with the N. Korean capital at P'Yongyang, control of the port would choke off traffic along the east coast and restrict movement to the interior.

Thus the stage was set for the siege of Wonsan when on February 16, 1951, Ozbourne in company with USS Manchester (CL-83) and USS Wallace L. Lind (DD-703) entered the harbor through a carefully swept channel prepared four days previously by Mine Squadron Three. The mine free areas were extremely cramped forcing the ships to fire while at anchor. Two days later while still firing from anchor, Ozbourne drew fire from the harbor islands which resulted in severe damage to Tom Dumstorf's Mk. 56 fire control director, holes in the after deckhouse

and other superficial damage to topside areas, loss of an anchor and the wounding of two sailors. As a result of this action, Ozbourne became the first naval vessel to be damaged in a continuous naval action that was to last for almost thirty months.

During the ensuing years until the so-called armistice restored the nations on the peninsula to pre-1950 boundaries, thousands of tons of explosives were expended, numerous ships were damaged or sunk and many sailors were killed or wounded in Wonsan Harbor. In the half century that has passed since those eventful days, and dark nights, in that mine filled and artillery ridden hell-hole, it might seem that not a whole lot was accomplished. The ROK has prospered mightily under the tutelage of the

United States but the north continues to deteriorate under the Communist regime and thus the stand-off continues.

This article was developed from a featured cover story that appeared in "The Tin Can Sailor" the official newsletter of the Tin Can Sailors, Inc. with their gracious permission.

Further, this story was brought to the attention of the editor by Shipmate Richard Clark 50-52 from Bella Vista, AR (see mail call)

The original article also contained a photo of Ozbourne which unfortunately was not of sufficient quality to copy

Ed.

MAIL CALL



EACH UNWORTHY WAS THEN SOUNDLY SCRUBBED, and given a final dousing and rinse. This cleansed him of the pollywog smell he'd been carrying, all unknowing, throughout his life.

George M. "Smiley" Robbins 1957



Two old sea dogs found lurking on the piers of the Huntington Harbor Yacht Club in California. April 2000
CAPT. Charlie Akers left, with COMMO. R. Satchell
(photo courtesy R. Satchell)

Due to space constraints it is not possible to publish the entire contents of all the letters received from shipmates. Excerpts follow:

From George Robbins, Austin, TX (56-59). George sent in a synopsis of his tour of duty during the late 1950's. Visits to such exotic ports as Pago Pago, New Zealand and Manus among others took place during the seven month cruise that ended in San Diego in March 1957. October of 1957 found the Oz westbound once again with ports of call in Australia and then on to Japan via Guadalcanal, Manus and the Formosa patrol. While in Australia a trio made up of Gaylon Jacobs and J. T. Farlow playing guitars with Lyle Harnden (Little Elvis) the singer appeared on the nation-wide radio station 4KQ. The cruise continued on to Japan and returned to the U. S. in April 1958. After a yard period at Mare Island the ship deployed again to WestPac and returned later in the year. George left the Oz-bourn in 1959.

Frank Spittle(49-50) sent us an excerpt from his book, "Seaman Second Class - Non Swimmer" in which he describes trying to find the ship in Long Beach Navy Yard in 1949 and being hindered in doing so because the entire bow of the ship was missing together with the bow numbers. The ship was, of course, undergoing repair following the severe damage that resulted from the collision with another ship during fleet operations near Tsingtao, China earlier in the year. The book tells in a humorous way the trials of coming of age in the Navy and deals with situations that all Oz sailors will recognize. Frank hopes to have the book in print in time for the reunion in Boston. It surely looks like a winner to me. Thanks for sending it in Frank, I for one, look forward to reading the "rest of the story".

Past President Bob Whitten (50-52), who is very active in Navy League affairs sent in a very thought provoking critique of the events surrounding the

(Continued on page 5)

mining of USS Cole (DDG-67) in Yemen last October. An abridged version of his letter follows.

Rather than a terrorist attack, the damage inflicted on Cole was an act of war declared long before by various supranationalist groups in that region of the world to include Iran and/or Iraq. This, together with an ineffectual U.S. Foreign Policy and lack of practicable rules of engagement led to the loss of American lives and the crippling of a billion dollar warship. In conclusion he writes, "A generation or more ago, the cry by people like our Commander in Chief was, 'the U.S. can't be the world's policeman!'. If not then, why now?"

Well said Bob.

In addition to contributing the front page article regarding Ozbourn and Wonsan, Richard Clark of Bella Vista, AR provided a thumbnail sketch of his life in the engine rooms on the ship. Richard was glad to have been assigned there especially when we steamed near the Siberian port of Vladivostock during the winter. Further, the MAA's steered clear of the engine rooms.

OZBOURN WEBMASTER REQUESTS INPUTS

All hands are requested to check those musty old ditty boxes, sea bags and cruise boxes for Ozbourn memorabilia for inclusion on the ship's Internet Website.

The website is managed by Pres. W.D. Minter and he is seeking new material to add to the site. Any suitable artifact such as photo's, copies of P.O.D.s, and holiday menus are desired. Items submitted will be carefully handled and promptly returned IAW the desires of the owner.

The Website is very well constructed and has been a fine source for finding old shipmates. If you have not already done so, all you Internet aficionados should check it out at the address found on the back cover of the newsletter.

Mail all artifacts to: W.D. Minter

USS Ozbourn Association

4206 Buchanan Loop Rd.

Texarkana, TX 75501-8748

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Continued membership in the USS Ozbourn Association is contingent upon payment of annual dues in the amount of \$10.00 per year, payable on January 1 of each year. In order to track your dues status, check the mailing label on the latest copy of Fireball!. For example, if the label indicates 00, you are overdue. If 01 appears, then membership is paid through 2001 and so on. Just think of the benefits derived from membership; find old drinking buddies, gain access to stellar entertainment in exotic locales and receive an informative, action packed newsletter (sic). Our Treasurer reports that a great many (367 to be exact) members have not yet paid their 2001 dues. Send those dues in to Treasurer:

Paul Hecht

PO Box 3534,

Portsmouth, VA 23701-0534

Additional years dues gladly accepted

In a related matter, inquiries concerning membership in the association should be directed to the Recording Secretary:
William L. Jones
15721 Piccadilly Rd.
Goodyear, AZ 85338
623 935 1073
Bill will ensure that the necessary forms and information will be sent pronto.

SALTY TALK

Davy Jones Locker: A familiar name among sailors for the lair of the evil spirit who was supposed to preside over the demons of the sea. He was thought to be in all storms, was of gigantic height, showing three rows of sharp teeth in an enormous mouth, great frightful eyes and nostrils that emitted blue flames. (Sounds more like the perfect XO to me. Ed.)

FROM THE BRIDGE*(Continued from page 2)*

while they were in command of the ship. John can be reached at: (925) 938 1143.

Recording Secretary, W.L. (Bill) Jones completed a two week tour of China in November. Bill took lots of pictures of life inside China and many of them can be seen on the Internet at: <http://photos.yahoo.com/arizonawill>.

Congratulations to Fireball's new editor, Tom Perkins. Tom had a lot to learn in a short time and I feel he has done a super job since taking over last fall.

Finally, every time that I have about convinced myself that I am far enough into my senior years that there are things I should not do anymore, something happens to make me think again. Recently, a story made the news about a group of WWII Navy Veterans, average age 74, were bringing back an old LST from Gibraltar to Mobile, AL, a distance of over 4000 miles. One of the crew being interviewed remarked, "I feel like a kid again". I wish them good luck and God-speed.

W.D. Minter

Following is a list of awards bestowed on the USS Ozbourn during the 29 years of commissioned service in the United States Navy.

1. Combat Action Ribbon
2. Navy Unit Commendation
3. Meritorious Service Medal
4. China Service Medal
5. World War II Victory Medal
6. National Defense Service Medal with 1 bronze star
7. Korean Service medal with 1 silver star
8. Navy Occupation Service Medal with Asia Clasp
9. Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with 2 bronze stars
10. Vietnam Service Medal with 2 silver stars
11. Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
12. United Nations Service medal
13. Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Color with Palm)

This list was developed by John Denham during his continuing effort to convince the Navy Department that a new destroyer should bear the name USS Ozbourn.

MAIL CALL (continued)

From shipmate Joe Yolly. Joe reported on board via helicopter in June 1972 while the ship was on plane guard station off the coast of Vietnam. He describes being at Condition 2 stations six hours on and six hours off while in charge of the handling room and magazine of a 5"/38 mount. During this period in close proximity to the coast in support of South Vietnamese troops the ship drew counter battery fire almost every night. During this cruise, Ozbourn also participated in the blockade of Haiphong Harbor and Russian and Chinese ships were sighted frequently out of range to seaward. Apparently none tried to run the blockade but an attempt was made to float rice bags in to shore on the tides. The rice was contained in burlap with watertight plastic outer coverings and weighed around 50 pounds. The

deck force expended considerable effort in sinking the thousands of bags using knives, marlinspikes from the whale boat and even a fifty caliber machine gun from the main deck. He also describes the CO firing at the rice bags from the bridge with an M-16 rifle. The ship returned to Long Beach in October 1972. Thanks to Joe for a most interesting story.

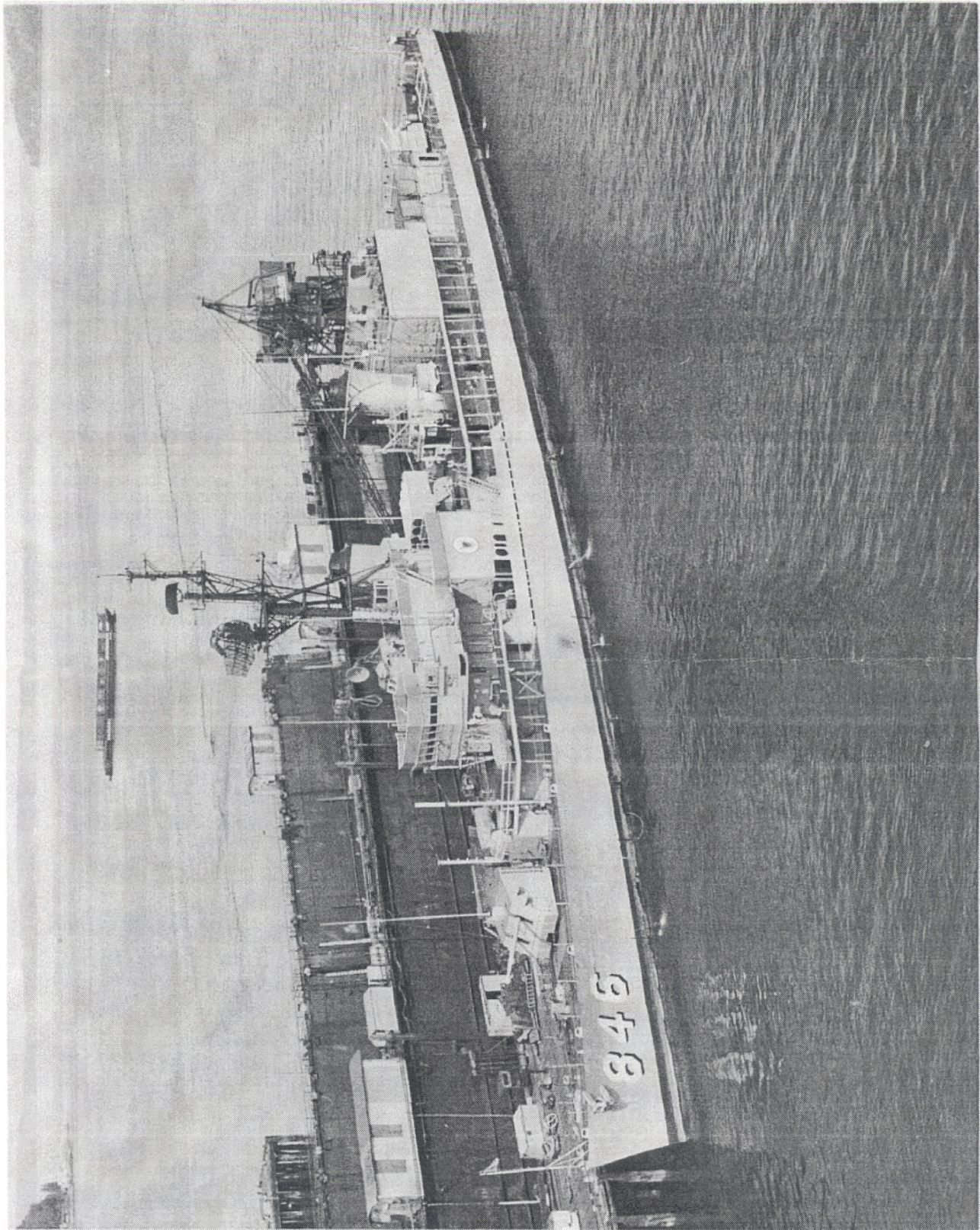
SALTY TALK II

Loggerhead: Derived from "logger-head", a piece of iron on a long handle used for melting pitch when making repairs to the hull and decking of a ship. It became a deadly weapon when men came to "loggerheads".

USS OZBOURN (DD-846)
Todd Shipvard, Seattle, WA
August, 23, 1974

This could well be one of the last photos of the ship prior to inactivation and disposal.

Courtesy of Helen Devine, Curator
 Naval Museum, Bremerton, WA



TAPS FOR SHIPMATES

Pleased to report no change in "ration strength" among Ozbourn crew members during the quarter ending 31 December Y2K . However, it would be fitting for each of us to take a few moments to reflect on the loss of the seventeen destroyermen who lost their lives while serving our country onboard USS Cole (DDG-67)

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President — W. D. Minter (52-55)

Email: wdminter@gte.net

Vice President — James R. Clay (52-55)

Email:

Recording Secretary — Bill Jones (51-52)

Email: arizonawill@juno.com

Corresponding Secretary and

Editor of Fireball! — Tom Perkins (50-53)

Email: ozbourn@tscnet.com

Treasurer — Paul Hecht (46-47)

Email: pwhecht@earthlink.net

Historian — Fred Conwell (48-51)

bedrock47@aol.com

Advisor — Charles Akers (50-52)

Email: caker5@msn.com

USS OZBOURN ASSOCIATION

INTERNET HOME PAGE

[http:// home1.gte.net/wdminter/ozbourn.
html](http://home1.gte.net/wdminter/ozbourn.html)